

**Major General Hossein Salaami,
The Commander of the Islamic
Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC)
Has Warned That Iran Will Not Leave
Enemies' Crimes Unanswered**

IRAN NEWS

**Iran's Ambassador to Russia Said in
Moscow That a Large Russian Trade
Delegation, Comprised of Over 100
Economic Activists, Will Visit Iran in
The Very Near Future for Trade Talks**

VOL. XXVIII, No. 7633 TEHRAN Price 50,000 Rials

www.irannewsdaily.com

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 12, 2022 - ABAN 21, 1401

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FM Warns UN Over Session On Recent Riots

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian has warned the UN Human Rights Council over organizing any session on Iran, noting that such a measure will affect Iran's cooperation with the West.

The Iranian minister discussed several issues in a phone conversation with UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres on Thursday night.

Amir-Abdollahian slammed the double standards of some Western governments and rejected their efforts to hold a UN Human Rights Council session on Iran.

"The UN Human Rights Council should hold sessions for governments that are encouraging violence and terror, not for the Islamic Republic of Iran which is a true defender of human rights and has exercised great restraint during recent riots," he said. He warned about the "negative consequences" of the UNHRC's "political measure" on cooperation between Iran and the West.

"Contrary to the UN Charter, few Western countries exploited the peaceful demands in Iran and encouraged violence and offered tutorials on building weapons and Molotov cocktail on media and social networks which led to the killing of police and insecurity in Iran," stressed the minister. **See Page 7**

Enemy's Anti-Iran Policy of Destabilization Failed

TEHRAN (PressTV) - President Ebrahim Raisi says the enemy's plot to stoke instability in Iran has failed just like the policy of piling up pressure by imposing draconian sanctions against the country which faced the same fate.

Raisi made the remark in a visit to Pakdasht city, located in the southeast of the capital Tehran on Thursday, saying the policy of sanctioning and destabilization were two mistakes that the enemy made in dealing with the Iranians, which both failed.

Stressing that the enemy does not want Iran to make progress and its scientists to conquer the peaks of science, Raisi said, "The enemy wants the hope of the people to turn into despair, the enemy does not want our country to make progress. The policy of destabilizing the country by the enemy failed like the policy of sanctions, and their attempt to apply maximum pressure also failed." The Iranian president went on to say, "By nullifying the sanctions, we defeated the enemy's strategy." **See Page 7**

Iran Develops Hypersonic Ballistic Missile



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - A high-ranking commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) says the country has developed a homegrown hypersonic ballistic missile which is capable of penetrating sophisticated aerial defense shields and striking designated targets.

"The missile has a high velocity and can maneuver both in and out of the Earth's atmosphere," Brigadier General Amir-Ali Hajizadeh, the commander of the IRGC's Aerospace Division, told reporters on Thursday.

"The new missile can pass through all missile defense systems, and I don't think that the technology capable of countering it will be achieved in the decades to come. It can target the enemy's anti-missile systems, and its production marks a huge leap in the development of a new generation of missiles," Hajizadeh pointed out.

The commander noted that the new homegrown missile can penetrate all air defense missile systems, saying, "I don't think any technology would be found for tens of years capable of countering it."

On Sunday, Iran's Defense Ministry unveiled the upgraded version of the domestically-designed and manufactured Bavar-373 (Belief-373) surface-to-air missile system, and inaugurated the production line of the long-range Sayad B4 missile.

"Bavar-373 system was initially capable of destroying targets at 200 kilometers and now the upgraded system, aiming to attack targets at very long ranges, [including] ballistic missiles, fighter aircraft, and bombers can destroy targets at 300 kilometers," Iranian Defense Minister Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Ashtiani during the unveiling ceremony.

The missile system can engage up to six targets at a time and destroy them, he said, stressing that many technologically advanced countries aspire to possess such a system.

The Bavar-373 system detection radar was said to have increased from 350 to 450 kilometers, and the range of its engagement range has risen from 260 to 400 kilometers, the report added.

It also noted that the missile range has gone from 200 to 300 kilometers, and its engagement altitude has increased from 27 to 32 kilometers.

The report also announced the launching of the Sayad B4 missile's production line (pictured below), saying the long-range missile, running on solid propellant, was operationally evaluated for the first time.

The Bavar-373 system was formally unveiled during a ceremony attended by former Iranian President Hassan Rouhani on August 22, 2019. It was reported at the time that the road-mobile system can detect targets or planes at more than 300 kilometers, lock them at about 250 kilometers, and destroy them at 200 kilometers.

Iran for the first time employed the homegrown Bavar-373 missile defense system during a joint air defense exercise, codenamed 'Guardians of Velayat Sky-99', in late October 2020.

Iranian military experts and technicians have in recent years made substantial headway in manufacturing a broad range of indigenous equipment, making the armed forces self-sufficient in the arms sphere.

Iran, IRU Focus on Further Expanding Transit and Trade

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - In light of Iran's growing role in regional trade, IRU and Iran's private and public sectors held high-level talks this week on avenues for further expansion.

Iran's role in trade and transit has increased considerably over recent years. In 2021, the country's overall transit traffic rose by 68%, while transit traffic by road doubled. Transit is forecasted to grow by another 25% by the end of this year.

IRU Secretary General Umberto de Pretto was in Iran this week to discuss how the country can continue along this positive trade and transit trajectory. He held a series of high-level talks, including with the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, customs authorities, and IRU member ICCIMA.

The authorities and IRU expressed their satisfaction with how they have cooperated and successfully implemented joint projects to further improve east-west and north-south corridors crossing Iran.

IRU Secretary General Umberto de Pretto said, "Almost every country in the region now plays a pivotal role in trade and transit. And Iran is no exception."

"The growth of Iran's transport sector in recent years has been impressive, making it the number one issuer of TIR carnets in 2021."

"Following my talks here, there is strong support from all authorities to intensify cooperation in many areas to further boost trade in the region and beyond," he added.

"All recognized that Turkmenistan's recent opening of its borders will now permit to connect China to Turkey and Europe via Iran, making the southern corridor a viable alternative to the northern one." **See Page 7**

Iran Opens First Section of Railway Link To Chabahar Port

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran has launched a first section of a key rail link to Chabahar, its only ocean port on the Sea of Oman.

Iran's Vice President Mohammad Mokhber traveled to the city of Khash in the southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchestan on Thursday to inaugurate the 154-kilometer rail link from the city to the provincial capital of Zahedan.

The line is a key section of a 628-kilometer rail link from Zahedan to Chabahar. It has cost some 23 trillion rials (\$63.7 million) to build while the government has spent double that figure on works in other sections of the project, including on track-laying between Khash to Iranshahr and to Chabahar.

Once finished, the Zahedan-Chabahar railway will allow cargo transit via Iran from the Indian Ocean to Afghanistan and other landlocked countries in Central Asia.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Mokhber said the rail line from Khash to Chabahar will definitely finish by March 2023. **See Page 7**

Iran to Give Response to Interventionist Positions

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian slams his German counterpart's remarks in support of violent riots in Iran as meddling in the country's domestic affairs, warning that Tehran will give a "proportionate and firm" response to such interventionist positions.

"Provocative, interventionist and undiplomatic stances don't signal sophistication and wisdom," Amirabdollahian said in a tweet addressed to German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock on Thursday.

He warned that undermining old ties between the two countries has long-term consequences, and added that Germany can choose between engagement to address shared challenges or pursue confrontation.

"Our response will be proportionate and firm," the top Iranian diplomat pointed out. **See Page 7**

IAEA Urged to Act Independently

NEW YORK (IRNA) - Iran's Permanent Envoy to the United Nations Amir Saeed Iravani said that the UN nuclear watchdog should not be under control of big powers.

The Iranian envoy was speaking at the UN General Assembly plenary meeting on the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for 2021. He said that nuclear energy plays a key role in the socioeconomic development of countries.

That's an issue which has been clearly mentioned in the charter of the IAEA, and obliges the agency to help its member states in the peaceful use of nuclear energy, Iravani added.

He noted that the IAEA's duty to verify member states' activities and concerns over nuclear proliferation should not turn into a hurdle in the way of peacefully using nuclear energy as an inalienable right of the member states.

The Iranian envoy also spoke about his country's cooperation with the IAEA, saying that no issue has remained regarding safeguards agreement between Tehran and the agency.

He stressed that the IAEA should act as an impartial, independent and professional body, staying away from control of powers so that all countries can enjoy the technical support of the agency in developing their peaceful nuclear programs. **See Page 7**

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Iran, Oman FMs Discuss Latest JCPOA-Related Issues

TEHRAN (MNA) – Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian and his Omani counterpart Badr Hamad Al Busaidi discussed the latest developments of JCPOA talks in a phone call.

Emphasizing the positive relations between Iran and Oman and serious determination of the senior officials of the two countries in continuing, expanding and strengthening bilateral relations as well as regional and international cooperation, Iranian and Omani foreign minister exchanged their views on the latest situation of JCPOA talks on the removal of sanctions.

Amirabdollahian pointed to the good and constructive intentions of Sultanate of Oman and thanked the unsparing and unflinching efforts of foreign minister of Oman for achieving a good, stable and lasting agreement.

Iran Plays Important Role In Enhancing Regional Peace, Stability

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Italy's Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani has told his Iranian counterpart that the Islamic Republic plays an important role in the regional status quo.

Speaking in a phone conversation with Hossein Amirabdollahian, Tajani underlined Tehran's role in the enhancement of peace and stability in the West Asia region.

Tajani went on to say that "Iran and Italy are [both] heirs to ancient civilizations, and can enjoy expansive and growing [bilateral] relations."

The top Italian diplomat also addressed the issue of the ongoing European Union-mediated talks that are aimed at potential restoration of Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with world countries.

The United States left the deal, which is officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), in 2018 and re-imposed the sanctions that the accord had lifted.

Tajani vowed that his country would "do its utmost" so the talks would lead to an agreement that meets the interests of all the concerned parties.

The Iranian foreign minister, for his part, explained the latest status of the JCPOA



revival negotiations as well as the Islamic Republic's ongoing cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

He also expressed hope that the two countries would further expand their political, economic, and cultural relations.

The top Iranian diplomat also thanked Tajani over Italy's condemnation of the late October terrorist attack on a popular Shia shrine in the southern Iranian Fars Province that led to the death of 15 pilgrims.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the Iranian official turned to the issue of the February-present war between Russia and Ukraine.

Iran's "principled and unchangeable" policy concerning the conflict rests on "the need for its political resolution and cessation of the war," he said.

The Islamic Republic would, therefore, continue its efforts towards "advancement of the political process" that could spell an end to the warfare, Amirabdollahian concluded.

Azerbaijan Ambassador Summoned

TEHRAN (IP) – Foreign Ministry summoned the ambassador Azerbaijan Republic to Tehran following the Azeri officials' continuous claims in their media against Iran on Thursday.

The Director General of the Eurasian Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran conveyed Tehran's strong dissatisfaction with the Azeri media and top officials' non-friendly comments about Iran.

He said: "We expect that the trend will be stopped soon and necessary measures will be taken to prevent its repetition."

The ambassador of Azerbaijan was summoned as President Ilham Aliyev got carried away and made rude comments against Iran's holding military exercises.

On Wednesday, an Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman, Nasser Kanaani reacted to remarks by Azerbaijan's president on Iran's ties with Armenia.

"Our principled policy is based on good neighborliness and expansion of relations with all neighbors, and strengthening of ties with a neighbor does not mean those relations are against another neighbor."

Powerful Iran Challenged Power Order in World

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - A top military advisor to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution said that powerful Iran has challenged the power system in the world thanks to a great nation with culture and civilization and with a brave and wise leadership.

Major General Yayha Rahim Safavi made the remarks on the occasion of 11th martyrdom anniversary of Brigadier General Hassan Tehrani Moghaddam, held at Command HQ of IRGC Aerospace Force on Thursday.

He said that the strong and powerful Islamic Iran has challenged the power system in the world.

Relying upon the assistance of the Almighty God and taking advantage of experiences gained during the eight years of Sacred Defense (Iraqi imposed war against Iran in 1980-1988), Iran will come out victorious in this new hybrid war waged by enemies against the country undoubtedly.

The world and power systems are on the verge of rapid changes, he said, adding that the domineering system led by the United States, occupying regime of Israel, Britain and NATO are ignorant of Iran's high power in the international arenas that has challenged the system of power in the world in its favor.

President Calls for Cooperation Among Independent States

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - President Ebrahim Raisi says cooperation among independent countries is the most decisive response that can be given to the sanctions and destabilization strategy of the United States and its allies.

In a meeting with Russia's visiting Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev in Tehran, Raisi added that the improvement of regional cooperation is the best way to create peace and stability, urging Tehran and Moscow to boost their strategic and economic relations.

He said Iran and Russia are determined to improve the level of strategic relations in various fields, saying the ties are growing and have a clear prospect.

The Iranian president once again reiterated the Islamic Republic's core policy of opposing any war, saying, "The expansion of the scope and escalation of war is a cause of concern for all countries."

Patrushev, for his part, said Russia is working very actively to develop cooperation with Tehran in the political, commercial, energy, agricultural and transit fields.

He added that the Iran-Russia Joint Economic Commission is following up on the implementation of the agreements reached between the two countries' presidents. The senior Russian security official expressed hope that Tehran and Moscow would expand relations in regional circles and organizations.

He emphasized that the creation of a multipolar world would be beneficial to all countries in the world.

In a meeting with Patrushev earlier in the day, Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani pointed to regional and global developments and said that "dialogue as well as regional and international cooperation" are the path to resolution of current challenges and crises.

Iran Ready for Integrated Iran-Russia Customs and Transit Services

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Secretary of the Supreme Council of Free Trade-Industrial and Special Economic Zones Hojatollah Abdolmaleki in meeting with Russia's Presidential Aide Igor Levitin emphasized integrating customs and transit services between Iran and Russia.

In the meeting, Abdolmaleki explained the tax and customs tax exemption in Iran's free zones and noted that free zones of Iran enjoy having proper infrastructures and they can serve investors and economic activists of the country with its legal advantages.

He added that Iran aims at integrating transit and customs services between Iran and Russia, stating that in the meeting with the CEO of special economic zone of Lotus of Astrakhan in Russia it was agreed that with cooperation of free zones of



Chabahar and Anzali of Iran with two free zones of Russia a safe, fast and economized transit route is launched for Russia and Caspian Sea states.

Abdolmaleki also said that the council wants to set up the joint free zone of Iran and Russia very soon to help Caspian Sea countries to make most of its benefits and this zone would turn into a place for presence of the economic activists of the country.

Meanwhile Levitin, for his part, announced readiness of Russian companies for broadening cooperation with Iran and develop rail and transit routes.

He expressed hope that soon they would see signing of the MoU on cooperation between private sectors of Iran and Russia in the free zones for broadening trade exchanges and joint investments.

Judiciary Chief Says Rioters to Be Dealt With Based on Law

BIRJAND (IRNA) - Judiciary Chief Gholam Hossein Ejei said that rioters will be dealt with firmly and strongly based on law and fairness for their actions to disturb the security of people.

Ejei made the comment in a meeting with judiciary staff in South Khorasan Province, located in eastern Iran.

He said that the rioters will receive a strong and firm response because they have disturbed the security of people, disrupted their livelihood and insulted their sanctities, adding that there will be no mercy for all those who have carried out these actions and are the main culprits. But anyone, who has been deceived, committed no crimes, is regretful of what has done and will make a commitment not to repeat their actions again, will be forgiven. The judiciary chief said that enemies are trying to exploit existing weakness to progress their own agenda and prevent Iran from making developments.

Considering these conditions, he added, everybody should be vigilant more than before in order to not be trapped by the hybrid warfare waged by enemies and their attempts to deceive public opinion.

Ejei also said that the current situation should be used as an opportunity to identify management failures so that riots can be turned into opportunities for progress and growth. The judiciary chief, during his trip to South Khorasan Province, also held a meeting with students of Birjand University.

He told the students that protesters are separated from rioters, and that enemies should not be allowed to deceive the youth and adversely affect their thoughts.

He said that university students have the right to raise their demands, protest and criticize, but they should be aware of how to proceed in order to avoid mistakes.

Unrest broke out in Iran after the death of young Kurdish woman Mahsa Amini on September 16.

She died in hospital three days after she collapsed at a police station.

Protests began over her death, but soon turned into riots and violence that lasted for more than a month and resulted in vandalism. Iranian officials have blamed the riots on the US, the UK, Saudi Arabia and Israel, as well as the media outlets they support, including London-based Iran International News Network which the Iranian intelligence has designated as a terrorist organization. Iran has said that Iran International agents will be prosecuted.

Iran Issues Travel Warning for Australia

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran called on Iranian citizens to avoid traveling to Australia.

In a statement, the ministry advised Iranian nationals, especially students, researchers and university professors, to reconsider unnecessary trips to Australia.

The statement cited the "possibility of arbitrary arrests" of Iranian nationals in the country and their "extradition to hostile governments without any reason."

It further said "activities of extremist and racist groups" have been reported in Australia, which have increased the likelihood of threats, racist insults and assaults "at any place and time."

The ministry announced that if any Iranian national is detained by the Australian authorities, they must inform the Iranian embassy in Australia "as soon as possible" and "request consular access."

"Otherwise, under the pretext of privacy law, Australian police and judicial system will avoid informing the embassy," the statement noted, Press TV reported.

It particularly referred to "illegal and inhumane behavior" of Australian authorities in the country's prisons, which have in some cases caused "long-term injuries" and even "death of prisoners."

Tehran, Seoul Stress Boosting Cooperation in ICT



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Minister of Information and Communications Technology Issa Zarepour and South Korea's Minister of Science and Communications in a meeting on Thursday called for enhancing bilateral relations, especially in the fields of Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

Zarepour, who traveled to Seoul at the invitation of his Korean counterpart to attend the Asia-Pacific Digital Ministerial Conference 2022, met and held talks with South Korea's Minister of Science and Communications on Thursday.

Referring to the 13th government's policy of developing relations with various states and pointing to the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations with South Korea, Zarepour voiced Iran's readiness to expand relations with South Korea, particularly in the field of ICT.

Pointing to South Korea's advances in ICT and the development of domestic platforms in the country, he noted that Iran, like South Korea, seeks to maximize the capacities of new communication technologies to facilitate life for its people.

Introducing some Iranian platforms in varied fields, he emphasized the readiness of Iranian companies to exchange knowledge and know-how with South Korean companies.

South Korea's Minister of Science and Communications, for his part, stressed the maintenance of relations between the two countries, given the deep-rooted relations between the two states and the name of a street in Seoul called "Tehran."

Pointing to the capacities of two sides in the sphere of ICT, he welcomed the development of cooperation in this sector.

At the meeting, the two sides agreed to pursue the formation of a joint working group to develop the two countries relations in the ICT sector.

IRGC Official Warns of Attempts to Create Chaos in Sistan Balochistan Province

ZAHEDAN (IRNA) - Commander of the Ground Force of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), Brigadier General Mohammad Pakpour on Thursday warned of enemies' attempts to create chaos and insecurity in Sistan-Balouchestan province in southeastern Iran.

Pakpour was speaking at a gathering of Sunni and Shia clerics, as well as elders in Zahedan, the capital city of Sistan-Balouchestan province.

He called on the elderly people and heads of different tribes in that province to remain united and keep vigilant in order to prevent the enemies from achieving their goals. The senior military commander said that the IRGC will firmly deal with anyone who tries to target the security of people.

CEO of Hormozgan Steel Co. Affirms Materialization of Nominal Capacity of Co. by Yearend

Hormozgan Steel Company (HOSCO), as the most advanced steel factory in the country, has been able to establish itself among the country's steel producers due to its strategic location such as access to open waters, proximity to the mines of the center of the country, the use of modern technology and the use of experienced and knowledge-oriented forces. And to become one of the reliable brands of the steel industry by supplying quality products in the world markets. Recording consecutive records in production during last year and this year, despite energy restrictions and increased exports under sanctions, shows that restrictions cannot prevent the realization of the big goals of management and employees of Hormozgan Steel. Employees who, with a correct understanding of the organizational goals, with a firm determination to achieve them, do not spare any efforts. To review the current condition of HOSCO, the CEO of the company Mr. Attaollah Maroufkhani in an interview answered the question which follows as:



As the first question, how do you evaluate the current situation of Hormozgan Steel Company?

Since the beginning of current year, Hormozgan Steel Company has been able to increase its production so that by the end of September, 104% of the 6-month schedule has been materialized. Although we are facing various challenges due to the economic war conditions in the global and domestic markets, the production in the company has not stopped and has maintained its trend in the market and is looking for its improvement and growth. This company has put the implementation of several development projects on the agenda. Plans that will be important both in terms of increasing production and earning income and also in terms of job creation. The increase in production and export and the progress of the development plans show that we are moving in the direction of achieving the macro-organizational goals.

How did Hormozgan Steel Company perform in the first seven months of this year in terms of production?

In 1401, all the country's steel producers were faced with the limitation of electricity consumption like last year. However, by using the business of the past years and the cooperation of the employees, we predicted this year's restrictions with a better plan than the previous year, and we were able to implement our plans according to the restrictions on electricity consumption in the summer. However, the power outage, as was completely predictable, hit the steel production in the country and caused it to decline; As in Hormozgan Steel, we lost about 200,000 tons of production in a total of 7 months due to electricity restrictions. However, we did not give in to the situation and with timely planning, especially the successful implementation of repairs in the direct regeneration and continuous steelmaking and casting units, we prepared the conditions for continuous and ultimately record-breaking production. From the beginning of April to the end of October, Hormozgan Steel was able to produce more than 817,000 tons of steel, which shows an increase of more than 7% compared to the same period last year, i.e. 764,000 tons. This amount of production means that we were able to overcome all the limitations and challenges ahead, especially the lack of electricity, and witness an increase in production. The remarkable thing about this year's production was three record breaking events.

From what point of view are record breaking important for the steel industry and Hormozgan steel in particular?

It should be noted that the nominal capacity of Hormozgan steel is one million and 500 thousand tons per year. In April this year, we were able to increase the monthly production to more than 150 thousand tons for the first time. However, from May to August, when we were faced with electricity supply restrictions, the production faced a decrease. In September, when the restrictions were removed, again with efforts and careful planning, the production exceeded 150 thousand tons and managed to produce 151 thousand 742 tons of final product. We became These record breaking events continued in October and with the production of 153 thousand 233 tons of products, a big step was taken towards realizing the nominal capacity and making up for the production lag in the summer.

Explain the reasons for these record breaking events.

It is definitely not possible to achieve a record overnight and beyond any success is long-term planning. As it was said, knowing that we have electricity restrictions in the summer, we moved the annual repairs of the direct regeneration and steelmaking units to the summer, and Hormozgan steel workers were able to perform the annual repairs effectively in the hot weather of Bandar Abbas and unfavorable conditions. When repairs are done well, the availability of equipment and parts increases. Also, measures such

as increasing the depth of the furnace have greatly reduced the hot repairs of the furnace, and this has led to the improvement of production parameters such as reducing the Power On time, reducing the metal charge, increasing the efficiency of the furnace, reducing the electrode consumption rate and reducing the refractory consumption rate. To these things, we can add the increase in the quality of sponge iron, which has reached 93%. Due to the continuous improvements that were achieved in various production parameters, the amount of stoppages was reduced, which resulted in an increase in production.

How was the sales situation of Hormozgan steel this year? What strategies have you adopted to sell the product?

This year was turbulent for the steel industry. The beginning of this year began with a sharp increase in global steel prices due to the war between Russia and Ukraine and the exclusion of these two countries from the world markets. On the other hand, the dumping of some countries and the indiscriminate release of products in the world markets caused a sharp decrease in the price of steel. In our country, according to the global markets, the price of steel decreased. However, Hormozgan Steel Company has shown that it will never surrender to the conditions and can find its way in the market. So that from the beginning of this year to the end of October, we were able to sell 389 thousand tons of products in the markets domestically and 330 thousand tons in export markets and sell a total of 719 thousand tons of products. The amount of exports grew by about 11% compared to last year, when we are facing heavy dumping by some producers in the world markets. In earning income, we were able to earn 5000 and 926 billion tomans from product sales in the domestic markets and 5000 and 107 billion tomans from exports and a total of 11 thousand and 33 billion tomans. Our most important strategy in the current situation is order-oriented production and production of products with higher added value. Because the domestic and global markets are moving towards heavier competition, and any company that can produce high-quality products with higher added value and according to customer needs, will be the winner in this competition. Fortunately, Hormozgan steel, due to the advanced technology it has in the field of product production, can produce a variety of special and value-added irons based on the needs and orders of customers.

Hormozgan Steel has started many projects since last year. How do you evaluate the progress of these projects?

Development is the cornerstone of the economy, and for economic progress, wealth creation, and job creation, product development is the most efficient solution. The country's steel industry is also considered as one of the drivers of development. The more the steel industry develops, the other side and downstream industries will also prosper and we will witness further development. Considering the widespread water shortage in the country, one of the areas that can be targeted for development is the southern coast, especially Hormozgan province. Hormozgan Steel in 1400 for the first time after the opening of the company, due to its many potentials and special position, the executive operations of four major development projects including increasing the capacity of sponge iron silos, building an industrial gas production unit and building the third module of the direct regeneration unit and The construction of the direct regeneration mega module in Star Simin Hormuz, worth approximately 10 thousand billion Tomans, began. We hope to witness the full operation of these projects by the end of 1404 according to the plan. Also, other projects including increasing the production capacity of electric arc furnaces through the installation of Lance Sidewall, and the construction of an industrial wastewater treatment plant, and the construction of a calcined lime production unit in Hormozgan Stone and Steel are also being

implemented, which often have significant progress and are on the verge of opening. In general, good plans have been planned for the development of Hormozgan Steel in cooperation with Mobarakeh Steel, and the development of this company will continue without stopping. Our plan is to complete the chain and produce the final steel product for more added value, and to realize this issue, we are considering the construction of a hot rolling unit.

Hormozgan Steel Company is one of the pioneers in carrying out social responsibilities in Hormozgan Province. What measures have you taken in this area this year and what strategy have you adopted?

Hormozgan Steel Company considers social responsibility as one of its inherent duties. Now it has entered in many fields of sports, culture, humanitarian aid, medicine, environment and some other cases and has taken effective steps, which has also had good feedback in the society, and this shows that the company is moving in the right direction in this regard. Is. The presence of 35 professional and labor sports teams of Hormozgan Steel in all age groups and winning numerous championship titles in the provincial, national and international categories for the sports teams of Hormozgan Steel has greatly contributed to the promotion of professional sports in Hormozgan Province. In the field of medicine, we have taken many measures, especially to deal with the corona disease. Sending liquid oxygen to hospitals in Bandar Abbas and sending liquid nitrogen to the University of Medical Sciences, buying and donating ventilators to hospitals treating Corona in the province, providing packages and health items during the Corona era, such as providing masks, gloves, and providing and donating 10 dialysis machines to Shahid Hospital Mohammadi Bandar Abbas for the treatment of patients is an example of these measures. Supporting the needy as well as supporting the oppressed in the form of social responsibilities is another activity of Hormozgan Steel. In this regard, financial support for Habib Ibn Mazahir Mentally Handicapped Center of Bandar Abbas to solve the problem of the morgue, support for the treatment and rehabilitation center for chronic mental patients in Fajr Asayesh, participation in the Ikram Itam (honoring orphans) and Mohsenin project with the aim of supporting 10,000 orphans and non-orphans under under coverage of Imam Khomeini (RA) Relief Committee in Hormozgan Province and provided financial assistance regarding Golrizan ceremony (ceremony to raise money for the people in need) for the release of prisoners in the river section of Rodan city.

Please explain about Hormozgan Steel's actions in the field of environment.

Hormozgan Steel is one of the leading companies in the field of environmental protection in Hormozgan province and the country. This company has an active presence in the Bandar Abbas wastewater purchase project to solve the urban sewage problem and help the environment. Also, this year, in order to protect the environment of Hormozgan province, we planned to supply five thousand tons of lime for burying public waste.

Final words?

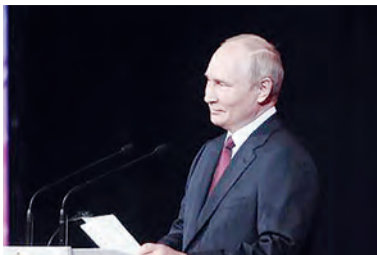
We hope that with the increasing support of Mobarakeh Steel Company (MSC) as the parent company and respected provincial and national officials, we will see the development of the company as soon as possible. Developments aimed at increasing the quantity and quality and diversity of the product portfolio are underway. Certainly, economic production and development in these difficult economic conditions can be the best gift for the society. For this purpose, we will use all our strength to achieve this valuable goal with the comprehensive cooperation of our colleagues.

Russia's Putin Not to Attend G20 Summit in Bali in Person

JAKARTA (Dispatches) - Russian President Vladimir Putin will not attend a gathering of leaders from the Group of 20 (G20) nations in person next week but may join virtually, officials from Russia and the host country Indonesia said.

Indonesia has resisted pressure from Western countries to withdraw its invitation to Putin and expel Russia from the group over the war in Ukraine, saying it does not have the authority to do so without consensus among members.

Putin might take part by video conference though "the format of (his) participation is being worked out," Russia's state news agency RIA reported, citing a diplomat in the Russian embassy in Indonesia.



EU Parliament Approves Croatia's Admission to Schengen Zone

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - The European Parliament has cleared the way for the admission of Croatia to the bloc's passport-free Schengen zone, leaving the final decision in the hands of the EU's government leaders.

With a 534-53 majority, the parliament on Thursday voted in favor of lifting the remaining border controls between the Schengen area and Croatia.

A final decision will now have to be taken by the EU Council, consisting of the EU's 27 government leaders, which in December last year already confirmed that Croatia had met all criteria to apply for access to the Schengen Area.



Russia's War Hawks Rally Behind Decision to Abandon Kherson



LONDON (Dispatches) - Russia's leading war hawks swiftly rallied behind the decision to abandon the Ukrainian city of Kherson, putting a brave face on one of Moscow's most humiliating retreats in nearly nine months of war.

The pullout proposed by General Sergei Surovikin, appointed last month to take overall charge of Russia's war effort, means Moscow is giving up a strategic city just north of annexed Crimea, the only Ukrainian provincial capital it had captured since its Feb. 24 invasion.

With Ukraine threatening to pin Russian forces against the west bank of the Dnipro River where they cannot easily be supplied, the shaven-headed Surovikin proposed to Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu that Russia adopt new defensive lines on the opposite bank in order to preserve soldiers' lives.

A grim-faced Shoigu agreed and ordered his troops to withdraw.

The decision - described by one Russian military blogger as "a black page in the history of the Russian army" - was nonetheless quickly defended by some of the most high-profile proponents of the war as a wise and necessary action.

"After weighing all the pros and cons, General Surovikin made the difficult but right choice between senseless sacrifices for the sake of loud statements and saving the priceless lives of soldiers," said Ramzan Kadyrov, the Chechen leader who has frequently urged a more aggressive approach to the war and has even called for the use of low-grade nuclear weapons.

Another increasingly outspoken war hawk - Yevgeny Prigozhin, founder of the Wagner mercenary group which is fighting for Russia in Ukraine - was quoted by the RIA news agency as saying: "The decision taken by Surovikin is not easy, but he acted like a man who is not afraid of responsibility."

Margarita Simonyan, editor-in-chief of state media outlet RT, went even further, comparing the retreat to the decision by General Mikhail Kutuzov to abandon Moscow to Napoleon in 1812 for the sake of preserving his army and saving Russia.

In recent weeks Simonyan has harshly criticised Russia's chaotic military mobilisation, while both Kadyrov and Prigozhin - before Surovikin's appointment - blasted the conduct of the war and ridiculed some of the generals in charge.

Their chorus of supportive comments on Wednesday suggested a concerted attempt to close ranks behind the top military leadership at a perilous moment in the war and to put on a united front.

But their comments barely disguised the bitter taste of the retreat.

"I know for sure that this decision was not easy for anyone. Not for those who took it, nor for those of us who understood it would be so but still prayed it wouldn't happen," RT's Simonyan said.

Russia is giving up both a symbolic prize - a city founded by 18th century Empress Catherine the Great - and a strategic foothold in the south of Ukraine, weeks after proclaiming its annexation, along with other Ukrainian regions, and declaring it would be part of Russia "forever".

U.S. Senate up for Grabs as Republicans Move Toward House Majority

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Republicans edged closer to securing a majority in the U.S. House of Representatives while control of the Senate hinged on a few tight races, two days after Democrats staved off an anticipated "red wave" of Republican gains in midterm elections.

Republicans have captured at least 210 House seats, Edison Research projected, eight short of the 218 needed to wrest the House away from Democrats and effectively halt President Joe Biden's legislative agenda.

While Republicans remain favored, there were 33 House contests yet to be decided - including 21 of the 53 most competitive races, based on a Reuters analysis of the leading nonpartisan forecasters - likely ensuring the final outcome will not be determined for some time.

The fate of the Senate was far less certain. Either party could seize control by winning too-close-to-call races in Nevada and Arizona, where officials are tallying thousands of uncounted ballots.



British Policies on Migration, Rights Issues Under Fire at UN Rights Forum

GENEVA (Dispatches) - The United Kingdom faced a barrage of questions and criticism of its migration and poverty policies in a United Nations review of its human rights record today amid allegations that it is backsliding on freedoms.

While criticism is part of the normal UN process that takes place every few years, analysts said the level of scrutiny of one of the world's most prominent democracies from such a broad range of countries, including allies, was notable.

Among the issues raised at the UN meeting in Geneva was London's plan to send asylum seekers who arrive in Britain to Rwanda to counter an influx of refugees and migrants on its southern coast.

Luxembourg's ambassador Marc Bichler called the agreement a violation of international law that "risks causing irreparable harm to those seeking international protection".

Close ally the United States also questioned the policy in written remarks, asking how it could ensure the individuals sent to other countries were protected.

"The fact that so many states made recommendations addressing the UK's backsliding on human rights at home and abroad, its treatment of people seeking asylum, and its undermining of international standards shows their grave concern," Emilie McDonnell from Human Rights Watch told Reuters.

"We can only hope this global spotlight leads the UK to change course."

Mike Freer, a junior minister in Britain's Justice Department, said that Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's government was "absolutely committed" to protecting and respecting human rights at home and abroad. Freer also said Rwanda was a safe and secure country with a track record of supporting refugees.

As yet, no deportations have taken place after a last-minute injunction from the European Court of Human Rights stopped the first planned flight in June. The policy is also facing a judicial review at the High Court in London.

All 193 UN member states are subject to scrutiny as part of the review process established in 2008. A three-person UN "troika" will submit recommendations to the British government next week.

British, Irish Leaders Bid to Resolve N. Ireland Brexit Dispute

LONDON (Dispatches) - UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak hosts his Irish counterpart Micheal Martin, as they bid to end a dispute over post-Brexit trade in Northern Ireland that has stymied power-sharing.

The two leaders meet in Blackpool, northwest England, with signs that frosty ties are thawing over the issue that has paralysed Northern Irish politics and put London at loggerheads with Brussels and Dublin.

In a sign of renewed commitment to resolving the row, Sunak will become the first UK prime minister since 2007 to open the bi-annual British-Irish Council summit.

Downing Street said Sunak will tell Martin he is "determined" to help restore the power-sharing assembly in Belfast "as soon as possible".

It collapsed in February over opposition from pro-UK unionists to the Northern Ireland Protocol governing post-Brexit trade.

The pact was signed separately from the trade and cooperation deal that cemented the UK's formal departure from the European Union in January 2021.

But its implementation has proven a flashpoint for disagreement between the bloc, member state Ireland and Britain -- and even threatens a possible EU-UK trade war.

The protocol kept Northern Ireland in the European single market and customs union, stipulating checks on goods moving from the rest of the UK to Northern Ireland.

That was designed to prevent a "hard" border between Ireland and Northern Ireland -- a key plank of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement that



largely ended three decades of conflict.

But it has enraged hardline unionists, including the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), leading to their boycott of the Stormont assembly in Belfast earlier this year.

Elections in May further complicated the situation, after pro-Irish party Sinn Fein on a historic first election.

The UK government, which is risking EU reprisals by trying to overhaul the protocol through legislation, has threatened to order a new vote.

But on Wednesday it extended a deadline "to create the time and space needed" for talks with the European Commission.

Northern Ireland Secretary Chris Heaton-Harris said on Thursday that the protocol remained "one of the biggest obstacles" to resuming power-sharing.

But in a further sign of a more conciliatory tone from London, he noted "showing trust and respect with the European Commission" could help solve disagreements over it.

Both Brussels and Dublin have signalled hopes that they can break the deadlock in the coming weeks.

Europe's point person on the talks, Maros Sefcovic, said on Monday an agreement could be found with the right "political will".

The Irish and UK governments are guarantors of the 1998 peace accords which ended the sectarian violence over British rule in Northern Ireland that left 3,500 dead.

The British-Irish Council brings together the UK, Ireland and representatives from the devolved Northern Irish, Scottish and Welsh governments, plus those on the Isle of Man, Jersey and Guernsey.

Imran Khan Relaunches Political March

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - Pakistani former Prime Minister Imran Khan told supporters via video-link they should keep up an anti-government march, a week after he suffered wounds in a gun attack, and he dismissed a police report that a lone shooter tried to kill him.

The 70-year-old former cricket hero was wounded last Thursday in the shooting at a rally, part of a rolling march that he has led to press for a general election, since he was ousted in a parliament vote in April.

Khan addressed a few hundred workers who relaunched the march in the eastern city of Wazirabad, the same town where the attacker fired several shots, wounding him and 10 others. One of the injured people later died.

Heavy police contingents were deployed for the security of the marchers, police official Ghulam Nabi said.

"Our march wouldn't stop," Khan said, adding the protest will instead gather strength as it closes on the capital Islamabad.

Khan has been leading public rallies to demand snap polls since his ouster by a joint opposition.

Khan said nothing could deter him from going ahead as long as the snap polls were not called, adding that he would join the protest march in the garrison city of Rawalpindi, adjacent to Islamabad, in some days.

"I will not back off as long as I'm alive," he said.

His successor Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has rejected the demand, saying the election will be held as scheduled later next year.

A police report released last week said a man identified as Mohammad Naveed acted alone when he took out a pistol and started shooting while Khan waved at his supporters at the event last week.

In the video address, Khan rejected the police version. He said at least two people executed what he said was a well planned attack. He did not provide evidence to back up his claim, but pointed to occasions when he spoke at his public rallies in September about a suspected plot.

Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah has said the shooter was a "self motivated and committed person" who carried out the attack on religious basis.



Developing World At COP27 Seeks Finance Details



SHARM EL-SHEIKH (Dispatches) - Finance took center stage at the COP27 climate talks, with U.N. experts publishing a list of projects worth \$120 billion that investors could back to help poorer countries cut emissions and adapt to the impacts of global warming.

A \$3 billion water transfer project between Lesotho and Botswana and a \$10 million plan to improve the public water system in Mauritius were among dozens of projects listed, including 19 in Africa.

"We can now show that a meaningful pipeline of investible opportunities does exist across the economies that need finance most," Mahmoud Mohieldin, one of the U.N. appointed experts, known as U.N. Climate Change High-Level Champions, said in a statement to accompany the report.

In an effort to answer the argument by private sector financiers that it's too risky to invest more in emerging markets, the experts, who help the COP host-governments engage with business, pulled together a list of projects that could be funded more quickly.

After a year of meetings with stakeholders around the world, they released the initial list so that banks and others can assess the projects.

"We now need a creative collaboration between project developers and public, private and concessionary finance, to unlock this investment potential and turn assets into flows," said Mohieldin, High-Level Champion for COP27.

However, another report released on Tuesday suggested that developing countries would need to secure \$1 trillion in external financing every year by 2030, and then match that with their own funds, in order to meet the world's goal of preventing runaway climate change.

Getting money to low- and middle-income countries so they can build infrastructure, such as renewable energy plants needed to replace fossil fuels, has long been a focus for the U.N. climate talks. But progress has been slow.

"Even though the pipeline of interesting projects is there, they will require technical and financial help to get to a position where they can attract the right kind of finance," said Nigel Topping, High-Level Champion for COP26.

"We need all actors in the system to roll up their sleeves to make that happen," he said., "We won't get anywhere near unlocking the scale of finance developing economies need if everyone continues to pass the buck."

The world's leading development banks lent \$51 billion to poorer countries in 2021, with private investors contributing \$13 billion, a recent report from the lenders said.

World Bank President David Malpass addressed delegates on Wednesday, running through the bank's climate efforts and involvement in a partnership under which Western nations would provide \$8.5 billion to South Africa for its energy transition.

Malpass' arrival at COP27, originally scheduled for Sunday, was delayed when his flight from South Africa was hit by lightning, a source familiar with the matter told Reuters.

When asked in Wednesday's event about his past comments seen as downplaying climate change, Malpass again dismissed the allegation that he is a climate change denier.

"You know that I'm not. You know that I'm not, so don't misreport it," Malpass said in response to a reporter's question as he was leaving the event.

Malpass has faced months of criticism from campaign groups and figures including former U.N. climate agency chief Christiana Figueres after answering a question in September at a New York Times event about whether he believed man-made emissions from the burning of fossil fuels was fuelling global warming. At the time, he had replied: "I don't even know. I'm not a scientist."

Thinning Greenland Ice Sheet May Mean More Sea Level Rise



PARIS (Dispatches) - Part of Greenland's ice sheet is thinning further inland than previously believed, which will likely lead to greater sea level rise by the end of this century, a new study found Wednesday.

The findings pertain to a northeast section of the giant ice block covering, but the trend is likely happening elsewhere on Greenland and Earth's other ice sheet, in Antarctica.

The implications are worrying, as sea level rise already threatens millions of people living along coasts that could find themselves underwater in the decades and centuries to come.

Scientists have previously focused on the edges of Greenland's ice sheet to examine active melting as global temperatures rise, largely using satellite data.

But the authors of Wednesday's study looked further inland, over 100 kilometers from the coast. What they found was alarming: thinning from Greenland's coast stretched back 200 to 300 kilometers (125 to 185 miles).

"What we see happening at the front reaches far back into the heart of the ice sheet," said first author Shfaqat Abbas Khan in a press release about the study, published in Nature.

"The new model really captures what's going on inland, the old ones do not... you end up with a completely different mass change, or sea level projection," he told AFP in an interview.

The researchers installed GPS stations on the ice sheet to gather more precise information, and also used satellite data and numerical modelling, all of which provided a new set of data likely to alter global sea level rise projections.

The research was conducted at the Northeast Greenland Ice Stream (NEGIS), which covers an estimated 12 percent of Greenland, according to co-author Mathieu Morlighem.

It found that the thinning could add between 13.5 and 15.5 millimetres to sea levels by the end of this century -- equivalent to the entire Greenland ice sheet's contribution during the past 50 years.

"The NEGIS could lose six times more ice than existing climate models estimate," the report found. One reason for the inland thinning is the intrusion of warm ocean currents, which in 2012 caused the floating extension of the NEGIS to collapse.

That event "has accelerated ice flow and triggered a wave of rapid ice thinning that has spread upstream". The Greenland ice sheet is currently the main factor in swelling the Earth's oceans, according to NASA, with the Arctic region heating at a faster rate than the rest of the planet.

In a landmark report on climate science last year, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) said the Greenland ice sheet would contribute up to 18 centimetres to sea level rise by 2100 under the highest emissions scenario.

The massive ice sheet, two kilometres thick, contains enough frozen water to lift global seas by over seven metres (23 feet) in total.

The researchers will now extend their methods to look at other glaciers on Greenland and Antarctica, and some new data could be available in a year or so.

Earth's surface has warmed, on average, nearly 1.2 degrees Celsius since pre-industrial times, unleashing a catalogue of impacts from heatwaves to more intense storms.

Under the Paris climate deal, countries have agreed to limit warming to well under 2C.

World leaders are currently meeting in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, for UN climate talks aimed at slashing harmful emissions and boosting funding to green developing country economies.

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Russian Weekly Consumer Prices Edge Up Slightly

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Consumer prices in Russia rose slightly for the seventh consecutive week at the start of November, data published on Wednesday showed, as the central bank tries to balance competing inflationary pressures across the economy.

Russia's consumer price index rose 0.01% in the week to Nov. 7, the Rosstat federal statistics service said. That was down from

a 0.07% rise in prices recorded a week earlier, a trend some analysts said was signs of weakening consumer demand.

Russia's economy is caught between short-term disinflationary pressures - aggravated by the call-up of more than 300,000 reservists to support Moscow's military operations in Ukraine - and longer-term trends that are likely to see prices rise, the central bank has warned.



China's Factory Gate Prices Suffer First Drop Since Dec. 2020

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China's factory gate prices for October dropped for the first time since December 2020, and consumer inflation moderated, underlining faltering domestic demand as strict COVID curbs, a property slump and global recession risks hammered the economy.

Analysts say the struggles for businesses and consumers both at home and abroad will heap deflationary pressure on China over coming months, with aggressive global interest rate increases and the Ukraine war adding to Beijing's challenge.

The producer price index (PPI) fell 1.3% year-on-year, reversing from a 0.9% gain a month earlier, National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) data showed on Wednesday, and compared with a forecast of a 1.5% contraction in a Reuters poll.

The consumer inflation also moderated from a 29-month high in September, and underlying price pressures remained much more modest with core inflation rising 0.6% in October, unchanged from September.

"Adverse factors like weak domestic demand and softening export will make China wary of a slide into deflation, signalled by its moderate core-CPI reading of below 1.5% growth for more than two years," said Bruce Pang, chief economist and head of research at Jones Lang Lasalle Inc.

The deflationary impulse in the producer price gauge partly reflected the sharply higher year-ago levels and falling commodity prices, according to an accompanying NBS statement.

Prices in coal mining and washing industry were down 16.5%, deepening from a 2.7% drop in the previous month, while those in ferrous metal smelting and rolling processing slumped 21.1% after declining 18.0% in September.

The world's second-largest economy has been hobbled this year by a recurrence of COVID-19 outbreaks, forcing authorities to implement strict anti-virus curbs in a blow to factory and consumer activity.

China's trade engine has also taken a hit, with exports and imports shrinking in October, and economists are warning of further weakness over the coming quarters due to pressure at home and global recession risks.

"The sharp divergence between PPI inflation in China and other industrial countries means China may be gaining some competitive advantage in manufacturing that could help bolster China's exports," Nomura analysts said in a note to clients.

"However, the worsening of global growth is denting external demand." The consumer price index climbed 2.1% from a year earlier, easing from a 29-month high of a 2.8% increase in September, mainly driven by falling food prices. It was also slower than the 2.4% forecast by analysts.

Food prices rose 7.0% in annual terms, slowing from 8.8% rise in the previous month, with fresh vegetable prices off 8.1% from a 12.1% rise in September.

However, Pork prices - a key driver of the CPI - rose 51.8% year-on-year in October, faster than 36% growth in September.

Almost three years into the pandemic, China has pledged to press on with its strict COVID-19 containment strategy. Analysts say policymakers will be cautious in easing monetary policy for fear of capital flight amid sweeping global interest rate hikes, led by the Federal Reserve.

China's yuan currency has already been pummeled this year by the global tightening trend and a buoyant U.S. dollar, effectively crimping headroom for any sizable policy action by the People's Bank of China.

German Economy to Shrink in 2023

BERLIN (Dispatches) - The German government's panel of independent economic advisers forecast Wednesday that Europe's biggest economy will shrink by 0.2% next year.

The five-member panel's report came after official figures late last month showed unexpected growth in the third quarter, thanks to private spending.

But a weak winter, with gross domestic product declining in the last months of the year and in the first three months of next year, is still widely expected. Two consecutive quarters of negative growth is one technical definition of recession, but the 19-country euro area has a body that also uses a broader set of data including employment numbers and depth of the economic decline to determine when a recession occurs.

The advisers' forecast of 1.7% growth this year and a decline of 0.2% in 2023 contrasts with a forecast at the end of March that German GDP would expand by 1.8% this year and 3.6% next year.

It's still more optimistic than a forecast by the government itself a month ago, which foresaw growth of 1.4% this year and a decline of 0.4% next year.

Inflation has increased to 10.4% in October as energy prices remain high, and the problem isn't expected to go away soon. Wednesday's report predicted an average annual inflation rate next year of 7.4%, a little below this year's 8%.

Officials say Germany is well-placed to get through the winter with sufficient energy after Russia cut off natural gas supplies but stress that it will still need to conserve the fuel that heats homes, powers factories and generates electricity. Federal and state officials agreed last week on the main details of a plan to provide up to 200 billion euros (dollars) in subsidies to households and businesses to ease the strain of high gas, electricity and heating prices through 2024.



IMF Agrees \$4.5b Bangladesh Support Program

DHAKA (Dispatches) - The International Monetary Fund (IMF) provisionally agreed a \$4.5-billion support program for Bangladesh, with the country's finance minister saying the deal would help prevent economic instability escalating into a crisis.

Bangladesh's \$416-billion economy has been one of the world's fastest growing for years. But rising energy and food prices, sparked by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, along with shrinking foreign exchange reserves, have swelled its import bill and current account deficit.

On Wednesday it became the third South Asian nation to secure a "staff-level agreement" with the IMF for loans this year, after Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

"The heat of the global economy has affected our economy to some extent," Finance Minister A.H.M. Mustafa Kamal told reporters after the IMF announcement. "We requested the IMF loan as a precautionary measure to ensure that this instability does not escalate into a crisis."

The Fund said a "staff-level agreement" had been reached for a 42-month arrangement, including about \$3.2 billion from its Extended Credit Facility (ECF) and Extended Fund Facility (EFF), plus about \$1.3 billion from its new Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF).

"The objectives of Bangladesh's new Fund-supported program are to preserve macroeconomic stability and support strong, inclusive, and green growth, while protecting the vulnerable," the lender said in a statement.

A staff-level agreement is typically subject to approval by IMF management and consideration by its Executive Board, which is expected in the coming weeks.

Iraq's Foreign Cash Reserves Reach Historical Levels

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) - While poverty rates are increasing in Iraq, the foreign cash reserves in the Central Bank of Iraq (CBI) reached historical levels.

An Iraqi official in the CBI revealed that the foreign cash reserves reached nearly 90 billion USD, and it will support the country's general budget next year.

European traders said the Iraqi government bought about 150 thousand tons of wheat in an international tender this week, most of which is expected to come from Canada, Lithuania and possibly Australia.

Iraq succeeded in benefiting from the

globally increased oil prices to build a large cash reserve expected to reach \$100b by the end of this year.

The cash reserves represent an unprecedented number in the history of the CBI, and it opens prospects for the new Iraqi government to take advantage of the financial surplus to establish strategic projects supporting the country's budgets and private sector projects, and reducing the total dependence on oil revenues which represent about 95 percent of the country's GDP.

CBI adviser, Ihsan Al-Yasiri, mentioned that the country's cash reserves reached 89.9 billion USD, and they are enough to finance import operations of Iraq's needs for a period of 22 months.

The Iraqi Ministry of Planning mentioned that the government's program focuses on tackling poverty in Iraq, noting that a quarter of Iraq's population lives below the poverty line.

The spokesperson of the Ministry of Planning, Abdul-Zahra Al-Hindawi, clarified that the ministry is preparing to launch an economic and social survey of families in Iraq during the coming period, according to the Iraqi News Agency (INA).

Al-Hindawi explained that this survey will give new indicators about the number of people who are below the poverty line, the concentration of the poor, their conditions and the services they obtain in different ways, because the current indicators are old.

Al-Hindawi pointed out that the poverty rate in Iraq is estimated between 23 and 25 percent.

The Iraqi Ministry of Oil mentioned that the country's exports of crude oil exceeded 3.38 million barrels per day last October.

With an average price of 88.31 USD per barrel, Iraq's total exports of crude oil reached 104.83 million barrels during the past month.

Afghan Central Bank Gets Fresh Banknotes

AFGHAN (Dispatches) - A Polish firm has delivered Afghani banknotes to Kabul this week after the United States paved the way for the Afghan central bank to make a payment via international banking systems, a member of the bank's supreme council told Reuters.

The payment represents a shift for Afghanistan's central bank, which has been largely cut off from the international financial system since hardline Islamist Taliban insurgents seized power in the country last year. Some Taliban members are subject to international sanctions.

The Afghan central bank held a contract with a Polish company for the printing of its banknotes but had been unable until early July to begin payment.

Without access to fresh banknotes for more than a year, Afghanistan's cash has been deteriorating, with notes torn in shreds or held together with cellotape, exacerbating the impoverished country's liquidity crisis.

"Afghanistan's markets run primarily on cash, but existing banknotes are crumbling ... The Central Bank will be able to replace old and damaged banknotes, and this will improve the Afghan people's ability to purchase food and other necessary items," a U.S. State Department spokesperson said.

Shah Mehrabi, a member of the Afghan central bank's supreme council, said assurances to banks and companies by the U.S. Treasury that they would not be prosecuted for allowing a transaction by Afghanistan's central bank, which has two Taliban members in its leadership, had been instrumental. "These transactions that were facilitated by the Treasury are welcomed by all Afghans," Mehrabi said.

He said the banknotes began arriving on Tuesday. The contract was for notes valued at 10 billion Afghanis, mostly in small denominations. A second contract with a French company had been reached for a similar value.

The Taliban say the central bank operates independently but the United States has objected to two Taliban officials holding senior bank positions.

Around \$3.5 billion in Afghan funds frozen by the United States are being transferred to a trust fund in Switzerland, of which Mehrabi is one of several trustees.

Some economists have flagged the risk that additional cash sent to Afghanistan could fuel inflation or be used to fund the Taliban's budget if not carefully accounted for.

The Afghan central bank did not respond to request for comment. A spokesperson for Afghanistan's finance ministry said that new banknotes would be used solely by the central bank for replacing old notes, not to fund the budget.



Italy Economy Minister Promises Fiscal Prudence, Lower Debt



ROME (Dispatches) - Italy aims to follow a cautious fiscal policy in order to lower its public debt but is ready to act quickly to curb surging energy costs and head off recession risks, Economy Minister Giancarlo Giorgetti told parliament.

Giorgetti rejected the notion that northern European countries feared inflation while southern ones dreaded recession, saying the whole continent now risked a "nightmare" scenario in which inflation and recession went hand in hand.

The euro zone's third largest economy grew by a stronger-than-expected 0.5% in the third quarter from the previous three months, but the Treasury forecasts contractions in the current quarter and at the start of next year.

Giorgetti, from the right-wing League party, told a panel of lawmakers the two-week-old government would pursue its budgetary policies "in a framework of prudence, aimed at enabling the reduction of the debt".

He said its decision last week to raise the 2023 budget deficit target did not undermine the goal of reining in a debt level which stood at 150.3% of national output at the end of last year, the highest in the euro zone after Greece.

Giorgetti said the energy crisis had "completely upset" previous economic forecasts and that the 2023 budget, to be presented to parliament this month and approved by the end of the year, will be focused on containing its impact.

Soaring inflation will add 50 billion euros (\$50.21 billion) to Rome's pension bill between 2022-2025 due to automatic indexation, he estimated.

The government is ready "to intervene rapidly ... to face possible recession risks," Giorgetti said, and is examining the possibility of using unspent EU structural funds from 2014-2020 to tame gas and electricity costs for firms and families.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	11:48
■ Evening (Maghreb)	17:18
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:11
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:38

18. He said, "It is my rod: on it I lean;
with it I beat down fodder for my flocks; and in it I find other uses."
19. ((Allah)) said, "Throw it, O Moses!"

Surah 20. Ta-ha (18 - 19)

China's Diesel Exports Recover But Not Enough to Reverse Global Shortage

LONDON (Dispatches) - China's diesel exports accelerated significantly in September after being severely restricted over the previous 13 months, according to data from the customs service.

Exports were boosted to 1.73 million tons (430,000 barrels per day) in September up from an average of 460,000 tons per month (114,000 barrels per day) between August 2021 and August 2022.

Volumes recovered to equal the average of 1.72 million tons per month between 2018 and the first half of 2021, before the government began restricting them ("Monthly statistical bulletin", General Administration of Customs, Oct. 18).

Faster exports will provide some relief amid a global diesel shortage, but are unlikely to be enough to stabilize and rebuild global inventories, or offset any future disruption as a result of sanctions on Russia's fuel exports.

China restricts overseas shipments of diesel, gasoline, jet fuel and other petroleum products through a quota system, administered by the Ministry of Commerce.

The country is a net oil importer so it makes sense to build refinery capacity to meet domestic needs for security reasons - but not to build a large export-oriented refining system.

The government's industrial strategy is focused on increasing exports of high-value technology products while minimizing exports of energy-intensive items that have little domestic value added.

Since refining is very energy intensive and a significant source of carbon dioxide emissions, the government has discouraged export of basic transport fuels to reduce domestic energy use and meet emissions targets.

The quota system also prioritizes domestic consumers and businesses, ensuring supplies and inventories remain comfortable and helping hold down prices.

The sudden tightening of quotas between the third quarter of 2021 and third quarter of 2022, which fell mostly on diesel exports, contributed to the worldwide shortage of diesel and other distillate fuel oils.

Diesel exports were reduced by a total of 16.3 million tons, or 122 million barrels, over 13 months compared with the pre-June 2021 trend.



Recently, extra quotas have been awarded, which should help relieve some of the global shortage, provided they are maintained at a higher level.

However, the cumulative production and exports lost earlier in 2021 and 2022 cannot be recovered easily and will leave global inventories lower than they would have been in the short to medium term.

If exports rise by 300,000 barrels per day, as they did in September, that will meet only around 1% of global consumption estimated at 27 million barrels per day in 2021 ("Statistical review of world energy", BP, June 2022).

Extra diesel shipments out of China will help, but rebalancing the diesel market still requires slower growth in the global economy and fuel consumption.

Pakistan Stresses Tehran-Islamabad Role In Afghan Peace Talks

TEHRAN (MNA) - Advisor to the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan Hina Rabbani described the key and important role of Tehran and Islamabad in restoration of peace and stability in Afghanistan.

The Public Relations Department of the Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement on Thursday regarding the visit of Ms. Hina Rabbani with the visiting political delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran as headed by the Special envoy of the Iranian President for Afghanistan Hassan Kazemi Qomi.

During the talks, Rabbani emphasized the key role of Tehran and Islamabad to help restoration of peace and stability in Afghanistan and called for the interaction of world with the interim rulers of Afghanistan in line with ensuring well-being and welfare for people of this country.

Referring to the deep-rooted ties and fraternal friendship between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan, she stressed that the role of neighbors, including Tehran and Islamabad, is considered very important for peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Hassan Kazemi Qomi, who has traveled to Pakistani capital of Islamabad for consulting with Pakistani authorities, wrote in his twitter account that Iran considers security and stability in Afghanistan as security of the regional countries.

The United States and some of its allies are the main source of instability and insecurity in the region, Kazemi Qomi stressed.

Iran, IRU Focus...

FROM PAGE 1

IRU and Iranian public and private actors also emphasized the benefits of using digital trade tools, such as those with the TIR system and the CMR Convention. There was equally a strong interest expressed by the transport ministry to partner with IRU to further improve the professional competence of drivers and road transport managers through IRU training and certification programs.

Umberto de Pretto also met with Ambassador Khusrav Noziri, the Economic Cooperation Organization's (ECO) Secretary General. The secretaries general expressed their satisfaction with how the IRU-ECO partnership has evolved in recent years, which has led to several successful joint projects in the region, such as the opening of the Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul (ITI) corridor.

Umberto de Pretto said, "There has been wishful talk about the ITI corridor for decades. Working in partnership with ECO, we turned that talk into reality!"

IRU and ECO agreed to continue strengthening their partnership, including by promoting trade and transit best practices, optimizing border crossings throughout the ECO region, and implementing existing digital tools, as well as digitalizing all other documentation, such as visas and permits.

Tehran Urges Quick Expansion of Trade in National Currencies With Russia

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has called for a quick expansion of trade in national currencies with Russia amid efforts by the two countries to boost bilateral economic ties.

Iran's Vice President Mohammad Mokhber said that increased use of national currencies in trade with Russia could lead to a big jump in trade exchanges between the two countries.

Mokhber made the remarks while meeting Russia's Presidential Aide Igor Levitin in Tehran.

He also said that an acceleration in efforts to finish the Rasht-Astara railway, a project along the Caspian Sea in northern Iran that relies on Russia's financial aid, will cause a boom in trade and cargo transit between Iran and Russia.

"Trade cooperation between Tehran and Moscow will not only serve the needs and interests of Iran and Russia, but it will meet the needs of the region and its

markets and will lead to increased benefits for the two nations," Mokhber was quoted as saying by the official IRNA news agency.

Mokhber's meeting with Levitin was the third such encounter between the two top officials since August.

It came as a senior delegation led by Russia's Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev was in Tehran to hold talks with Iranian government officials.

Levitin said during the meeting with Mokhber that Russia has strong plans to expand its economic and trade ties with Iran, adding that Moscow is particularly interested in investments that could boost transit of cargo through the Iranian roads and railways.

Levitin said Russian suppliers of agricultural equipment and bus manufacturers are eager to increase their presence in the Iranian market.

Kanaani Rejects G7 Statement, Calls Anti-Iran Accusations Unfounded

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Ministry Spokesman Nasser Kanaani strongly condemned and rejected a recent statement by the Group of Seven (G7) about the latest developments in Iran.

Foreign ministers of the G7, which consists of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Britain, and the US, issued a statement at the end of their meeting in Germany on November 4, condemning Iran for what they called a crackdown on protests that followed the death of Mahsa Amini.

The statement also condemned Iran for what they described as "destabilizing activities" and criticized the country for the alleged transfer of drones to Russia for use in the Ukraine war.

Kanaani said that all those allegations are unfounded and fabricated, adding that the G7 statement violates the UN Charter.

He said that the statement practically encourages riots and terrorist attacks in Iran, and that those issuing the statement should be held accountable over their stance.

The diplomat said that the majority of the G7 member states refused to even condemn the October 26 terrorist attack in the southern city of Shiraz that left 13 people dead.

That shows the G7 members divide terrorism to good and bad, which by itself is indicative of contradiction in their words and actions, he added.

Also reacting to the G7 statement, Kanaani said that Iran has always remained committed to its obligations under the 2015 nuclear deal and is ready to reach a revival agreement that guarantees the rights of its people.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the spokesman said that the Islamic Republic makes efforts to improve peace and stability in the region, and the accusations against the country over regional issues are totally rejected.

IAEA Urged to...

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Also in his remarks, Iravani referred to the 2018 US withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal and the imposition of sanctions against the Islamic Republic, which he called illegal.

He said that Iran has remained committed to its safeguards' obligations, and is ready to fully implement the nuclear deal if other parties fulfill their obligations fully.

Iran's envoy also spoke about the assassination of Iranian nuclear scientists by the Zionist regime in the past years, and called on international organizations, including the UN, to condemn the regime's crimes.

Iravani, meanwhile, blasted the Zionist regime for refusing to join the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and said that the IAEA should deal with this issue without taking sides.

Iran Opens First...

FROM PAGE 1

He said Iran plans to finish two other key rail links in its north and southwest to allow the international transportation of cargo from Chabahar to ports in Finland and from Chabahar to the Mediterranean.

Back in 2019, the Iranian government approved 300 million euros in special funds to finish the Zahedan-Chabahar railway after Indian companies decided to pull out of the project because of American sanctions on Iran.

The Iranian transportation ministry said last month that some 250 million euros of the fund has already been earmarked to the project and another 50 million euros will be made available in the near future.

FM Warns UN...

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Such measures prepared the ground for a terrorist attack by Daesh, he said, referring to Shah Cheragh Shrine terror attack in Shiraz on October 26 which claimed the lives of more than a dozen pilgrims, including women and children, and injured at least 40 others.

Amirabdollahian also slammed the "security and media" meddling of an Arab country in riots inside the country, probably referring to Saudi Arabia which according to Iranian intelligence agencies has had a role in the unrest.

Guterres, for his part, rejected the council's political interference in the internal affairs of other countries.

The Iranian foreign minister referred to "technical" negotiations between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), describing the bilateral cooperation as "appropriate".

The minister had said on November 2 that an Iranian delegation would travel to Vienna to hold talks with the IAEA.

Furthermore, Amirabdollahian informed Guterres about recent message exchanges between Tehran and Washington through the European Union.

The UN chief lauded Iran's stress on diplomacy, noting that the revival of the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), would safeguard the interests of all parties.

He also said continued cooperation with the IAEA was a positive step by Iran.

Amirabdollahian stressed that Iran continues to cooperate with the United Nations for extending the truce in Yemen.

"Of course, any decision on continuation of truce and complete removal of siege in Yemen will be adopted by Yemeni leaders and people," he said.

For his part, Guterres appreciated Iran's "constructive" role in the fight against terrorism and its help in establishing truce in Yemen, also calling on Tehran to continue cooperation with the UN Special Envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg for extending the temporary truce.

The UN chief also pointed to a recent meeting that he had with ambassadors of Persian Gulf countries and Iran, hoping that a new structure for regional cooperation could strengthen peace and stability in the region.

Elsewhere, the Iranian minister strongly rejected "baseless accusations" on delivery of Iranian drones to Russia for use in the Ukraine war.

Enemy's Anti-Iran Policy...

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Underlining that the Iranian administration had increased the amount of oil exports compared to the time before the imposition of sanctions, Raisi said, "We tried to restore the share of Iran's economy in the region. They sought to isolate Iran, but they themselves became isolated. The enemy thought that serving the people would be slowed down with chaos and riots, but it was just a delusion."

The Iranian chief executive said the enemy attempted to stop the country's progress and started disrupting security, adding, "The enemy is trying to implement in the country the same scenario that it implemented in other states, but it is unaware that it is making yet another strategic mistake because its policy of sanctions and destabilizing the country has failed once again."

Major General Hossein Salami, the chief commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), warned enemies on Friday that the Islamic Republic would definitely avenge their "interventionist and mischievous actions" following the latest Western-provoked riots.

"The enemies are well aware that we will definitely respond to their interventionist and mischievous behavior; but now, we cannot say where and how this will take place," Salami said, adding, "Whoever disturbs the Iranian nation's peace will never enjoy peace."

Iran to Give Response...

FROM PAGE 1

On Wednesday, Baerbock voiced support for the recent riots across Iran, saying the European Union will seek to adopt new sanctions against Tehran next week.

The riots broke out in Iran in mid-September after the death of Mahsa Amini. The 22-year-old fainted at a police station in Tehran and was pronounced dead three days later in hospital.

Rioters went on rampage across the country, brutally attacking security officers and causing massive damage to public property as Western powers, especially the United States, provided support.

The European countries slapped a set of sanctions on Iran over the country's handling of the violence.

Iran, in turn, announced tit-for-tat sanctions against institutions and individuals in the European Union due to their deliberate actions in support of terrorism and terrorist groups.

Son Will Be in South Korea's World Cup Squad

LONDON (Dispatches) - South Korea coach Paulo Bento said today Son Heung-min will be selected for the World Cup in Qatar, adding that he does not have a contingency plan in place if the forward is unable to recover from a facial injury in time.

In an Instagram post, Tottenham Hotspur's Son said he will be available for selection at the World Cup after undergoing surgery to stabilise a fracture around his left eye.

He added that he would play with a protective mask if required.

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ISSN 1024-6053

P.O. Box: 15875-8551

Address: No 13, Pajouhesh St., Golestan II St, Golestan St. Marzadaran Blvd., Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Printed by: Honar Sarzmin Sabz

Distributed by:

Cities of Iran Cultural and Artistic Institute

Managing Director: Fereydoon Taherpour Asl

Southampton Appoint Jones as Manager

LONDON (Dispatches) - Nathan Jones has been tasked with saving Southampton from relegation after being appointed manager of the Premier League club today.

The 49-year-old Welshman signed a three-and-a-half year contract and replaces Ralph Hasenhuttl who was sacked. Jones gets the job on the back of an impressive second spell with Championship side Luton. "Southampton Football Club is delighted to announce it has appointed Nathan Jones as its new Men's First Team Manager," read a club statement.

Durant Scoring Streak Rolls On as Nets Sink Knicks

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Kevin Durant extended his 25-point scoring streak with a triple double as the Brooklyn Nets launched Jacque Vaughn's reign as head coach with a 112-85 rout of the New York Knicks.

Durant gave Brooklyn's fans some respite from recent off-court drama with a superb performance, scoring 29 points with 12 rebounds and 12 assists in a wire-to-wire victory at the Barclays Center.

The 34-year-old has now scored at least 25 points in each of Brooklyn's 12 games since the start of the season — the longest streak since Michael Jordan opened the 1988-1989 campaign with 16 games scoring 25 points or more per game.

More significantly, Durant's latest dominant performance ensured a smooth start to Vaughn's tenure as head coach.

Durant was also happy to have helped deliver a win for Vaughn that saw the Nets improve to 5-7.

"He's been around this group for a while, been around this organization for a while, so he understands us," Durant said.

As well as the dismissal of Nash last week, the Nets have also been buffeted by controversy surrounding Kyrie Irving, who was suspended by the club last week after posting a link to an anti-Semitic film on his social media.

In other games, the Los Angeles Lakers' miserable season continued with a 114-101 defeat to city rivals the Clippers that saw LeBron James hobble off with an apparent injury.

James, who finished with 30 points, eight rebounds and five assists, left the court with just over five minutes remaining in the fourth quarter.

The defeat leaves the Lakers just one place off the bottom of the Western Conference with a dismal 2-9 record. Only the Houston Rockets (2-10) have a worse record.

Utah's blistering start to the season continued with a 125-119 win over the Atlanta Hawks in Georgia.

The Hawks had gone into the game on a high after ending Milwaukee's unbeaten start to the season in their previous game.

But Jazz star Lauri Markkanen put on a



shooting clinic with 32 points while Jordan Clarkson added 23 as Utah improved to 10-3 to maintain their lead at the top of the Western Conference standings.

Markkanen's exhibition of shooting included six buckets from three-point range and a perfect eight-from-eight from the free-throw line.

Dejounte Murray led the Atlanta scorers with 26 points while the returning Trae Young had 22 points. The Phoenix Suns remain in hot pursuit of Utah at the top of the Western Conference after romping to a 129-117 road win over the Minnesota Timberwolves.

Devin Booker's 32-point haul and 31 from Mikal Bridges set up victory for Phoenix, who improved to 8-3 to remain second in the standings.

The Portland Trail Blazers are also on 8-3 in the West after sending the Charlotte Hornets to a sixth straight loss with a 105-95 win on the road.

Damian Lillard led the Blazers scoring with 26 points, six assists with seven rebounds. The Denver Nuggets are level with Phoenix and Portland on 8-3 after their 122-119 win over the Indiana Pacers.

Reigning NBA MVP Nikola Jokic led the Denver scoring with 24 points while Benedict Mathurin topped the Pacers scorers with 30 points.



Flick Omits Reus, Recalls Goetze

FRANKFURT (Dispatches) - Borussia Dortmund captain Marco Reus has been omitted by head coach Hansi Flick from Germany's squad for the World Cup, while 2014 World Cup hero Mario Goetze makes a shock return.

"We're looking forward to seeing him," Flick said of 30-year-old Goetze, who last played for Germany five years ago.

"We have a very good squad we can take with us" Flick said today in Frankfurt.

Flick also selected uncapped duo Werder Bremen striker Niklas Fuellkrug and 17-year-old Dortmund forward Youssoufa Moukoko.

While Moukoko has represented his country at junior level, this is the first time Fuellkrug, 29, will don a Germany shirt.

"He is someone who is constantly trying to improve" Flick said of Fuellkrug, "he gives the team the confidence that anything is possible".

Alongside Reus, there were several high-profile absences in the squad, including Reus' Dortmund teammate Mats Hummels and Inter Milan wing-back Robin Gosens.

Zverev Eyeing December Return From Ankle Injury

MUNICH (Dispatches) - Former world No. 2 Alexander Zverev is planning a return to the courts during December from a serious ankle injury, his brother and manager Mischa said.

Former U.S. Open runner-up Zverev has been sidelined since June's French Open with the ligament tear and could return for December 8-10's Diriyah Tennis Cup in Saudi Arabia.

"He needs a few matches before the start of the season. Training sessions at home, without a crowd, are different," Mischa Zverev told Eurosport.

"He needs to be on the court against a good player, with ball boys and girls, referees, to feel the adrenalin again."

Zverev has been sidelined since tearing ankle ligaments during his semi-final against Rafael Nadal at Roland Garros.

He left the court in a wheelchair and subsequently underwent surgery to repair three torn ligaments in his right ankle.

A planned return at the Davis Cup in September came up short when Zverev pulled out after experiencing "extreme pain".

The tournament in the Middle East will allow the 25-year-old to prepare for the United Cup, which starts in late December before the Australian Open, beginning on January 29.

Lukaku, Hazard Included In Belgium Squad For World Cup

LONDON (Dispatches) - Belgium coach Roberto Martinez has included injured striker Romelu Lukaku and playmaker Eden Hazard in his 26-man squad for the World Cup in Qatar, saying he will give the former "every second" to regain his fitness for the tournament.

Lukaku has been suffering with a hamstring injury which, coupled with a thigh problem earlier this season, means he has played just twice since August and is currently sidelined for his club Inter Milan.

But Martinez has previously stated that as long as Lukaku could feature in one of the team's Group F games against Canada, Morocco or Croatia, he would take him to the tournament.

Nadal, Swiatek to Begin 2023 at United Cup in Australia



SYDNEY (Dispatches) - Rafael Nadal and Iga Swiatek will kick off their 2023 seasons at the United Cup in Australia, a new mixed teams event, but a host of top 10 players are skipping the tournament.

The United Cup, with \$15 million in prize money and rankings points at stake, has replaced the men's ATP Cup and will be held in Brisbane, Perth and Sydney as a key build-up to the Australian Open Grand Slam.

Eighteen countries will compete across 11 days from December 29, with each team comprising four men and four women with 500 WTA and 500 ATP rankings points available.

"The playing group is very excited about the United Cup, and that's confirmed in the high quality and caliber of those who've committed to the event," tournament director Stephen Farrow said Thursday.

"We are delighted with the depth and breadth of the teams, and we can look forward to many exciting matchups and lots of entertaining tennis."

World number two and 22-time Grand Slam winner Nadal — the defending Australian Open champion — will headline Spain's team along with 13th-ranked Paula Badosa. But Spanish world number one Carlos Alcaraz will not take part.

Top-ranked Swiatek will spearhead Poland alongside Hubert Hurkacz while world number three Jessica Pegula is on a United States team that also features Madison Keys, Taylor Fritz and Frances Tiafoe.

A resurgent Caroline Garcia, fresh from beating Aryna Sabalenka to win the season-ending WTA Finals on Monday, is the big-name player for France.

Sixth-ranked Maria Sakkari is the only other woman in the top 10 taking part, in a strong Greek team seeded one with world number three Stefanos Tsitsipas.

The likes of top-10 players Sabalenka, Ons Jabeur and Coco Gauff have opted to begin their seasons at other events, likely the Adelaide International, a joint ATP-WTA tournament that runs at the same time.

Liverpool Survive Shootout In League Cup

LONDON (Dispatches) - Liverpool survived a penalty shootout to see off third-tier Derby County and reach the League Cup fourth round while Manchester City won a heavyweight tie with Chelsea 2-0 and Tottenham Hotspur and Arsenal were both knocked out.

Liverpool, who won last season's competition by beating Chelsea on penalties, were held to a goalless draw at home to Derby and once again Irish goalkeeper Caoimhin Kelleher was their hero, saving three spot-kicks as his side progressed 3-2 in the shootout.

Second-half goals from Riyad Mahrez and Julian Alvarez secured victory for City after Pep Guardiola made seven changes to the line-up that scraped a 2-1 win over Fulham in the Premier League on Saturday.

Jack Grealish, the Premier League's most expensive signing, was City's standout player and created a number of chances but it was Mahrez who broke the deadlock in the 53rd minute from a free kick.

Alvarez doubled City's lead five minutes later, sending a spectacular crossfield ball towards Mahrez and knocking the loose ball in from close range after Chelsea keeper Edouard Mendy had parried the Algerian's low strike.

Premier League leaders Arsenal were beaten 3-1 at home by Brighton & Hove Albion, taking the lead through striker Eddie Nketiah but then going conceding a penalty later in the first half scored by their former striker Danny Welbeck. Kaoru Mitoma and Tariq Lamptey clinched victory for the visitors in the second half.



Schumacher Ferrari Fetches Record \$15m at Auction

GENEVA (Dispatches) - The Ferrari in which Formula One legend Michael Schumacher won the 2003 World Championship title sold for nearly US\$15 million (RM70.3 million) at auction in Geneva.

"This remarkable car has achieved a world record price for a modern-era Formula One," the Sotheby's auctioneer said after the F2003-GA, Chassis 229 car went under the hammer for 13 million Swiss francs (US\$13.2 million).

When taxes and fees were added on, the final price stood at 14.6 million francs (US\$14.9 million), the auction house said later.

The previous record was held by another Schumacher-driven Ferrari, an F2001 model sold by Sotheby's in New York in 2017 for \$7.5 million.

The final price, offered by an unidentified telephone bidder from Europe after a bidding war of more than 40 minutes, far outstripped expectations, with the auction house estimating before the sale that the car would fetch up to 9.5 million Swiss francs.

It is "one of the most significant Formula One cars of all time", the auctioneers said.

Schumacher, who has not been seen in public since suffering serious injuries in a skiing accident in 2013, raced nine times in the car.

He won five Grands Prix with it in the 2003 season and drove it when he clinched the title in Japan.

"It's one of the Ferraris with the most victories in the constructor's history, so it's a very important car in the history of motor racing," Vincent Luzuy, from the Sotheby's branch dealing with luxury car sales, told AFP.

Designed by Rory Byrne and Ross Brawn, the F2003-GA featured a longer wheelbase to improve aerodynamics, he explained.

