

**EU Foreign Policy Spokesman
Stephan Stano in Tweet on
Thursday and With a 24-Hour
Delay Condemned the Wednesday
Evening Terrorist Attack in Shah
Cheraqgh Holy Shrine of Shiraz**

IRAN NEWS

**Interior Minister Said Combination War
Plot of Enemies Against Iran Will Lead
Nowhere, and Terrorist Act in Shah
Cheragh Holy Shrine by Killing
Innocent People and Their Children
Was a Sign of Enemies' Desperateness**

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Leader Calls for Punishment of Perpetrators of Shiraz Terror Attack

TEHRAN (PressTV) – Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has offered condolences to the Iranian nation on a deadly terrorist attack at a holy shrine in Shiraz, assuring that the perpetrators of the “outrageous” crime will definitely face punishment.

“The outrageous crime in the holy shrine of Ahmad ibn Musa (peace be upon him), which led to the martyrdom and injury of tens of innocent men, women and children, saddened the hearts,” the Leader wrote in a message on Thursday.

“Perpetrator or perpetrators of this crime will surely be punished,” Ayatollah Khamenei said. “The grief of these dears and desecration of the shrine of Ahl al Bayt will, however, not be compensated unless through tracking these disastrous acts back to where they originate from and through adopting decisive and wise measures against it.”

Fifteen pilgrims lost their lives and at least 40 others were wounded after an armed terrorist opened indiscriminate fire at Shah Cheragh, a highly revered Shia shrine in the southwestern city of Shiraz, Fars Province, on Wednesday.

Two terrorists involved in the assault have been arrested, while a search is underway to nab the third.

Ayatollah Khamenei further said everyone has a responsibility in confronting the enemy as well as its “traitor or ignorant” agents.

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Enemies Sparked Unrest In Iran to Sour Gov't Success



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - President Ebrahim Raisi suggests that the recent unrest in the country has been instigated by enemies to mar his administration's success.

Speaking at an event to inaugurate six power stations in Zanjan in northwestern Iran on Thursday, Raisi listed a number of achievements that he said his administration had pulled off, and drew comparisons with the past, when he said “some looked to the outside of the country” to generate progress.

“They (the enemies) believed that we would be deterred by sanctions and threats and would be slowed down, but they saw us gaining further momentum. We advance our work by preserving the dignity and might of this system and by relying on God and on homegrown capabilities,” he said, in an apparent reference to his own administration.

“When the enemy saw that its threats had fallen flat, it officially declared that... [its policy of] maximum pressure has been ineffective,” he said.

“The enemy was after isolating Iran, but we made contact with world countries, and what had already been made was enhanced. In the first year of this administration, our trade increased by 40 percent. Our share in the trade and economy and transit of the region is not comparable to the past and something extraordinary has happened,” Raisi said.

“They (the enemies) sought to limit our monetary and financial situation with sanctions, but they saw we were not limited. When they failed in all these conspiracies, they looked to create unrest in the country so the country's progress and production would stop,” he added afterwards.

Raisi called on those active in trade, business, and manufacturing not to be deterred by “these riots and seditions,” which started in Iran following the death of a young woman in the custody of “morality patrol” agents.

“These riots and seditions shall not in any way weaken your steely resolve. My message to you is this: we will not allow the train of the country's progress to be slowed down or stopped. These events shall not disappoint you,” he said.

President further noted: “Security is the principle, and all measures are secondary compared to maintaining security; the country's people should see the hand of the enemy, the conspiracies and intrigues of the enemies who do not want Islamic Iran to grow and develop.”

Raisi continued: “My presence at the opening ceremony of the thermal power plant in Zanjan carries the message to tell all the activists, industrialists and producers of the country, the engineers, employees, workers and hard workers of the country that these issues are not in your decision and will in any way. Don't let yourself down because the nation will not allow the train of progress and activity of the country to be stopped moving.”

Raisi stated: “Our universities, which are a place for cultivating educated, profitable and influential forces, should be used as a place for increasing knowledge, increasing insight, increasing knowledge and developing the people who are founders of future schools and factories, power plants and all scientific, industrial and agricultural centers.”

“So they should redouble their efforts. The only way to stand against this conspiracy is to do their best and frustrate the enemies.”

He added: “Today, students, businessmen, industrialists, professors, and all people should know that the way to the progress of the country is to raise hope in the hearts of the people and to disappoint the enemy through continuous activities and efforts for the development of the country and production, knowledge-based and job-generating.”

“The one which at the beginning of the year, advised by the leader of the revolution, and that this is the only way out of the country's problems,” President Raisi concluded.

Iran Rejects Unfounded Nuclear Allegations by UK, Israel, Saudi Arabia

TEHRAN (PressTV) - An Iranian envoy to the United Nations has strongly rejected “unfounded” allegations made by representatives of the Israeli regime, Saudi Arabia, and the UK about the country's peaceful nuclear program.

Iran's Representative to the UN General Assembly First Committee Heidar Ali Balouji dismissed as “fake news” the accusations made against the country during the 77th session of the committee in New York on October 25.

“The dissemination of fake news and unfounded accusations against regional actors, including through the pursuit of widespread and systematic disinformation and Iranophobic campaigns, has long been a standard practice of the Israeli regime,” said the envoy.

The remarks came after an Israeli representative claimed “Iran was the biggest threat to the region and beyond,” accusing Iran of proliferating “arms of all kinds” and spreading “terror” without providing any evidence.

The Iranian diplomat said the Israeli attempts aim to “whitewash the destabilizing policies and criminal practices of that regime in such a volatile region as the Middle East,” referring to a list of Israeli brutalities in the region, including 15 wars in seven decades, aggression against all neighbors, and occupation of lands in Palestine, Syria, and Lebanon. See Page 7

Tehran Maintains Position Of Active Neutrality On Ukraine War

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has reiterated its rejection of “totally unfounded allegations” that it supplied Russia with weapons for use in the war in Ukraine, saying Tehran has maintained “a position of active neutrality” since the outbreak of the military conflict in February.

“Iran has never provided the parties with weapons for use in the Ukraine conflict,” Iran's ambassador and permanent representative to the United Nations Amir Saeed Irvani said in a Security Council meeting.

“Iran has never produced or supplied, nor does it intend to produce or supply items, materials, equipment, goods, and technology that could contribute to the development of nuclear weapons delivery systems,” he said.

The United States and its European allies have in recent months accused Iran of providing Russia with drones to be used in the war in Ukraine.

The anti-Iran claims first emerged in July, with US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan alleging that Washington had received “information” indicating that the Islamic Republic was preparing to provide Russia with “up to several hundred drones, including weapons-capable UAVs on an expedited timeline” for use in the war in Ukraine.

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Iran Can Help Pakistan Overcome Energy Shortfall

KARACHI (dispatches) - Gholam Hossein Shafei, the president of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), has said the Pakistan and Iran stand to benefit from enhanced bilateral trade volumes as both countries have their own strengths in exports that have demand in the other country.

He specifically mentioned that Iran is an important player in global energy production and Pakistan can benefit from Iran to overcome energy deficits and Iranian petrochemical industries are world-class and price-competitive as well.

He called upon central banks of both the countries to help establish banking channels between the two countries to facilitate trade.

Mohammad Ali Hosseini, Ambassador of Iran in Pakistan, expressed his satisfaction that a 27-member trade delegation of Iran is in Pakistan and it will lead improved people-to-people and business-to-business contacts.

He also emphasised that tourism in general and business tourism is particular is welcome in Iran.

Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, President FPCCI, welcomed Iranian ambassador to Pakistan at the Federation House and the president of ICCIMA accompanied by chamber officials, diplomats and prominent business personalities.

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Iran to Diversify China Exports With Focus on Agrifood

TEHRAN (PressTV) - A businessman who watches over private sector trade between Iran and China says Iranian exports to China will increase and diversify in the near future as part of an understanding between the two countries to deepen their trade relations.

Majid Reza Hariri, who leads Iran-China Joint Chamber of Commerce, said on Wednesday that China's decision to authorize the imports of three new categories of goods from Iran will allow Iranian exporters to expand their presence in the Chinese market.

Hariri said the decision, which will cover fishery products, fruits with a focus on kiwi and dairy products, is part of an understanding between Iran and China to increase their trade relations.

“This issue had been finalized with regards to the rules and regulations (in China) and Iranian companies can start negotiations for exporting their products,” Hariri was quoted as saying by the IRIB News. See Page 7

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Putin Condoles to Raisi After Terror Attack in Shiraz

TEHRAN (MNA) – Russian president offered condolences to Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi after the terrorist attack in Shiraz, and also confirmed his readiness to increase cooperation in the fight against terrorism, the Kremlin said Thursday.

"Please accept my sincere condolences on the tragic consequences of the terrorist act committed in Shiraz," Putin said in a telegram, according to Sputnik. "I would like to confirm the readiness of the

Russian side to further build up cooperation with Iranian partners in the anti-terrorist direction."

The Russian leader noted that it was difficult to imagine a more cynical crime than the murder of civilians — including children and women — within the walls of a religious shrine.

He added that terrorism violated not only the laws, but also the norms of human morality.

Military Chief Pledges Revenge Against Perpetrators of Shiraz Terror Attack

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's military chief says national security, tranquility, as well as the people's lives and property are a red line for the country's Armed Forces, vowing revenge against the masterminds and perpetrators of the bloody terrorist attack in Shiraz.

The Daesh-claimed terrorist attack on the holy shrine of Shah Cheragh took place on Wednesday just before the evening prayers, when an assailant opened indiscriminate fire at pilgrims inside the shrine and was himself wounded and arrested by security officials.

In a message on Thursday, Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Baqeri said the country's security and intelligence forces would soon punish the "internal and foreign designers and perpetrators" of the brutal crime for their shameful actions.

He added that rioters behind the recent wave of unrest in the country and those who have been deceived in the case were "undoubtedly complicit in this big crime."

The top Iranian commander emphasized that the plot has been devised and directed by "the vicious Hebrew-Arabic-Western triangle."

Nour News Agency, which is affiliated with Iran's top security body, said the militant who carried out the attack was a foreign national but did not give his nationality.

CCTV footage released by local authorities showed the terrorist making his way inside the shrine after hiding an assault rifle in a bag and opening fire at



worshippers tried to flee and hide in corridors.

In turn, Chief Commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Major General Hossein Salami also on Thursday denounced the "brutal crime and vicious act" in Shiraz and vowed retaliation against its perpetrators.

He delivered a stern warning to the perpetrators and sponsors of the horrific crime, saying the Iranian nation will eventually bring them to justice.

The IRGC chief said the terror attack showed "the enemies of dignity, strength and progress of the Islamic Iran" will commit any crime to "achieve their malicious goals and wishes" and are ready to kill and shed the blood of defenseless men, women and children even during prayers.

Uzbekistan Rejects Assembling Iran Drones in Country

TEHRAN (MNA) - The Uzbek Ministry of Foreign Affairs followed up with a statement rejecting the allegation that Iranian drones were, or are, being assembled in Uzbekistan.

"We declare that the Republic of Uzbekistan does not cooperate with the Islamic Republic of Iran in the military-technical sphere and does not assemble Iranian military equipment on its territory," the ministry said.

Uzbekistan also urged the Ukrainian authorities to take appropriate measures to prevent the Ukrainian media from spreading such unfounded accusations and other unreliable information.

The allegations were raised in an interview between Ukrainian journalist Dmitry Gordon and Zionist businessman Leonid Nevzlin, according to The Diplomat.

Iran, Belarus FMs Review Mutual Ties

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian and his Belarusian counterpart, Vladimir Makei in a meeting on Thursday discussed bilateral relations in various fields.

During the meeting on Thursday in Tehran, Amirabdollahian described the development of Iran and Belarus's economic cooperation as satisfactory.

He stressed the importance of joint economic plans that are on the agenda of the two countries' relations and emphasized serious attention to these issues.

The Foreign Minister considered the facilitation of consular cooperation between the two countries to ease the traffic of nationals, especially in the field of economics, transportation, transit activists, and students to pave the way for enhancing cooperation.

Makei, for his part, called for strengthening bilateral relations with Iran and defined the approach of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Belarus on regional and international issues close to each other.

During the meeting, both sides signed a document of cooperation between the two countries foreign ministries.

Enemies Pursuing Multi-Layered Project To Undermine Iran's Security

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian has slammed the deadly terrorist attack in Shiraz, saying Tehran is in possession of "solid information" revealing a "multi-layered project" being pursued by the enemies to make the Islamic Republic insecure.

In an Instagram post on Thursday, the chief diplomat offered condolences on the martyrdom of 15 Iranian pilgrims in the armed terror attack at Shah Cheragh, a revered Shia holy shrine in the southwestern city of Shiraz, a day earlier, wishing speedy recovery for the injured.

He said the crime brought to light "the sinister intentions of the promoters of terror and violence in Iran."

"There is solid information indicating that the enemies have devised a multi-layered project to make Iran insecure," he wrote.

He also vowed response to the act of terror, saying, "We will certainly not let Iran's national security and interests be toyed with by terrorists and foreign meddlers who claim to defend human rights."

The terrorist attack took place at around 5:45 p.m. local time (1415 GMT) on Wednesday, just before the evening prayers.

The police commander of Fars province said the attacker opened indiscriminate fire at pilgrims inside the shrine and was himself wounded and arrested by security officials.

Hours later, the Daesh terrorist group claimed responsibility for the attack.

Separately, Iran's Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi said that the attack exposed the complex nature of the enemy's conspiracies, which are aimed at all forms of violence and recognize no boundaries as to the loss of a large number of ordinary people.

Vahidi said that the terrorist attack revealed the actual extent of enemies' cruelty — something which has been demonstrated at times during the latest foreign-back riots which erupted after a young woman, Mahsa Amini, died in hospital three days after she collapsed in police custody.

Deputy Chief of the Iranian Judiciary Kazem Gharibabadi also reacted to the terror attack, denouncing the silence of human rights organizations on the terrorist crime in Shiraz.

"Terrorists continue to target innocent Iranian civilians. Over 17,000 people have been assassinated in Iran in 4 decades," he said in a tweet.

The secretary of the High Council for Human Rights noted that the terrorists, based in the US and Europe, enjoy "unwavering backing" there.

"Why are the human rights mechanisms silent about the deadly Shiraz terrorist attack?" he asked.

German Ambassador Summoned Over Meddlesome Stance on Iran Riots

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Ali Bagheri Kani on Thursday summoned German Ambassador Hans-Udo Muzel to Tehran over "meddlesome" remarks by a number of German officials about the latest riots in Iran.

In his meeting with the German envoy, Bagheri Kani described as unacceptable and irresponsible the stance taken by the German officials including the foreign minister, which he said has provoked the riots in Iran and is against international law.

He added, such a stance is not compatible with the tradition existing in the long-running ties between the two countries.

The Iranian official said that the Islamic Republic observes human rights, including the right to peaceful protests, adding that violence and breaking law not only breach that right, but also affect public order and the security of Iranian citizens.

Protests began in Iran on September 16 when 22-year-old woman Mahsa Amini died in hospital, three days after she collapsed at a police station in Tehran. A forensic report showed that her death was not because of blows to her body but was due to an underlying condition. Those protests however turned into riots and unrest.

Bagheri Kani blamed that on the illegal interference by some Western countries.

He said, certain European countries have turned into a safe haven for terror groups and media outlets that produce content provoking terror and riots in Iran.

Bagheri Kani referred to the Wednesday terror attack in Shiraz that killed 15 people, saying that such terrorist acts are in line with the chaos and violent provocations which some European countries and the United States have backed.

The Iranian diplomat stressed that his country will never tolerate any kind of interference in its internal affairs.

The German ambassador said that he will convey views expressed by Bagheri Kani to the authorities in Berlin.

Iran-Belarus Economic Ties Helpful to Mitigate Sanctions

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Majlis Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf called for expanding ties with Belarus in a bid to mitigate the "cruel" sanctions which have been imposed by the U.S. and other Western countries.

Qalibaf made the comment on Thursday during a meeting with Belarus Foreign Minister Vladimir Makei and his accompanying delegation in Tehran.

The top Iranian lawmaker said that the countries, which are under pressure due to Western sanctions, should stand together. He said that Western states, including the US, have imposed sanctions on a significant number of other countries across the world in order to protect their own interests.

The Belarus official, for on his part, said that his country is trying to act independently on its domestic and foreign policy fronts.

Also, he added, Belarus is trying to counter sanctions and pressure, and therefore considers Iran as a friendly country. In this line, Makei said, Belarus is trying to establish a strategic partnership with Iran which he called an important country in Asia.

Qalibaf and the Belarus foreign minister also discussed parliamentary relations between the two countries, and economic cooperation in Central Asia.

Makei, meanwhile, condemned the Wednesday terror attack in the southern Iranian city of Shiraz that left 15 people dead. He also sympathized with the Iranians over "the bitter incident".

Students Protest UK Meddling

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Hundreds of university students in the Iranian capital of Tehran have gathered in front of the British Embassy to protest the European country's interventionist role in recent riots across Iran.

The protesters from various universities in Tehran, alongside a large number of ordinary people and marketeers, assembled in front of the UK Embassy on Thursday morning to voice their strong opposition to the role and interference of the British government and its affiliated media in Iran's recent riots.

The university students censured the British government's support for the media that back rabble-rousing and riots in Iran, such as the London-based BBC Persian and Iran International.

Holding placards in protest at the anti-Iran policies of arrogant countries, especially Britain, the ralliers condemned London's hostile approach towards Tehran and chanted, "Death to the UK", "Death to the USA," and "Death to traitors."



In their slogans, the students also pledged allegiance to maintaining Iran's territorial integrity and said the recent riots and Wednesday's bloody terrorist attack in the holy shrine of Shah Cheragh in the Iranian city of Shiraz was perpetrated with separatist motives.

"Although the UK has no longer the ability to directly attack and interfere in the Islamic Iran, it still expresses its animosity against the Iranian nation through other methods. Today, it is no longer a secret to anyone that the Persian-language media in London have become a circle of those who wish for the disintegration and humiliation of our dear country" and seek nothing but despair and frustration for the Iranian people, the university students said in a concluding statement.

"Definitely, the recent riots [in Iran] and the leadership of this new sedition originate from your country, and the noble nation of the Islamic Iran will not remain indifferent to the issue," the statement added.

Iran Calls for Strengthening Bilateral Ties With Qatar

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian in a meeting with Qatari Deputy Foreign Minister for Regional Affairs Mohammad bin Abdul Aziz al-Khalifi stressed the Islamic Republic of Iran's determination to develop relations with Qatar.

The Qatari Foreign Ministry's delegation headed by the country's Deputy Foreign Minister for Regional Affairs Mohammad bin Abdul Aziz al-Khalifi on Wednesday afternoon met with Iran's top diplomat Hossein Amirabdollahian.

They held talks over bilateral ties and issues of mutual interest as well as ways of expanding relations between Tehran and Doha in the issues of mutual interests.

Amirabdollahian underlined the necessity of implementing agreements signed by Iran and Qatar during Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi's visit to Doha and also during the Qatari emir's visit to Tehran.

Amirabdollahian stressed the importance of strengthening cooperation among regional countries within the framework of common interests.

Al-Khalifi, for his part, calling for the importance of developing bilateral ties, emphasized the importance of promoting cooperation at the regional level.

Iranian, Kuwaiti FMs Discuss Bilateral Ties Over Phone

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian in a phone conversation with his Kuwaiti counterpart Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al Sabah on Thursday congratulated him on his appointment as the new top diplomat of Kuwait.

During a phone conversation with Al Sabah on Thursday, Amirabdollahian referred to the priority of ties with the neighbors in the 13th government's foreign policy of Iran and stressed the importance of regional cooperation for the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Al Sabah, for his part, said that Kuwait seeks to cooperate with the Islamic Republic of Iran to promote deep-rooted and friendly relations between Iran and Kuwait.

While thanking Amirabdollahian for his congratulatory message, He added that Kuwait seeks lasting ties to keep countries in the region safe.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	11:48
■ Evening (Maghreb)	17:31
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:59
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:24

105. Before this We wrote in the Psalms, after the Message (given to Moses):

My servants the righteous, shall inherit the earth."

106. Verily in this (Qur'an) is a Message for people who would (truly) worship Allah.

Surah 21. The Prophets (105 - 106)

Over 1 GW Added to Electricity Generation Capacity

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran has added more than 1 gigawatt (GW) to its electricity generation capacity with the launch of several new projects across the country.

President Ebrahim Raisi on Thursday inaugurated five new power plant units as part of a campaign by his administration to boost the country's energy security in the face growing demand in the country.

The projects included a 366-GW thermal power plant located 82 kilometers to the west of the city of Zanjan. Raisi traveled to the site of the project to inaugurate the power plant which has cost 130 million euros and around eight months to build.

Reports said that the Aryan power plant will be the largest in northwestern Iran and will create a total of 240 new jobs in the region.

Other projects that Raisi opened via a video link on Thursday were two 180 GW and two 160 GW power plant units located in northwest, northeast and in southern Iran.

The new power plants will bring Iran's total electricity generation capacity to 89.365 GW. A breakdown of the figure showed thermal power plants accounted for

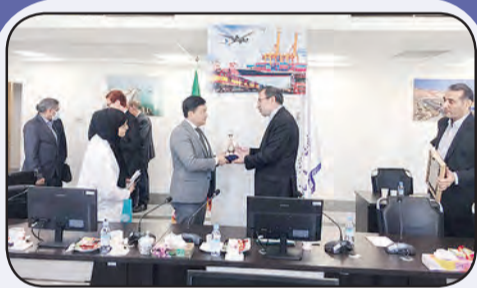


some 72.614 GW of the capacity, while total capacity at Iranian hydroelectric stations was at about 12.087 GW.

The report said renewables and small generators account for 3.644 GW of Iran's electricity generation mix while one single nuclear power plant located in the south of the country has a generation capacity of 1.02 GW.

Raisi's website said in a report that his administration had inaugurated 3.614 GW of new electricity generation capacity since coming to office in August last year, adding that another 1.88 of new capacity will come on line until March 2023.

Eurasian Economic Union to Expand Trade Ties With Iran



TEHRAN (MNA) – The Eurasian Economic Union will expand transport and trade relations with Iran.

Iran transport officials are hosting the head of the Eurasian Economic Union Trade Council, Danil Ibrayev, on Wednesday to discuss prospects of transport and trade cooperation.

Ibrayev who is also President of the Kyrgyz Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (KUIE), expressed hope for the development of transport corridors and ports and logistics infrastructures in Iran during his visit.

The two sides expressed willingness over launching rail transit from Bandar Abbas to Osh which can transit Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Belarus, and China freights to Iran and also the possibility of forming a cross-border port in Bandar Abbas.

Although Shahid Rajaei Port is a Special Economic Zone which can attract investments; however, the Eurasian Economic Union has a proposal for a cross-border port in Bandar Abbas to facilitate and accelerate freight transit. Iran is to respond to the proposal after examining the legal and regulatory requirements.

Stating that the rail route through Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Iran is open to the central Asian countries, Afandizadeh, Iran's deputy transport minister welcomed rail freight transit from China and Kyrgyzstan towards Iran which gives them access to both Europe and the Indian Ocean.

The Eurasian Economic Union consists of five member states including Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Armenia and Iran's geographical location is very important in providing the Central Asian countries access to the high seas.

Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan signed a joint statement for enhanced transit during the first ministerial summit on transit cooperation among regional countries which was initiated for the first time by Iran on October 9.

Iran, Pakistan Can Take Bilateral Trade to \$5b in 2023

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN – President of Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) Irfan Iqbal Sheikh welcomed Iranian Ambassador to Pakistan at the Federation House and the President of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA); accompanied by chamber officials, diplomats and prominent business personalities.

He maintained that the real potential for bilateral trade between Pakistan & Iran is at least \$5 billion in the near-term; and, this can be materialized by the next year itself.

Irfan Iqbal Sheikh explained that land-based & border trade accounts for 70 – 80 percent in the total trade of many geographically-contiguous and developed countries as it is cost-competitive in not only product pricing but also saves shipping costs; time-saving and creates healthy interdependencies among naturally complementary economies.

FPCCI Chief termed the formation of Pak-Iran Joint Business Council as a historic milestone and also apprised that another MoU has been signed between the counterpart



chambers of two countries to constitute a high-powered dispute resolution committee to resolve trade disputes swiftly, fairly and unanimously.

Irfan Iqbal Sheikh emphasized that since Pakistan has become part of the TIR convention, we should be able to exponentially increase our exports to ECO member countries and Central Asia through the use of land-based transport routes and

make full use of transit trade through Iran – which is close to \$100 billion per year.

Seyed Mohammad Ali Hosseini, ambassador of Iran in Pakistan, expressed his satisfaction that a 27-member strong, high-profile trade delegation of Iran is in Pakistan; and, it will lead to better & improved people-to-people and business-to-business contacts. He also emphasized that tourism in general and business tourism is particular is welcome in Iran.

Gholam Hossein Shafei, President ICCIMA, said that both countries stand to benefit from enhanced bilateral trade volumes; as both countries have their own strengths in exports which have demand in other country.

Cargo Transit Through Iran Up 20%

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iranian transportation ministry (MRUD) says international cargo transit through the country has increased significantly in recent months thanks to an understanding with neighboring Turkmenistan and also because of restrictions imposed on Russia's trade routes because of the war in Ukraine.

A senior official at MRUD's road transportation department said on Wednesday that cargo transit through the Iranian road network had topped five million metric tons (mt) in the six months to September 22, up nearly 20% from the same period last year.

Javad Hedayati said the figure is equivalent to the entire volume of cargo transported via the Iranian road and rail networks in the calendar year to late March.

Hedayati added that cargo transit through Iranian roads reached 791,000 mt in the calendar month to late September.

He said the surge was mainly a result of increased activity on an Iranian shipping route that connects Turkey to Turkmenistan and other countries in Central Asia.

"Currently, some 100 trucks transport cargo between Turkey and Central Asia through Iran on a daily basis," said the official.

He said Iran and Turkmenistan have reached an understanding under which Turkmenistan has eased transportation restrictions for trucks arriving or traveling to Iran.

The official added that Turkmenistan has lifted a \$1.5 per kilometer tax that it used to charge Iranian trucks for travelling in the country.

Hedayati said Iranian transit routes have also become more attractive for cargo delivery to and from Russia since early this year when Moscow came under Western sanctions because of the war in Ukraine.

He said that transportation of cargo containers via Iranian seaports to Russia have increased after Turkmenistan eased restrictions on international transportation earlier this year.

NICICO Selected as Top Exporter of Year

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – On last Saturday, October 22, and during the National Export Day ceremony which was held in presence of President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi,

National Iranian Copper Industries Company (NICICO) was selected as the exemplary exporter of the year 1401 (Iranian calendar year). In the ceremony Industry Minister Seyed Reza Fatemi Amin, Head of Iran Trade Promotion Organization Mr. Alireza Payman-Pak and vice president on economic affairs Mohsen Rezaei were also present.

According to reports, during ceremony for naming the exemplary exporters of the year, National Iranian Copper Industries Company was chosen as the exemplary exporter and it was awarded with plaque of appreciation and medal.

NICICO has so far five times won this accolade due to its valuable and influential performance in the field of exports and in line with materializing the slogan of the year.

According to the official data, NICICO has exported products worth of \$1.55b to be chosen as the top exporter of the year.

In this year's award ceremony, 612 exporting companies in 7 different goods and services categories competed and 57 top exporters of the year were selected and honored.

In the ceremony, deputy head of the company on financial and economic affairs Mr. Hossein Taqaddosi received the award on behalf of the CEO of the Company Dr. Ali Rostami. The sales manager of the company Mr. Ayub Babasalari and other managers of the NICICO were also present in this event.

Iran to Provide Iraqi People With High-Tech Medics

TEHRAN (IP) - Iran is to launch a cancer research center in Karbala, Iraq, to provide people with advanced treatment for diseases.

Motamed Cancer Research Institute is the first center for cancer treatment and transplant of stem cells, the establishment of which was requested by Karbala of Iraq.

An expert team of Iranian physicians is to have the first allogeneic stem cell transplant of bone marrow in the Iraqi city.

The Father of Iran's stem cell transplant, Ardeshir Ghavamzadeh, said: "Soon, the first allogeneic bone marrow transplant will be performed on a patient with leukemia in Karbala."

The chancellor of Motamed Cancer Research Institute, Ramin Sarrami Forooshani, also has traveled to Karbala to sign an agreement with Iraqi officials for transferring stem cell transplant technology and setting up a cancer treatment and stem cell transplant center.

"The primary focus of this center will be on stem cell transplantation in the treatment of patients suffering from cancer and thalassemia as well as the technological diagnosis of hereditary cancers. In the near future, with the completion of the necessary infrastructure and equipment, comprehensive cell therapy and gene therapy projects will be carried out in the center," he said.

Popular Iranian Voice Actor, TV Presenter Dies at 81

TEHRAN (IFP) - Former Iranian voice actor, actor and TV presenter Jalal Maghami has passed away due to cardiac arrest at the age of 81.

Born in 1941, Maghami started his artistic activities from a young age.

He is best known for serving as a presenter at a highly popular TV show broadcast for 12 years in the 80s and early 90s, titled "Captivating," which aired fascinating footage of natural phenomena, fascinating events and interesting sights from around the world.

In the golden years of dubbing, he served as a voice actor in or supervised the dubbing of many famous series and movies made in Iran and elsewhere in the world.

In the years prior to the Islamic Revolution in 1979, he also played roles in a number of movies.



44% Growth in Net Profit of Amirkabir Petrochem Plant

TEHRAN (Shana) -- Amirkabir Petrochemical Company registered a 44% growth in its net profit and 29% in its operating income in the first half of the current calendar year, which began on March 21.

According to Amirkabir Petrochemical Company, Kodal System announced that this company registered a profit of 750 riyals per share in the period ending on September 22, which, compared to the same period last year, rose by 44%.

Amirkabir Petrochemical Company also has a 29% increase in operating income compared to last year.

Amirkabir Petrochemical Company also managed to achieve a significant

production record in its olefin unit, which is unprecedented in its 6-month books.

It is worth mentioning that low density polyethylene and linear low density polyethylene plants were able to exceed the nominal capacity of the unit by one percent and seven percent, respectively.

Amirkabir Petrochemical Plant is the producer of the most diverse polyethylene grades in the country, which is located in the 4th petrochemical special economic zone in Mahshahr County. 52% of the shares of this company belong to Refah Capital Development Holding, which belongs to Refah Karkaran Bank and the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labor and Social Welfare.

U.S. Commits Another \$30m For Pakistan Flood Relief

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The United States said it would provide another \$30 million in flood aid to Pakistan, hoping to reach nearly two million additional people after the historic disaster.

The U.S. Agency for International Development said the new aid would include emergency food and nutrition, screening for malnutrition, shelter assistance and kits to help families prepare for winter.

USAID chief Samantha Power, who visited Pakistan last month, said she had seen a "sunken world" from the floods which killed more than 1,700 people and 1.2 million livestock and at their height submerged one-third of the country.



U.S. Terror Alert in S. Africa Unfortunate

PRETORIA (Dispatches) - South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa regretted as "unfortunate" the U.S. embassy's issuing of a warning of a possible weekend "terrorist" in the country without consulting his government.

The U.S. embassy posted the alert on its website and identified the potential target as Sandton, a suburb in the country's financial hub of Johannesburg.

Sandton, a collection of high-end shops and lofty office blocks and banks, is commonly referred to as the richest square mile on the African continent.



Russia Says It May Destroy Western Satellites



KYIV (Dispatches) - A senior Russian government official raised the possibility that Moscow could shoot down commercial Western satellites being used to help Ukraine's war effort, as Russia pressed ahead with its bombing campaign against Ukrainian infrastructure.

If acted on, the threat would inevitably raise fears about spiralling escalation of the eight-month-old conflict and the risk of direct confrontation between Russia and the West.

There was no immediate reaction from the United States or commercial satellite providers.

Konstantin Vorontsov, a senior Russian foreign ministry official, said the use of Western satellites to aid the Ukrainian war effort was "an extremely dangerous trend".

"Quasi-civilian infrastructure may be a legitimate target for a retaliatory strike," he told the United Nations First Committee, adding that the West's use of such satellites to support Ukraine was "provocative".

"We are talking about the involvement of components of civilian space infrastructure, including commercial, by the United States and its allies in armed conflicts," said Vorontsov.

He did not mention any specific satellite companies, though Elon Musk said earlier this month that his rocket company SpaceX would continue to fund its Starlink internet service in Ukraine, citing the need for "good deeds".

Russia has a significant offensive space capability - as do the United States and China. In 2021, Russia launched an anti-satellite missile to destroy one of its own satellites.

Moscow in August accused the United States of direct involvement in the war after Vadym Skibitsky, Ukraine's deputy head of military intelligence,

told Britain's Telegraph newspaper that Kyiv was using U.S.-supplied High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) launchers based on what he called excellent satellite imagery and real-time information.

Satellite images of the conflict zone captured by commercial U.S. satellite imagery firms are pored over daily on Twitter by open source intelligence experts who highlight the coordinates of potential Russian military vulnerabilities.

With Ukraine's counteroffensive in its southern Kherson region slowing down in recent days due to wet weather and difficult terrain, and no dramatic changes in the east either, Kyiv said Russia was pressing ahead with a campaign to destroy critical infrastructure ahead of the winter.

Ukrainian officials have said the campaign was aimed at breaking people's spirit to resist by depriving them of basic utilities such as light and heat, a strategy they say is doomed to failure.

Russia says it is targeting infrastructure as part of what it calls its "special military operation" to degrade the Ukrainian military and remove what it says is a potential threat against its own security.

Oleksiy Kuleba, the governor of the Kyiv region, said the area, including the capital city itself, faced a 30% deficit in its capacity to generate the power it needs after overnight Russian strikes.

A SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket lifts off, carrying 53 Starlink internet satellites, from the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral

"Last night the enemy damaged the facilities of the energy infrastructure of our region. A number of critical facilities have been disabled," Kuleba said in a video clip on the Telegram messaging app.

Protests in Sri Lanka Over economic Crisis And Police Brutality

COLOMBO (Dispatches) - Thousands of Sri Lankans protested in the capital, Colombo, with civil rights groups, trade unions and students expressing their discontent over the economic situation and the brutal suppression of previous demonstrations.

Sri Lanka is facing its worst economic crisis in decades, pushing many into poverty. Annual food price inflation is at 85.8 percent, and prices of non-food items are at 62.8 percent. Sri Lanka's gross domestic product (GDP) is forecast to contract by 8.7 percent.

Al Jazeera's Minelle Fernandez said the protesters are frustrated as there seems to be "no let-up" in the ongoing economic crisis. "The cost of living is soaring, food inflation is topping 90 percent, and people are really, really struggling," she said.

The Trade Union Coordination Centre initiated the rally. The combined people's movement brings together trade unions and prominent figures who led the earlier protests to remove former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa.

This year's uprising against Rajapaksa began on March 31 and ended with the storming of his residence on July 9.

Ranil Wickremesinghe was elected president by a vote in Parliament on July 21.

Wickremesinghe immediately declared a state of emergency, which granted sweeping powers to the military and resulted in a series of crackdowns on protesters, with several protest leaders arrested.

After a brief wait-and-watch period following the crackdowns, "people are now coming out once again, and the reason for that is there seems to be no let-up," said Fernandez. "A few months ago it was just beginning to make itself felt at the household table but now most households are really struggling."

In August, the United Nations urged Wickremesinghe to end the crackdowns, describing them as a "misuse of emergency measures".



N. Ireland Faces Second Vote in Six Months

BELFAST (Dispatches) - Northern Ireland is facing the prospect of a second election in six months after the region's largest pro-British party refused to drop its boycott of a power-sharing government, citing concerns about post-Brexit trade rules.

An election is likely to prolong a political stalemate that has frozen parts of the region's administration and will put a spotlight on deep political divisions over the trade rules just as Britain and the European Union try to find a compromise.

At an emergency session of the Northern Ireland Assembly, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) on Thursday said it would not back the election of a speaker, effectively ensuring that a six-month deadline to form a government after elections in May is missed.

Under the terms of the 1998 Good Friday peace agreement that largely ended 30 years of sectarian bloodshed in the region, nationalists who seek independence and unionists who want to remain part of the United Kingdom are required to agree on a speaker before electing a cross-community government.

"We do not believe that sufficient progress has been made to addressing the issues of concern to the people we represent," DUP leader Jeffrey Donaldson told journalists.

Chris Heaton-Harris, the UK government's minister for Northern Ireland, has repeatedly said that failure to form a government by the end of Thursday would leave him legally obliged to call a new election despite the fact that the region's main parties have said a vote would do little to break the deadlock.

"There is no doubt that having an election at this time won't change anything in terms of the issues and challenges we have in Northern Ireland," Donaldson said.

Heaton-Harris would have 12 weeks to call an election, but media in Northern Ireland have reported local officials preparing for a possible vote in mid-December.

Israel, Lebanon Finalize Maritime Demarcation Deal

BAABDA (Dispatches) - Israeli and Lebanese leaders finalized a U.S.-brokered maritime demarcation deal on Thursday, bringing a measure of accommodation between the enemy states as they eye offshore energy exploration.

Leaders from Lebanon, Israel and the United States have all hailed the deal as "historic" but the possibility of a wider diplomatic breakthrough remains slim.

As a result, there was no joint signing ceremony: Lebanese President Michel Aoun signed a letter approving the deal at his palace in Baabda in the presence of the U.S. official who mediated the accord, Amos Hochstein.

"We have heard about the Abraham Accords. Today there is a new era. It could be the Amos Hochstein accord," said top Lebanese negotiator and deputy parliament speaker Elias Bou Saab, referring to the 2020 U.S.-brokered normalization of ties between Israel and the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain.

Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid signed separately in Jerusalem, saying the deal was a "tremendous achievement" that had produced Lebanon's de facto recognition of Israel.

"It is not every day that an enemy country recognizes the state of Israel, in a written agreement, in view of the international community," Lapid told his cabinet in broadcast remarks.

But Aoun later said the deal was purely "technical" and would have "no political dimensions or impacts that contradict Lebanon's foreign policy".

Lebanon does not recognize Israel's right to exist and still considers itself at war with its neighbor, with laws barring contact with Israeli officials.

Lower-level delegations from each country headed to the United Nations' peacekeeping base at Naqoura along their contested land border, which has yet to be delineated.

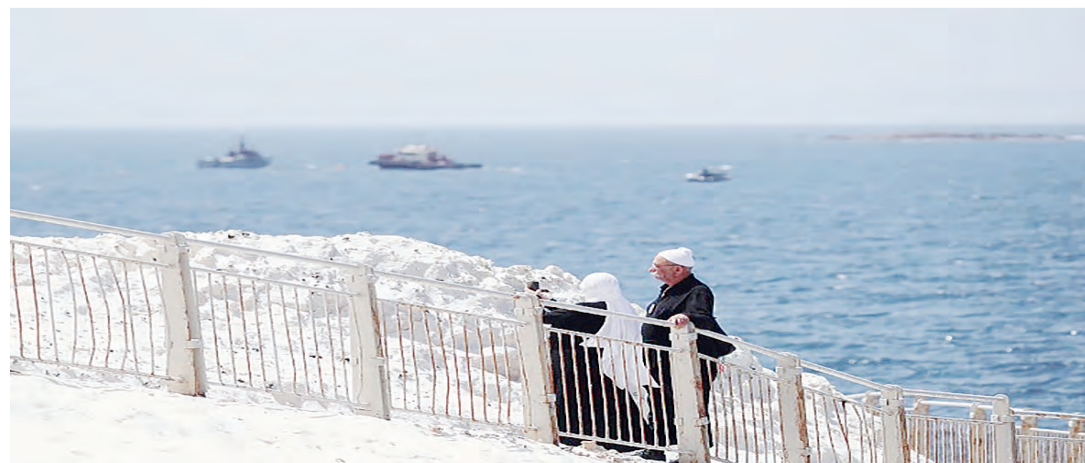
There, the delegations entered the same tent, each standing on a side of a table, and submitted their signed copies of the deal to U.S. officials and their new coordinates for the maritime border to the U.N., officially bringing the deal into force, an Israeli official and a Lebanese source told Reuters.

"I hope it will serve as a confidence-building measure that promotes more security and stability in the region and economic benefits for both countries," said the U.N.'s Special Coordinator for Lebanon Joanna Wronecka.

The accord comes days ahead of major political milestones for both Israel and Lebanon.

Aoun's term is set to end on Oct. 31 and political sources say he was keen to seal the deal as the crowning achievement of his six years in office.

Israel holds elections on Nov. 1, its fifth in less than four years.



ASEAN Still Backing Myanmar Consensus Peace Plan-Chair

JAKARTA (Dispatches, Oct 27 (Reuters) - The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) remains committed to a peace plan agreed with Myanmar's military rulers, its chair Cambodia said on Thursday, even as some countries raised concerns over the failure to implement the plan agreed with the junta 18 months ago.

A special meeting of the group's foreign ministers was held in Jakarta to discuss the stalled peace plan, though no representatives from Myanmar were present.

Myanmar's generals have been barred from high-level ASEAN meetings since last year, when the army ousted Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi's elected government, detaining her and thousands of activists and launching a deadly crackdown that has given rise to armed resistance movements.

The junta has done little to honour its commitments to the so-called five-point peace "consensus" which includes an immediate halt to violence, starting dialogue, allowing an envoy of the ASEAN chair to facilitate mediation, and for ASEAN to provide humanitarian assistance.

A spokesperson for Myanmar's military government did not answer a call seeking comment on Thursday. The head of the junta has previously blamed a lack of progress implementing the plan on instability in the country and the pandemic.

Political analysts said the meeting, which comes ahead of the bloc's leaders' summit next month, was "disappointing" and did little to move the needle on getting Myanmar's generals to cooperate.

"Today's meeting reflects that there is no common position among the ASEAN countries, they are split in handling the Myanmar issue," said Lina Alexandra of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Jakarta.

ASEAN foreign ministers and representatives agreed on Thursday the bloc should be "even more determined" to bring about a peaceful solution in Myanmar as soon as possible, the chair said in a statement, noting that Myanmar's situation remained "critical and fragile".

"The foreign ministers expressed concern and disappointment over no significant progress on the five-point consensus implementation," Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi told a news conference after the meeting.



Will Africa's Metals Boom Suffer the Same Curse as Oil?



MOANDA (Dispatches) - Mechanical diggers are hard at work in the bleak landscape of the Moanda open-cast mine in Gabon, using giant jaws to rip out manganese and then dump the ore into trucks with a crash.

"We're lucky here in Moanda. We find it about five to six meters (about 18 feet) below the surface," said manager Olivier Kassibi, whose mine yields 36 tons of manganese each day.

Element number 25 on the periodic table, manganese has traditionally been perceived as a useful if humdrum material widely employed in steel and alloys.

More recently, though, the silvery metal has gained star status thanks to its emerging role in rechargeable car batteries, helping to wean the world off carbon-spewing fossil fuels.

Decarbonisation of the world economy will take center stage at the UN's COP27 climate talks in Egypt next month.

And as the great transition goes into higher gear, eyes are turning to Africa.

Its soil is rich in manganese, cobalt, nickel and lithium -- crucial ingredients in cleaner technology for generating or storing power.

The Moanda region alone contains as much as a quarter of known global reserves of manganese, according to the Compagnie Miniere de l'Ogooue (Comilog), a subsidiary of the French group Eramet which operates the site.

But hopes that the mineral boom will translate into a new dawn of prosperity in the world's poorest continent are clouded by memories of what happened with oil.

In Africa's oil-producing countries, black gold meant a gush of wealth for a well-connected few -- but only drops for the needy majority.

Corruption sucked the dollars out of plans for roads, hospitals and schools, and environmental damage was often all that remained.

Africa's potential in new-age minerals is "huge", said the former chief economist of the African Development Bank, Rabah Arezki, who pointed out that reserves are not even known because so little exploration has been done.

But, he said, "there is very little reason to think that this windfall will benefit the people of Africa, particularly because of governance concerns."

New metals deposits are following one another at a giddy pace.

In one example, Firefinch Ltd of Australia was looking for gold at Goulamina in southern Mali when it came across lithium, said Seydou Semega, geologist and local director of the firm.

Firefinch then created a local offshoot, Leo Lithium, and inaugurated the mine in early 2022 -- a facility that it says could create 1,200 jobs and generate more than \$100 million a year for Mali in taxes and dividends.

"Could Africa be the main source of lithium in the world?" asked Simon Hay, director of Leo Lithium. "Absolutely."

Comilog, which has operated the Moanda mine since 1960, claims the creation of 3,400 direct and 6,000 indirect jobs, a contribution of around \$345 million per year to the national economy in various forms, plus millions of dollars in health and education provisions for the population.

"You need to have a social policy that is as committed as possible to share this wealth," said its CEO, Leod Paul Batolo.

Comilog is keen to list its green principles, which include rehabilitating and replanting extraction sites, decarbonising the energy mix of its factories and "setting limits" on encroaching on wildlife areas.

Europe's Bees Stung By Climate, Pesticides And Parasites



PARIS (Dispatches) - Bees pollinate 71 of the 100 crop species that provide 90 percent of food worldwide. They also pollinate wild plants, helping sustain biodiversity and the beauty of the natural world.

But climate change, pesticides and parasites are taking a terrible toll on bees and they need protecting, according to European beekeepers, who held their annual congress in Quimper, western France, this week.

The congress, which said some European beekeepers were suffering "significant mortalities and catastrophic harvests due to difficult climatic conditions", was an opportunity for beekeepers and scientists to try to respond to the major concerns.

The European Union, the world's second largest importer of honey, currently produces just 60 percent of what it consumes.

French beekeepers, for example, expect to harvest between 12,000 and 14,000 tons of honey this year, far lower than the 30,000 tons they harvested in the 1990s, according to the National Union of French Beekeepers (UNAF).

"I've been fighting for bees for 30 years but if I had to choose now, I don't know if I'd become a beekeeper," said UNAF spokesman Henri Clement, who has 200 hives in the unspoiled mountainous Cevennes region in southeastern France.

Clement is 62 and not far off retiring.

"But it's not much fun for young people who want to take up the profession," he said.

Many of the subjects buzzing around the congress were evidence of this -- Asian hornets, parasitic varroa mites and hive beetles (all invasive alien species in Europe), pesticides and climate change.

With climate change, "the bigger issue is just the erratic weather and rain patterns, drought and things like that", explained US entomologist Jeffery Pettis, president of Apimondia, an international federation of beekeeping associations in 110 countries.

"In certain places, the plants had been used to a certain temperature. And now it goes up, and you have a hot dry summer, and there are no flowers," Pettis told AFP.

No flowers means no pollen, which means bees dying of hunger.

Climate scientists say human-induced global heating is intensifying extreme weather events like flooding, and heatwaves that exacerbate wildfires.

"The fires seem to be a big issue," Pettis said. "They come sporadically and we lose hives directly from flooding and fires."

Pettis, a former scientist at the US Department of Agriculture, published a study in 2016 on the quality of pollen produced by goldenrod -- a hardy perennial also known as solidago that produces a myriad of small, yellow, daisy-like flowers.

The study showed that the more carbon dioxide -- a greenhouse gas -- accumulates in the atmosphere, the lower the amount of protein in goldenrod pollen.

North America bees are dependent on nourishment from goldenrod pollen to get through the winter, Pettis explained.

As in France, 30 to 40 percent of hives in the United States are dying every winter, Pettis said, decimated by varroa mites, pesticides and the destruction of wild spaces where wild plants grow.

Toxic pesticides are another factor decimating bee colonies and other pollinating insects.

French molecular biophysics scientist Jean-Marc Bonmatin said parasites like varroa, were "boosted by the presence of neonicotinide pesticides, which directly poison pollinators".



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Central Banks Urged to Keep Raising Rates to Hit Neutral Level

BERLIN (Dispatches) - International Monetary Fund chief Kristalina Georgieva said that central banks should keep raising interest rates further to fight inflation until they hit a "neutral" level, though in most cases they have not reached this point. Speaking to Reuters in Berlin a day before the European Central Bank is widely expected to raise rates by 75 basis points, the fund's managing director said it would take until

2024 for the positive effect of central banks raising rates globally to be felt. The ECB had for months said that its first step will be to raise rates to a neutral setting, where it was neither driving nor restricting growth, but some policymakers are now advocating more aggressive action, saying the ECB should go further to tame inflationary pressures.



Australia Inflation Races to 32-Year High

SYDNEY (Dispatches) - Australian inflation raced to a 32-year high last quarter as the cost of home building and gas surged, a shock result that stoked pressure for a return to more aggressive rate hikes by the country's central bank.

Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) showed the consumer price index (CPI) jumped 1.8% in the September quarter, topping market forecasts of 1.6%.

The annual rate shot up to 7.3%, from 6.1%, the highest since 1990 and almost three times the pace of wage growth.

A closely watched measure of core inflation, the trimmed mean, also climbed 1.8% in the quarter, lifting the annual pace to 6.1% and again far above forecasts of 5.6%. That would be unwelcome news to the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) which had thought core inflation would peak at 6% in the December quarter, with headline inflation topping at 7.75%.

Instead, analysts were warning that both core and headline measures were certain to spike even further this quarter with the ABS's new monthly CPI accelerating in September.

"The upshot is that CPI inflation will approach 8% in Q4," said Marcel Thieliant, a senior economist at Capital Economics. "The stronger-than-expected rise in consumer prices is consistent with our forecast that the RBA will hike rates more aggressively than most anticipate."

Both ANZ and Commonwealth Bank of Australia added another 25 basis points to their forecasts for the cash rates to peak at 3.85% and 3.1% respectively. National Australia Bank also revised its terminal rate expectation to 3.6%, compared with 3.1% before. The cash rate is currently at 2.6%.

The Australian dollar climbed 0.3% to \$0.6412, the highest level in more than two weeks.

It is particularly ill-timed for the RBA since it surprised many this month by downshifting to a quarter-point rate hike, following four moves of 50 basis points.

Rates have already risen by a massive 250 basis points since May and the RBA had wanted to go slower to see how the drastic tightening was impacting consumer spending.

Investors now suspected the central bank may have to reconsider, perhaps not at its policy meeting next week but rather in December.

Futures still imply a quarter-point move on Nov. 1 to 2.85%, but now show some chance of a half-point hike in December and a peak for rates around 4.20% in July.

The European Central Bank (ECB) and the Bank of Canada are both expected to hike by 75 basis points this week, while the Federal Reserve (Fed) should match that at its meeting on Nov. 2. Australia's Labor government bowed to inflation concerns this week by restraining spending in its 2022/23 Budget, despite calls for more cost-of-living support amid soaring prices.

"Whether it's food, whether it's electricity, whether it's rent, inflation is public enemy number one. Inflation is the dragon we need to slay," was how Treasurer Jim Chalmers responded to the data. There are also fears recent flooding across eastern Australia will lift food prices even higher, with supermarket chain Coles (COL.AX) warning of declining volumes in fresh food where prices were up 8.8% on a year earlier.

Russian Bombings of Infrastructure Raise Cost of Ukraine's Recovery

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Russia's latest strikes on civilian infrastructure have raised the cost of Ukraine's recovery and could see it needing close to \$4 billion a month just to keep power and water supplies going, the head of the International Monetary Fund said.

The IMF had envisaged Ukraine's external financing needs at around \$3-4 billion a month next year but sees that rising to \$5 billion in a worst case scenario after Russian forces rained missiles and drone attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure.

Speaking to Reuters in Berlin, IMF managing director Kristalina Georgieva said the institution was focused on helping Ukraine keep afloat now while working on a longer-term programme whose size and duration were yet to be worked out.

She also signalled that China should be allowed to participate in an international platform that the European Commission wants to set up this year for Ukraine.

"We still hope that we can stay within these parameters of 3-4 billion, but what changed since we had this discussion is Russia's terrible bombing of civilian infrastructure," she said.

"Just to get electricity back and water supply back we are moving towards the upper range of 4 billion ... Just imagine a worst case scenario."

Russia stepped up attacks on infrastructure this month at the same time as its forces were being pushed back by advancing Ukrainian troops. The attacks caused nationwide blackouts and forced Ukraine to ration energy use. Moscow has acknowledged targeting energy infrastructure but denies targeting civilians.



Bank of Canada Slows Pace of Rate Hikes as Recession Fears Mount

OTTAWA (Dispatches) - The Bank of Canada announced a smaller-than-expected interest rate hike and said it was getting closer to the end of its historic tightening campaign as it forecast the economy would stall over the next three quarters.

The central bank increased its policy rate by half a percentage point to 3.75%, coming up short on calls for another 75 basis points move. It has lifted rates by 350 basis points since March, one of its fastest tightening cycles ever.

"This tightening phase will draw to a close. We are getting closer, but we are not there yet," Governor Tiff Macklem told reporters at a news conference after the decision.

How much higher rates need to go "will depend on how monetary policy is working to slow demand, how supply challenges are resolving and how inflation and inflation expectations are responding," he said.

When asked if those considerations could lead the bank to not hike at all at its next decision or whether they would simply inform the size of an inevitable increase, Macklem said it "would be closer" to the latter. "We expect rates will need to rise further. That could mean another bigger-than-normal increase, it could mean that we can move to more normal size 25-basis-point increases," he said.

Macklem said the central bank was still far from its goal of low, stable and predictable inflation at 2%, but was trying to balance the risks of under- and over-tightening.

This as the bank slashed its growth forecasts for 2023 and said economic activity would be close to flat from the fourth quarter of 2022 through the first half of 2023.

Meloni Under Fire Over Plan to Raise Cash Payments Cap

ROME (Dispatches) - Italy's new right-wing government is planning to raise a limit on cash payments, Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said, amid opposition complaints that the move would benefit tax cheats and money launderers.

Tax dodging is a chronic problem in Italy, with more than 100 billion euros (\$100.47 billion) evaded per year, according to Treasury data. In 2019, some 18.5% of taxes due were evaded.

Cash is harder to trace compared to electronic payments, so it is more likely to be

used for illicit purposes. Yet forcing people to use credit cards is unpopular in some quarters, ostensibly for reasons of freedom and privacy.

"I confirm that we will change the cap on cash (payments)", Meloni told the Senate before a vote of confidence on her government, standing by a pre-election pledge of her rightist bloc.

Earlier, Matteo Salvini's League, a junior coalition ally, presented a draft bill to hike the cap to 10,000 euros from next year. It currently stands at 2,000 euros and was due to go down to 1,000 euros from next year.

Since 2010, the cap has been moved up and down several times, ranging from 1,000 to 5,000 euros.

Italy has traditionally been one of the European Union's more cash-based economies, but the trend has changed in recent years, with card payments becoming increasingly popular since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Senator Franco Mirabelli of the centre-left Democratic Party said Meloni's plan would be a "gift" to mafia groups. "It would favour (tax) evasion as well as money laundering," he wrote on Facebook.

Giuseppe Conte, a former premier and leader of the left-leaning opposition Five Star Movement, also protested.

"We don't want to favor crime and corruption. We are instead concerned with helping ... the majority of Italians, ordinary people. Those who do not normally go around with 10,000 euros in cash in their pocket," he said.

Meloni insisted there was "no correlation" between cash payments and the size of the underground economy. "There are countries that have no limits and very low (tax) evasion," she said, mentioning Germany.

However, a Bank of Italy study from last year concluded that "raising the threshold for the use of cash from 1,000 euros to 3,000 euros, as was done in Italy in 2016 to boost spending, had the side effect of leading to a larger underground economy."

World Bank Projects 11% Energy Price Decline in 2023

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The World Bank on Wednesday said it expects energy prices to decline by 11% in 2023 after this year's 60% surge following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, although slower global growth and COVID restrictions in China could lead to a deeper fall.

The bank in its latest Commodity Markets Outlook projected a Brent crude average price of \$92 a barrel in 2023, easing to \$80 in 2024 but well above the five-year average of \$60. It said Russia's oil exports could drop by as much as 2 million barrels per day due to a European Union embargo on Russian oil and gas products, coupled with restrictions on insurance and shipping, that are take effect on Dec. 5.

A proposed Group of Seven oil price cap could also affect the flow of oil from Russia, but needed the participation of large emerging markets and developing countries to be effective, it said, calling the mechanism "untested." The World Bank said the stronger dollar - and the shrinking value of the currencies of most developing economies - had driven up food and fuel prices that could aggravate the food insecurity already affecting 200 million people worldwide.

"The combination of elevated commodity prices and persistent currency depreciations translates into higher inflation in many countries," said Ayhan Kose, who heads the World Bank group that produces the report. He said emerging market and developing economies should brace for "a period of even higher volatility in global financial and commodity markets."

Currency depreciation meant that almost 60% of oil-importing emerging markets and developing economies saw an increase in domestic currency oil prices from Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which began on Feb. 24, the report found. Nearly 90% of these economies also saw a larger increase in wheat prices in local currency terms, it said.

Food price inflation averaged more than 20% in South Asia in the first three quarters of 2022, while other regions, including Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Eastern Europe and Central Asia, averaged food price inflation of between 12% and 15%.

While energy prices were easing, they would still be 75% above their average over the past five years, the bank said.

Both natural gas and coal prices are projected to decline in 2023 from record highs in 2022, but Australian coal and U.S. natural-gas prices are still expected to be double their average over the last five years by 2024. European natural gas prices could be nearly four times higher, it said.

Coal production, meanwhile, was increasing significantly, as major exporters boosted output, putting climate-change goals at risk.

U.S. Auto Sales To Rise in October



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - U.S. auto retail sales are expected to rise in October as supply chain snags ease, making more vehicles available at dealerships amid higher demand, an industry report from consultants J.D. Power and LMC Automotive showed.

An improvement in new vehicle inventories bumped up the sales activity in the United States at a time when consumers are ready to spend more to own a personal vehicle.

Customers have been unaffected by higher vehicle prices and a lack of incentives or discounts from automakers, who have been taking advantage of strong demand and tight inventory.

"Even with a modest increase in inventory, strong demand continues to allow manufacturers to maintain a low level of discounting," the report said, adding that average transaction price for new vehicles is expected to reach record levels in October.

Retail sales of new vehicles are expected to rise 12.1% to 1,008,200 units in October, compared with a year earlier, the report showed.

"The vehicle market is being supported by improving inventories and product selection for some, but not all, brands," said Charlie Chesbrough, senior economist at Cox Automotive.

October seasonally adjusted annualized rate for total new vehicle sales is expected to be 15.0 million units, up 1.8 million units from 2021, the J.D. Power-LMC Automotive report showed.

"While production has shown some signs of improvement, it most likely will not be enough to bring forward any material sales events," said Thomas King, president of the data and analytics division at J.D. Power.

King flagged that per unit pricing and profitability may see a deterioration in the coming months, as rising interest rates pressure affordability.

Total new-vehicle sales in October, including retail and non-retail transactions, are projected to reach 1,157,900 units, a 15.2% increase from October 2021, according to the report.

Over 8.5m Tons of Basic Goods Transported in H1

TEHRAN (MNA) - More than 8.581 million tons of basic commodities were transported to the designated destinations throughout the country during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22), Iran's Government Trading Corporation (GTC) announced.

Based on the GTC's report, the essential commodities including wheat, rice, raw oil, sugar and oil seeds were transported throughout the country via roads and railway network in the six-month period. As the GTC has previously announced, 3.117 million tons of basic commodities were imported into the country during the first half of this year.



What Brazil's Election Means for the Amazon Rainforest

SAO PAULO (Dispatches) - Brazil's presidential election on Sunday may determine the fate of the Amazon jungle, the world's largest rainforest, after deforestation soared in the past four years under President Jair Bolsonaro.

He faces off against former President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, who has pledged to stop all Amazon destruction and act aggressively on climate change.

Protecting the Amazon is vital to stopping catastrophic climate change because of the vast amount of climate-warming greenhouse gas it absorbs.

What happens on Sunday?

Brazilians will choose between the top two presidential candidates from the Oct. 2 first-round vote: leftist Lula and right-wing Bolsonaro.

Lula bested Bolsonaro in the first round but fell short of the 50% needed to win outright. Bolsonaro performed far better than most surveys had indicated.

The latest opinion polls show Lula ahead, on 52.0% to Bolsonaro's 46.2%.

Why has deforestation soared under Bolsonaro?

Bolsonaro, who took office at the start of 2019, has pushed for more mining and commercial farming in the Amazon, saying it would develop the region economically and help to fight poverty.

He has weakened environmental enforcement agencies, cutting their budgets and staff while making it more difficult to punish environmental criminals.

His public criticism of conservation efforts has also emboldened illegal loggers, ranchers and land grabbers to clear the forest with less fear the government will punish them, scientists and environmentalists say.

How much has deforestation risen?

Destruction in the Amazon rainforest last year hit the highest level since 2006, according to the government's space research agency INPE.

An area of forest larger than the U.S. state of Maryland was destroyed during the first three years of Bolsonaro's presidency.

Preliminary government data indicates that deforestation rose a further 23% in the first nine months of 2022.

What is Lula's track record on deforestation?

Lula took office in 2003 with levels of Amazon deforestation near all-time highs. His administration strengthened federal environmental enforcer Ibama and created the parks service agency ICMBio.

By 2010, his last year in office, deforestation had fallen by 72% to near record lows.

But Lula also backed the massive Belo Monte hydroelectric dam in the Amazon, which destroyed river habitats and displaced indigenous people. Deforestation began to creep up again under his hand-picked successor, ex-President Dilma Rousseff, who weakened some policies to favor development.

What is Bolsonaro promising on the environment?

Bolsonaro has said little about his environmental proposals should he win a second



term. A representative for his Liberal Party told Reuters that the campaign did not have a spokesperson or any way to answer media questions on the subject.

Bolsonaro's policy platform emphasizes that Brazilians have the right to develop natural resources in the Amazon. The campaign documents tout efforts by the military, police and other agencies to combat deforestation and forest fires. However, data shows that under Bolsonaro they have failed to reduce the destruction.

What is Lula promising on the environment?

Lula has vowed to bring deforestation to zero by rebuilding the government's environmental agencies. His campaign has likened his sweeping proposals to a post-war reconstruction after the rising environmental destruction under the current government.

He has committed broadly to the principles of "climate justice," saying that the environment can only be protected by increasing economic opportunities to reduce hunger and poverty.

But with Brazil's government facing a budget crunch, it remains unclear how he will pay for his policies.

What are indigenous groups saying?

Indigenous groups have broadly endorsed Lula, who promises to empower them to protect their lands from environmental destruction.

Illegal miners, loggers and landgrabbers have increasingly invaded indigenous land and killed tribe members under Bolsonaro, who has halted the process of demarcating tribal lands.

Volkswagen Brand Will Only Produce Electric Cars in Europe From 2033



BERLIN (Dispatches) - The Volkswagen brand will only produce electric cars in Europe from 2033, its boss Thomas Schaefer said on Wednesday, committing to an earlier date than its previous 2033-2035 target.

Schaefer said in the coming decade the VW brand would narrow down the number of models on offer and raise the profit margin for all volume brands - Volkswagen, SEAT and Skoda, and commercial vehicles - to 8% by 2025.

His comments echo other senior management figures at the German carmaker who have also laid out plans to streamline production and improve productivity as it battles to dominate the electric vehicle market.

Premium brands like Audi and Porsche boosted the Group's results in the first half of the year, with Audi registering a 51% jump in operating profit and Porsche up 22%, compared to an 8% drop at the Volkswagen volume brands.

The passenger cars brand saw a 5.6% operative margin in the first half of the year, up from 3.4% in the same period last year.

Bringing vehicles from the volume brands into the same factory saves costs, Schaefer said: "We have historically a lot of waste in the system we can take out."

The VW brand would also move its production focus from concentrating on a single model per factory to "platform thinking", Schaefer said, using the same basic design for different models to allow economies of scale.

This, combined with standardising battery chemistry, was key to achieving the carmaker's goal of producing an entry-level electric vehicle for 25,000 euros or under, Schaefer said.

"If you have 30-40 different battery cell and pack formats, it's unmanageable. The focus is a clear standard across the brands, and full scale," the chief executive said.

"The only company that can scale on this territory at the moment is us."

Palestinians in Crisis-Hit Lebanon Plunge Deeper Into Poverty

BEIRUT (Dispatches) - A United Nations agency warned that more Palestinians living in crisis-hit Lebanon have fallen deeper into poverty, spelling a "dramatic humanitarian crisis".

For three years Lebanon has been in the throes of one of the worst economic crises in recent history according to the World Bank -- dealing an especially heavy blow to vulnerable communities including refugees.

Two thirds of Palestinian refugee families in Lebanon have cut down on the number of daily meals, Leni Stenseth, deputy commissioner general at the UN agency for Palestinian refugees UNRWA, told reporters in Beirut.

Days ago the UN body "urgently" appealed for \$13 million in funding for cash assistance to families, primary health care services and to keep the agency's schools open until the end of this year. The poverty level among Palestinian refugees in Lebanon has shot up from a little more than 70 percent at the beginning of the year to 93 percent, according to UNRWA.

"This means that almost everyone is without the ability to cater for the most basic needs in their lives," Stenseth said.

"This is a dramatic humanitarian crisis."



Lebanon hosts about 210,000 Palestinian refugees, including 30,000 who fled Syria after war erupted there in 2011, according to the agency.

Around two million Syrian refugees are in Lebanon, authorities said Tuesday, while nearly 830,000 are registered with the UN.

Most Palestinians in Lebanon live in one of 12 official refugee camps, often in squalid conditions worsened by the financial meltdown, and face a variety of legal restrictions including on their employment.

"We know the infrastructure in Lebanon is depleted ... of course the camps are in no better state," Stenseth said.

UNRWA is working on a prevention campaign to help shield refugees from a cholera outbreak that struck Lebanon this month, she said.

Cholera has spread mainly among Lebanon's Syrian refugees, and no cases have so far been reported in Palestinian camps. "We've asked for funding now to prepare for the situation that has just surfaced linked to cholera," she said.

Palestinians were among more than 100 people who died after a migrant boat that left from Lebanon's north sank off Syria last month, in one of the deadliest recent such shipwrecks in the eastern Mediterranean.

Iran Rejects Unfounded...

FROM PAGE 1

Balouji also pointed to the "destructive and destabilizing" practices of the regime in the area of armaments including "the massive accumulation of the most sophisticated conventional weapons, the development and stockpiling of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction as well as clandestine nuclear activities in unsafeguarded nuclear facilities."

"The Israeli regime was the only entity in the region that refused to accede to the NPT or to the Biological and Chemical Weapons Conventions. Chemical weapons had been frequently and massively used in the region," he stressed.

Elsewhere, the Iranian diplomat rejected the claim of Wajdi Hassan Moharram, a Saudi diplomat who had voiced concern over what he called Iran's non-compliance with its nuclear undertakings.

"Iran is upholding its commitments," Balouji said, calling on Riyadh to "meet the long-lasting request of the IAEA by adopting a CSA as the previous SQP is not enough to ensure a safeguarded nuclear program by Saudi Arabia."

Saudi Arabia's nuclear ambitions have prompted worries in the global community over the past few years, especially after Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman hinted in 2018 that the kingdom may go for nukes. According to reports, Saudi Arabia was building a facility for the extraction of yellowcake from uranium ore near the remote town of al-Ula back in August 2020.

Balouji also used the floor to denounce the allegations made by a British envoy who claimed Iran had taken "unprecedented steps to accelerate the pace of its nuclear program, producing enriched uranium, including highly enriched uranium, at an alarming pace." The Iranian diplomat said the UK has failed to live up to its commitments in relation to "nuclear disarmament under article VI of the NPT" as well as the 2015 nuclear deal and hence has no moral ground on raising the issue.

The UK is "in flagrant non-compliance not just by disobeying this responsibility, but also by strengthening its nuclear arsenal, participation in nuclear sharing, and signing together with the USA, the Aukus deal, all of which have seriously complicated its non-proliferation obligation," said the diplomat.

Leader Calls for...

FROM PAGE 1

The Leader called on security agencies, the Judiciary branch, thinkers, activists in the field of propagation, and the entire nation to act in union to confront the current that is disregarding and disrespecting people's lives, security, and sanctities.

"The dear nation and the institutions in charge will definitely overcome the sinister plot hatched by the enemies, God willing," said the Leader.

Ayatollah Khamenei also condoled with the bereaved families of the martyrs, the people of Shiraz, and the entire Iranian nation, praying for recovery of those wounded.

Tehran Maintains Position of...

FROM PAGE 1

Both Iran and Russia have in the past vehemently denied the allegations.

Iravani further said that several member states of the Security Council, including the United States, have accused Iran of violating Resolution 2231 (2015) while they continue to violate their legal obligations under the same resolution, citing Washington's illegal withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear agreement, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), as the main example in this regard.

The Iranian diplomat added that some countries, by disseminating erroneous information, are now attempting to establish "an entirely artificial linkage" between Security Council Resolution 2231 and the alleged use of Iranian-made unmanned aerial vehicles in the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.

Since the beginning of the conflict in Ukraine on February 24, he added, Iran has emphasized that all member states must fully respect the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter as well as international law.

Iravani slammed the illegal move to conduct a so-called investigation as to whether Russia has used Iranian drones against Ukraine, saying it would be in clear violation of the Secretariat's mandate.

Russian Permanent Representative to the United Nations Vasily Nebenzya said on Wednesday that the West's calls for a probe into Russia's alleged use of Iranian-made drones against Ukraine would "create a very dangerous precedent for the United Nations' work."

"From the legal point of view, they (Western delegations) want an artificial expansion of the secretariat's competences and endowing it with extra functions by means of infringing upon the Security Council's prerogatives," he said.

Iran and Russia have rejected baseless allegations that Tehran supplied Moscow with a fleet of drones for use in the war in Ukraine.

The Russian envoy called on the member states of the Security Council to "defend the UN Charter, to condemn the Western delegation's actions that are undermining it, and to speak up clearly for the Secretariat's sticking to Article 101 of the Charter and its mandate."

He noted that the Russian delegation has "heard nothing legal" in the argument in favor of setting a probe into the use of drones in Ukraine, saying, "It was especially touching to hear the United States, the major resolution violator, accusing Russia of violating resolution 2231."

"The Secretariat must respond to member states' inquiries, but it must be guided by its mandate and the UN Charter rather than requests from some states," Nebenzya added.

Iran Can Help Pakistan...

FROM PAGE 1

FPCCI chief termed the formation of Pak-Iran Joint Business Council as a historic milestone and also apprised that another MoU has been signed between the counterpart chambers to constitute a high-powered dispute resolution committee to resolve trade disputes swiftly, fairly and unanimously.

Arshad Mahmood Bhatti, Executive Director of SBP for Banking Policy and Regulations Group (BPRG), expressed the willingness of central bank in facilitating trade between Iran & Pakistan in non-sanctioned products and with non-sanctioned entities.

He also called upon FPCCI and ICCIMA to work out a mechanism for trading in local currencies; settlements of trade proceeds and ceiling / limit for such arrangements.

Iran to Diversify China Exports...

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The businessman said increased exports of agrifood from Iran to China would help Iranian businesses to get more added value from their activity in the Chinese market as he insisted that products with low added value, including petroleum products and raw minerals, have accounted for more than 90% of Iranian exports to China in recent years.

He said that Iranian exporters will increase their dealings with Chinese businesses in the upcoming months with an easing of coronavirus restrictions in China.

Hariri said Iran will launch a permanent trade fair in China to promote products and services of Iranian companies in the East Asian country.

Switchboard:
(+98) (21) 44253448
Public Relations Tel:
(+98)(21) 44253450
Editorial Board: 44253449
Public Relations Fax:
(+98)(21) 44253395
Advertising Department:
Tel/Fax:(+98) (21) 44253335-9/44253234
Website:
http://www.irannewsdaily.com

E-Mail Address:
info@irannewsdaily.com
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Blvd., Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
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Alcaraz Eases Into Swiss Indoors Quarters

BASEL (Dispatches) - World number one Carlos Alcaraz cruised into his 11th quarter-final of the season with a comfortable victory over Botić van de Zandschulp at the Swiss Indoors. The 19-year-old saw off his 35th-ranked opponent 6-4, 6-2 to continue his bid for a sixth title of the year. Alcaraz will take on either fellow Spaniard Pablo Carreno Busta or home player Dominic Stricker in the last eight. The US Open champion edged a tight opening set and then fell an early break down in the second as Dutchman Van de Zandschulp gave himself renewed hope of a shock win.

Mickelson Says LIV Not Going Away

DORAL (Dispatches) - Six-time major winner Phil Mickelson says the breakaway Saudi-backed LIV Golf Series is a "force in the game that is not going away" after world number one Rory McIlroy expressed fear of an "irreparable" split. The LIV season concludes at the Trump National club at Doral, near Miami, this weekend with a team championship featuring an eye-watering US\$50 million purse. The animosity LIV's breakaway has caused has left McIlroy worried for the game, but at the media launch for the event, Mickelson said LIV Golf had already defied expectations and was here to stay.

Lakers Woes Continue, Giannis Sparks Bucks Over Nets

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - The Los Angeles Lakers' miserable start to the season continued on Wednesday as the winless NBA giants crashed to a fourth straight defeat against the Denver Nuggets.

Nikola Jokic scored 31 points and hauled down 13 rebounds in a 110-99 win for Denver that left the Lakers rooted to the foot of the Western Conference standings at 0-4.

LeBron James finished with 19 points and Anthony Davis 22 but it was another frustrating night for the Lakers, who reached half-time tied at 54-54 before being outscored 32-17 in a lopsided third quarter in Denver.

The Lakers' 0-4 start to the season matches their start to the 2015-2016 campaign, when the team would go on to post the worst season in franchise history, finishing with a 17-65 record. It is only the fourth time in franchise history that the Lakers have started a season with an 0-4 record.

Elsewhere Wednesday, Giannis Antetokounmpo produced his second straight 40-point performance as the Milwaukee Bucks maintained their unbeaten start to the NBA season with a 110-99 win over the Brooklyn Nets.

Antetokounmpo single-handedly hauled Milwaukee back into an absorbing clash at Fiserv Forum, scoring 17 points in a third-quarter rally which turned a 12-point half-time deficit into a two-point lead.

The Greek star added 17 more points in the fourth quarter to finish with 43 in total as the Bucks pulled clear to wrap up the win and improve to 3-0.

Former NBA Most Valuable Player Antetokounmpo scored 44 points in his last outing against Houston on Saturday and has averaged 36 points per game this season.

Brooklyn, meanwhile, saw head coach Steve Nash ejected late in the third quarter after an uncharacteristic outburst from the Canadian Hall of Famer.

Nash erupted after officials failed to call a foul on Antetokounmpo when the Bucks star flattened Brooklyn's Patty Mills.

An incandescent Nash needed to be hustled away from the confrontation by Nets players and coaching staff before heading back to the locker room.

"I was just standing up for our guys," Nash said. "I thought Patty took a forearm to the throat from Giannis right in front of the ref and I didn't think that was fair... What happened happened. I said my piece on the court and that's really all there is to it."

Schalke Appoint Reis as Head Coach

BERLIN (Dispatches) - The Bundesliga's last-placed side Schalke have appointed former Bochum manager Thomas Reis as head coach, the club confirmed.

"I am happy to work with a team again. The goal we have together is to stay in the league," said Reis.

Schalke have just six points from 11 league matches and have been without a manager since sacking previous mentor Frank Kramer after a 5-1 German Cup loss against Hoffenheim in mid-October.

Bochum fired Reis after the side lost its first six matches to start the 2022-23 season, even though he had led them to promotion from the second division in the 2020-21 season.

Lomachenko Returns to Ring After Fighting for His Country

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Ukrainian boxer Vasiliy Lomachenko was preparing for a fight to regain his world lightweight championship belts in February when he heard that Russia had invaded his home country.

Instead of staying safely abroad, the two-time Olympic gold medallist known as "Loma" raced back to join the war effort.

"That's a clear decision, a normal decision, for any man when it's time to defend his home country," Lomachenko told Reuters through an interpreter while preparing for his bout against American Jamaine Ortiz on Saturday in New York, his first since the start of the invasion.

The uncertain early days of the conflict were the most difficult, he said.

"During those first days, the Russian military advanced very rapidly, taking over one city after another and going towards Kiev. So you could not get a clear understanding of what might happen tomorrow in your area, in your region," he said. What he discovered while standing side by side with other volunteers was that Ukrainians are full of resolve and boundless bravery.

"We have a lot of courageous people, people who are willing to sacrifice for the sake of our nation," he said.



Nash's ejection came at a time when momentum had swung back towards Milwaukee, who recovered after being pummeled 35-18 in the second quarter to outscore Brooklyn 35-21 in the third.

Brooklyn led by four points when Nash was ejected but Antetokounmpo took over to lead the Bucks to a deserved win.

Kevin Durant led the Nets scoring with 33 points while Kyrie Irving added 27 and Royce O'Neale 12. Ben Simmons finished with four points.

Elsewhere on Wednesday, in-form Damian Lillard scored 22 points but hobbled off with a right calf strain as the Portland Trail Blazers suffered their first loss of the season with a 119-98 defeat to the Miami Heat in Oregon.

In other games, Gary Trent Jr. scored 27 points as the Toronto Raptors handed the Philadelphia 76ers their fourth defeat of the season.

Joel Embiid and Tyrese Maxey scored 31 points each for the Sixers, but the visitors were undone by a balanced offensive effort from home side Toronto who had six players in double figures.

Pascal Siakam had 20 points with 13 assists and five rebounds as the Raptors led virtually from start to finish to win 119-109.

The Sixers fell to 1-4 with the defeat.

In Detroit, Trae Young poured in 35 points for visiting Atlanta as the Hawks downed the Pistons 118-113.

In Cleveland, Orlando's No.1 draft pick Paolo Banchero excelled with 29 points but could not stop the Magic slipping to a 103-92 defeat to the Cavaliers.

VAR Damaging Game



LONDON (Dispatches) - Tottenham Hotspur manager Antonio Conte said VAR is doing "a lot of damage" to football after seeing a last-gasp Harry Kane goal controversially ruled out in the 1-1 Champions League Group D draw with Sporting.

Kane fired home from close range with almost the last kick of the game in the fifth minute of stoppage time after Emerson Royal headed the ball across the goal.

After a VAR check lasting several minutes Tottenham's wild celebrations over a winner that would have sent them through to the last 16 turned to bitter frustration and Dutch referee Danny Makkelie sent off Conte for his reaction.

Photos of the decision with VAR lines added showed that Kane's knee may have been millimetres offside when Emerson headed the ball across, although the ball also came to Kane off a Sporting defender.

"I think the ball was in front of Kane and the goal is a goal. Yeah. I don't understand the line they put. It's very difficult to comment on this decision," Conte told BT Sport.

"VAR is doing a lot of damage. I want to see if in another stadium of a big team if they are ready to disallow this type of goal. I'd like to know this."

"A lot of injustice. I don't like this type of situation. I see not positive things," he added.

Mexico Bids to Host 2036 Olympics



Ebrard described Mexico as "a sports power," noting that it would be the first country to stage the men's FIFA World Cup for a third time in 2024, jointly with

MEXICO CITY (Dispatches) - Mexico announced a bid to host the 2036 Olympics, more than half a century after first staging the Summer Games.

"We're starting on the path to once again be the organisers of the Olympic Games in 2036," Mexican Olympic Committee head Maria Jose Alcalá said at a news conference alongside Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard.

"Today it was already over, too late to do anything. The main reason that we got to this situation was because of our own mistakes in the previous games, we failed to be effective up front."

"We go out with a really bad feeling but we need to reset and reconnect to fight for the other trophies left."

The defeat was another blow to Barca after they lost the LaLiga lead thanks to a 3-1 defeat at Real Madrid in 'El Clasico' last week.

the United States and Canada.

"Our goal is to bring the Olympic Games to Mexico in 2036 and, if not, in 2040," he said, adding that the proposed locations of the main venues had not been decided.

"Cities shouldn't adapt to the Olympic Games. Large facilities should not be built that are not used later. It has to be the other way around — the Olympic Games should be adapted to cities," Ebrard said.

It would be the second time that the Latin American nation hosts the Summer Games.

The 1968 Olympics were held in Mexico City, at an altitude of 2,240 meters (7,350 feet) above sea level.

Egypt and Indonesia are among countries that have also expressed an interest in hosting the 2036 Olympics, along with the mayor of Istanbul.

Barcelona Needed A Beating in Order to Grow

BARCELONA (Dispatches) - Barcelona manager Xavi Hernandez said his team needed to leave their Champions League disappointment behind them as soon as possible and focus on improving their game in order to compete for the La Liga and Europa League titles.

The coach sought no excuses after Barcelona's 3-0 home loss to Bayern Munich in Group C on Wednesday, a match they played knowing that they had already been eliminated from the competition after Inter Milan's 4-0 win against Viktoria Plzen earlier in the day.

Barcelona have won only one of their five games in the group and will continue in the second-tier Europa League after ending up third in their group for a second year in a row.

"This is our reality and we have to face it. Maybe that's what we needed, to be given a beating in order to grow," Xavi Hernandez told a news conference at Camp Nou.

"Today it was already over, too late to do anything. The main reason that we got to this situation was because of our own mistakes in the previous games, we failed to be effective up front."

"We go out with a really bad feeling but we need to reset and reconnect to fight for the other trophies left."

The defeat was another blow to Barca after they lost the LaLiga lead thanks to a 3-1 defeat at Real Madrid in 'El Clasico' last week.



Too Early To Talk of a Verstappen Era

MEXICO CITY (Dispatches) - Lewis Hamilton believes it is too early to refer to a "Max Verstappen era" following the Dutchman's success in clinching a second consecutive driver's world title with Red Bull.

Mercedes' seven-time champion, who was controversially beaten by Verstappen on the final lap of last year's final race in Abu Dhabi, suggested it remained possible Ferrari can overhaul Red Bull and change the narrative.

And his view was supported by Charles Leclerc who said he is working towards preventing a Verstappen and Red Bull era of dominance.

"It is too early to say," said Hamilton, who is without a win this season for the first time since he entered Formula One in 2007.

"If we get into next year and they're dominating again, then yes, but the Ferraris have been quicker than them throughout qualifying."

"I think they've probably had better performance for the majority of the season. Now, all they need to do is pick up their race pace and they'll be right with them."

"I think we've got a much, much bigger step and steeper hill to climb, but hopefully not impossible."

Verstappen goes into this weekend's Mexico Grand Prix chasing a record for most wins in a single season after drawing level with seven-time champion Michael Schumacher and four-time champion Sebastian Vettel on 13.

