

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy Mehdi Safari Said That Considering Africa as a Priority Is on the Agenda of the Incumbent President Raisi Government's Foreign Policy

IRAN NEWS

Iranian Film "Shahrbanoo" By Maryam Bahrololoomi Has Been Nominated for the Best Actress and Best Film Awards at North Hollywood International Film Festival

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MPs Ask Judiciary to Severely Punish Agents, Inciters of Riots

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iranian lawmakers have called for firm punishment of those who incited the recent riots across the country and caused loss of life and extensive damage to public property.

The call was made in a Sunday letter to the Judiciary, signed by 227 Iranian lawmakers, who asked the judicial officials to consider severe punishments for all those involved in the riots, both as agents on the ground and inciters.

"We, the representatives of this nation, ask all state officials, including the Judiciary, to treat those, who waged war [against the Islamic establishment] and attacked people's life and property like the Daesh [terrorists], in a way that would serve as a good lesson in the shortest possible time," they said.

The lawmakers added that such a punishment will "prove to all that life, property, security and honor of our dear people is a red line for this [Islamic] establishment, and that it would show no leniency to anybody in this regard."

The legislators appreciated the efforts of the Iranian police and military forces to maintain security across the country, asking the Judiciary to deal decisively with the perpetrators of those crimes and all those who assisted in the crimes and provoked rioters, including some politicians.

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Gov't Issues First List of Individuals Suspected of Money Laundering

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has issued a first list of individuals suspected of money laundering activities as an official in the country's finance ministry (MEFA) says the move would signal to the world that Iran is serious in its fight against financial crimes.

Head of MEFA's Financial Intelligence Center Hadi Khani said on Sunday that a list of 300 individuals suspected of ties to money laundering networks had been identified over the past five months.

"We have ... sent this list to all banks, insurance firms and the local stock market to warn them about the bad records of those individuals on money laundering," Khani told the IRIB News.

He said the move reflects Iran's serious intentions in fighting money laundering despite the country's unwillingness to join U.S.-led money laundering alliances and initiatives in the world.

"This will signal to the world that Iran is taking important and fundamental steps in fighting money laundering.

"If Iran is not ready to accept some (money laundering) conventions, it is because of the political agenda that exists behind them," said the official.

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26 Takfiri Terrorists Captured Over Shah Cheragh Terror Attack



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The Iranian Intelligence Ministry says the country's security and intelligence forces have arrested 26 Takfiri terrorists for involvement in a recent terrorist attack on the Shah Cheragh shrine in the southern province of Fars, adding that the main coordinator of the deadly incident was a citizen of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The ministry, in a statement released on Monday, announced that authorities launched rigorous and round-the-clock intelligence, counter-intelligence and security operations soon after the attack and managed to identify and capture all those behind the bloody act of terror.

The statement said that the detainees are nationals of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Tajikistan and Afghanistan, and none of them are Iranians.

It further noted that the terrorist who played the main role of coordinating the terror attack is an Azerbaijani national who entered Iran via Imam Khomeini International Airport, southwest of Tehran, en route from Heydar Aliyev International Airport in the Azerbaijani capital city of Baku.

According to the statement, he immediately informed a collaborator in Azerbaijan of his arrival in Tehran and then contacted a network of foreign members of the notorious Daesh Takfiri terrorist group in Afghanistan, better known as Daesh in Khorasan Province, and told them that he was in Iran.

The statement went on to highlight that the terrorist, who provided logistics for the terrorist attack in Shiraz, is an Afghan national identified as Mohammed Ramez Rashidi, better known by the name de guerre Abu Basir. The shooter was identified as Sebahon Kamrouni, better known by the name de guerre Abu Aisha, and is a citizen of Tajikistan.

The Iranian Intelligence Ministry said the Takfiri terrorists were arrested in the capital province of Tehran, the central province of Alborz and Qom, the southern provinces of Fars and Kerman as well as the northeastern province of Khorasan Razavi. Some of them were captured while attempting to flee Iran through eastern neighbors.

The ministry pointed out that some of the detainees were even plotting to carry out acts of terror in other Iranian cities, including in the southeastern city of Zahedan.

A heavily-armed terrorist assaulted the well-known shrine at approximately 5:45 p.m. local time (1415 GMT) on October 26, just before the evening prayers, killing 15 pilgrims — including a lady and two children — and injuring at least 40 others.

The attacker opened fire indiscriminately on visitors within the shrine, according to the police commander of Fars province. The perpetrator was wounded and taken into custody by security personnel. He later succumbed to his wounds. Soon afterward, Daesh claimed responsibility for the act of terror.

Armenia Doubles Gas Imports From Iran Through 2030

LONDON (OilPrice) - Armenia gets the bulk of its natural gas from Russia. But ties with Moscow are fraying and Yerevan will soon have more alternatives Iran and Armenia have agreed to double the amount of natural gas that Iran sells to Armenia, and to extend their gas trade agreement to 2030.

The deal was made during a visit by Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan to Tehran. The memorandum of understanding was signed on November 1 by Majid Chegeni, Iran's deputy minister of oil for gas affairs and director of the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC), and Gnel Sanosyan, Armenia's minister of territorial administration and infrastructure.

Currently, Armenia imports about 365 million cubic meters of natural gas from Iran every year. "Now we export 1 million cubic meters of gas to Armenia daily, which will be doubled based on the new memorandum," Chegeni said.

The two sides trade energy based on a 2006 gas-for-electricity barter agreement; Armenia gets one cubic meter of gas from Iran in exchange for three kilowatt hours of electricity produced by thermal plants in Armenia.

An expansion of the deal has been in the works for some time. The increase in gas imports has been made possible by Armenia's increasing capacity to generate electricity, economist Suren Parsyan told Eurasianet. A new thermal power plant constructed by Italian firm Renco came online in 2021 and will be able to supplement the other supplier, the state-run Yerevan Thermal plant.

Even with the additional Iranian imports, Russia will remain Armenia's main gas supplier. Armenia buys over 2 billion cubic meters of Russian gas annually, paying \$165 per thousand cubic meters. The price for Russian gas went up by \$15 per thousand cubic meters in 2019, and that price remains unchanged.

In April, Armenia started paying for its Russian gas in rubles, though the rate remains pegged to the dollar price. The supply has not been affected even as the world natural gas markets are in turmoil, with Russia cutting off many European customers and prices fluctuating wildly. In 2021, Armenia paid \$414 million to Russia for its gas.

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Tax Revenues Rise 63% In 7 Months on Year

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iran's tax incomes during the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-October 22) rose 63 percent compared to the same period of time in the previous year, IRNA reported on Monday quoting an official with Iranian National Tax Administration (INTA).

According to Mehdi Movahedi, head of INTA's Education, Research, and Planning Office, his organization has collected 2.709 quadrillion rials (about \$7.1 billion) of taxes during the seven-month period of this year, while the figure was 1.66 trillion rials (about \$5.75 billion) in the same time span of the past year.

During the first seven months of the present year, INTA has managed to realize the tax income plan for the current period by 102 percent. In late October, INTA Head Davoud Manzour said the government's average monthly tax collections have increased by 80 percent in the current Iranian calendar year as compared to the previous year.

According to Manzour, last year every month about 250 trillion rials (about \$864 million) of taxes were collected on average, while the figure has reached 450 trillion rials (\$1.55 billion) in the current year, Tasnim news agency reported.

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Afghan Minister Sees Coal Import Deal With Iran "Soon"

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran and Afghanistan will conclude a deal "soon" under which the Islamic Republic will import Afghan coal, minister of commerce and industries in the transitional Taliban government Nuruddin Azizi has said.

"Talks with the Iranian side for the export of coal have progressed and a contract will be signed in this regard soon," Fars news agency quoted him as saying.

Azizi said the exports will help improve trade balance between the two countries which is in Iran's favor.

Iran is Afghanistan's largest trading partner, with around \$2 billion in bilateral trade each year, nearly a third of Afghanistan's total trade volume.

Afghanistan has an estimated 73 million tons of proven coal reserves with a capacity to produce 1.8 million tons a year.

The country hopes that untapped mineral deposits valued at \$3 trillion could help bankroll its impoverished economy after years of US-led occupation.

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Israeli Forces Arrest Dozens of Palestinians

BEIRUT (Dispatches) - Israeli forces have detained nearly 20 Palestinians in a wide-scale arrest campaign in several areas across the occupied West Bank and al-Quds.

Israeli troops arrested eight people on Monday after storming the al-Aroub refugee camp in the West Bank province of al-Khalil (Hebron).

Two other Palestinians were also detained in Beit Kahil and Beit Ummar in al-Khalil.

Five of the arrests were made in the provinces of Jenin, Qalqilya, Tubas, and Ramallah.

Two other Palestinians identified as Yousef and Wael Masha were arrested when Israeli forces stormed the Balata refugee camp, east of Nablus, and encircled their home before breaking into it. The raid sparked clashes with the Palestinian resistance fighters.

Balata Brigade said in a statement that its fighters spotted the Israeli forces infiltrating the camp and fired a barrage of bullets at them.

Moreover, two other Palestinians were arrested in Anata town, east of al-Quds City.

The Israeli military frequently carries out wide-ranging arrest campaigns across the West Bank under the pretext of searching for "wanted" Palestinians.

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Border Guards Seize 600 War Weapons From Traffickers

ZAHEDAN (IRNA) - Iranian border guards have annihilated several trafficking bands and discovered about 600 war weapons during the past 45 days, Border Guards Commander Brigadier General Ahmad-Ali Goudarzi has said. Seizure of war weapons grew 26 percent while being compared with the preceding year, the commander noted according to the police website on Monday. Visiting the borders in the southeast of Iran, the commander said the recent unrest resulted from the US and the children-killer regime of Israel and their agents inside the country created problems for the security of "our dear citizens." The border guards seriously stand against any move to break the law, he underlined.

Administrative System Needs Transformation

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK



TEHRAN – President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi described the complete realization of the administrative system at the level of the Islamic Republic as requiring a transformational view and attitude and said, "Today, everyone agrees that the administrative system needs transformation and in a government that has raised the flag of transformation, it is necessary to transform the administrative system and governance structure".

Raisi attended the Administrative and Recruitment Affairs Organization meeting as part of the plan for supervision of executive bodies.

The President described the complete realization of the administrative system at the level of the Islamic Republic as requiring a transformational view and attitude and said, "Today, everyone agrees that the administrative system needs transformation and in a government that has raised the flag of transformation, it is necessary to transform the administrative system and governance structure".

Raisi said that the revision of the processes is a necessity for transformation in the country's administrative system and emphasized, "All stages of administrative transformation must have two important features, firstly, its foundations must be scientifically rich and certain sound and defensible, and secondly, there is a practical determination to implement it".

The President said that the country's Administrative and Recruitment Affairs Organization should provide the best and highest quality administrative services to the people at the lowest cost, make the administrative system healthy, speed up the orderliness of the country's administrative organization and also consider people's wishes in the evaluation system.

The President also pointed out the importance of the position of the Supreme Board for Monitoring Administrative Violations and noted, "The Supreme Board for Monitoring Administrative Violations Law is one of the most efficient laws in the country and the members of the Supreme Board for Monitoring Administrative Violations is obliged to implement the explicit text of this law without compromise and leniency".

Raisi also considered the law on promoting the health of the administrative system as one of the practical laws and emphasized on its full implementation by all institutions and organizations and the follow-up of this issue by the Administrative and Recruitment Affairs Organization.

He also urged the Administrative and Recruitment Affairs Organization to identify the main routes of corruption in cooperation with the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology and take action to eliminate them.

The President stated that in the Administrative and Recruitment Affairs Organization, both the administrative and employment sectors should be taken into consideration, and clarified, "The more active administrative sector of this organization will definitely increase productivity and solve many problems in the country".

"Ghaem 100" Satellite Carrier Launch Shows National Authority

TEHRAN (MNA) - Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Nasser Kanaani says that the successful launch of the "Ghaem 100" satellite carrier demonstrates Iran's national authority.

In a tweet on Monday, the Iranian diplomat called the successful launch of "Ghaem 100" another demonstration of the national authority and ability of Iran's young scientists to achieve science and new technologies despite the sanctions.

Kanaani added that such achievements make the enemies of Iran angry.

On November 5, Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Aerospace Force successfully test-launched the "Ghaem 100" satellite carrier into suborbital space.

The test-launch was carried out in the presence of the Commander of the Aerospace Force of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh and a group of officials of the country's armed forces on Saturday.

"Ghaem 100" three-stage solid fuel carrier is capable of placing satellites weighing 80 kg into orbit 500 kilometers from the earth's surface.

Gov't Seeking to Speed Up Iran's Space Industry Progress

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The Ministry of Information and Communications Technology of Iran said that the administration of President Ebrahim Raisi was speeding up the development of the space industry of the Islamic Republic.

The ministry explained that the Raisi administration is determined to make use of the benefits of the space as much as possible.

The Supreme Space Council of Iran held its first meeting last year to resume its activities after a decade-long pause.

The council decided to prepare a 10-year plan for the space industry of the Islamic country, so it held tens of specialized sessions.

The Supreme Space Council of Iran, as the coordinator of all apparatuses active in this regard, has made all-out efforts to prepare a 10-year program on the basis of experts' suggestions as well as the realities on the ground and real infrastructure available in the country.

Therefore, skepticism about Iran's space program has its roots in a media propaganda campaign, which has been hatched to disappoint the elite and scientists.

Launching three research and operational satellites into orbit, out of which two of the launches have been successful, should be seen as the reality.

Enemies Did What They Could to Stop Iran's Progress in Riots

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iranian Judiciary chief Gholamhossein Ejei said that the recent riots were instigated by the enemies, who made every effort to stop Islamic Republic's progress after sanctioning policy failed.

Speaking in Monday's meeting of the Supreme Judicial Council, Iranian Judiciary chief Gholamhossein Ejei said, "Since the very first days of the recent cases, the judicial authorities asked the security and law enforcement agencies to identify, detain and introduce the main elements behind the riots. Good success was achieved and this process still continues."

"All the people who committed murder during the recent riots should be identified and introduced to the judicial system as soon as possible," Ejei added.

The Judiciary chief described the riots as part of the hybrid war against the country waged by the enemies with the United States, the Zionist Israeli regime, and the UK at the top with the help of their cohorts inside the country to undermine the country's security and stop the country's progress.

Ejei added that the enemies were angered by the fact the country was making progress and expanding economic and trade relations with the regional and neighboring countries despite the sanctions and sought to stop the trend.

"The enemies saw that our government is passing through this turning point despite the alleged crippling sanctions they had imposed and was expanding relations with neighboring countries and some big countries in the world and concluding long-term and strategic contracts and agreements with them. These things cannot be tolerated by the enemy. Therefore, they started a hybrid war but failed," he pointed out.

Independent States Need Planning to Use Int'l Organizations

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Deputy foreign minister for political affairs emphasizing that America takes advantage of international organization faultily against independent countries, said such states, too, need planning to use international bodies' capacities.

Deputy foreign ministers of Russia, Venezuela and Cuba, who are in Tehran to attend the 1st Meeting of Coordinators of National Group of Friends to Support UN Charter, had separate meetings with Iran Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Ali Bagheri Kani.

The Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Vreshnin in his meeting with Bagheri Kani criticized the US policies in taking instrumental advantage of the human rights issue, emphasizing that the UN Secretariat Office must heed its responsibilities and Tehran-Moscow cooperation to counter the west's political and economic pressure is of extreme importance.

The Venezuelan Deputy Foreign Minister Carlos



Julio Martinez, and the Cuban Deputy Foreign Minister Elio Rodríguez Perdomo, too, in separate meetings with Deputy Foreign Minister Bagheri Kani while emphasizing the need for increased economic cooperation and resistance against the US totalitarian approach in various fields, said that safeguarding the independent countries' interests is a dire necessity.

The Iranian deputy foreign minister, too, in those meetings referred to the miscellaneous and numerous capacities in any of the member countries of the Coordinators of National Group of Friends to Support UN Charter, reiterated, "Combining the political, economic, legal, and media capacities of the independent countries versus the totalitarian approach of the Americans and their western allies, will decrease the imposed pressure.

Bagheri Kani said that the U.S. take advantage of the international organizations and foundations faultily against the independent countries to secure its own illegitimate interests.

Iran, Russia Deputy FMs Discuss Regional, Int'l Issues

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Deputy Foreign Minister Ali Asghar Khaji and his Russian counterpart Sergey Vreshnin, in a meeting in Tehran on Sunday, reviewed the latest regional and international developments including what is going on in Syria, Libya, and Yemen.

The Russian deputy foreign minister is in the Iranian capital on the head of a delegation.

Referring to the improved stability and security in Syria, the Iranian official urged the need for economic reconstruction in the country and alleviating the suffering of the Syrian people.

Khaji also stressed the necessity for the expansion of bilateral cooperation between Iran and Russia and increased support of the international community to help the reconstruction process in Syria.



The two officials also discussed the developments on the ground in Libya and Yemen, and stressed the need for efforts to preserve solidarity and territorial integrity in the country without the intervention of aliens.

The Iranian side highlighted the significance of extending a ceasefire deal in Yemen to help proceed with political dialogue to bring about peace and stability in the country.

Iran to Partake in Automotive Meetings Bursa 2022

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Secretary of the Iranian Auto Parts Manufacturers Association (IAPMA) Arash Mohebnejad said that the Iranian auto parts manufacturers will attend in Automotive Meetings Bursa 2022.

Mohebnejad who was addressing an automotive conference in Tehran referred to MIMS Automobility Moscow 2022 and termed that expo as it was a very good opportunity for Iranian car manufacturers and auto parts manufacturers.

He said that Russian market is highly attractive for the production and export of auto parts, and a committee has been formed to follow up on the issues related to the MIMS Automobility Moscow 2022. Secretary of the Iranian Auto Parts Manufacturers Association (IAPMA) in his remarks said that that the Iranian auto parts manufacturers will take part in Automotive Meetings Bursa 2022.

The MIMS Automobility Moscow 2022 was held on August 22-25 at Moscow Expo Center and 600 companies from 18 countries attended the expo.

Earlier, Iran's Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali predicted that Iranian companies' presence at the exhibition will have a positive effect on the country's car and car parts exports and trigger cooperation between Iranian and Russian companies for joint production.

Iran Launches 1st Book Internet Television Channel

TEHRAN (IP) - The secretary of the 30th Book Week of the Islamic Republic of Iran said that the first book internet television channel has been launched in the country to achieve a new Islamic civilization in Iranian society.

Ali Ramezani, the CEO of Iran Book and Literature House and the secretary of the 30th Book Week of the Islamic Republic of Iran, who is speaking as the keynote speaker of the event, said that the first book internet television channel had been launched in Islamic Iran.

He added that the book's exclusive network was planned and established on virtual platforms. Ramezani said: "On November 15, like every year, we will honor librarians all across Iran."

According to the CEO of Iran Book and Literature House, in this year's theme, "We are the ones who read," all different classes of readers have been addressed; many of them have reached their current position by passing through the path of reading books."

He went on to say that creating a platform to improve the level of public awareness

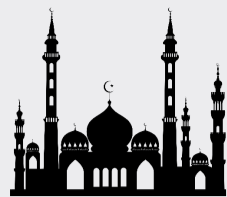
and knowledge, providing a base for cultural guidance of the society in the direction of a wise, hopeful and lively life among the general public and in a transcendental horizon, preparing the society to achieve the new Islamic civilization is among the missions of this online television channel.

He said that the National Book Fair of Holy Defense will be held in Iran's Qom, with the presence of 90 publishers and six thousand book titles, and will continue until November 18.

He added that 90 publishers would attend the event, and it will showcase some six thousand book titles for enthusiasts.

116 million copies of printed book signal revitalization of Iran's publishing industry in post-COVID era

In his remarks, he also said that since last year's Book Week, about 116 million copies of books had been published in the country.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	11:48
■ Evening (Maghreb)	17:21
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:08
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:34

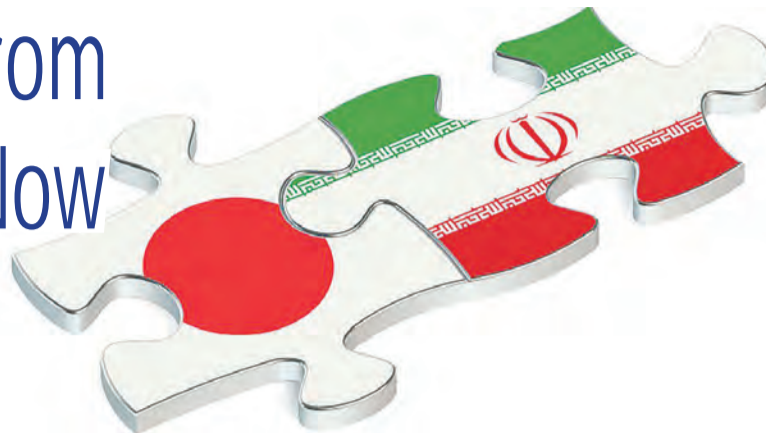
12. "Verily I am thy Lord! therefore (in My presence) put off thy shoes: thou art in the sacred valley Tuwa.

13. "I have chosen thee: listen, then, to the inspiration (sent to thee).

Surah 20. Ta-ha (12 - 13)

Direct Import of Cars From Japan 'Impossible' for Now

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK



TEHRAN - Chairman of the Iran-Japan Joint Trade Committee says without any doubt reforming relations with Japan will help the trade ties between the two countries to broaden but at the current condition, there is no chance for direct import of cars from Japan.

Speaking to ILNA, Bahram Shakouri pointed to the role of ambassador in developing trade ties and said that Iran, in an important country like Japan, has no trade ambassador while these envoys can play important roles in broadening trade relations although Iran with having embassies and ambassadors in many countries has failed to take important actions for advancing broadening of trade ties.

He added that Japan is one of the economic poles of the world and Iranian government should attach more importance to relation with Japan because Japan can replace European countries and the U.S. in the field of knowledge and technology transfer.

Shakouri went on to say that Toyota Company produces over 10m cars per year that 75% of its products are offered in the international markets. He added that the U.S. and Europe are themselves car manufacturers but since the price and quality of Asian cars especially the Japanese are good and suitable, the demands for purchase of Japanese cars exist in the European and the U.S. markets.

He stated that Japanese auto-makers can invest in Iran or export cars to Iran, adding that materialization of this will be possible when Iran improves the course of interactions with the world, and without any doubt, reforming ties will lead to

broadening trade ties with Japan and at the current condition, Iran cannot import cars from Japan directly.

Shakouri then pointed to the joint investment of the Japanese with Americans and said that keeping the trade relations with the U.S. is important for the Japanese because the U.S. is the biggest trade partner of the Japanese and most of Japanese products are sold in the U.S. market and therefore trade with the U.S. is more important than with Iran for the Japanese.

He admitted due to the sanctions on Iran, the Japanese are currently not interested in trade with Iran but it is possible for Iran to import cars via the third party country.

He said that the industry ministry has set condition for import of cars and there should be representative of the companies for the after sales services and this condition will almost zero the chance of presence of the foreign car manufacturers in Iran in the sanctions era and this condition means that Iran can only import cars from China and Russia.

Shakouri added that the trade volume of Iran and Japan is currently below \$30m and noted that Iran's trade relation with Japan dates back to over 90 years and Japanese are interested in working with Iran but traders first think about their profits and since their profits in trade with the U.S. is more than trade with Iran, it is natural they choose the U.S. and Iran can import required equipment via the third party countries.

Dividend of EORC Up by 357%

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

ISFAHAN - The CEO of Esfahan Oil Refining Company (EORC) says dividend of each share of the company has increased by 357% in the first half of the year comparing to the same period last year.



Mohsen Ghadiri said that the dividend of each share of the company in the first half of the year has increased by 357% comparing to the same period last year, adding that this rise of the profit of the share is due to some factors that the main one is the index of crack spread (the overall pricing difference between a barrel of crude oil and the petroleum products refined from it).

He added that the most important thing is that despite continuous rise in the price of feed and oil products of the oil and refining companies, Esfahan Refinery has achieved this success due to the change in the approach of board of directors and current CEO in making strategic decisions especially boosting hope among the personnel and job security for them and change in the organizational chart.

Ghadiri noted that EORC supplies over 25% of the fuel of the country, adding that Euro standard gasoline produced by the company in recent years has turned into one of the company's honors and achievements in field of reducing air pollution resulted from using fossil fuels in big cities like Isfahan, Tehran and Arak.

He added that by the launch of the gasoline refining unit from last month and reducing the amount of sulfur to less than 10ppm as well as producing Euro standard gasoline, the company not only will earn more profit in the second half of the year but also it will considerably help reducing air pollution.

Ghadiri then pointed to other factors which helped the company reach more profitability like precise injection of feeds to the units like Jay Oil and Sepahan Oil.

He added that the profit of the company which has not been officially audited has reached 20.6 thousand million tomans which is unique.

\$898m Worth of Exports to Iraq Through Mehran Border

ILAM (IRNA) - Iran exported 1,944,000 tons of goods worth \$898 million to Iraq and other countries via Mehran border crossing located in Ilam Province during the first six months of the Iranian calendar year (started March 21), said Director-General of Ilam Customs Administration Ruhollah Gholami Gholami said that the amount of goods transited from Mehran border crossing during the first six months of the current year exceeded more than 99,000 tons.

Gholami in his remarks added that 500 trucks cross Mehran border every day, and during the first six months of the current fiscal year more than 81,000 trucks crossed this international border.

The director-general of Ilam Customs Administration said that Iran exported goods worth \$1,161,000,000 to Iraq and other countries via Mehran border crossing located in Ilam Province last year.

Located 230 km from Baghdad, Mehran is Iran's closest border city to the Iraqi capital.

Iran, Kazakhstan to Implement Pilot Sea-Rail Transport Plan

BANDAR ABBAS (IRNA) - Kazakhstan and Iran plan to implement a pilot sea-rail transport project slated for the beginning of the next year, an Iranian official announced.

Hossein Abbasnejad, the director general of the Ports and Maritime Department of Hormozgan Province, pointed to a recent visit by Serik Zhumangarin, Kazakhstan's acting deputy prime minister and minister of trade and integration, to Shahid Rajaei Port, noting that both countries start joint port activities at the port.

Abbasnejad went on to say that as a result of the recent situation that erupted after the Russia-Ukraine war, one of the important issues concerning the transit of commodities is the use of the North-South International Corridor and Iran's special position in terms of export and import in the eyes of the Central Asian countries and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

Kazakhstan is among the states that have expressed their readiness to transit their goods via Shahid Rajaei Port, he said, adding that Astana and Tehran pursue



joint ventures to develop investment in the transit sector.

The CIS member states attach importance to the railroad in order to be able to transport their commodities from north to south Iran and then export them to southern countries, the Iranian official noted.

According to the director general, a technical committee of representatives from both countries is going to be formed within the next two months in order to discuss mechanisms and requirements to implement the joint venture, including a plan for applying a railway to transfer goods by the use of containers from northern Iran to Shahid Rajaei Port.

The two sides decided on the pilot and limited utilization of containers in the north-south route, he said, noting that the process would be expanded if the results are satisfactory at this stage.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Abbasnejad said that Kazakhstan's prime minister is scheduled to visit Iran simultaneously with the New Year and that the Kazakh authorities are keen on witnessing the initiation of the joint economic activity at the port at the same time.

Zhumangarin, heading a delegation of representatives from Kazakhstan's governmental entities and private sector, visited Shahid Rajaei Port in southern Hormozgan province on November 1 with the aim of inspecting the potential for investment in terminals of the Iranian port.

On Saturday, a delegation of 26 tradesmen and representatives of Russian transportation companies visited Shahid Rajaei Port in order to become familiar with the advantages of investing in the largest trade port in Iran.

Petchem Parks to Create Jobs for 20,000 People

TEHRAN (MNA) - Oil Minister Javad Owji has said 13 petrochemical industry parks are going to be constructed in the country which will create job opportunities for over 20,000 people, Shana reported.

Speaking on national TV on Sunday night, Owji said the mentioned parks are going to be constructed in southern Iran where most of the country's oil and gas reserves lay.

According to the official, the Oil Ministry first identified 29 areas in four provinces on the coasts of the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, and after assessing the mentioned areas 13 sites have been finally chosen based on studies of land, the possibility of providing feed and the availability of ancillary facilities.

Mentioning a meeting with First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber and some experts and oil industry officials, as well as the representatives of some major petrochemical complexes on Sunday, Oji said that the resources for the implementation of these parks are going to be supplied by the Persian Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company (PGPIC), bank facilities, and some private investment.

"These parks will be established in four provinces of Khuzestan, Bushehr, Hormozgan, and Sistan-Baluchestan," he added.

"One of the main duties of the Oil Ministry is to prevent the sale of raw materials and to complete the oil industry's value chain, which is emphasized by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution," Oji said.

Mentioning the country's petrochemical capacity, the minister said: "Today there are 60 petrochemical complexes in the country whose 70 percent of major products are exported in the form of semi-crude products, and the other 30 percent is consumed inside the country."

Saying that the completion of the value chain is one of the priorities of the Oil Ministry, Oji added: "In this regard, a plan has been made to complete the value chain for the mentioned 70 percent of products; this can create added value, prevent the outflow of revenues, generate higher income and create jobs."

Free Zones the Driving Force of National Economic Development

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Secretary of the Supreme Council of Free Trade, Industrial and Special Economic Zones Hojatollah Abdolmaleki in meeting with deputies and officials of the council termed free zones as the driving force and engine of national economic development.

Abdolmaleki said that the whole group of the council is considered as one of the important sectors of the national economy and government and President is very sensitive about these zones.

He added that free zones due to their properties and condition have turned into the driving national economic force and then pointed to the shortages in some of free zones of the country and added that there are some complaints regarding the performance of free zones like problems in other economic systems of the country but there are some acceptable capacities against these problems. He then pointed to the general policies of resistance economy in the free and special economic zones, adding that transfer of the advanced technology, expansion and easing production, exporting goods and services, providing required needs and financial resources from outside and above all welfare of residents of these zones are of the general policies of resistance economy in these zones which have been emphasized in it.

Regarding the launch of new free zones, Abdolmaleki said that the law has final say and if it is approved, it will be implemented very fast.

He then thanked his predecessor Mr. Saeed Mohammad and also caretaker of the council Mr. Nasrollah Ebrahimi for their efforts in the council during their presence in the office.



PGPIC Tries to Compensate Lag In Downstream Industries

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Head of Persian Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company (PGPIC) in a TV program said that the company is trying to compensate the chronic lag in the field of downstream industries.



Ali Askari said that as the Supreme Leader and President have emphasized preventing from crude sales, PGPIC is trying to compensate the chronic lag in the field of downstream industries.

He added that PGPIC as the biggest petrochemical company present in the stock market has extraordinary human technical and financial capability for entering the chain of creating value added in the downstream industries.

He invited domestic knowledge-based companies for creating a petrochemical park in 13 ports and regions of the country. He reiterated that creating wealth without capability of technology is impossible, adding that the condition like infrastructure, electricity and gas is ready for the launch of the petrochemical parks in four areas out of the 13 specific regions. He noted that infrastructures should be created and completed in remaining 9 regions.

Askari added that since the infrastructures are ready in the regions of Parsian, Naiband, Mahshahr and Chabahar, the executive trend of launching the parks will start sooner than other regions. He added that due to the emphasis of the Supreme Leader, the look and trend of development in Chabahar region will be changed drastically and PGPIC will cooperate in creating the primary infrastructures in this important port.

He also said that the company welcomes entering of the knowledge-based companies and owners of capital and technical capabilities in the trend of creating petrochemical parks and to this end, it has had some valuable meetings with the first vice president and oil minister. He noted that banks have also announced readiness in cooperating for the launch of these parks.

Cameroon's Paul Biya Marks 40 Years as President

YAOUNDE (Dispatches) - When Paul Biya first took the helm of Cameroon, Ronald Reagan was in his second year of presidency, Madonna had not yet made the charts and the Soviet Union was still nearly a decade away from break-up.

Biya, who at 89 will notch up 40 years in power on Sunday, became one of the world's longest-serving leaders thanks to iron-fisted rule and support from loyalists in key positions.

After seven years as the central African country's prime minister, he entered the presidential palace on November 6, 1982, becoming only the second head of state since independence from France in 1960.



Imran Khan Welcomes Probe Into Shooting

LAHORE (Dispatches) - Former Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan said he welcomed the government's offer to launch a judicial commission to investigate the attack in which he was shot in the leg on Thursday.

Khan made the remarks in a video broadcast live on social media from a hospital in the eastern city of Lahore, where he was receiving treatment after being shot during a protest march three days earlier in what he and supporters called an assassination attempt. The government has said it will investigate the shooting.

On Sunday afternoon following Khan's remarks, a spokesman for the provincial government said he had been discharged from hospital and left for his home in Lahore.



U.S. Urges Ukraine to Be Open to Russia Talks



WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The United States is privately encouraging Ukraine to signal an openness to negotiate with Russia, the Washington Post reported, as the State Department said Moscow was escalating the war and did not seriously wish to engage in peace talks.

The newspaper cited unnamed sources as saying the request by American officials was not aimed at pushing Ukraine to the negotiating table, but a calculated attempt to ensure Kyiv maintains the support of other nations.

U.S. and Ukrainian officials acknowledged that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy's ban on talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin had generated concern in parts of Europe, Africa and Latin America, where the war's effects on costs of food and fuel are felt most sharply, the Post said.

"Ukraine fatigue is a real thing for some of our partners," it quoted an unnamed U.S. official as saying. Zelenskiy signed a decree on Oct. 4 formally declaring the prospect of any Ukrainian talks with Putin "impossible" but leaving the door open to talks with Russia.

The White House National Security Council had no immediate comment on the accuracy of the report.

A State Department spokesperson responded: "We've said it before and will say it again: Actions speak louder than words. If Russia is ready for negotiation, it should stop its bombs and missiles and withdraw its forces from Ukraine."

"The Kremlin continues to escalate this war. The Kremlin has demonstrated its unwillingness to seriously engage in negotiations since even before it launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine."

The spokesperson also noted remarks by Zelenskiy on Friday, in which he said: "We are ready for peace, for a fair and just peace, the formula of which we have voiced many times."

In his nightly address to the Ukrainian people on Friday, Zelenskiy added: "The world knows our position. This is respect for the U.N. Charter, respect for our territorial integrity, respect for our people."

U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said during a visit to Kyiv on Friday that Washington's support for Ukraine would remain "unwavering and unflinching" after Tuesday's midterm congressional elections.

The United States announced \$400 million worth of additional security assistance for Ukraine, including refurbishing T-72 tanks from the Czech Republic and missiles for HAWK air defences that could be used against Russian drones and cruise missiles.

The new assistance brought the amount of U.S. military aid sent to Kyiv to more than \$18.2 billion since the invasion.

COP27 Kicks Off With Deal to Discuss Climate Compensation

SHARM EL-SHEIKH (Dispatches) - Delegates from nearly 200 countries kicked off the U.N. climate summit in Egypt on Sunday with an agreement to discuss compensating poor nations for mounting damage linked to global warming, placing the controversial topic on the agenda for the first time since climate talks began decades ago.

The agreement set a constructive tone for the COP27 summit in the seaside resort town of Sharm el-Sheikh, where governments hope to keep alive a goal to avert the worst impacts of planetary warming even as a slew of crises - from a land war in Europe to rampant inflation - distract the international focus.

For more than a decade, wealthy nations have rejected official discussions on what is referred to as loss and damage, the term used to describe rich nations paying out funds to help poor countries cope with the consequences of global warming for which they bear little blame.

At COP26 last year in Glasgow, high-income nations, including the United States and the European Union blocked a proposal for a loss and damage financing body, instead supporting a three-year dialogue for funding discussions.

But pressure to address the issue has been increasing as weather calamities mount, including this year's floods in Pakistan that caused economic losses of more than \$30 billion and left hundreds of thousands homeless.

"The inclusion of this agenda reflects a sense of solidarity for the victims of climate disasters," COP27 President Sameh Shoukry told the opening plenary. He added the decision created "an institutionally stable space" for discussion of funding for loss and damage, and that the talks are intended to lead to a conclusive decision "no later than 2024".

The issue could ramp up diplomatic tensions already stretched by Russia's war on Ukraine, a surge in energy prices and the risks of economic recession triggered by inflation. Negotiations on Saturday night before the agenda's adoption "were extremely challenging," Harjeet Singh, head of global political strategy at the non-profit Climate Action Network International, said.

Over 87,000 people have landed in Italy so far this year, according to the interior ministry -- though only 14 percent of those were rescued at sea and brought to safety by charity vessels.

Sources close to far-right transport minister Matteo Salvini, who controls the ports, said Sunday the Geo Barents was only being allowed in temporarily. "Those who remain on the vessel will be provided with the assistance necessary to leave territorial waters," the sources said. The 35 migrants refused permission to leave the Humanity 1 were "extremely depressed", SOS Humanity's press officer Petra Krischok told AFP.

Italy's new far-right government, which was sworn in last month, has vowed to crack down on boat migrants attempting the perilous crossing from North Africa to Europe.

Minor and the sick were let off the German-flagged Humanity 1 in the early hours at the port of Catania, but 35 adult male migrants were refused permission to set foot on Italian soil, charity SOS Humanity said.

Fellow humanitarian vessel Geo Barents, run by Doctors Without Borders' and sailing under a Norwegian flag, said it too has been summoned so authorities could "evaluate vulnerable cases" among the 572 rescued people on board.

Interior Minister Matteo Piantedosi earlier said those who do not "qualify" would have to "leave territorial waters", after refusing requests by four charity vessels for a safe port.

The Geo Barents, Ocean Viking and Rise Above are still carrying 900 migrants between them.

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E. Guinea Accuses France, Spain, U.S. of Election Interference

MALABO (Dispatches) - Equatorial Guinea on Sunday accused Spain, France and the United States of "interference" in its presidential and legislative elections scheduled for November 20.

President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, who has ruled his country with an iron fist for 43 years, launched his bid for a sixth term this week in a first campaign event.

Equatorial Guinea, a former Spanish colony, reproached the three countries after their diplomats attended a campaign event this week by one of the two opposition movements authorised to present candidates in the polls.

The foreign ministry described it as "interference in the country's internal affairs" in a statement.

Obiang's dominant Democratic Party of Equatorial Guinea (PDGE) holds 99 of the 100 seats in the outgoing lower house of parliament and all the senate seats.

It was the country's single legal political movement until 1991, when multi-party politics were introduced.

Running against Obiang are Andres Esono Ondo of the Convergence for Social Democracy party (CPDS) and Buenaventura Monsuy Asumu, who represents the Party of the Democratic Social Coalition.

In a tweet on Thursday, US State Department spokesman Ned Price said Washington was "concerned by reports of arrests and harassment of opposition members and civil society" and called on the government to hold "free and fair" elections.

"Equatorial Guinea can cultivate a more inclusive, peaceful, and democratic society by ensuring the expression of diverse political perspectives, a free and fair voting process, and the protection of the human rights of all individuals," Price said.

Security forces have waged a ruthless campaign over several weeks including arresting opponents.

But the government says the detentions are part of a crackdown on a "plot" by the opposition to plan "attacks" on "gas stations, Western embassies and ministers' homes".

Obiang, 80, came to power in a 1979 coup and is the longest-ruling head of state in the world excluding monarchs.

He has never officially been re-elected with less than 93 percent of the vote.

More than 425,000 voters are registered for the polls out of a population of around 1.4 million.

The country possesses major oil and gas resources, but a majority of its 1.3 million people live below the poverty line, according to the World Bank.



Arizona Election Workers Face Midterm Threats

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Election workers in Arizona's most fiercely contested county faced more than 100 violent threats and intimidating communications in the run-up to Tuesday's midterms, most of them based on election conspiracy theories promoted by former President Donald Trump and his allies.

The harassment in Maricopa County included menacing emails and social media posts, threats to circulate personal information online and photographing employees arriving at work, according to nearly 1,600 pages of documents obtained by Reuters through a public records request for security records and correspondence related to threats and harassments against election workers.

Between July 11 and Aug. 22, the county election office documented at least 140 threats and other hostile communications, the records show. "You will all be executed," said one. "Wire around their limbs and tied & dragged by a car," wrote another.

The documents reveal the consequences of election conspiracy theories as voters nominated candidates in August to compete in the midterms. Many of the threats in Maricopa County, which helped propel President Joe Biden to victory over Trump in 2020, cited debunked claims around fake ballots, rigged voting machines and corrupt election officials.

Other jurisdictions nationwide have seen threats and harassment this year by the former president's supporters and prominent Republican figures who question the legitimacy of the 2020 election, according to interviews with Republican and Democratic election officials in 10 states.

The threats come at a time of growing concern over the risk of political violence, highlighted by the Oct. 28 attack on Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's husband by a man who embraced right-wing conspiracy theories.

In Maricopa, a county of 4.5 million people that includes Phoenix, the harassment unnerved some election workers, according to previously unreported incidents documented in the emails and interviews with county officials.



As Violence Torments Guayaquil, Even Police Cower

GUAYAQUIL (Dispatches) - Two uniformed agents cower behind a wall, gun at the ready, fearfully eying a car parked outside their police station after nightfall in the violence-stricken Ecuadoran port city of Guayaquil.

Any car near a police station in these parts is viewed with suspicion after a recent spate of gun and explosives attacks blamed on a gruesome gang war that has killed dozens of officers since last year.

Numerous attacks this week in the city of 2.8 million people have killed five police officers and a civilian, and injured at least 17 members of the security forces.

Officials say the attacks were a response by organized crime to an ongoing mass transfer of inmates from the infamous Guayas 1 prison in Guayaquil to other jails controlled by different gangs.

On Friday, special police units oversaw the transfer of gang leaders even as journalists and concerned family members who were gathered outside could hear loud detonations coming from the jail.

"We have dealt a big blow to organized crime," President Guillermo Lasso said in a radio and television address after the operation to transfer 1,000 inmates.

Officers "deployed all necessary actions to deal with organized crime, drug trafficking and its links to politics," he said.

But even police live in fear in Guayaquil, where gangs outgun law enforcement and everything from the port to the prisons are under criminal control.

So far this year, the commercial heart of Ecuador has seen 1,200 murders — 60 per cent more than in 2021, according to official data.

"I've seen bombs explode," said a Guayaquil petrol station attendant who did not want to be named for fear of retribution.

"That's the danger right now. You have to watch out for any motorcyclist: If they leave something behind or throw something... you have to watch out," he told AFP.

Ecuador — once a relatively peaceful neighbor of major cocaine producers Colombia and Peru has seen a wave of violent crime that authorities blame on turf battles between rival gangs with ties to Mexican cartels.

President Lasso responded to this week's rash of attacks by declaring a state of emergency and nighttime curfew in the Guayas and Esmeraldas provinces, which was extended Friday to include Santa Domingo de los Tsachilas.

He also ordered the deployment of troops to the three provinces, home to a third of Ecuador's 18 million inhabitants.

The streets of Guayaquil, worst hit by the violence, are largely empty at night, and police are on high alert. They patrol in vans with the lights turned off or barricade themselves at their command posts wearing bulletproof vests.

Streets where politicians' homes are located are fenced off to any traffic and petrol station attendants man their posts in terror after a number were targeted in the most recent fear-mongering campaign.

It has become an occupation of "life or death," said one attendant, 21, who did not want to be named and said he feared being shot dead by "merciless" criminals.

Lasso has vowed his government will "not surrender to narco-terrorists."

Ecuador has gone from being a drug transit route in recent years to an important distribution centre in its own right. The United States and Europe are the main destinations for drugs from Latin America.

The murder rate in Ecuador nearly doubled in 2021 to 14 per 100,000 inhabitants, and reached 18 per 100,000 between January and October this year, according to official data.



Controversial Monkey Study Reignites Animal Testing Debate

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Mother monkeys permanently separated from their newborns sometimes find comfort in plush toys: this recent finding from Harvard experiments has set off intense controversy among scientists and reignited the ethical debate over animal testing.

The paper, Triggers for mother love was authored by neuroscientist Margaret Livingstone and appeared in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS) in September to little fanfare or media coverage.

But once news of the study began spreading on social media, it provoked a firestorm of criticism and eventually a letter to PNAS signed by over 250 scientists calling for a retraction.

Animal rights groups meanwhile recalled Livingstone's past work, that included temporarily suturing shut the eyelids of infant monkeys in order to study the impact on their cognition.

"We cannot ask monkeys for consent, but we can stop using, publishing, and in this case actively promoting cruel methods that knowingly cause extreme distress," wrote Catherine Hobaiter, a primatologist at the University of St Andrews, who co-authored the retraction letter.

Hobaiter told AFP she was awaiting a response from the journal before further comment, but expected news soon. Harvard and Livingstone, for their part, have strongly defended the research.

Livingstone's observations "can help scientists understand maternal bonding in humans and can inform comforting interventions to help women cope with loss in the immediate aftermath of suffering a miscarriage or experiencing a still birth," said Harvard Medical School in a statement.

Livingstone, in a separate statement, said: "I have joined the ranks of scientists targeted and demonized by opponents of animal research, who seek to abolish lifesaving research in all animals."

Such work routinely attracts the ire of groups such as People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), which opposes all forms of animal testing.

This controversy has notably provoked strong responses in the scientific community, particularly from animal behavior researchers and primatologists, said Alan McElligot of the City University of Hong Kong's Centre for Animal Health and a co-signer of the PNAS letter.

He told AFP that Livingstone appears to have replicated research performed by Harry Harlow, a notorious American psychologist, from the mid-20th century.

Harlow's experiments on maternal deprivation in rhesus macaques were considered groundbreaking, but may have also helped catalyze the early animal liberation movement.

"It just ignored all of the literature that we already have on attachment theory," added Holly Root-Gutteridge, an animal behavior scientist at the University of Lincoln in Britain.

McElligot and Root-Gutteridge argue the case was emblematic of a wider problem in animal research, in which questionable studies and papers continue to pass institutional reviews and are published in high impact journals.

McElligot pointed to a much-critiqued 2020 paper extolling the efficiency of foot snares to capture jaguars and cougars for scientific study in Brazil.

More recently, experiments on marmosets that included invasive surgeries have attracted controversy. The University of Massachusetts Amherst team behind the work says studying the tiny monkeys, which have 10-year-lifespans and experience cognitive decline in their old age, are essential to better understand Alzheimers in people.

Opponents argue results rarely translate across species.



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German Pensions Could Rise by Up to 4.2% in 2023

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Germany's more than 20 million pensioners will likely see their state benefit rise by up to 4.2% from July 2023, according to a government proposal seen by Reuters, lower than the expected inflation rate of 7.0%.

The state pension in western Germany will rise by 3.5%, while in former East Germany it will increase by 4.2% according to the draft, as the government continues to narrow the gap between the two regions.

The final decision on pension increases will depend on wage growth data released in early 2023.



Kazakh President Signs Constitutional Amendments Into Law

ASTANA (Dispatches) - Kazakhstan President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev signed into law the constitutional amendments to re-establish the Constitutional Court and expand the powers of the country's Human Rights Commissioner and the human rights focus of the Prosecutor General, among other laws, at a public ceremony on Nov. 5 at Akorda, reported the presidential press service.

The six laws that Tokayev signed during the ceremony were adopted following the June 5 national referendum on amendments to the Constitution and marked the "beginning of a constitutional reform". They are meant to introduce the initiatives he voiced in his March 16 state-of-the-nation address.

"The constitutional reform marked the beginning of a new era in the history of Kazakhstan. It allowed consolidating the political transformation of the last three years and laying a solid foundation for strengthening our statehood. From now on, the principles of justice, transparency and solidarity will be strictly observed. The referendum convincingly showed that we can withstand unprecedented external and internal challenges," said Tokayev.

Based on the amendments, the Constitutional Court will start functioning from Jan. 1, 2023. The Constitutional Court will consist of 11 judges. Six judges are appointed by the Parliament (three judges each by the Mazhilis and the Senate), and four judges are appointed by the President. The Chairperson of the Constitutional Court is appointed by the President with the consent of the Senate.

The human rights commissioner has also been granted immunity from prosecution, has become independent and not accountable to any state bodies and officials, and has the right to apply directly to the Constitutional Court, the same right that the country's citizens will also acquire. The human rights function of the Prosecutor General has also been strengthened, as the Prosecutor General now has the right to apply to the Constitutional Court to review any of the country's legal acts to ensure their compliance with the Constitution, including laws.

The laws also regulate Kazakhstan's transition to a mixed electoral system, according to a system of proportional representation in the territory of a single nationwide constituency, as well as in single-mandate territorial constituencies.

Besides state officials, the public ceremony also gathered experts and public figures, who took part in the writing of the amendments. Photo credit: Akorda.kz

Some deputies of the Mazhilis, a lower chamber of the Kazakh Parliament, and the regional maslikhats (local representative bodies), and deputies of district maslikhats will be elected in single-member districts. Kazakhstan will have elections to the Mazhilis and maslikhats in the first half of the next year, which, according to Tokayev, will be held according to "new, more fair and open rules."

Tokayev reiterated that the people will continue to be a priority for the state and that the idea of justice will become the basis of the state policy.

"Our Constitution proclaims that the land and its subsoil, water, flora and fauna and other natural resources belong to the people. Thanks to the adoption of this norm, a large-scale National Fund for Children program will be launched. The true greatness of a nation is the well-being of each family and each citizen, which is why the national economy should work for the benefit of the people," said the President.

China Workers in Economic Corridor in Pakistan to Get Bullet-Proof Cars

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - Amid the growing concerns over the safety and security of Chinese nationals working on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects, Pakistan and China on Sunday agreed to use bullet-proof vehicles for all outdoor movement of Chinese workers.

"It has been decided that bullet-proof vehicles shall be used for all outdoor movements of the Chinese employed on projects," said the draft minutes of the 11th Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) of the CPEC, which had been exchanged by Pakistan and China, reported The Express Tribune.

Against general expectations, Pakistan and China did not sign the 11th JCC minutes during the two-day visit of the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to Beijing earlier this week. In the past, the minutes were signed immediately after the JCC. Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal had said after the meeting that the minutes would be signed during the Prime Minister's visit, reported The Express Tribune.

"Due to a very short visit of only 24 hours some of the memoranda of understanding, including the minutes of the JCC, could not be signed," the Minister said.

"About 17 meetings took place in a span of 24 hours, which left no time for some other important engagements," he said, adding that either a delegation would soon go to China for the signing or those would be signed virtually. Both the sides have also agreed to strengthen capabilities of the law-enforcement agencies and investigators, reported The Express Tribune.

In order to speed up the investigations into the crimes, involving the Chinese nationals, it had been decided the National Forensic Science Agency (NFSA) would be built on modern lines.



The Pakistani side requested Chinese support for full upgrade of the National Forensic Science Lab in Islamabad. The Chinese side assured their full support for the purpose, according to the draft minutes, reported The Express Tribune.

The Chinese side has also committed to establish a training centre for the private security guards and the LEA personnel to equip them with the modern techniques and modules.

The decisions may help address the concerns of the government of China that was not moving forward on the CPEC front until the security of its nationals was fully guaranteed and Pakistan fulfilled its commitments under the energy deals.

S. Korea's GDP Growth May Fall Below 2% In 2023

SEOUL (Dispatches) - South Korea's gross domestic product (GDP) growth may fall below 2 percent next year due to the impact of high interest rates, high inflation and a weak won on its economy, experts said.

Private-sector economists said they find few upside factors that will keep the country's economic growth at the rate of 2 percent in 2023.

"Exports are slowing amid a global slowdown and domestic consumption is expected to remain sluggish due to high consumer prices and rising interest rates. There will be limited corporate investments due to high borrowing costs," LG Economic Research Institute economist Cho Young-moo said.

Kim Jung-sik, an economics professor at Yonsei University, projected that the real estate market could collapse due to higher lending rates and high inflation.

Hana Bank's financial institute and the Korea Economic Research Institute forecast the country's GDP to grow 1.8 percent and 1.9 percent, respectively, in 2023.

But state-run agencies and overseas financial institutions have yet to lower their growth outlook for South Korea. The Bank of Korea (BOK) and the state-run Korea Development Institute projected Korea's economy to grow 2.1 percent and 2.3 percent, respectively, next year. But the KDI is expected to lower its growth outlook sooner or later.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and the Asian Development Bank forecast growth of 2 percent, 2.2 percent and 2.3 percent for Korea next year.

In its upcoming economic outlook next month, the government is widely expected to lower its growth outlook of 2.6 percent for South Korea in 2023.

Consumer prices, a key gauge of inflation, increased at the fastest pace in almost 24 years at 6.3 percent in July and rose 5.7 percent in October from a year earlier.

The country's key interest rate stands at 3 percent, lower than the U.S. benchmark rate at a range of 3.75 percent to 4 percent.



World Food Index Edges Slightly Lower in October

ROME (Dispatches) - The United Nations food agency's world price index edged slightly lower in October, the seventh consecutive monthly fall and some 14.9% down from its all-time high recorded in March.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said that its price index, which tracks the most globally traded food commodities, averaged 135.9 points last month versus a revised 136.0 for September.

The September figure was previously put at 136.3.

The index has fallen from a record of 159.7 in March but remained 2.0% higher than a year earlier.

While prices dipped overall, the cereal index rose 3.0%, with wheat up 3.2%, mostly reflecting uncertainties related to exports from Ukraine and also a downward revision for U.S. supplies. International rice prices increased by 1.0%.

By contrast, FAO's vegetable oil index fell 1.6% in October and was down nearly 20% on its year-earlier level. Rising international quotations for sunflower seed oil were more than offset by lower world prices of palm, soy and rapeseed oils.

Dairy prices fell 1.7%, meat was down 1.4% and sugar eased 0.6%.

In separate cereal supply and demand estimates, FAO lowered its forecast for global cereal production in 2022 to 2.764 billion tons from a previous 2.768 billion tons.

That is 1.8% below the estimated output for 2021.

"The month-on-month downward revision almost entirely concerns the wheat crop in the United States, reflecting downgrades to yields and harvested area," FAO said.

World cereal use in 2022/23 is expected to surpass production at 2.778 billion tons, leading to a projected 2.0% fall in global stocks compared with 2021/22 to 841 million tons.

That would represent a stocks-to-use ratio of 29.4%, down from 30.9% in 2021/22 but still relatively high historically, FAO said. World trade in cereals in 2022/23 was predicted to register a 2.2% contraction to 469 million tons.

India Has Cheapest Manufacturing Cost Globally

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - The report evaluates 85 countries across 73 attributes. Attributes are grouped into 10 sub-categories,

including adventure, agility, entrepreneurship, open for business, social purpose and quality of life.

India has been ranked as the nation with the cheapest manufacturing cost ahead of China and Vietnam, according to a report. According to the US News and World Report, out of 85 nations, India has bagged the 31st position in the overall Best Countries ranking.

India featured at the 37th spot in the 'Open for Business' category.

The report evaluates 85 countries across 73 attributes. Attributes are grouped into 10 sub-categories, including adventure, agility, entrepreneurship, open for business, social purpose and quality of life.

Under the open for business sub-category, India has scored 100 per cent when it comes to cheap manufacturing costs. But in 'favourable tax environment', it has scored 16.2 out of 100; 18.1 in the 'not corrupt' category and 3.5 in 'transparent government policies'.

Similarly, under the 'quality of life' segment, India has scored 1.9 in 'income equality'; 4.3 in 'safe'; 2.3 in 'well-developed public health system'; and 9.9 in 'economically stable' sub-parameter.

The government has taken steps such as rolling out production linked incentive schemes and reducing compliance burden with a view to make India a global manufacturing hub.

In the overall Best Countries ranking, Switzerland has topped the chart, followed by Germany, Canada, US and Sweden.

Sri Lanka Clinches \$300m Annual Loan From IDA



COLOMBO (Dispatches) - Sri Lanka secured a USD 300 million annual commitment from the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA) following a meeting of its deputies in Washington on Thursday, the Sunday Times reliably learns.

As a member of the World Bank, the IDA is the financial institution that offers concessional loans to developing countries. At Thursday's meeting, the IDA reviewed Sri Lanka's request for a temporary downgrade to lower-income-country (LIC) status from a middle-income-country (MIC) status.

The request was for a reverse classification to allow IDA concessional financing as, after the default in April, Sri Lanka was not credit-worthy for loans from the World Bank's IBRD (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development). Sri Lanka was eligible for USD 500 million annually from the IBRD until the default.

In Colombo, a World Bank spokesman said a decision is yet to be reached for the IDA loan, but confirmed Sri Lanka requested a shift from IBRD status (MIC) to IDA Gap status (LIC).

The spokesman said: "The discussions were positive and the World Bank management will communicate its decision to the Government once completed. Amounts under IDA will be determined at that point and communicated. The World Bank's actual financing support is subject to a deep reform agenda and an IMF program," he told the Sunday Times.

Sources in Colombo said the IDA-IBRD financial facility was in the pipeline in the Finance Ministry's foreign fund mobilization program and will, however, remain with middle-income country status.

Sri Lanka in its proposal to the IDA indicated its readiness to develop climate-resilient growth strategies and relevant projects with special attention to gender issues, women, children, and the elderly who are most affected by the economic downturn, senior Finance Ministry officials said.

Tehran, Ashgabat Stress Expansion of Energy Ties

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iran and Turkmenistan's energy ministers have explored ways of expanding relations between the two countries in the energy sector in an online meeting, IRIB reported on Monday.

During the meeting, Ali-Akbar Mehrabian and his Turkmen counterpart Rajab Muradov stressed the need for the expansion of energy ties between the two neighbors.

Mehrabian pointed to the positive political relations between the two countries in the meeting, saying that good relations have also been established between the two sides in the field of water and electricity and significant projects are being implemented.



As Clock Ticks on G7's Russia Oil Price Cap, Big Questions Remain

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Just a month before the Group of Seven rich countries plan to cap the price of Russian oil, officials are racing to finalize details, leaving traders, shippers and insurers with questions about the price level and how it will work.

Officials from the United States and its G7 allies plan to cap prices of sea-borne oil shipments effective Dec. 5, with a second cap on oil products kicking in Feb. 5.

The unprecedented price cap aims to block Russia from profiting from high oil after its Feb. 24 invasion of Ukraine while ensuring that most of Russia's oil continues flowing to global energy markets.

India and China have been snapping up heavily discounted oil from Russia, and G7 officials hope they will use the cap to negotiate lower prices with Moscow.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has said he will stop exporting oil to countries that enforce the cap, and even if he does not, his threat could help support oil prices.

Here are the known and unknowns so far:

The G7 wealthy nations, the United States, Japan, Germany, Britain, France, Italy and Canada, are hammering out the plan with the EU and Australia.

Yellen last month said G7 members were not looking to broaden the coalition since none of the countries outside it were major suppliers of insurance or oil-related financial services.

Britain said Thursday it could ban countries from using its services to transport Russian oil purchased for a price exceeding the cap.

U.S. Treasury Assistant Secretary for Economic Policy Ben Harris said on Sept. 9 that if China negotiates a separate 30%-40% discount on Russian oil because of the price cap "we consider that a win."

It will likely be weeks before the price level of the caps will be decided, government officials and analysts said.

One person familiar with the process said the cap will be determined in line with the historical average of \$63-\$64 a barrel, suggesting a natural upper limit.

Currently, Russian crude is priced at a discount to the international Brent benchmark and the G7 wants that discount as steep as possible to keep down Russian oil revenue. Still, requiring too wide a spread could have the unintended consequence of squeezing global supplies because Russia is the world's second largest crude exporter, after Saudi Arabia. This could raise fuel prices for Western consumers.

Hoping to prevent this, coalition officials have agreed to set a fixed price when they finalize a price cap on Russian oil later this month, rather than adopting a floating rate, sources said on Thursday.

Consensus on the cap level will be reached with the aid of a "rotating lead coordinator," the U.S. Treasury said.

The plan calls for participating countries to deny Western-dominated oil transport services like insurance, finance, brokering and navigation to oil cargoes priced above the cap.

Petroleum buyers would need to state they bought Russian petroleum at or below the cap. Maritime services providers will not be held liable for false pricing information provided by buyers and sellers of Russian petroleum, the U.S. Treasury said.

G7 officials believe the plan will work because the London-based International Group of Protection & Indemnity Clubs insure about 95% of the global oil shipping fleet.

Putin has vowed to cut exports to countries that participate in the cap, but he also needs oil revenues to help fund Moscow's war efforts.



Industry players estimate that 80% to 90% of Russian oil can flow outside the cap mechanism using Russian and other non-Western ships and insurance.

In October, JP Morgan estimated that Russia is short about 1 million barrels of daily tanker capacity for shipping crude and 2.5 million barrels short on fuels capacity. Moscow could end up cutting production as a result, which would apply upward pressure on global oil prices. Prices could rise even if traders fear Putin will stop exports.

Some analysts say Moscow also could withhold oil from Russian assets in other producing countries such as Libya and Iraq.

The plan lacks a centralized enforcement mechanism leaving it up to countries implementing the cap to apply punishments for purchases above the cap.

The U.S. Treasury warned service companies to watch for potential evasion or fraud by Russian oil buyers. Those could include evidence of deceptive shipping practices, refusal to provide requested price information, or excessively high services costs.

Anyone who falsifies documentation or otherwise hides the true origin or price of Russian oil would face consequences under the domestic law of jurisdictions implementing the price cap, Treasury said.

The coalition has agreed the price cap will apply through the first landed sale of sea-borne oil, or when the oil is offloaded from a ship to a tank on land. This means any intermediary trades while the oil is at sea must be at or under the cap, a Western source said on Friday.

Some industry players worry that owners of tankers could face sanctions, noting the United States has no mechanism to determine what due diligence was undertaken.

Worries about potential sanctions, even if unfounded, can cause traders to avoid deals, another factor that can boost oil prices.

Japan Gov't Sounds Alarm Over U.S. EV Tax Credits

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Japan's government warned on Saturday that new electric vehicle tax credits in the United States could ultimately deter further investment by the Japanese there and hit employment in the world's biggest economy.



In a comment submitted to the U.S. Treasury Department, the government raised a number of concerns about the tax credits in the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), which is designed to build more resilient supply chains as the United States aims to reduce exposure to China.

The statement is a culmination of months-long concerns shared by the Japanese government and the country's auto lobbying group that the IRA puts Japanese car makers at a disadvantage in their crucial North American market.

The requirements to be eligible for the tax credit are "not consistent" with the shared policy between the Japanese and the U.S. governments to build resilient supply chains by working with allies and partners, the government said.

"It would be possible that Japanese automakers hesitate to make further investments towards electrification of vehicles," the government said. "This could cause negative impacts on the expansion of investment and employment in the U.S."

Europe - the Warning Light Flashing on Carmakers' Dashboards

LONDON (Dispatches) - Carmakers BMW and Stellantis expressed concerns about Europe's economic outlook, joining a chorus of retailers and others in warning of waning consumer confidence on the continent and hitting their shares.

"Obviously the macro-economic situation in Europe is more challenging, which gives me pause, personally," Stellantis chief financial officer Richard Palmer said on a conference call with analysts. "If there was anywhere where I was more concerned, it would be Europe than anywhere else really based on the macro."

This follows a dire assessment of consumer sentiment in Europe from the likes of consumer goods company Unilever and news of lower spending by Europeans from Amazon.

Like other major auto companies, Stellantis and BMW have been hit by supply chain disruptions stemming from the global coronavirus pandemic that have curtailed car production.

They have also benefited from strong consumer demand amid low vehicle supply, allowing them to raise prices and keep them high even as the semiconductor shortage shows signs of easing.

BMW posted a 35.3% jump in third-quarter revenue despite a small drop in vehicle sales. Stellantis said its



revenue rose 29% on the back of a 13% increase in vehicle sales as more semiconductors became available.

The concern among analysts has been that demand may falter, just as carmakers get their hands on the supplies they need, undermining pricing and hurting profits.

But this week Ferrari said it was confident about its prospects for this year and 2023 as demand for its luxury, as well its pricing power, remained strong.

Both BMW and Stellantis said they had vehicle order books that stretched into the second quarter of 2023.

But BMW's chief financial officer Nicolas Peter said high inflation and rising interest rates could hit buyers' wallets.

"This is causing conditions for consumers to deteriorate, which will affect their behaviour in the coming months," he said. "We therefore continue to expect our higher-than-average order books to normalise, especially in Europe."

He added customers had been unhappy about the wait for new cars, so "a slight reduction (in orders) would not be negative."

Palmer said Stellantis was "ready for any softness in demand" but in the short term had been affected by a shortage of drivers to deliver its cars to dealers.

Armenia Doubles Gas...

FROM PAGE 1

"Russian gas is still cheaper" than Iranian, Parsyan said. "The issue is that Russia wants money for it, but Iran agrees to be paid in electricity."

Further expansion of the Iran-Armenia energy trade could be in the works in the future.

Electricity is currently supplied to Iran through two power lines, but construction of a third high-voltage line has been long delayed and is now scheduled to be completed by the end of 2023. In May, Hakob Vardanyan, a deputy minister of territorial administration and infrastructure, told RFE/RL that "Armenia will be able to import up to 1.8 billion cubic meters of Iranian gas after completing the protracted construction of a third power transmission line connecting it to Iran."

While increasing gas imports from Iran has long been in the works, it comes at a propitious time geopolitically.

Ties with Russia have been tense, with Armenians accusing Moscow of failing to come to its aid during a September offensive by Azerbaijan. In turn, Russia has been airing more critical coverage of the conflict with Azerbaijan and sharpening its attacks against Armenia's current leadership.

Iran, meanwhile, has become a closer partner to Armenia, regularly warning Azerbaijan against any attempts at trying to take control of any Armenian territory. In October Iran opened a consulate in the southern city of Kapan, effectively planting its flag in the tensest region.

In Tehran, Pashinyan and Iran President Ibrahim Raisi had warm words for many aspects of the bilateral relationship. Raisi pointed out

that trade between the two countries had increased 43 percent in 2022 over the previous year, and that the two sides are seeking to increase total annual trade to \$3 billion. "We will definitely achieve this goal," Raisi said. In the period January-August 2022, bilateral trade amounted to \$427 million. Closer Armenian-Iranian cooperation in spheres including energy, agriculture, and road construction have "huge potential," Pashinyan said in Tehran.

Sanosyan said that he had urged Iranian companies to participate in road construction projects in Syunik and had discussed with Iranian colleagues the planned construction of a four-kilometer tunnel under a mountain pass on the road leading to the border with Iran; the current road goes over a 2,500-meter pass that is often closed in winter due to severe weather.

Regional security was perhaps highest on the agenda; Pashinyan went to Tehran directly after meeting Russian President Vladimir Putin and Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev in Sochi on October 30.

"It is important that our Iranian partners are notified about what is happening in the context of Armenia-Azerbaijan relations, Armenia-Turkey relations, and the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict," Pashinyan told a joint news briefing with the Iranian president.

Raisi, in turn, warned against the influence of "outside forces" in the Caucasus, by which he presumably meant the West.

"The Caucasus region is a part of Iran's history, civilization, and culture, and we are sensitive to the Caucasus region. Security and peace in the Caucasus region are significant for Iran," he said. "The presence of outside forces ... can only exacerbate regional problems."

MPs Ask Judiciary to...

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"In these riots, the United States and other enemies [of Iran] were openly involved, and took command of the riots through incitement and organizing [the riots] as well as providing funds and weapons [for rioters], which ended in insecurity and martyrdom of scores of the dear people of the Islamic Iran," they said.

The letter also said the enemies of Iran have been already defeated in Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Lebanon and Yemen, and suffered another defeat at the hands of the Iranian nation.

"The enemies have been irked by such defeats and ... the recent riots were a passive effort and a despicable reaction in the face of the grandeur and great victories of the Iranian nation," the lawmakers added.

Gov't Issues...

FROM PAGE 1

Khani was referring to Iran's lack of endorsement of all conventions of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), a global money laundering and terrorism financing watchdog based in France which is heavily influenced by the United States and its sanctions polices against other countries.

Iran has endorsed all but two FATF conventions on the grounds that approving those protocols would endanger the country's efforts to circumvent illegal American sanctions imposed on its economy.

Khani said the MEFA has plans to establish a special unit to fight money laundering in Iran until March this year, adding that the ministry is trying to set up the required mechanisms and arrangements for a systematic fight against money laundering in the country.

Tax Revenues Rise...

FROM PAGE 1

According to the official, INTA has been taking serious measures for battling tax evasion so that the organization has discovered more than 170 cases over the past year and the violators have been faced with heavy penalties.

There are many methods of tax evasion and one of the most common is the creation of shell companies, he explained.

"Unfortunately, there are many problems in the regulations and laws regarding company establishment and there is no necessary strictness. We see such cases with regard to business cards and credit cards as well," the official added.

Afghan Minister...

FROM PAGE 1

Those resources include iron ore, copper, lithium, oil gas and gems, but the challenge of exploiting them in a country at war and with little mining infrastructure is daunting for most investors.

China acquired a 30-year lease on the Mes Aynak copper mine for around \$3 billion in 2008 but the project has been plagued by delays due to contractual wrangling.

Back in March, Iranian Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade Reza Fatemi-Amin said he had held talks with the Taliban government to help exploit iron ore mines in Afghanistan.

Israeli Forces...

FROM PAGE 1

Thousands of Palestinians are held in Israeli jails. Hundreds have been imprisoned under the practice of administrative detention, which allows incarcerating Palestinian inmates without trial or charge.

Some Palestinian prisoners have been held in administrative detention for up to eleven years.

Meanwhile, Palestinian media reported that acts of resistance in the West Bank on Sunday reached 19 operations, including five shootings.

The occupied al-Quds also saw clashes between Israeli forces and resistance fighters. Israeli forces have recently been conducting near-nightly raids and killings in the northern occupied West Bank, mainly in the cities of Jenin and Nablus, where new groups of Palestinian resistance fighters have been formed.

Dryburgh Stays Calm to Win LPGA Japan Classic

OTSU (Dispatches) - Gemma Dryburgh became the first Scot to win on the LPGA Tour since 2011, staying "surprisingly calm" to claim victory by four strokes at the LPGA Japan Classic. World number 199 Dryburgh rattled off seven birdies with no bogeys on her final round to capture her first title on the elite LPGA Tour. She also gave Scotland its first winner on the tour since Catriona Matthew at the 2011 Lorena Ochoa Invitational. Dryburgh began the day one shot behind leader Momoka Ueda but carded a final-day score of 65 to put her 20-under overall, four shots clear of Japanese runner-up Kana Nagai.

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Ledecky Breaks 800m Freestyle Short-Course World Record

LONDON (Dispatches) - Ten-times Olympic medallist Katie Ledecky broke her second world record in just over a week on Saturday, beating the all-time women's short-course time in the 800 meters freestyle at the Indianapolis FINA World Cup meeting. The American led from the start and finished in 7:57.42, shaving nearly two seconds off the previous mark set by Spain's Mireia Belmonte in 2013.

Salah Leads Liverpool To Victory Over Spurs

LONDON (Dispatches) - Mohamed Salah scored twice as Liverpool beat Tottenham 2-1 to maintain their hex over the London club, returning to winning ways after two consecutive Premier League defeats.

Jurgen Klopp's men started the match 10 points behind fourth-placed Spurs, with questions growing over their ability even to mount a challenge for next season's Champions League places.

But they dominated the contest from the start and took the lead in the 11th minute when the impressive Darwin Nunez teed up Salah, who fired into the bottom corner.

The visitors' intensity dropped as the half wore on but they doubled their lead in the 40th minute when Salah took advantage of a horrendous error by Eric Dier, who headed the ball straight into the path of the Egyptian forward.

Harry Kane pulled a goal back in the 70th minute as the decibel count rose among the crowd of 62,000 in the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium but they fell to a third defeat in four league matches.

Spurs have not beaten Liverpool since 2017 and have now lost seven out of the past nine Premier League matches between the sides.

The result will add to doubts over the ability of Antonio Conte's men to compete at the top of the table after another damaging defeat against a top-four rival.

Tottenham were missing the services of South Korean forward Son Heung-min, who suffered a fracture around his left eye in his side's midweek Champions League win against Marseille.

Earlier Arsenal beat Chelsea 1-0 to dispel doubts over their Premier League title credentials and go top of the table on Sunday as Manchester United were blown away 3-1 by an inspired Aston Villa on Unai Emery's bow as boss.

United are now three points off the top four after Newcastle continued their fine form with a 4-1 win at Southampton to go third.

Gabriel Magalhaes bundled in Bukayo Saka's corner for the only goal at Stamford Bridge, but the slender margin of victory was the very least Arsenal deserved.



Chelsea offered barely anything going forward as they slipped to back-to-back Premier League defeats for the first time in two years.

"For such a young team, the maturity, the composure they showed, the resilience and courage to play how we wanted to play was phenomenal to do it against these kind of players," said a proud Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta.

"Winning in this stadium is an extra thing, another step for this team to keep believing they can do it under pressure and against big opponents."

Victory takes Arsenal back two points clear of Manchester City at the top of the table. Manchester United were unbeaten in nine games as the Red Devils appeared to be taking shape under Erik ten Hag.

But despite the lavish amounts spent to assemble the United squad, a lack of strength in depth was exposed with Antony, Jadon Sancho and Raphael Varane missing due to injury and Bruno Fernandes suspended.

Emery could not have asked for a better start to his time in charge of Villa as Leon Bailey smashed across David de Gea and Lucas Digne's free-kick found the top corner inside 11 minutes.

Luke Shaw's strike that deflected off Jacob Ramsey into his own net gave the visitors hope just before half-time.

Villa, though, quickly restored their two-goal lead when Ramsey side-footed into the top corner on 49 minutes.

Cristiano Ronaldo captained United just weeks after being disciplined for refusing Ten Hag's orders to come on as a substitute.

On another frustrating afternoon for Ronaldo, the five-time Ballon d'Or winner survived a VAR review for a red card after clashing with Tyrone Mings.



VALENCIA (Dispatches) - Francesco Bagnaia claimed the MotoGP crown in the season-ending Valencia Grand Prix to pull off the greatest title turnaround in the championship's history.

The Ducati rider, who trailed outgoing champion Fabio Quartararo by 91 points mid-season, completed his astonishing comeback with ninth place behind race winner Alex Rins.

"World champion - it sounds good" beamed Bagnaia, universally known as 'Pecco'.

"That was the hardest race of my life," the 25-year-old added.

"I was struggling. My aim was to be in the top five, but I started to struggle after a few laps, but the most important thing is we are world champions."

Among those rushing to congratulate him was his mentor, Italian motorcycling legend Valentino Rossi, the last Italian to win the MotoGP title in 2009.

Also on hand was Giacomo Agostini, who was the last Italian to take the championship on an Italian bike 50 years ago.

Ducati's last world championship came back in 2007 courtesy of Casey Stoner.

Back in June, Quartararo looked sure to defend his crown after success in Germany.

Hacking Targeted Critics of Qatar World Cup

LONDON (Dispatches) - An India-based computer hacking gang targeted critics of the Qatar World Cup, an investigation by British journalists said.

A database leaked to Britain's Sunday Times and the Bureau of Investigative Journalism revealed the hacking of a dozen lawyers, journalists and famous people from 2019 "commissioned by one particular client", the newspaper and the bureau said in a statement.

"This investigation points strongly to this client being the host of (the) World Cup: Qatar," it said, prompting the Qatari authorities to describe the allegations as "patently false and without merit".

Among those targeted was London-based consultant Ghanem Nuseibeh whose company Cornerstone produced a report on corruption relating to the World Cup, the Sunday Times said in its report based on the joint investigation.

Others included Nathalie Goulet, a French senator and vocal critic of Qatar for allegedly financing "Islamic terrorism".

Another target was Mark Somos, a Germany-based lawyer, who had made a complaint about the Qatari royal family to the United Nations Human Rights Council, the report added.

The newspaper alleges that the hacking was masterminded by a 31-year-old accountancy firm employee, who denies the claims.

Based in a suburb of the Indian tech city of Gurugram near Delhi, his network of computer hackers allegedly ensnared their targets using "phishing" techniques to gain access to their email inboxes, sometimes also deploying malicious software to take control of their computer cameras and microphones.

Hacking attacks were not limited, however, to those with an interest in the Qatar World Cup.

In total more than 100 victims had their private email accounts targeted by the gang "on behalf of investigators working for autocratic states, British lawyers and their wealthy clients", the report said.

These included politicians dealing with issues relating to Russia such as Britain's former finance minister Philip Hammond.



Bale Says Not 100% After MLS Heroics

equaliser to set up LAFC's penalty shoot-out win.

Bale was brought on as a substitute early in extra time at the Banc of California Stadium in what was his first taste of competitive football for more than a month.

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Gareth Bale said yesterday he is still battling through fitness issues as he turns his attention to the World Cup after a dramatic game-saving cameo set up Los Angeles FC's MLS Cup triumph.

The 33-year-old Wales captain once again demonstrated his habit of rising to the occasion, nodding home a 128th-minute

Bale, whose next game will be Wales' World Cup opener against the United States in Qatar on November 21, admitted afterwards he was not yet 100 per cent after a recent leg injury.

And the former Real Madrid star acknowledged that preparing for the World Cup had been a mental struggle, learning to manage the anxiety of possibly suffering an injury that would force him out of the finals in Qatar.

"I'm feeling better and better as time goes on," Bale told reporters. "I've had a few setbacks, and had a slight knock a few weeks ago which kept me out for 10 days. It's just one of those things."

"It's been difficult mentally now leading into the World Cup. You see now there's so many players that are dropping out and now are missing the World Cup."

"It's been difficult mentally and I'm sure it has been for a lot of players. For sure it's been in the back of my mind to make sure I'm 100 per cent fit. Today I felt good enough to come on the pitch and help the team and I'm happy to see them lifting that trophy."

Rune Upsets Djokovic to Win Paris Masters

PARIS (Dispatches) - Danish teenager Holger Rune shocked six-time champion Novak Djokovic to clinch his first Masters title in Paris after coming from a set down to win 3-6, 6-3, 7-5.

Rune, 19, became the youngest winner of the Paris tournament since Boris Becker in 1986 after beating five top-10 players in as many days.

He is the fifth first-time Masters winner this season and will be the first Danish man to break into the top 10.

Djokovic had not lost at Bercy since his defeat to Karen Khachanov in the 2018 final, although he did not play at the tournament two years ago.

The former world number one came into Sunday's final having won 21 of 22 matches since the start of Wimbledon, which he won for the seventh time in July to match Pete Sampras.

The Serb broke for a 3-1 lead as Rune served back-to-back double faults in what was his fourth successive final, but first at the Masters level.

Djokovic comfortably held out to pocket the opening set and looked to have Rune on the ropes when he surged 40-0 ahead on his opponent's serve in the first game of the second set.

But Rune battled back superbly to thwart Djokovic and then swung the momentum in his favour by immediately breaking to go 2-0 up the following game, which proved enough to force a decider.

The 16-year age gap between the pair was the biggest in a Masters final since Rafael Nadal, then 19, defeated 35-year-old Andre Agassi in Montreal in 2005.

Rune's inexperience resurfaced when he double-faulted attempting a big second serve to hand Djokovic a 3-1 edge, but the Dane showed his remarkable character to break back straight away.



India Set Up T20 World Cup Semifinal Against England

MELBOURNE (Dispatches) - India will face England and New Zealand play Pakistan in the semi-finals as a Twenty20 World Cup full of shocks wrapped up its Super 12 stage in suitably scintillating fashion.

South Africa had been fully expected to seal their place in the final four in Australia as they met the Netherlands at the Adelaide Oval on the last day of the group stage.

But the Dutch refused to read the script, Colin Ackermann blasting 41 off 26 balls as the Netherlands stunned the heavily fancied Proteas by 13 runs.

South Africa had been touted as dark horses for the title but instead it extended their wretched run in white-ball World Cups and saw Mark Boucher's reign as coach end in bitter disappointment.

"Gutted, to be honest," he said. "I think this squad deserved to give themselves a better chance."

"Unfortunately it didn't happen for us, which is very disappointing for me and certainly every single guy who's in our dressing room at the moment."

The Dutch finished a heady fourth in Group 2 and so will not need to go through qualifying for the next World Cup.

"The fact that we now have an opportunity to just walk straight in, I think it's a good confidence booster and very good for Dutch cricket," said bowler Brandon Glover, who took 3-9 against shell-shocked South Africa.

"Hopefully we can take advantage of it."

Dutch delight changed the complexion of Group 2. It sent top-ranked T20 side India into the semi-finals before they even played Zimbabwe and turned Pakistan versus Bangladesh into a virtual quarter-final.

