

Bank for International Settlements (BIS) Announced a Three-Percent Growth in Iran's Deposits With Foreign Banks and Financial Institutions During the H1 of 2022, As Compared to the First H1 of 2021

IRAN NEWS

Health Ministry Announced on Tuesday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran Increased to **144,580 With **Four** More Iranians Killed by the Virus Over the Past 24 Hours**

VOL. XXVIII, No. 7625 TEHRAN Price 50,000 Rials

www.irannewsdaily.com

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 2, 2022 - ABAN 11, 1401

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U.S. Lacks Qualification to Hold UNSC Meeting on Riots

TEHRAN (PressTV) - A senior Iranian envoy has questioned the United States' ostensible commitment to defending Iranian women, calling on UN member states to skip an informal meeting the US plans to hold at the Security Council on the recent nationwide riots in Iran.

"The U.S. has no true and genuine concern about the human rights situation in Iran or elsewhere," Iran's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations Amir Saeed Iravani said in a letter to all ambassadors and permanent representatives of the UN member and observer states.

The U.S. claims that it is defending Iranian women, those who have been seriously hurt by decades of inhumane sanctions imposed by Washington, he said.

He called the recent protests in Iran an internal issue, warning that it would be "counterproductive to the promotion of human rights" if the UN Security Council discussed it.

The United States and Albania plan to hold an informal Security Council meeting on Iran on Wednesday, which can be attended by all UN members. The meeting, according to the U.S. mission to the UN, aims to "highlight the ongoing repression of women and girls and members of religious and ethnic minority groups" in Iran.

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Armenian PM in Tehran to Cement Ties, Sign Documents



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan arrived in Tehran Tuesday to hold key talks with senior Iranian officials on ways to improve bilateral relations and sign documents for strengthening cooperation.

Heading a high-ranking politico-economic delegation, Pashinyan arrived in Tehran. He was officially welcomed by Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi at Sa'dabad Palace, where the national anthems of the two countries were performed. The two top officials then reviewed the guard of honor.

Pashinyan and Raisi then started their meeting to discuss Tehran-Yerevan ties. On the sidelines of the meeting, political and economic delegations of the two countries also discussed issues of common interests.

Trade relations between Iran and Armenia have witnessed a 43% growth in recent months, said President Raisi, adding that the goal is to increase trade relations up to \$3 billion.

Undoubtedly, the visit of the Prime Minister of Armenia to the Islamic Republic of Iran will be a turning point in the development of the two countries, the Iranian President said in this presser.

Saying that the neighborliness policy is one of the policies emphasized by the Iranian government, he added that holding such bilateral meetings for the development of economic, trade, and security relations between Iran and Armenia are on the agenda.

According to President Raisi, the trade relations between Iran and Armenia have witnessed a 43% growth in recent months. "Our goal is to increase trade relations up to three billion dollars, which can be achieved with the will of the two countries," he added.

Good relations between the two countries will definitely lead to better relations in the region and the world, Raisi underlined. Stating that the Caucasus region is a part of Iran's history, civilization, and culture, Raisi said that developments, security, and peace in the Caucasus region are very important for Iran.

Emphasizing that regional problems should be resolved by regional actors, he stressed, "Any kind of interference by foreigners in the region will create problems instead of solving the problem."

For his part, the Armenian Prime Minister appreciated president Raisi's approach toward the Armenian community of Iran. The Islamic Republic of Iran can be a clear and explicit symbol of peaceful cooperation and coexistence among the followers of different religions, Pashinyan said.

Appreciating Iran's principled views on peace and security in the Caucasus region, Pashinyan said, "I briefed Mr. Raisi about the tripartite meeting in Sochi and I agree with the views of the Iranian president regarding the establishment of stable peace and security in the region."

The Iranian and Armenian ministers signed a memorandum of understanding regarding the extension of the electricity and gas agreement, he also announced.

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Tehran Imposes Sanctions on 10 U.S. Individuals, 4 Entities

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Foreign Ministry announces sanctions on a host of American individuals and entities for committing human rights violations, supporting terrorism and inciting violence against the Iranian nation during the recent riots.

In a statement, the ministry said the sanctions were imposed in line with a law titled "Countering America's Human Rights Violation and Adventurous and Terrorist Actions" passed by the Iranian Parliament in 2017.

The Islamic Republic has imposed sanctions on 10 American individuals and 4 entities for committing human rights violations, interfering in Iran's internal affairs, instigating violence and riots in the country, encouraging acts of terror, countering Tehran's moves and attempts to fight terrorism, and mounting pressure on the Iranian nation amounting to economic terrorism.

This list includes:

- Michael Erik Kurilla, the commander of United States Central Command
- Gregory M. Guillot, the deputy commander of United States Central Command
- Scott Desormeaux, the commander of US airbase in Erbil, Iraq

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Tehran-Moscow Cooperation Render Bans Futile

TEHRAN (Shana) - Oil Minister Javad Owji said expansion of cooperation between Iran and Russia will make international sanctions ineffective.

Addressing reporters in Russia on Monday, Owji underlined a preliminary coordination meeting with the representatives of different working groups on the Iranian side of the Joint Economic Commission of Iran and Russia to review the documents compiled for the purpose of negotiating and signing the final document of Tehran-Moscow cooperation.

He said: "In a few months and in the form of various working groups, discussions concerning banking, energy, transportation, health, economy, etc. have been followed up with relevant ministries and agencies at the [Iranian] Oil Ministry. Simultaneously with these meetings, Russian officials and authorities traveled to Iran for further communication with Iranian officials, and the Iranian Embassy in Russia has provided great assistance to the Oil Ministry."

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Industry and Trade Minister Survives Impeachment

TEHRAN (MNA) - Seyyed Reza Fatemi Amin retained his post as minister of industry, mining and trade in an impeachment session of the parliament (Majlis) on Tuesday.

Out of 274 MPs present in the parliament, only 84 MPs voted against Fatami Amin. However, 182 MPs voted to keep him in his job. There were six abstention votes and two invalid ones.

The post of industry, mining and trade minister is highly important as Iran is fighting crippling economic sanctions imposed illegally by the United States.

To reduce the burden, the government plans to separate the trade ministry.

The trade ministry was merged with the industry and mines ministry in 2011.

The main opponents of the minister are mostly those who are unhappy with the quality of the locally-produced cars, something which the minister himself acknowledged it in defending his record in the impeachment session.

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Palestine Calls for Elimination of Israel's Nuclear Arsenal

BEIRUT (Dispatches) - Palestinian foreign minister Riyad al-Maliki says Israel must join the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and eliminate its stockpile of nuclear weapons in order for a nuclear-weapon-free zone to be established in the Middle East.

Maliki made the appeal following the adoption of a resolution, submitted by Egypt, at the First Committee of the UN General Assembly that called on Israel to get rid of its atomic armaments.

He welcomed the adoption of the resolution, saying, "Israel is obliged to set its programs to be monitored by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as it is the only party in the Middle East that possesses weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons."

It is essential that Israel has to abide by the relevant rules of international law, the Palestinian foreign minister said.

Earlier in the day, the First Committee decided via a 152-5 vote that Israel should destroy its nuclear weapons.

The resolution, supported by Jordan, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority and Bahrain, also urged the Tel Aviv regime to place its nuclear facilities under the supervision of the IAEA.

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Tehran, Helsinki Vow to Enhance Ties on Waste Management

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The Ambassador of Finland to Iran, Kari Kahiluoto, in the meeting with the head of the Basel and Stockholm conventions Regional Center located in Iran (BCRC-SCRC Iran), Mehdi Khadem Sameni, called for exchange of technical knowledge and the use of joint power and expertise in order to strengthen environmental cooperation.

According to Department of Environment of Iran, the meeting was held at the Regional Center of Basel and Stockholm Conventions in Tehran, and the two officials discussed the fields of joint environmental cooperation and development.

Expressing concern about the existing sanctions on Iran, the Ambassador of Finland to Iran called for the exchange of technical knowledge and the use of joint expertise to strengthen environmental cooperation.

Both sides in the meeting agreed to follow up the exchange of relevant information and joint plans through holding video conference meetings.

It was agreed that according to the environmental capabilities of the two countries, environmental cooperation between the two countries would be increased.

The Basel and Stockholm Conventions can be considered as the most important international treaty in the field of proper management of hazardous waste and chemicals, and this Convention aims to control transboundary transfers of hazardous wastes and other types of wastes and improve their environmental management, and it came into force in 1992 for the member countries, and so far, 189 countries have become members of this convention with its legal approval.

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President Congratulates 68th Anniversary of Algerian Revolution

TEHRAN (IRNA) - President Ebrahim Raisi congratulated his Algerian counterpart Abdelmadjid Tebboune on the 68th anniversary of the Algerian Revolution.

In his message to Tebboune, the Iranian president expressed hope that with regard to good ties and cooperation, the two sides will see a deepening and expansion of bilateral relations in all fields.

Algerian Revolution or the Algerian War of Independence was fought between France and the Algerian National Liberation Front from 1954 to 1962, which led to Algeria winning its independence from France.

Self-Sufficiency in Production of 500 Products

TEHRAN (IP) – The government spokesman announced a 25% increase in domestic production licenses, self-sufficiency in the production of 500 products and a 6.2% growth in the production of petrochemical products since the beginning of the current Iranian year (starting from March 21).

Speaking in a press conference, Ali Bahadori Jahromi said: “In the first year of the current administration, we had 6,000 megawatts of new electricity production capacity, which is the best record after Iran’s Islamic Revolution.”

Jahromi condoled the martyrdom of a number of compatriots in the Shah Cheragh shrine terrorist incident and the death of some other compatriots in the recent riots, noting: “The enthusiastic gathering of people in the funeral of those who lost their lives in the terrorist incidents and martyrs of defending the security and opposing the chaos shows that the people rejected the all-out efforts of the enemies against this nation despite all their intelligence, security and espionage capabilities and will not allow the enemies to abuse the legitimate demands of the people”.

Congratulating Students’ Day, the government spokesman added: “We hope that these days will be an opportunity to recount U.S.’s crime against Iran, which is trying to create obstacles in the path of people’s growth with cruel sanctions and spreading lies.”

Bahadori Jahormi further announced the appointment of Mohsen Mansouri as the vice president for executive affairs and said: “This way, another young man was added to the administration. Mr. Mansouri has been the Governor-General of Tehran and has had a successful management experience; he was elected as the Executive Vice President by the decree of the President.”

He expressed his hope that the Executive Vice President will move faster in the new term on the good path created by Mr. Solat Mortazavi.

The administration spokesman also announced the growth of production in



various sectors and stated: “The gross national product in the first quarter of this year grew by 3.1% compared to the same period last year, which was 5.1% in the industry sector.”

The official stated: “In the field of automobile manufacturing, we saw the growth of complete car production, and unlike the previous years when there were incomplete cars in the warehouses of car manufacturers, today the complete car production has reached 100%”.

Bahadori Jahromi noted: “In the seven months of this year, we saw an increase in the production of vans by 454%, pickup trucks by 47%, paper industry by 6.8%, petrochemical products by 6.2%, and television by 21%.”

He added: “In the field of agricultural products, the production of rice increased by 25%, barley by 30%, and wheat by 37%, and the guaranteed purchase of wheat increased by 60% compared to last year”.

Bahadori Jahormi, presenting the statistics of production indicators, said: “In the first week of this year, we saw a 25% increase in the issuance of domestic production permits and self-sufficiency in the production of 500 products, and in the first five months of this year, there was a 9.9% increase in steel production and a 6.2% increase in petrochemical products.

He pointed out: “In the first year of the 13th administration, the power generation capacity increased by 6,000 megawatts, which is the best record since the victory of the Islamic Revolution.”

Iraq Urged to Proceed Trial of Gen Soleimani’s Assassinator

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Judiciary Chief in a letter to the head of the Iraqi Supreme Judicial Council, Judge Faiq Zidan, called for accelerating the process of trial of the agents of the January 2020 assassination of General Qassem Soleimani.

Hojjatolislam Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejei expressed satisfaction over the three rounds of talks held at the joint judicial research committee on the issue.

Results after the talks indicate that Tehran and Baghdad are determined to fight terrorism, bring about justice, preserve peace and security, and extend friendly cooperation, particularly in judicial areas, Ejei said.

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Qods Force commander Lt General Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Mohandes, the acting commander of the Iraqi Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) – known as the Hashd al-Shaabi – were assassinated in Baghdad by the US attack on January 3, 2020.

Such a terrorist act violated the national sovereignty of Iran and Iraq and got out of international principles, the Judicial chief underlined.

Although the terrorist act was carried out by former US president Donald Trump and certain officials of some countries, their posts will not prevent their punishment, he added. To proceed with the process of trial, the Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to continue cooperation with the Iraqi judicial council.

New Russian Envoy Submits Credentials to FM

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Newly-appointed Russian ambassador to Iran, Alexey Dedov, submitted his credentials to Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian.

The top Iranian diplomat and the Russian envoy discussed ties between the two countries.

Amirabdollahian expressed hope that the two sides further expand their relations, given agreements previously reached to boost cooperation in different fields.



The Russian ambassador said that his country is determined to promote ties with Iran.

Dedov was appointed as the Russian ambassador to Iran on September 8 under an executive order by President Vladimir Putin.

He has replaced Levan Dzagharyan who takes charge of the Russian embassy in Sri Lanka, according to Interfax news agency.

Canada Imposes New Sanctions on Iran

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Canada has imposed additional sanctions on Iran, targeting police and judicial officials over what Ottawa claimed as gross and systematic human rights violations at home and abroad and actions to destabilize peace and security.

In a statement, Canada’s Foreign Ministry said the latest sanctions target four individuals and two entities, including senior officials and Iran’s Law Enforcement Forces, which Canada accused of participating in the crackdown and arrest of protesters that started after the death of an Iranian woman in a police station some seven weeks ago.

The sanctions list includes Hossein Rahimi, Police Commander of Tehran, Ahmad Fazelian, Deputy Attorney General, Asadollah Jafari, Head of the Judicial

Administration in North Khorasan Province and Morteza Mousavi, Deputy Head of the Judicial Administration in Mazandaran Province.

Al-Mustafa International University was also named, accused of recruiting students into the Quds Force of Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC).

According to the statement, the sanctions prohibit dealings with the above-mentioned individuals and entities, effectively freezing any assets they may hold in Canada.

Canada has in recent weeks been carrying out a series of sanctions against a wide range of Iranian institutions and persons and permanently denied entry to more than 10,000 Iranian officials.

The latest announcement brings to 93 individuals and 179 entities the total number sanctioned in Iran, effectively freezing their assets in Canada and making them inadmissible to this country.

Tehran Hosting Bitumen, Asphalt Conference, Exhibition

TEHRAN (MNA) - The 14th edition of Iran’s Bitumen, Asphalt, Insulation, and Related Machinery Conference and Exhibition opened at the Road, Housing, and Urban Development Research Center on Tuesday, IRIB reported.

As reported, 35 domestic companies are participating in this year’s exhibition to showcase their latest products and achievements.

According to the organizers, the Iranian exhibitions in this event are aiming to showcase the country’s capacities and capabilities in the bitumen and asphalt sectors.

The event is also aimed to provide a platform for domestic companies to exchange knowledge and experience.

The exhibition will wrap up on Thursday.

Enemies Try to Abuse Iran Recent Events To Create Insecurity



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian announced some enemies have tried in recent weeks to abuse events in Iran in order to create instability and insecurity in the country.

The enemies made effort to prepare the ground for the Daesh (ISIS) terrorist attack, Amirabdollahian said in a telephone conversation held on Monday afternoon with his Turkish counterpart Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu.

Amirabdollahian expressed sympathy with the nation and government on Turkey over the recent mine blast in that country which led to the death of some Turkish people and injury of some others.

The Iranian foreign minister also congratulated Turkey on Republic Day on October 29.

For his part, the Turkish foreign minister said his country has stood and will stand by Iran in the fight against terrorism.

He made the remarks after condemning the October 26 terrorist attack on a holy shrine in the southern Iranian city of Shiraz in which 13 pilgrims were killed and 30 others wounded.

Ankara and Tehran are two brother countries that have supported each other in good and bad days, Çavuşoğlu noted.

He further welcomed the process of talks between Iran and Azerbaijan.

In the end, the two foreign ministers exchanged views about important international, regional, and bilateral issues.

FM Calls for Implementing Tehran-Caracas Agreements

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian called for implementing cooperation agreements reached by presidents of Iran and Venezuela earlier this year.

Amirabdollahian was speaking on Monday at a meeting with new Venezuelan ambassador to Iran, Jose Rafael Silva Aponteas.

The top Iranian diplomat was referring to the agreements reached during a visit by Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro to Tehran.

Amirabdollahian called Maduro’s visit an important stage in ties between the two countries, stressing the importance of implementing the agreements that President Maduro and President Ebrahim Raisi reached to boost mutual cooperation.

The new Venezuelan ambassador, who submitted his credentials to Amirabdollahian, said that he will do his best during his mission to help promote Tehran-Caracas relations.

Jose Rafael Silva Aponteas was picked the new ambassador to Tehran by President Maduro in July.

During Maduro’s visit to Tehran, the two sides signed a document on 20-year cooperation in different fields, including politics, economy and culture, as well as oil and petrochemical industries.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	11:47
■ Evening (Maghreb)	17:27
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:03
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:28

1. Ta-Ha.
2. We have not sent down the Qur'an to thee to be (an occasion) for thy distress,
3. But only as an admonition to those who fear ((Allah)), -

Surah 20. Ta-ha (1-3)

Tehran, Astana Eye \$3b Trade Volume

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Visiting Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Trade and Integration of Kazakhstan Serik Zhumangarin on Tuesday met with Iran's Agriculture Minister Seyed Javad Sadatinejad and during the meeting both sides called for enhancing bilateral trade and increasing it to \$3b.

On the sidelines of the meeting, Sadatinejad said that Iran and Kazakhstan had several meetings during their joint economic commission and today's meeting was the third in the recent months and it bespeaks of strong determination of both countries in the field of trade.

He added that presidents of both countries in recent months have reiterated that both countries have set the target of boosting bilateral trade to \$3b, adding that the main trade exchanges between the two countries is agro products as Kazakhstan supplies grains to Iran and in return, Iran exports vegetables, fruits, dried fruits, dates and pistachios.

Sadatinejad noted that soon a joint committee on agriculture will be launched between the two countries to take the trade to the operational stage and to launch calendar and volume in the field of trade exchange.

He went on to say that due to the interest of Kazakhstan to the southern markets and need of north Iran to grains, Iran can provided grains in north in cooperation with Kazakhstan and in south, Iran can create transit route and even swap for trade of Kazakhstan with southern markets.

Sadatinejad said that Iran is interested in extraterrestrial cultivation agriculture in Kazakhstan and it was decided a joint meeting to be held in this field.

Meanwhile Zhumangarin told the reporters that currently the relation between the



two countries has reached its strategic level.

He added that these meetings should lead to the rise in the trade exchanges and in today's meeting, both sides exchanged views for boosting bilateral trade to \$3b and at least one-thirds of this amount should be in the field of agriculture.

Zhumangarin noted that Kazakhstan is ready to send wheat and barley to Iran and it is also ready to import dates, pistachio, vegetables, fruits and citrus from Iran.

He reiterated that logistic is very crucial in trade, adding that using all logistical facilities from railway, plane, ship and road is in consideration and he wants to go to Bandar Abbas to study the condition for the launch of a terminal or construct infrastructures required for Kazakhstan's trade.

He stated that today in the field of oil and agro products swap both sides exchanged views and the issue of electricity export among Iran, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan was raised and both sides discussed the launch of a joint committee on agriculture and it was decided both countries to launch a joint import and export for their agro products.

Zhumangarin also invited Iranian investors for investment in the city of Khorgos bordering China in order to have trade exchange with China. On the revoke of visas, he said that he had talks with road and urban development and reached agreements for signing a MoU for revoking visas.

Russian Investors To Spend \$4.5b in 7 Iran Oilfields

TEHRAN (Shana) – Oil Minister said Russian investors and companies have finalized a contract for developing 7 oil and gas fields with Iran worth \$4.5 billion, and some projects have achieved 7 to 35% physical progress so far.

Javad Owji, on Monday afternoon in a coordination meeting with the representatives of different working groups of the Iranian side of the Joint Economic Commission of Iran and Russia to review the documents compiled for the purpose of negotiating and signing the final document of Tehran-Moscow cooperation, stated that so far in the 16th Joint Commission for Economic Cooperation between Iran and Russia all the Iranian organizations have been instrumental.

He said: "Soon, with the summaries made, the general documents of the agreements between the two countries will be signed."

Emphasizing that at no time in history have relations between Iran and Russia been so close, he said: "We should all take advantage of this golden opportunity in the fields of energy, transportation, economy, industry, healthcare, banking, etc. Meanwhile, the cooperation between the two countries in the field of banking seems to be the most important."

Referring to possible sanctions on Russia in January by the United States and the European Union, the Iranian petroleum minister said: "Iran has been facing such sanctions for years, so it is a good opportunity to neutralize the sanctions with the help of two countries."

Owji, while thanking the Iranian Embassy in Russia for the cooperation in holding the joint commission of economic partners between Iran and Russia, said: "Undoubtedly, some of the issues raised in the economic negotiations between Iran and Russia need the support of the Iranian parliament to be implemented, and we hope that this will also be sorted out."

He said: "So far, Russian investors and companies have finalized a contract for developing seven oil and gas fields with Iran worth 4.5 billion dollars, and some projects have made 7-35% physical progress."

The Iranian oil minister further said that a downhole pump manufacturing plant would be built jointly by Russian companies and the Setad Farman Emam in the southwestern city of Ahvaz which is considered one of the outstanding projects developed by the two countries.

"As planned, this plant will manufacture 150 downhole pumps every year. With their special technology, these pumps can increase the production of oil wells by two to three times," he went on to add.



Gov't Divests Shares in Largest Petrochemical Company

TEHRAN (PressTV) - The government has sold 12% of its shares in the country's largest petrochemical company the PGPIC for nearly \$3.3 billion.

Reports published in the local media on Monday suggested that the government had divested 587,400,000 of its shares in the Persian Gulf Petrochemical Industries (PGPIC) for a final price of 18,510 rials (\$0.056) per share.

The Ahdaf Investment Company, a subsidiary of Iran's Oil Pension Fund, bought the entire block of shares after a tight race with Tehran Oil Refinery.

On Saturday, the PGPIC had listed the block of shares for an initial price of 820 trillion rials.

"Moments ago, the stocks of this company was sold for a total price of 1,087 trillion rials. It was the largest privatization scheme in the country's history," Hossein Ghorbanzade, who leads Iran's Privatization Organization, was quoted as saying by the official ISNA news agency.

The PGPIC is one of the largest petrochemical companies in the world and the second largest in the Middle East after Saudi Arabia's SABIC

The divestment of government shares in the company comes amid efforts to boost competitiveness in the local manufacturing market.

The divestment can also shore up government finances at a time of increased economic pressure on the country because of American sanctions.

The Iranian government had announced in December last year that it plans to sell all of its stake in the PGPIC, which amounts to 18% of the total shares in the company, in three separate listings in the local stock market.

However, a statement in January this year indicated that officials were not happy with a price of \$70 trillion rials offered by a single bidder for the entire shares.

Iran Steel Output Up 27% in Month

TEHRAN (MNA) – The World Steel Association (WSA) in its latest report announced that Iran's steel production has registered a 27 percent growth in the Iranian month of Shahrivar (Aug. 21-Sept. 22).

European Union's steel production volume decreased by 17 percent due to the energy crisis overshadowing the member states of the Union.

The Islamic Republic of Iran produced 2.7 million tons of steel on Sept. 22, showing a 26.7 percent hike as compared to the last year's corresponding period.

As all the first 10 steel-producing countries in the world faced a production slump in the reported period, the three countries including Iran, India and China registered a production boom, so Iran accounted for the maximum steel production output in this period.

Other statistics indicated that Iran produced 22.2 million tons of steel in the nine months of the current year in 2022 (from Jan. to Sep.), showing a 9.8 percent increase as compared to the same period of last year.

According to the World Steel Association, Iran produced 28.5 million tons of steel in 2021, showing a 1.8 percent decrease as compared to a year earlier.

PGSOC, IRIB of Persian Gulf Office Sign MoU on Cooperation

TEHRAN – The CEO of Persian Gulf Star Oil Company Mr. Alireza Jafarpour in a ceremony signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on cooperation with IRIB of Persian Gulf Office.

According to reports, this MoU was signed in line with industrial and media cooperation which is important for promoting the performance of the company.

On the sidelines of the ceremony, Jafarpour said that the jihad for explanation which has been emphasized by the Supreme Leader is very important and the actions and performance of the Islamic establishment should be told and promoted among all walks of the life especially to the youths.

He added that Persian Gulf Star Refinery as the biggest refinery of the country has very crucial task in providing security for fuel supply in the country and

this group is very vital and important for the country.

He said that IRIB (national broadcasting) is an influential media for explaining and promoting achievements of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the refinery is on the front line of fight with the sanctions of the world arrogance playing a key role and promoting its achievements is very important.

Then the head of IRIB of Persian Gulf Office Mr. Mehran Jalaei, for his part, said that due to the media and economic war in this period of time against Iran, one of the main activities of IRIB is to help the progress of the country.

He added that Hormozgan Province has different potentials for showing the progresses in the country and Persian Gulf Star Refinery is the turning points of these progresses and promoting its achievements is very crucial.



Start of 13,000b-Investment With Creating 1200 Jobs at Garmsar SEZ

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Deputy Industry, Mine and Trade Minister and Head of Board of Directors of Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO) announced the beginning of operation for construction of industrial units with estimated credit of 13,000b rials from private sector investors in the Garmsar Special Economic Zone.



According to IDRO News, Ali Nabavi said that since last August, completion of infrastructures setting up production and economic units has started and in this period, activists in the private sector have signed required contracts with Garmsar Special Economic Zone for investment equal to 13,000b rials and started construction of industrial units.

According to Mr. Nabavi, in the first year of the 13th government in office, we would see creation of 1200 direct jobs by the private sector in this zone.

He added that the grounds for activities of these units are chemicals, metal industries, sanitary, electricity industries, electronics and textile.

Nabavi also pointed to issuance of 18 establishment licenses for industrial units placed on the Garmsar Special Economic Zone and noted that 6 exploitation licenses have also been issued for the industrial units and they have started their activities.

He also said that the process for construction of 5 industrial units and required pursuit for entering to the stage of providing machineries for beginning exploitation has ended and simultaneously the construction work of 15 industrial units in the zone has started.

He then said that the descriptive project of sites 3 and 4 on an area around 1500 hectares and improving the previous projects of the region has been of the other actions taken in the zone.

Garmsar Special Economic Zone under supervision of IDRO and on an area around 2,000 hectares is located on 90th kilometers and on neighborhood of Tehran-Garmsar Expressway.

Russians Keen to Invest in Iran's Petrochemical, Oil and Gas Poles

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Caretaker of Supreme Council of Free Trade-Industrial and Special Economic Zones says in the meeting between trade delegations of Iran and Russia, the legal and potential capacities and incentives of Iran's free trade zones were explained well for the Russians and Russians welcomed investments in the petrochemical, oil and gas poles of Iran.



Touching upon the latest outcomes of meeting between Iranian and Russian trade delegations in Russia, Nasrollah Ebrahimi said that as they had already asked Russian government, in these meetings big Russian companies in different fields were present and fortunately these Russian companies held serious economic talks with their Iranian counterparts in the field of joint investment in the projects between the two states.

He added that during the meetings, participants emphasized reinforcing economic and diplomatic relations and supporting investors of both countries and Iran could explain for Russians the legal and potential capacities and incentives of Iran's free trade zones and in return Russians expressed enthusiasm for investment in the petrochemical, oil, gas and airport hubs of the zones.

Ebrahimi noted that creating a joint economic union for free zones of both countries was one of the main goals of the meeting of the trade delegations of both countries, adding that in the first phase it has been planned to create a link between free zones of Lotus of Astrakhan, Anzali and Chabahar and in the future both sides want to expand this link to Mundra Free Zone of Mumbai in India.

He added that the private and state banks of Russia were invited to be active in the joint free zones of both countries.

Shanghai Disney Resort Shuts Over Covid

SHANGHAI (Dispatches) - Shanghai's Disney Resort abruptly suspended operations on Monday to comply with Covid-19 prevention measures, with all visitors at the time of the announcement directed to stay in the park until they return a negative test for the virus.

The resort said at 11:39am local time (03:39 GMT) it would immediately shut the main theme park and surrounding areas including its shopping street until further notice to comply with virus curbs.

The Shanghai government said on its official WeChat account the park was barring people from entering or exiting and that all visitors inside the site would need to await the results of their tests before they could leave.



Police Arrest Nine Over Indian Bridge Collapse

MORBI (Dispatches) - Indian police arrested nine people, including ticketing clerks and contractors, as they investigate the collapse of a foot bridge in which at least 134 people, including many children, were killed.

CCTV footage from just before the collapse showed a group of young men taking photos while others tried to rock the suspension bridge in Morbi from side to side, before they tumbled into the river below as the cables gave way.

The colonial-era bridge over the Machchhu River was packed with sightseers enjoying holiday festivities when it ruptured on Sunday evening, sending people plunging about 10 metres (33 feet) into the water.



Missiles Rain on Ukraine as Grain Ships Sail



KYIV (Dispatches) - Ships brought grain from Ukrainian ports, suggesting Moscow had stopped short of reimposing a blockade that might have caused world hunger, despite suspending its participation in a U.N. program to safely export grain from the war zone.

Air raid sirens blared across Ukraine and explosions rang out in Kyiv, sending black smoke into the sky as Russia rained missiles down in renewed air attacks. Ukrainian officials said energy infrastructure was hit including at hydro-electric dams, knocking out power, heat and water supplies.

Ukraine's military said it had shot down 44 of 50 Russian missiles. But strikes left 80 percent of Kyiv without running water, authorities said, adding they hoped to restore it quickly. Two people were reported injured in the Kyiv region.

Still, the resumption of food exports from Ukrainian ports suggested that at least one dire scenario had been averted for now. International officials had feared that Moscow would reimpose a blockade on Ukrainian grain, after Russia announced on Saturday that it was suspending its role in the U.N.-backed program that escorts cargo ships through the Black Sea.

"Civilian cargo ships can never be a military target or held hostage. The food must flow," tweeted Amir Abdullah, the U.N. official who coordinates the program.

Shortly afterwards, Ukraine confirmed that 12 ships had set sail. The 354,500 tons of grain they carried was the most in a day since the program began, suggesting a backlog was being cleared after exports were interrupted on Sunday.

But shipments could be interrupted again, not least if insurers stop underwriting them. Chris McGill, head of cargo at Lloyd's of London insurer Ascot, which has underwritten many of the shipments so far, told Reuters his company was pausing writing new cover for shipments from Monday "until we better understand the situation".

Insurance previously issued "still stands," he said. Most policies must be renewed on a seven-day basis.

Russia's missile strikes during the Monday morning rush hour repeated a tactic it has pursued this month of targeting Ukrainian civilian infrastructure, especially power stations.

"Instead of fighting on the battlefield, Russia fights civilians," Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said. "Don't justify these attacks by calling them a 'response'." Russia does this because it still has the missiles and the will to kill Ukrainians."

The U.S. ambassador to Kyiv, Bridget Brink, tweeted: "Like millions of Ukrainians, our USEmbassyKyiv team is once again taking shelter as Russia continues its callous and barbaric missile strikes on the people of Ukraine in an effort to leave the country cold and dark as we approach winter."

For the past three weeks, Russia has been conducting a campaign of attacks on Ukrainian civil infrastructure using expensive long range missiles and cheap Iranian-made "suicide drones" that fly at a target and detonate.

Ukraine's Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal said 18 targets, mostly energy infrastructure, were hit in missile and drone strikes on 10 Ukrainian regions on Monday.

In Ukraine's second largest city Kharkiv, the strikes had caused a blackout that left trolleybus driver Ihor Polovikov stranded in his electric cable-powered vehicle on the roadside.

He was fed up, he said, adding: "But nobody will give up just like that. We got used to it, it's the ninth month. Everyone has understood that this is necessary."

Moscow said it was forced to pull out of the Black Sea grain shipping deal after blaming Kyiv for blasts that damaged Russian navy ships in the Crimean port of Sevastopol on Saturday.

Bolsonaro Yet to Concede After Lula's Election Victory

BRASILIA (Dispatches) - Brazil's outgoing President Jair Bolsonaro had yet to concede defeat in the presidential election, raising fears the far-right nationalist might contest the victory of his leftist rival, former president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

Tens of thousands of jubilant supporters took to the streets of Sao Paulo on Sunday night to celebrate a stunning comeback for Lula, a 77-year-old former metalworker who served two terms as president from 2003 to 2010. His electoral win follows a spell in prison for corruption convictions that were later annulled.

Bolsonaro left his residence on Monday morning and headed to the presidential palace, but had still not made any public comments. He is the first Brazilian incumbent to lose a presidential election. Lula has vowed to overturn his legacy, including pro-gun policies and weak protection of the Amazon rainforest.

Pitching the contest as a battle for democracy after his rival made baseless claims the electoral system was open to fraud, Lula promised to unite his deeply divided country and celebrated what he called his "resurrection."



Thousands Join Anti-Rwanda Protests in DR Congo's Goma

GOMA (Dispatches) - Thousands have protested in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) city of Goma, denouncing Rwanda's alleged support of M23 rebels, as Kinshasa recalled its interim acting ambassador from Kigali in a further souring of relations.

The protests on Monday come as M23 have tightened their grip on the surrounding countryside.

"We denounce the hypocrisy of the international community in the face of Rwanda's aggression," Mambo Kawayi, a civil society representative attending the demonstration, told AFP news agency.

A mostly Congolese Tutsi group, the M23 resumed fighting in late 2021 after lying dormant for years, accusing the Congolese government of failing to honour an agreement to integrate its fighters into the army.

The group's resurgence has destabilised regional relations in central Africa, with the DRC accusing its smaller neighbour Rwanda of backing the rebel group.

The front line between the Congolese military and the M23 had been calm for several weeks, but fresh clashes from October 20 saw the rebel group make advances across North Kivu province.

Rebels in recent days seized the towns of Kiwanja and Rutshuru, along a strategic highway leading to the provincial capital Goma, which lies on the Rwandan border.

On Sunday, the DRC's government ordered the Rwandan ambassador, Vincent Karega, to leave the country within 48 hours. Rwanda stated that it had noted the decision "with regret".

The DRC's foreign ministry has recalled the interim charge d'affaires from Kigali and ordered its newly-appointed ambassador to Rwanda not to register his credentials, it said in a statement on Monday.

On Sunday, Rwanda accused the DRC of escalating tensions between the two countries and said its forces along the border "remain on alert".

South Korea Begins Probe Into Deadly Halloween Crush

SEOUL (Dispatches) - South Korean investigators combed footage from more than 50 state and private closed-circuit TV cameras as well as from social media looking for answers to how a surge in Halloween party-goers trapped in narrow alleys killed so many.

As the country began a week of mourning, the death toll climbed to 154. Another 149 people were injured, 33 of them in serious condition. At least 26 citizens from 14 countries were among the dead.

South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol called for a thorough investigation, and authorities said they were focused on reconstructing the lead-up to the surge and looking at whether anyone may have been responsible for triggering the crush.

"We are analysing CCTVs to find out the exact cause of the accident," Police chief investigator Nam Gu-jun told reporters.

"We will continue questioning more witnesses, including nearby shop employees," he said.

Tens of thousands of revellers - many in their teens and twenties and dressed in costume - had crowded into narrow streets and alleyways of the popular Itaewon district on Saturday for the first virtually unrestricted Halloween festivities in three years.

Chaos erupted when people poured into one particularly narrow and sloping alley, even after it was already packed, witnesses said.

Prime Minister Han Duck-soo, who steers a task force team handling the accident, said the identification of the victims was nearly complete and funeral preparations could move ahead, promising support for the bereaved families.

On Monday, people laid white chrysanthemums, drinks and candles at a small makeshift altar off an exit of the Itaewon subway station.

Jung Si-hoon, a retiree, placed an old wooden cross at the altar, saying nothing could be done to bring back all the young people who had died.

"Those poor people, all at similar ages to my grandchildren... What more should we say? We should pray for them and wish they rest in peace," he said.

On Monday afternoon, dozens of crime scene investigators and forensics officers descended onto the trash-strewn alleys which were eerily quiet with many shops and cafes closed.

One agent with the National Forensic Service team, in white overalls and a black ribbon of mourning pinned to his chest, operated a Leica 3D scanner, he said, "to capture the scene."

Yoon paid his respects to victims at a memorial altar near the Seoul city hall on Monday, a day after visiting the crush scene and designating Itaewon a disaster zone.



Erdogan Says Constitutional Change Will Protect Families

ISTANBUL (Dispatches) - President Tayyip Erdogan said that a constitutional amendment that his party will present to Turkey's parliament will protect families from what he called "perverse trends," appearing to take aim at global same-sex marriage laws.

Erdogan's AK Party (AKP) is preparing to submit constitutional amendments in coming days which will also ensure civil rights for women wearing headscarves.

Speaking to Islamic religious leaders, Erdogan criticized what he said was a global trend of the family unit losing its meaning.

"While the unity between woman and man based on legitimacy is scorned; perversion, immorality and crooked relationships are being encouraged intentionally," he said.

Erdogan and AKP lawmakers have toughened their rhetoric against the LGBT community in recent years, frequently labeling members "deviants" or "perverts".

"I view the proposal for a constitutional amendment that we will submit to parliament in coming days as an important step in this regard," Erdogan said.

He said he aims to "protect the family establishment from increasing threats by perverse trends".

Kerem Dikmen, a lawyer for the LGBT rights group Kaos GL, said strengthening the constitutional rights of one part of society should not lead to loss of rights for another.

Referring to homosexual relations in a speech about families "deepens the concerns by LGBTI+ individuals, who are equal citizens of the state ...in a period when hate speech against LGBTI+ individuals and hate crimes have increased," Dikmen said.

Homosexuality is not a crime in Turkey, but hostility to it is widespread. The country was once seen as a safe haven for the LGBT community in the Middle East and Istanbul was the scene of large Pride marches, with tens of thousands attending. But the marches have been effectively banned since 2015.

The AKP and their nationalist MHP allies do not have the three-fifths majority in parliament to pass constitutional amendments.

Erdogan appeared to refer to a recent vote in a state in Mexico to approve same-sex marriage, saying they would stand against such moves in Turkey.

"We are going to stand tall against these efforts (in our country) until the end and not let this Muslim society be taken over by some people," he said.



"Perfect Storm" Swirls as Canadians Face Hot Inflation, Rising Rates

OTTAWA (Dispatches) - At a warehouse on an industrial stretch in Ottawa, giant metal crates of donated groceries are piled high as volunteers sort canned goods, pasta and other foods to be distributed to pantries around the Canadian city.

Demand has surged 33% at the Ottawa Food Bank from pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels, with visits up as spiraling grocery, gas and rent prices, along with fast-rising borrowing costs, leave more Canadians struggling to make ends meet.

"We are absolutely seeing more people," said Rachael Wilson, chief executive of the Ottawa Food Bank, adding the organization is now spending C\$6 million (\$4.4 million) a year on food, up from C\$2 million pre-pandemic.

"That's because the cost of food has risen ... but also because of the number of people that are turning to a food bank right now," said Wilson. "It is unfortunately a perfect storm."

Canada's headline inflation rate has eased to 6.9% from a peak of 8.1%, but food costs are still accelerating and underlying price pressures remain sticky.

At the same time, the Bank of Canada (BoC) has hiked interest rates by 350-basis points in just seven months, one of its sharpest tightening campaigns ever, to try to force inflation back to its 2% target.

The result is Canadian consumers and small businesses are being squeezed from both sides, prompting politicians, unions and even some economists to implore the central bank to slow its pace of tightening. The bank this week signaled its tightening campaign was nearing its peak, but made clear it was not done yet, as it hiked rates by 50-bps to a fresh 14-year high.

In a television interview after the decision, BoC Governor Tiff Macklem said restoring price stability was not easy, but rampant inflation would be worse.

"I understand a lot of Canadians are in debt and interest rate increases will put more stress on them. It is something that we are watching closely," he told Radio-Canada.

Canada, with its pricey homes and top of the G7 household debt levels, is particularly sensitive to higher interest rates, with fears mounting the BoC's aggressive hikes will trigger a recession.

Wes Farnell, who runs Eight Ounce Coffee in Calgary with his wife Jen, said their specialty coffee equipment business was growing by 25% to 35% a year before the pandemic, and then boomed as lockdowns led to surging demand for high-end lifestyle appliances.

Now he is already seeing signs that hot inflation and recession worries have consumers focused on essentials rather than luxury appliances, which is adding up to fewer large orders even as the holiday shopping season approaches.

"Our wholesalers are definitely more tentative about spending money," said Farnell. "Everyone's nervous ... Will people be spending money? Will there be any money to spend? Will inflation go up even further?"

The pain is also being felt on the farm, where record high debt levels and surging operating costs are weighing on many farmers, despite strong grain prices.

For Brodie Haugan, who farms with his parents near Orion, Alberta, inflation has hit especially hard, coupled with a relentless drought.

With the price of feed rising faster than cattle prices, Haugan reduced his 400-cow herd by 30% in spring. He also delayed buying a much-needed new truck, as the cost shot up to C\$100,000 from C\$75,000 pre-pandemic.

"Right across the board, everything has increased in price, making it very difficult to really do anything at all," Haugan said.



Turkish Drone Maker Baykar To Counter Kamikaze Threat In Ukraine

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkish combat drone maker Baykar hopes "soon" to be able to counter "kamikaze" drones in Ukraine, such as the Russian-operated drones recently threatening critical infrastructure, the company's CEO told Deutsche Presse-Agentur (dpa).

"Soon our Bayraktar TB2 and Akıncı will have air-to-air missiles; not only to engage drones but other enemy aircraft... we are conducting our tests," Haluk Bayraktar said during a defense fair in Istanbul.

During the fair, SAHA Expo, a contract was signed between Turkish rocket and missile-making giant Roketsan and Baykar for the integration of the Sungur air defense missile to combat drones.

Sungur is "a proven ammunition, especially against moving targets such as helicopters and drones. Using it from our unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) as an air-to-air missile will be a game changer," Murat İkinci, Roketsan general manager said at the fair.

Integration of such missiles to Akıncı and Bayraktar TB2 combat drones can lead to the creation of a low-cost air patrol concept in eliminating threats such as attack helicopters and enemy drones, including kamikaze drones, instead of using high-cost air-to-air missiles.

Ukraine currently tries to intercept kamikaze UAVs used by Russia with fighter jets in its inventory but the use of UAVs will be a cost-effective solution for them.

The Ukrainian army have largely been successfully using Baykar's TB2 unmanned combat aerial vehicles (UCAV) against the Russian invasion since February. Meanwhile, the recent introduction of Iranian "Shahed-136" drones by Moscow has complicated the situation for Kyiv.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has warned against a "large-scale disaster" should the wave of kamikaze attacks on energy facilities continue through winter. "In any case, you need to be ready with your countermeasures... We fully support Ukraine to defend their sovereignty," Bayraktar said.

The kamikazes are slow, noisy and deployed at low altitudes, making them "easy targets," Bayraktar said. Bayraktar, who holds a Ukrainian state medal, said his company looks to cement cooperation with Kyiv, including launching a production facility in Ukraine within a year.

The plant will also manufacture Baykar's soon-to-be-launched jet-powered drone "Kızılelma" ("Red Apple"), Bayraktar told dpa.

Russian criticism against Baykar had spiked in particular after reports of Bayraktar TB2's alleged role in helping Ukraine sink the flagship missile cruiser Moskva in April.

Bayraktar himself was reportedly targeted by Russian intelligence, using deepfake technology. "Unfortunately such things happen... but we are a huge team, we focus on our targets, not other noises," Bayraktar said.

"We hear such reports of TB2's role," Bayraktar said of the Moskva incident.

He acknowledged that Ukraine recently became the world's first country to engage the TB2 in a naval mission, but did not elaborate. The Bayraktar TB2 has gained global fame and become an export hit for Baykar since 2018, following successful operations in northern Syria, Libya, Karabakh, and lately, Ukraine.

The drone reportedly initially used components made in the United States, Canada and Europe, including Germany, pushing some lawmakers in NATO allies Germany and the U.S. to call for restricting technology transfer to Baykar. Those calls had no effect on the production of the famed drones, on the contrary, the company immediately replaced the imported parts with those produced domestically within the country.



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ECB’s Next Rate Move Likely Between 50 and 75 bps

AMSTERDAM (Dispatches) - The European Central Bank (ECB) could hike its interest rates by 75 basis points again at its next policy meeting in December, ECB governing council member Klaas Knot said on Sunday.

The central bank for the 19 countries that share the euro raised the interest rate it pays on bank deposits by 75 basis points last week, taking it 1.5%, its highest level since 2009.

“We will take a significant interest step again in December,” Knot said in an interview with Dutch TV programme Buitenhof, adding that is was likely that the next raise would be between 50 and 75 basis points.



India Becoming Major Manufacturing Hub

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - India will now become a major producer of transport aircraft, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday after laying the foundation stone of a manufacturing facility for C-295 medium transport plane for the Indian Air Force.

Modi said India is witnessing rapid economic growth including in the manufacturing sector as his government’s policies are “stable, predictable and futuristic”.

“Today India is working with a new mindset and new work culture,” he said in his address at the ceremony in this city in Gujarat.

He said India, with its ‘Make-in-India’ and ‘Make-for-World’ approach, is enhancing its strength further and that the country has emerged as a major manufacturing hub globally.

The prime minister said the manufacturing of C295 aircraft in Vadodara will not only give strength to the military but it will also create an aerospace ecosystem.

Defense Minister Rajnath Singh described the occasion as a milestone in India’s quest for becoming self-reliant in defense.

The aircraft will be produced by a consortium of European aerospace major Airbus and the Tata Group.

It is the first project of its kind in which a military aircraft will be manufactured in India by a private company.

The manufacturing unit will also cater for the export of the premier transport aircraft as well as for additional orders by the Indian Air Force.

In September last year, India sealed a Rs 21,935 crore deal with Airbus Defense and Space to procure 56 C-295 aircraft to replace the IAF’s ageing Avro-748 planes that entered service in the early 1960s.

Under the agreement, Airbus will deliver the first 16 aircraft in ‘fly-away’ condition from its final assembly line in Seville, Spain within four years and the subsequent 40 aircraft will be manufactured by Tata Advanced Systems Ltd (TASL) in India as part of an industrial partnership between the two companies.

The 16 fly-away aircraft are scheduled to be delivered to the IAF between September 2023 and August 2025.

The first Made-in-India aircraft will be rolled out of the manufacturing facility in September 2026 and the remaining 39 will have to be produced by August 2031.

The foundation laying ceremony was attended by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia and Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendrabhai Patel among others.

IAF officials said the C-295 aircraft would be able to operate from Advanced Landing Grounds (ALGs) and even unprepared runways.

It is also the first time that the C-295 aircraft will be manufactured outside of Europe.

All 56 aircraft will be fitted with an indigenous electronic warfare suite to be developed by the state-run Bharat Electronics Ltd and Bharat Dynamics Limited.

After the completion of the delivery of 56 aircraft to the IAF, Airbus Defence and Space will be allowed to sell the aircraft manufactured in India to civil operators and export to countries which are cleared by the Government of India.

Defense Secretary Ajay Kumar three days back said the indigenous content in the plane will be the highest ever in India, and that 96 per cent of the work that Airbus does in Spain to produce the plane will be done at the manufacturing unit in Vadodara.

The C-295MW is a transport aircraft of 5-10 tonne capacity with contemporary technology. The aircraft has a maximum speed of 480 kmph.

Aid Spending Soared to Record Level in Pacific Islands as COVID-19 Hit

SYDNEY (Dispatches) - A record \$3.3 billion in aid flowed to the Pacific islands in 2020 as the COVID-19 pandemic hit, a 33% increase on the previous year, according to a report released by the Lowy Institute think-tank on Monday.

The pandemic led to border closures, confronting governments reliant on tourism with economic crisis. It also brought a shift in how aid was delivered, with more loans than grants made, and more direct funding to help deliver critical services.

The Lowy Institute’s annual Pacific Aid Map showed Chinese aid to the region dropped to \$187 million in 2020, its lowest since the institute began tracking aid flows in 2008.

Australia and New Zealand provided a third of all aid in 2020.

The map tracks development assistance to the Pacific islands, an effort the Institute says increases transparency of money flows, as China and the United States and its allies vie for influence in the strategically important region.

A move by the Solomon Islands to sign a security pact with China in 2022 has alarmed Washington and its allies, including Australia.

Since 2008, Australia has provided 40% of all aid to the region, followed by New Zealand, with 8.6%, Japan, with 8.5% and China, with 8.5%, the report said. Chinese aid, predominantly loans for infrastructure, had peaked in 2016.

The project director of the Pacific Aid Map, Alexandre Dayant, said development assistance remained a diplomatic tool for Beijing, with regional aid focusing on Kiribati and Solomon Islands, which switched diplomatic ties from Taiwan to Beijing a year earlier.

Dayant said the overall drop in Chinese aid in the region comes amid negative publicity about the cost of Chinese infrastructure loans, and Pacific island nations having more choice.

Australia, which has committed A\$600 million in infrastructure loans since 2019, is becoming a prominent Pacific lender and needed to take “considerable care” it did not contribute to the region’s debt problems, the report said.

Australia last week said it would spend another A\$900 million (\$576.99 million) in Pacific aid.

The United States has also pledged \$800 million more after hosting a dozen Pacific islands leaders at a White House summit in September.

Turkey Seeks Saudi Partnership Cooperation To Be an Energy Hub to Europe

RIYADH (Dispatches) - Turkey is seeking more cooperation with Saudi Arabia and other countries as it plans to be an energy hub to Europe, its finance minister said.

“Turkey from its geographical position is an energy corridor from Russia, Iran, and Saudi Arabia. Any kind of natural gas or oil that is going to be transported or shipped, will cost less and will be more safely shipped,” Nureddin Nebati told Arab News in an interview.

Speaking on the sideline of the 6th edition of Future Investment Initiative forum in Riyadh, the minister didn’t elaborate further on how the two countries might cooperate but said that peace in the region will bring energy costs down.

“Turkey and Saudi Arabia are also assisting each other, which will bring peace in the region. That peace will bring more affordable gas prices, the energy prices, and will allow both countries to look ahead,” he added.

Saudi Arabia is the largest exporter of oil in the world. Its gas reserves amounts to nearly 300 trillion cubic feet, making it the largest fifth gas reserve in the world. However, the Kingdom doesn’t export gas and it intends to expand production to meet local demand and eliminate the use of oil and other liquids in power generation.

Saudi Commerce Minister Majed Al-Qasabi has estimated Saudi investments in Turkey to total \$18 billion, and he expects to see around \$3-5 billion in new investments over the coming period. (Reuters)

Nebati’s comments come a week after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said that he had agreed with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin to form a natural gas hub in Turkey.

Speaking to members of his AK Party in parliament on October 19, Erdogan said Putin had said Europe can obtain its gas supply from the hub in Turkey.

“When we look at Europe, they are dependent on Russian gas, and they will be passing winter with huge stress. This is obvious, and new steps and new structuring need to be taken,” Nebati added.

“And this is why our President Erdogan said that Turkey, which will become a hub, should take the needed measures for the distribution of Iran gas or Russian gas to Europe. And that will contribute to the establishment of peace in the region and create an environment that is safe for this shipment,” he added.

Nebati, who held several meetings with Saudi officials during his visit including the finance and commerce ministers, said that the moves taken by Turkey will help reduce the cost of energy by lowering the cost of transportation.



“That will lead to the solution of the high prices, which is putting the world in front of recession. And in that sense, it is good to interpret that as Turkey being ready to take all the responsibilities as our president said to take a step in comforting the entire world especially Europe in this gas challenge,” he said.

Pakistan’s Economic Outlook Shows Optimistic Picture



ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - The trade balance of Pakistan is expected to improve in the coming months on account of import contraction due to a deceleration in domestic economic activity and aggregate demand, the monthly Economic Update and Outlook October 2022 released by the ministry of finance said.

“Overall economic outlook shows an optimistic picture of the economic performance in the coming months. The CPI inflation is declining, rupee has gained stability, and the current account balance is on an improving trend. These development indicate that economic activity will remain positive and persistent in coming months”, the report added.

It said that for the future path of inflation, the exchange rate is of utmost importance. Moderating inflation also contributes to exchange rate stability, which in the benign case may generate a virtuous inflation-exchange rate cycle. Further, exchange rate stability requires sound economic fundamentals.

Besides inflation, a manageable current account deficit and guaranteed financing of this deficit by healthy financial inflows are also required. When markets get convinced about these prospects, speculative bubbles in the exchange market would be highly unlikely.

In the short to medium run, helped by sound domestic fiscal and monetary policies, the current account deficit is expected to reduce. A major risk factor, though, relates to the necessary imports to absorb the devastating consequences of the floods. However, downward revision of Pakistan’s main trading partners’ outlook may have a downside risk for exports in coming months.

For the fiscal sector, catastrophic floods require rehabilitation and massive expenditures, which will pose a significant challenge for fiscal consolidation. On the other hand, growth prospects have weakened, along with contained economic activities and low demand, which will impact on resource mobilization. Thus, FY2023 is moving with challenges, seeking balance policy mix for stabilization.

IMF Believes Egypt’s Economy Is on the Right Track

CAIRO (Dispatches) - The International Monetary Fund’s move to grant a new loan to Egypt will have positive repercussions for the country’s economy, according to government officials and economic experts.

The IMF and the Egyptian government recently reached an initial agreement for Cairo to obtain a \$3 billion loan from the fund, in addition to another package that includes \$1 billion from the Fund’s Sustainability and Resilience Fund, and \$5 billion from partner countries for development, amounting to a total of \$9 billion in aid.

The head of the IMF’s mission in Egypt, Ivanna Vladkova Hollar, said that the fund had approved the financing program, which extends over a period of 46 months, on the condition that the Egyptian financial authorities initiate certain economic reforms.

Egypt’s central bank said it was intent on intensifying economic reforms and had “moved to a durably flexible exchange rate regime, leaving the forces of supply and demand to determine the value of the Egyptian pound against other foreign currencies.”

Fakhry El-Feky, head of the parliamentary committee for planning and budget, said that the agreement is “a certificate of reassurance.”

He told Arab News: “The agreement will not reduce citizens’ income, but will lead to a reduction in the inflation rate with the application of the monetary policy of the central bank which will control inflation while leaving the dollar exchange rate (up) to the forces of supply and demand.

“The agreement is (necessary in order) to address the repercussions of the global economic crisis



resulting from the Russian-Ukrainian war and the pandemic,” he added.

Gihan Madig, head of the Egypt October Party, said in a statement: “The IMF believes that the Egyptian economy is on the right track because Egypt is one of the countries in which growth rates are positive. This reflects the solidity of the Egyptian economy and its ability to withstand global challenges.”

Madig added: “The IMF’s approval to grant a new loan to Egypt will have positive repercussions on the economy during the coming period ... I expect that the new loan and the package of measures will ease economic pressures during the coming year.”

Raouf Elsayed-Ali, head of the Egyptian National Movement Party, told Arab News: “The agreement comes in light of the economic reform programs and major national projects, all of which will make Egypt stand on solid foundations.”

He added: “The IMF does not grant funding (without conducting) careful reviews and careful studies on the economic conditions, which gives a strong message to all those inside or outside that the Egyptian economy is stable and secure.”

Nagy El-Shehaby, head of the Generation Party and general coordinator of the National Coalition of Egyptian Political Parties, said: “The agreement must make the government more committed to strengthening social-protection measures for low-income people, and offering more support for employees and the middle class, who are currently suffering from the cruelty of the increasing burdens of life, from the rise in inflation and ... from increasing prices.”

Arms Smuggling Gang Dismantled in Iran

TEHRAN (MNA) – The police commander of Khuzestan province in the southwest of Iran announced the dismantling of an arms smuggling gang in the police operation.

The Second Brigadier General Mohammad Salehi said that following a comprehensive intelligence operation, the police forces of the province identified an arms smuggling gang that transfer the cargo of weapons into the province in collaboration with some smugglers from one of the countries in the region.

The police identified the smuggler’s hideout and the location of the weapon cargo depot in Shadgan city, he added.



“Greenwashing” Mars Qatar’s Carbon-Neutral World Cup Promise

LONDON (Dispatches) - When Qatar was awarded hosting duties for the biggest event in football, the Persian Gulf nation promised to host “the first carbon neutral World Cup”. While organizers introduced several green initiatives, environmentalists accuse the event’s governing body of “greenwashing” its environmental claims.

Hosting a football World Cup tournament may be good for fans, players and sponsors, but it’s rarely good for the planet. The 2022 World Cup due to start on November 20 in Qatar has already received bad publicity over migrant rights issues. Now, environmentalists are criticizing the competition over its devastating environmental impact.

With its recently built air-conditioned stadiums and 150 daily flights to bring in fans, the 2022 World Cup has been slammed as one of the biggest environmental fiascos in the competition’s history.

In January 2020, Qatar promised to make the 2022 tournament the first “carbon neutral” World Cup. In September of that year, the organizing committee detailed a roadmap to meet the challenge. “Our goal is to offset all greenhouse gas emissions while advancing low-carbon solutions in Qatar and the region. A carbon-neutral tournament is delivered through a four-step process: awareness, measurement, reduction and offsetting,” said the committee in a statement.

Organizers planned to use large quantities of renewable energy and environmentally responsible materials, as well as adopt carbon offsetting measures. The World Cup in Qatar “will change the way future FIFA World Cup competitions and other sporting mega-events are organised,” the statement added.

“This promise of carbon neutrality is absolutely not credible,” said Gilles Dufrasne, lead author of the Carbon Market Watch report published in May 2022 examining Qatar’s claims. “This is a blatant example of greenwashing.”

In June 2021, a FIFA report indicated that the 2022 World Cup would produce up to 3.6m tonnes of carbon dioxide. By comparison, France releases about 4.2m tonnes per year. The 2018 World Cup in Russia generated 2.1m tonnes of CO2. “It’s inherent in this type of competition which brings together fans from all over the world in one place. As things stand, a football World Cup cannot be green. Despite our efforts, the environmental impact will still be significant,” said Dufrasne. “In my opinion, this is the real problem. Although it is high time we take this reality into account when organising the next World Cup, FIFA would rather launch a greenwashing campaign.”

The vast majority of CO2 emissions related to the World Cup are generated by transport and infrastructure construction. When the event was awarded in 2010, Qatar’s main argument was that it could limit travel by organising a centralised competition concentrated around one airport and in one city, Doha.

Over the past decade, Qatar has tried to focus on reducing emissions through a number of green initiatives. While this gas-rich state ranks first in the world in terms of CO2 emissions per capita – they reached 32.5 metric tons in 2019, according to the World Bank – it has notably announced a gigantic solar plan designed to cover 10% of its energy needs and the widespread use of electric cars by 2030.



Its efforts have culminated in the showcase Msheireb eco-district, which is located in the centre of Doha and is one of the World Cup’s biggest construction sites. Solar panels shine on the roofs of the buildings, all accessible by tram. In the middle of the hotels, shops and housing, planted trees and small bodies of water cool the atmosphere.

Jonathan Piron, historian and author of the book “Qatar, le Pays des Possédants: du Désert à la Coupe du Monde”, says that while these initiatives should be welcomed, they are still not enough to compensate for the damage being done to the planet. “We must not forget Qatar’s geographical characteristics. In this country in the middle of the desert, every human gesture has a greater impact on the environment than elsewhere,” said Piron.

“First of all, the country is not at all autonomous when it comes to accessing raw materials. For each building constructed, many materials had to be imported by plane,” he continued. “For example, installing solar panels is very good. But you have to build them and then recycle them when they reach the end of their life. In a climate like this, they deteriorate more quickly. Has this been taken into account?”

The historian feels the turf on which the players will meet from November 20 perfectly illustrates this problem. “No matter how hard FIFA tried to meet the standards, hundreds of tonnes of grass seed had to be flown in from the US in air-conditioned planes. The country is short of water, so they had to be grown using desalinated seawater — a process that consumes a lot of energy and is very disruptive to the ecosystem,” he said.

Armenian PM in Tehran...

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He also said that some discussions were held in the field of energy and agriculture, infrastructure, and water resources management.

The Prime Minister of Armenia also invited the Iranian President to visit Yerevan to continue these talks.

Later Iranian road minister voiced readiness of Iranian firms for developing transportation between Iran and Armenia and creating a new transit corridor between Armenia and the Persian Gulf via Nordooz village in East Azarbaijan.

Rostam Ghasemi made the remarks in a meeting with the Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructures of Armenia Gnel Sanosyan during which it was decided that Iranian companies cooperate with Armenia in the construction of tunnels, roads, and buildings.

Based on the agreement between the two countries, they decided to complete and develop the north-south corridor from the Nordooz border to Varzeqan and Tabriz, he added.

Due to the fact that Iran has good experience in the field of housing construction under the title of National Housing Movement, Iranian construction companies will start activity in Armenia, Ghasemi said.

More than 200 million tons of goods are transited in the north of Iran, which can be considered a good opportunity for developing exchanges between the two countries, the Iranian minister noted.

Emphasizing the fact that Iran is the fourth largest producer of cement in the world and has also been effective in the field of steel production, Ghasemi said that Iranian producers of cement, steel, and construction materials will be introduced to Armenia.

Tehran-Moscow...

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Emphasizing that all the agreements reached and discussed in the 16th Joint Economic Commission of Iran and Russia are actually the main topics agreed upon by the presidents of the two countries, he said: “At no time in history have relations between Iran and Russia been this close. Therefore, there is now a very good opportunity to cooperate with this country.”

The Iranian oil minister underlined the capacities of Iran and Russia in different areas and the sanctions targeting both countries, and said: “The two countries can work together to neutralize the international sanctions and tomorrow at the 16th meeting of the joint economic commission of the two countries, the agreements and decisions of the two sides will be finalized and signed. Besides, a general agreement will also be signed between the two countries.”

Emphasizing that holding the 16th meeting of the Joint Economic Commission of the two countries will bring good results, Owji said: “In the future, the level of relations between the two countries will increase day by day, especially in the economic field.”

Meanwhile Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak said that Russia and Iran have discussed swap supplies of oil and gas within the framework of the meeting of the intergovernmental commission on trade and economic cooperation. Novak also said that Russia and Iran have agreed to sign a free trade agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union in the near future. “We have also agreed to remove all barriers that exist today on the way of developing bilateral trade. And we are talking about reducing barriers at the borders with third countries. We have agreed to conclude an agreement on a free trade zone between Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union in the near future,” Novak said during a press conference, following the meeting of the Russia-Iran intergovernmental commission on trade and economic cooperation.

Besides, Novak added that Russia and Iran see opportunities for implementing joint projects, including in the field of machine and aircraft building.

“Russia and Iran see opportunities for joint projects in the field of shipbuilding, automobile and aviation construction, and there are already joint projects, agreements between Russian and Iranian companies on organizing the necessary joint ventures and supplying relevant components,” he said. The minister went on to reveal that the two countries have already started swap deliveries of energy resources, in particular petroleum products, and have agreed to expand the list of supplied goods. Meanwhile Iran and Russia signed four cooperation documents at the 16th Joint Commission for Economic Cooperation aiming at expanding the relations between the two countries.

The strategic document for the development of bilateral relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Russian Federation was signed on Tuesday by Iranian Oil Minister Owji, as the head of the Iranian delegation of the Joint Economic Commission of Iran and Russia, and Novak, the Deputy Prime Minister of Russia.

A loan agreement for the electrification of the Incheh Borun -Garmsar railway project was also signed between Ali Fakhri, Deputy Minister of Economy and Finance and General Director of Iran’s Investment and Economic and Technical Assistance Organization, and Vladimir Ilyichev, Deputy Minister of Economy of Russia.

In addition, a bilateral memorandum of cooperation in the field of health was signed between Mohammad Hossein Niknam, Director General of International Cooperation of the Ministry of Health, Medicine and Medical Education of Iran, and Sergey Glagolev, Deputy Minister of Health of the Russian Federation.

Also, Mohammad Ziyar, the CEO of Sina Energy Gostar Holding, from Iran and Mikhail Silantiev, the CEO of the state-owned Promsyrimport Company of Russia, also signed a memorandum of understanding for the implementation of EPC projects for product transfer pipelines.

U.S. Lacks Qualification...

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“The United States lacks the political, moral, and legal qualifications to hold such a meeting, distorting the very basic principles of human rights,” Iravani said.

The Iranian ambassador called on UN member states to “explicitly object to such reckless and dangerous practices through which the US attempt to create such a dangerous precedent and politicize human rights issues in order to achieve its political agenda.”

Iravani said the U.S. has waged a psychological

warfare and a deception operation against Iran while claiming that the informal meeting aims to support rights of Iranian women. But, he continued, this is completely originated from Washington’s hypocrisy and is considered an abuse of the valuable concept of human rights.

He also reiterated the Islamic Republic’s commitment to promotion of human rights and implementation of obligations in this regard within

the framework of international law contrary to baseless U.S. accusations against Iran.

The Iranian envoy warned against the unconstructive consequences of any bid by the UN Security Council to deal with the internal issues of countries, saying it would weaken the existing effective mechanisms in violation of the UN principles and objectives enshrined in the United Nations Charter regarding non-interference in the internal affairs of states.

Tehran Imposes Sanctions...

FROM PAGE 1

- Juan Zarate, chairman of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies’ Center on Economic and Financial Power (CEFP)

- Mark Wallace, the CEO of United Against Nuclear Iran (UANI)

- Adewale “Wally” Adeyemo, the United States deputy secretary of the Treasury

- Alexis G. Grynkwich, the commander of Ninth Air Force (Air Forces Central)

- Anne Neuberger, the Deputy National Security Advisor for Cyber and Emerging Technology

- Isaac Johnson, Jr., the commander of the United States Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command

- Brian E. Nelson, Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence,

in addition to:

- United Against Nuclear Iran (UANI)

- Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)

- The Ninth Air Force

- National Guard of the United States

The U.S. administration and its European allies have over the past weeks introduced restrictive measures against a number of Iranian individuals and entities over what they claim a heavy-handed crackdown on violent protesters across the country after the death of an Iranian woman of Kurdish descent in police custody in the capital, Tehran.

Palestine Calls for...

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The committee also called on Israel to join the NPT without delay, not to develop, manufacture, test, or otherwise obtain nuclear weapons, and to desist from acquiring nuclear munitions.

Israel, which pursues a policy of deliberate ambiguity about its nuclear weapons, is estimated to possess 200 to 400 nuclear warheads in its arsenal, making it the sole possessor of non-conventional arms in West Asia.

The illegitimate entity has, however, refused to either allow inspections of its military nuclear facilities or sign the NPT.

What has emboldened Tel Aviv to accelerate its nuclear activities, according to observers, is the support from the United States and Europe, the two parties most critical of Iran’s peaceful nuclear program.

Over the years, the regime has assassinated at least seven Iranian nuclear scientists and conducted a series of sabotage operations against the Islamic Republic’s nuclear facilities.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani in July warned that the Israeli regime’s advanced

atomic military program poses a serious threat to international security and the NPT, urging the UN nuclear agency to fulfill its responsibility in this regard.

“The advanced atomic military program of the apartheid Israeli regime and the regime’s continued objection to placing its nuclear facilities under the Safeguards Agreements [of the International Atomic Energy] Agency and not joining the Non-Proliferation Treaty are serious threats to international security and the non-proliferation regime,” Kanaani said at the time.

Tehran, Helsinki...

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Iran also joined the Stockholm Convention in 2004, the signatories agreed to ban the use of 9 chemicals, limit the use of DDT (dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethane) to control malaria, and reduce the unwanted production of dioxins. So far, 185 countries have become members of this convention with its legal approval. Basel Convention Regional Center (BCRC) in Iran is established according to Decision VII/10 of the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 7) of the Basel Convention in October 2004. Bangladesh, Iran, Maldives, Nepal, and Pakistan are members of the BCRC Iran.

Industry and Trade...

FROM PAGE 1

Mohammadreza Rezaei Kouchi, chairman of the Majlis infrastructure committee, opposed impeachment. He said unseating the minister will cause “instability” in the government’s economic team and the experience of the previous government will be repeated.

Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said the vote of confidence for Fatemi Amin will create an opportunity for the minister to implement his promises so that people can “feel” it.

Lukaku Picks Up New Hamstring Injury

MILAN (Dispatches) - Romelu Lukaku has suffered a new hamstring injury less than a week after making his return to action for Inter Milan, the Serie A club said.

In a statement, Inter said that Belgium striker Lukaku had picked up a "strain in the hamstring of his left thigh", the same muscle which kept him out of action for two months.

Inter added that the 29-year-old would be "reassessed in the next few days", and Italian media report that he is not yet at risk of missing the World Cup.

LICENCE HOLDER: SOKHAN GOSTAR INSTITUTE	
Switchboard: (+98) (21) 44253448	E-Mail Address: info@irannewsdaily.com
Public Relations Tel: (+98)(21) 44253450	ISSN 1024-6053
Editorial Board: 44253449	P.O. Box: 15875-8551
Public Relations Fax: (+98)(21) 44253395	Address: No 13, Pajouhesh St., Golestan II St, Golestan St.Marzadaran Blvd., Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Advertising Department: Tel/Fax:(+98) (21) 44253335-9/44253234	Printed by: Honar Sarzmin Sabz
Website: http://www.irannewsdaily.com	Distributed by: Cities of Iran Cultural and Artistic Institute
	Managing Director: Fereydoon Taherpour Asl

Davis Cup to Become Part of ATP Tour Calendar in 2023

LONDON (Dispatches) - The Davis Cup will become a part of the ATP Tour calendar from next year under a groundbreaking deal signed between the governing body of men's tennis, the International Tennis Federation (ITF) and tournament promoters Kosmos.

The move comes after the ATP Cup, a joint venture between Tennis Australia and the ATP was but put to bed last week with the announcement of a mixed-sex US\$15 million (RM71 million) event featuring teams from 18 nations to kick off the 2023 season.

Verstappen Sets F1 Record For Most Wins in a Season

MEXICO CITY (Dispatches) - Red Bull's double world champion Max Verstappen won the Mexico City Grand Prix to set a Formula One record of 14 victories from a single season, as well as the most points scored.

The Dutch driver led from pole position at the Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez, stopping on lap 26 of 71 to switch from soft to medium tyres and taking the chequered flag 15.186 seconds clear of Mercedes's Lewis Hamilton.

"It's been an incredible year so far, we are definitely enjoying it and we'll try to go for more," said Verstappen, who clinched his second title in Japan on Oct. 9 and had an untroubled afternoon.

Red Bull's Sergio Perez finished third in front of his cheering home crowd after a race that was low on thrills and all about tyre strategy.

Verstappen's win was the 25-year-old's fourth in Mexico and the podium was the same as last year.

In Austin, Texas, last weekend he had pulled level with German champions Michael Schumacher (2004) and Sebastian Vettel (2013) on 13 wins in a season.

There are more races now than then, however, with the 2022 season featuring 22 compared to 19 in 2013 and 18 in 2004.



Verstappen also took his points tally to 416 -- 136 more than Perez who moved up to second overall and three more than the previous record set by Hamilton in 2019.

It was also a ninth win in a row and 16th from 20 races for Red Bull, who wrapped up the constructors' title in Texas with three rounds to spare, but Mercedes showed they were getting closer.

"I was so close in that first stint but I think the Red Bull was clearly too fast today and ultimately, maybe they had the better tyre strategy," said Hamilton, who felt he should have started on softs instead of mediums before switching to hards.

"I'm not sure (hard) was the right tyre at the end."

George Russell lost out at the start, lining up on the front row for Mercedes but dropping two places to fourth as Hamilton muscled past his team mate with Perez also seizing the opportunity to go third.

Russell finished fourth, pitting on the penultimate lap to deny Perez the bonus point for fastest lap.

Both Mercedes drivers complained about the strategy but were assured from the pit wall that Red Bull's medium tyres would lose performance -- a hope that proved to be optimistic.

"That medium looks quick mate, they're going to go to the end," said Hamilton over the radio 10 laps from the end, accepting it was game over.

The race was already a four-driver battle after 20 of the 71 laps, with Ferrari's Carlos Sainz and Charles Leclerc finishing fifth and sixth but far off the pace and the latter close to being lapped.

"This weekend we were just slow," said Sainz, who finished 58 seconds behind Verstappen.

Daniel Ricciardo put on the show of the day, reeling off overtakes on the soft tyres and finishing seventh for McLaren despite a 10-second penalty for causing a collision with AlphaTauri's Yuki Tsunoda.

His performance won the Australian, who is leaving McLaren at the end of the season with no other drive lined up, the vote for driver of the day by fans and that familiar smile was broader than ever.

Esteban Ocon was eighth for Renault-owned Alpine, after team mate Fernando Alonso retired with an engine failure, with McLaren's Lando Norris ninth and Valtteri Bottas back in the points for Alfa Romeo in 10th.

Ten Hag Hopes De Gea Stays on at Man United

MANCHESTER (Dispatches) - Manchester United manager Erik ten Hag said he hoped "magnificent" goalkeeper David de Gea would stay beyond this season at the club after seeing the Spaniard play a starring role in his side's 1-0 win over West Ham United.

De Gea produced three stunning saves in the second half to help United stretch their unbeaten run to eight in all competitions and earn a victory that moved them up to fifth in the Premier League.

Widespread reports in the British media, however, have said that United are not certain to extend the Spanish keeper's contract, which expires at the end of the current campaign.

"This issue about negotiating (contracts), we said first we are focusing on the games," Ten Hag said.

"When we come to an end with this block, we have the World Cup and then we have to think about them."

"In the background we have our strategies for how to deal with it. It is clear already and I have already emphasized it several times, I am really happy with David. He is a great goalkeeper."

"He is only 31. He is fit. He can progress even more. He was already impressively good for Man United and I think he will do that in the future as well."

Ricciardo Set For Mercedes or Red Bull Reserve Role

MEXICO CITY (Dispatches) - Daniel Ricciardo, who lost his McLaren seat as his career fell into the doldrums this year, looks set to join Red Bull or Mercedes as a reserve driver next season when he takes a year out of racing.

The Australian hinted at his brightening future prospects after storming to seventh with a reinvigorated performance in Sunday's Mexico Grand Prix, but he declined to confirm his plans.

"I won't be on the grid next year, but I will be here (in F1) because I have ambitious plans for 2024," he said.

"Discussions are ongoing, but nothing has been signed."

"Nothing has been guaranteed for 2024, but I will do everything I can to return."

Ricciardo, 33, revived his prospects and his smile on Sunday when he rose from the near-anonymous mediocrity of finishing among the also rans to finish behind the top six -- made up of both Red Bulls, both Mercedes and the two Ferraris.

He made light of a harsh 10-second penalty for colliding with Yuki Tsunoda's Alpha Tauri to romp back with several thrilling passing moves to finish ahead of McLaren team-mate Lando Norris.

His revival delighted most paddock observers who believed he was set to join Mercedes as replacement for reserve driver Nyck de Vries who is joining Alpha Tauri next season.

Mercedes team chief Toto Wolff confirmed that talks between them have been taking place, but he added that he thought Ricciardo was talking to other teams.

"Yes, also with Red Bull Racing," said Wolff. "For. Us, we think he's a great character, but we are not ready yet to say who our third driver will be next season."

"His personality is an absolute strength and Daniel has been with us for a long time. He knows these cars inside out."

"That can definitely be an advantage, but I don't want to start any rumours here because the truth is that we haven't decided anything yet."

Pogba's World Cup at Risk With Thigh Injury



MILAN (Dispatches) - Paul Pogba's chances of playing in the upcoming World Cup are at risk again after media reports in Italy said he had suffered a thigh injury.

France star Pogba had recently returned to training with Juventus, for whom he is yet to feature following a knee injury suffered in the summer.

Neither Juve nor Pogba's representatives responded to AFP's requests for confirmation of the injury, described by Italian media as muscle fatigue which could keep him out of action for 10 days.

Les Bleus' first World Cup game is against Australia on November 22, and coach Didier Deschamps will name his squad for the tournament in Qatar on November 9.

On Friday Juve coach Massimiliano Allegri said that it was "very unlikely" that the 29-year-old midfielder would play before Serie A breaks up for the Qatar World Cup.

Juve's final fixture of 2022 is against Lazio in Turin on November 13.

Lakers Beat Denver For First Triumph of NBA Season

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - LeBron James scored a game-high 26 points and the Los Angeles Lakers became the last NBA team to win a game this season, defeating Denver 121-110.

Anthony Davis added 23 points and 15 rebounds while Russell Westbrook came off the bench to contribute 18 points, eight rebounds and eight assists as the host Lakers improved to 1-5 by ending their futility run.

"We needed this one," Davis said. "We needed this for our team, our spirits, our fans, our organisation. We come out and showed what we're capable of. It could be the start of a run for us."

The 0-5 start had matched the 2014-15 Lakers for the worst in the club's history, which dates to 1947, but the victory avoided a new mark and gave coach Darvin Ham his first victory.

"It feels good to get that monkey off our back," Davis said. "Get a win in the win column and try to get this thing going." The Lakers scored their most points of any game this season and grabbed their largest lead of the campaign late in the fourth quarter to subdue the Nuggets, who fell to 4-3 despite 23 points and 14 assists by Nikola Jokic.

"When we play defense like that, we're a tough team to beat," Davis said. "But today we made shots."

Davis played despite a painful back injury.

"It was killing me tonight but I tried to do whatever I could do to help the team get the win," Davis said.

Earlier in Los Angeles, Zion Williamson made a triumphant return from a right hip injury with 21 points, 12 rebounds and seven assists for New Orleans in a 112-91 victory over the Los Angeles Clippers.



Wimbledon Win Was Huge Confidence Boost

LONDON (Dispatches) - Novak Djokovic said his Wimbledon triumph gave him a much-needed boost of confidence during a tough season and that it laid the platform for a strong finish to the year.

Djokovic was deported from Australia in the lead-up to the year's first Grand Slam in January for not being vaccinated against COVID-19. The Serb then struggled to hit top form and only began showing glimpses of his best at the end of the clay season.

The 35-year-old then beat Australian Nick Kyrgios in the Wimbledon final to bag his 21st Grand Slam crown before winning trophies in Tel Aviv and Astana and arriving in France primed to defend his Paris Masters title this week.

"The first part of the year with everything that happened in Australia, I felt challenged, very much emotionally, mentally off the court and it was affecting my game," Djokovic said.

"I was finding my way to that desired level and that happened towards the end of the clay season. Wimbledon always comes at the right time in my career. When I need that huge confidence boost and big title, Wimbledon is always there."

Djokovic has won the Paris title six times, including in his last two appearances in 2019 and 2021, and said coming back always brings him good memories.

"At this level it's important to have a good feeling on the court and good memory of coming to a place where you have done well, because tennis is a game of fine margins that decide who is going to take a win in the match," he added.

"Often, how you feel mentally, whether you're fighting with your demons inside in a good or bad way affects the end result. Here I always felt good."

