

Iraqi News Sources on Tuesday Afternoon Reported That the Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps Quds Force Has Held Meetings With the Iraqi President and Prime Minister in Baghdad

IRAN NEWS

Iran's Envoy to the UN Said That the Zionist Regime Is the Main Obstacle To Creating a Mideast Free of Weapons of Mass Destruction, Calling on the International Community to Assist the Region In Overcoming These Obstacles

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Official Blasts Role of UK-Based Anti-Iran Media Outlets in Riots

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - A senior Iranian human rights official has slammed the British government's support for the "unlawful" anti-Iran campaign waged by the Persian-language media outlets, saying the role of these UK's state-funded anti-Iran outlets is no less than that of terrorist groups.

"In fact, the anti-Iran Persian-language media's moves are completely contrary to the laws and regulations, and we hold the British government responsible in this regard," Secretary of the High Council for Human Rights Kazem Gharibabadi told reporters in New York.

Gharibabadi, who is also the deputy chief of the Iranian Judiciary, said British media regulator Ofcom must investigate such media violations which are supported by the British government.

He added that the role of anti-Iran media outlets is no less than that of terrorist groups or their members, as they have incited violence, crime, insecurity and terrorist acts across Iran.

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Germany in Talks With Iran to Buy Crude Oil

TEHRAN (PressTV) - The chief economist for the partially state-owned bank LBBW in the southwestern German state of Baden-Württemberg is reported to have said that Germany is engaged in talks with the Islamic Republic to buy Iranian oil.

"Intensive talks are already being held behind the scenes with Venezuela, Iran or Algeria to cover Germany's oil and gasoline needs," the Jerusalem Post quoted Moritz Kraemer, the chief economist of the Landesbank Baden-Württemberg (LBBW), as saying.

The comments by Kraemer were made in the context of how Germany plans to cover its energy needs in light of the country's efforts to wean itself off Russian gas dependency, the Israeli newspaper wrote.

Iran's oil exports have been affected by various sanctions for about a decade, with the former US administration even trying to reduce them to zero. Although the goal was never realized, Iran's oil exports and access to its money were severely limited after then president Donald Trump pulled the US out of the Iran nuclear deal in 2018 and decided to pile pressure on Tehran, including round after round of economic sanctions.

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Tehran, Moscow Eye \$40b Annual Trade



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - A big trade delegation from Russia yesterday at Tehran's Espinas Palace Hotel met their Iranian partners to discuss ways to develop trade ties between the two countries.

Organized by the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), the event was participated by a 120-member Russian delegation as well as businesspeople and officials from Iran, the ICCIMA portal reported.

ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie, Russian Ambassador to Iran Alexey Yurievich Dedov, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy Mehdi Safari, and President of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Russian Federation Sergey Katyrin were among the officials who attended the forum.

Opening the event, ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie underlined the need for the improvement of transportation and trade infrastructure for the expansion of trade ties between Iran and Russia, saying that the creation of transportation infrastructure, development of banking relations, facilitation of the issuance of bank guarantees, and expansion of the activities of the green customs corridor are prerequisites for the development of relations between the two countries.

Referring to Iran's major policy of constructive partnership with neighboring countries, Shafeie stated: "In order to create a calm and stress-free environment for business, Iranian private sector emphasizes the use of diplomatic capacities to develop economic and trade relations with other nations."

He further stressed the capacities of Iran and Russia to develop relations and said: "The two countries' major resources and capabilities in various fields such as oil and gas, shipping in the Caspian Sea and general transportation along the north-south corridor, information technology and electronics, petrochemicals, agriculture and food, metals and chemicals, construction and textile materials, pharmaceuticals, technical and engineering services, along with the desire of the two countries for regional cooperation have paved the way for the expansion of bilateral exchanges."

Elsewhere in the forum, Mehdi Safari, Iran's deputy foreign minister for economic diplomacy, said Iran and Russia are working on a mechanism for establishing a direct banking channel between the two countries.

Mentioning the visit of several delegations from Central Bank of Iran (CBI) to Russia and also the visit of some Russian bank representatives to Iran, Safari said: "The central bank has sent five high-level delegations to Russia which have had long negotiations [with Russian counterparts]. On the other hand, Russian bank representatives also came to Iran and the infrastructure is being prepared; As the central bank says in four months our business relationship with Russia will be closed [conducted directly], and if this is done, such a relationship can be formed with more than 10 other countries."

Also addressing the forum, President of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Russian Federation Sergey Katyrin said: "The roadmap for achieving \$40 billion of trade between Iran and Russia has been prepared and the businesspeople of both sides are waiting for the implementation of a free trade agreement [between the two countries]."

Underlining the Russian chamber's efforts to develop relations between Iranian and Russian businessmen, Katyrin emphasized: "Following these efforts, today more than 100 representatives and entrepreneurs from different provinces of Russia are present in this forum, and we are ready to develop provincial relations between the two countries even further."

"In this regard, as emphasized in the meeting of the presidents of the two countries, various ministers of our country visited Russia in order to lay the groundwork for the development of trade relations," he said.

The official stressed the importance of exchanging information between businessmen of the two countries and added: "Decisions were made in the Russian Chamber [of commerce and industry] to increase the level of relations with the Iranian side, and we took more than 100 people on this trip to show how important it is for Russia to increase relations with Iran."

Also speaking at the gathering, Russian Ambassador to Iran Alexey Yurievich Dedov underlined the governments of the two countries' support for the expansion of economic ties and said the government officials of Iran and Russia have met each other and talked on the phone several times to come up with ways to develop relations.

"By the end of this year, the presence of more high-level Russian delegations in Iran can create a foundation for bilateral and multilateral relations and make it possible to reach the economic goals [set by the two sides]."

Headed by Sergey Katyrin, the Russian trade delegation, comprised of businesspersons active in different areas, including transportation, food, constructional materials, petrochemical and oil products, international arbitration, and so on, arrived in Tehran on Monday.

After attending the forum, the delegation also plans to visit other Iranian cities of Rasht, Anzali, and Isfahan. On the sidelines of the business forum, the Russian businesspersons held B2B meetings with their Iranian counterparts. Iran and Russia traded as much as \$4.63 billion worth of commodities over the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), according to an April report by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

Sanctions or Blackmails?

Imposing sanctions in recent decades mainly by the Western countries has turned into a tool for blackmailing or increasing pressures on the countries which do not follow the West's policies or want to be independent, and the Islamic Republic of Iran since its establishment in 1979 has always been under Western countries' sanctions under different pretexts and on Monday EU and UK announced a new series of sanctions on Tehran to enhance pressure on Tehran for not to confront with rioters or anyone who causes disrupt in the country.

The European Union on Monday announced imposition of a number of Iranian institutions and individuals, including the 24-hour English-language Press TV, over alleged "rights violations" following the recent foreign-backed riots in the country.

The EU announced new sanctions on a further 29 Iranian officials and three organizations for alleged crackdown on protests, which began following the death of Mahsa Amini, a young Iranian woman, who collapsed in police custody and was pronounced dead a few days later at hospital.

The 29-member bloc imposed visa bans and asset freezes on Iranian Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi, four members of the police squad that arrested Amini, high-ranking members of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), including its provincial commanders, the commander of the Iranian Army's Ground Forces, and state broadcaster Press TV, which it accused of airing "forced confessions of detainees," an EU statement said.

Experts believe that sanctions imposed on Press TV by the EU, and earlier by the government of Canada, are aimed at muzzling free speech and alternative views. They have also highlighted the role played by Press TV during the recent riots, as the news channel made a great effort to counter fake narratives fostered by Western media concerning Iran's riots.

Meanwhile, despite EU's fake claims that "Press TV is responsible for producing and broadcasting the forced confessions of detainees," no such forced confessions have ever been produced or broadcast by the English-language news channel during the recent riots.

"We stand with the Iranian people and support their right to protest peacefully and voice their demands and views freely," EU foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, said in a statement.

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Tehran Condemns EU, UK Sanctions Over Alleged Rights Violations

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Foreign Ministry has denounced as "baseless, illegal and meddlesome" the new rounds of sanctions on the country by the European Union and the UK over what they called Tehran's use of force in recent riots.

In a statement on Tuesday, Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kan'ani said that Iran reserves the right to retaliate in kind.

He said "addiction to sanctions" has deprived European parties of rationality and tactfulness, warning that Europe itself is tightening the noose on its foreign relations by such a wrong-headed approach.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran, relying on its national power and making use of its unique experiences in actively dealing with imposed challenges, will take effective countermeasures against such fruitless and unconstructive measures, as it did before, by upholding its honor and protecting its national interest," he added.

On Monday, the EU announced a new round of sanctions against Iran after accusing the Islamic Republic of crackdown on protests.

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Iranian Military Delegation in Pakistan to Take Part in Defense Exhibition

TEHRAN (IRNA) - An Iranian military delegation on Monday arrived in Pakistan's southern city of Karachi to take part in the 11th International Defense Exhibition and Seminar (IDEAS) 2022.

The delegation represents the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran and is headed by Brigadier General Nasser Mokhtarzadeh, Deputy Army Chief for Information Communications Technology Affairs. The 11th International Defense Exhibition and Seminar (IDEAS) 2022 kicks off on Tuesday and runs for four days. Some 500 exhibitors from 64 countries take part in the exhibition that displays innovations and advancement in "arms for peace", according to Pakistani media.

Modern Ignorance Against Societies' Awareness

TEHRAN (IRNA) - President Ebrahim Raisi has said that the modern ignorance of today's world resorts to the media empire in order to get in the way of awareness of human societies.

President Raisi made the remarks on the day of marking books and bookkeepers on Tuesday, noting that one of the ways to increase awareness among human communities is to promote book reading.

Asking the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance to facilitate access to books in Iranian society, he said that the level of connection of society with culture can be evaluated through the index of reading books.

One of the ways to get acquainted with religious and cultural figures is to study books and their scripts, he noted, urging the young generation to read books written by Allameh Tabatabaei, an Iranian scholar, theorist, philosopher, and one of the most prominent thinkers of modern Shia Islam.

As to Imam Khomeini's books, the chief executive argued that several books from the renowned figure show his great character as a big clergyman, mystic, and scholar.

He further described the recent unrest in Iran as one of the plots hatched by the enemies of the Islamic Republic, saying that let's see what the foe treated in dealing with those who thought it would rescue them because the enemies disrupted many societies under the guise of supporting human rights and freedom.

The global arrogance was forced to leave Iran in 1979 and the Islamic country will not allow them to decide for the Iranians' fate, Raisi stated.

The president warned that modern ignorance through using technology and the media empire wants to hinder human awareness, but book-reading is one of the ways to increase insight.

Raisi stated, "Today reading is a serious necessity for our society and it should be planned on a daily basis so that our teenagers and young people get more acquainted with books".



Stating that the enemies of knowledge, in the past, after attacking any country, they first set its libraries on fire in order to promote ignorance in that country, the President said, "Today, the modern ignorance is using the tool of media empire and technology to promote ignorance in societies, because it knows that an informed society does not fall under the burden of domination".

The President added, "Reading and studying history, while raising awareness of the fate of those who were deceived by the enemy, will bring even more scandal to the domination system, which destroyed societies in the name of freedom and attention to human rights".

Dr Raisi considered the creation of seditions and riots, including the recent riots in the country, in line with the evil intentions of the domination system to dominate the country and our people again and said, "A living, dynamic and knowledgeable nation who drove the dictators out of this country once in 1979 will not allow them to dominate this country again".

Minister Says Medical, Currency Supply Are on Agenda

TEHRAN (IP) - Minister of Health, Treatment and Medical Education in the open session of the parliament on Tuesday said: New plans by the Ministry led to cut drug smuggling, while medical equipment supply has been taken into consideration.

After the report of Health and Treatment Commission Bahram Eynollahi said: "The representatives in the 1401 budget gave the authority to implement the drug plan to the Ministry of Health and with the support of parliamentarians in the budget of 1401, the Ministry of Health was authorized to implement the pharmaceutical plan; In which, foreign exchange policies in the supply of medicine, essentials and medical equipment has been taken into consideration.

Based on this, the Ministry of Health issued a plan for currency reforms in the supply of medicine and medical equipment, which has been implemented for 4 months, he added.

Pointing out that the allocation of preferential currency to drug manufacturers was one of the important problems, Eynollahi emphasized: sometimes the invoices were not real and some manufacturers received more preferential currency than they needed.

He considered the prevention of drug smuggling by implementing the drug project as one of the other goals of this plan and stated: In addition to domestic consumers, millions of people outside of Iran are expected to use the country's drugs in the form of smuggling, which was also prevented.

The minister pointed out that this plan was the result of cooperation between all institutions. Drug production and supply is an inter-organizational process and success is achieved if all organizations are coordinated; In this regard, the Ministry of Health is the policy maker, planner and operator.

Referring to the establishment of a special pharmaceutical measures center by the Ministry of Health, Eynollahi said: "We invited the Program and Budget Organization, the Central Bank, insurers and regulatory institutions and established the partnership among all of them."

Russia, Iran Determined to Help End Crisis in Afghanistan

TEHRAN (IRNA) - An Iranian official has underscored that the Russian Federation and the Islamic Republic of Iran are determined to collaborate in order to pave the way for terminating the existing crisis in Afghanistan.

Hassan Kazemi Ghomi, Iran's special envoy in Afghanistan affairs, wrote on his Twitter account on Tuesday that in a meeting with the Russian ambassador to Tehran the two sides had exchanged views on cooperation and common concerns, including terrorism and its supporters in Afghanistan.

The special envoy went on to say that a destabilizing movement attempts to make use of different tools such as the Daesh terrorist group in a bid to pave the way for continuation of the crisis in Afghanistan.

Amid his recent trip to Pakistan, Kazemi Ghomi tweeted on November 9 that the security and stability of Afghanistan are translated into security in the regional countries, but the United States and some of its allied governments are sources of instability in West Asia.

Afghanistan has been suffering from insecurity and instability since the invasion of the country by the United States and its NATO allies in 2001. The war-torn state is now affected by the US' hazardous withdrawal in 2021.

Iran Ready to Expand Cooperation With Venezuela in Key Fields

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Rouhollah Dehghani Firouzabadi, the Iranian Vice-President for Scientific, Technological and Knowledge-based Economic Affairs said the Islamic Republic is interested in cooperating with Venezuela in key fields such as nanotechnology, biotechnology, stem cells, as well as agriculture and animal husbandry.

The Iranian official was speaking on Monday with Venezuela's Minister of Science and Technology Gabriela Servilia Jiménez Ramirez here in the Iranian capital Tehran.

Dehghani Firouzabadi said that there are numerous grounds for cooperation between the two countries in the technology sector, adding that Iranian knowledge-based companies can play a key role in this regard.

He said that these companies have already left a great impact on Iran's economy.

The Venezuelan minister hailed Iran's scientific achievements which she said serve as a good model for her country and pave the way for further development of cooperation between the two sides.

Amirabdollahian, Borrell Discuss JCPOA on Phone



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian and EU Foreign Policy Chief Josep Borrell discussed the negotiations aimed at reviving the 2015 Iran nuclear deal and removing sanctions against the country.

Those negotiations began in April 2021, three years after the US pulled out of the nuclear deal and threw it into disarray. The talks, however, have been stopped for several months now over what Iran calls a lack of political decision by the United States to return to its commitments under the accord.

Amirabdollahian and Borrell held their talks on phone Monday night.

They also talked about Iran's cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency, the IAEA.

Hours earlier, Borrell told reporters in Brussels that the European Union will continue efforts aimed reaching an agreement on the revival of the Iran deal known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the JCPOA.

Borrell spoke of what he called a deadlock in the JCPOA revival talks, but added that the EU will continue to act as the coordinator of the talks despite problems.

This issue is not related to other issues that the EU is concerned about, he said.

The top EU diplomat made the comments after the bloc imposed additional sanctions on Iran over what it described as a crackdown against protests, targeting 29 individuals and three entities.

Those protests began in mid-September after the death of young woman Mahsa Amini, but soon turned into riots and vandalism.

Iran has blamed foreign elements, including the US, the UK, Saudi Arabia and Israel for the riots, saying that they have provided support to rioters.

The Islamic Republic has promised a firm response to anyone disturbing the security of the Iranian people.

Tehran, Caracas Sign Economic Document in Various Fields

TEHRAN (MNA) - The signing ceremony of several economic documents between Iran and Venezuela was held in the presence of Iran's Minister of Defense Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Ashtiani and a number of Venezuelan authorities.

The cooperation documents were reached in petrochemical, mining, energy, trade, agriculture, science, and technology fields.

During the ceremony, Iran's Minister of Defense Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Ashtiani who heads the Iran-Venezuela Joint Economic Cooperation Commission expressed satisfaction with holding the event and thanked the Iranian and Venezuelan-related officials for their efforts.



He added that the successful holding of this commission will be a turning point in the strategic relations between Iran and Venezuela under the leadership of the presidents of the two countries.

Ashtiani also stated that during this round of the commission, in addition to promoting balanced bilateral cooperation, the two Iranian and Venezuelan sides reached new and reliable agreements and understandings in economic, scientific, technological, industrial, agricultural, cultural, energy, and other aspects of cooperation.

The main mission of this commission is to help businessmen, traders, industrialists, and investors of the two countries to increase and improve the level of economic, commercial, and trade exchanges, he added.

Iraq Urged to Stop Threats Posed to Tehran

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's foreign minister has urged the neighboring Iraq to stop threats posed to Tehran from the semi-autonomous Kurdistan region.

Hossein Amirabdollahian made the remark in a late Monday phone call with his Iraqi counterpart, Fuad Hussein.

During the conversation, the Iranian top diplomat described security as a key element both at regional level and in bilateral relations.

"The Islamic Republic does not expect to be threatened from the Iraqi Kurdistan Region in view of the two countries' excellent relations," Amirabdollahian said, adding, "The central government [in Iraq] is responsible to [stamp out] these [terrorist] measures."

Iran's top diplomat was referring to anti-Iran terrorists' occasional attempts at using the semi-autonomous region's territory to target the Iranian soil or to smuggle weapons into the country, which have been used in recent riots to target Iran's security forces.

In response to terrorist activities targeting Iran's security over the past years, Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has now and then targeted terrorists' lairs in the Kurdistan region. The preemptive strikes have grown especially larger in scale since September 24.

The latest of the defensive operations took place earlier on Monday, with the IRGC pounding the positions of terror groups operating near Iran's western and northwestern borders in the Kurdistan region with multiple rocket launchers, precision-strike weapons, and drones.

For his part, the Iraqi foreign minister said, "Baghdad will not allow its neighbors to be threatened from its soil."

He also expressed satisfaction with the current level of the mutual relations, emphasizing that cooperation between Tehran and Baghdad will serve common security of both countries.

German Ambassador Summoned

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Foreign Ministry summoned the German ambassador to Tehran over "interventionist and irresponsible" comments by the European country's head of state in support of the recent Western-instigated riots in Iran.

Hans-Udo Muzel was summoned by the director general of the West European affairs of the Iranian Foreign Ministry on Monday to receive the Islamic Republic's strong protest to Berlin regarding German Chancellor Olaf Scholz' latest anti-Iran and pro-riots stance.

Scholz criticized the Iranian government on Saturday for what he claimed was "brutal crackdown" on protests after the September death of a young Iranian woman of Kurdish descent in the capital Tehran.

The German chancellor also claimed that Berlin would stand "shoulder to shoulder" with the Iranian people in their protests and riots across the country, accusing the Iranian government of being "solely

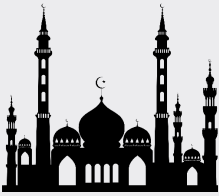
responsible for this spate of violence."

Condemning the remarks by the German official, the director general of the West European affairs of the Iranian Foreign Ministry conveyed the Islamic Republic's strong protest to the envoy over Germany's "destructive approaches to Iran's internal developments."

The Foreign Ministry official held the German side responsible for any consequences arising from the continuation of such "unconstructive" statements and actions on the future of relations between the two countries.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran, based on dignity and authority and national interests and expediencies, will monitor the positions and actions of the other parties and will give a proportionate response," the official noted.

Having been handed over Iran's formal notice of protest, the German ambassador, for his part, said he would convey Iran's message to his respective government at the earliest.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	11:49
■ Evening (Maghreb)	17:16
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:15
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:42

26. "Ease my task for me;
27. "And remove the impediment from my speech,

Surah 20. Ta-ha (26 - 27)

Petchems Exports Predicted to Reach \$17b

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Secretary General of the Petrochemical Industry Employers Association Ahmad Mahdavi Abhari has predicted the petrochemical sector would inject some \$15b into the Forex Management Integrated System (locally known as NIMA) and the sector would have \$17b of exports by the yearend.

Speaking in a press conference, Mahdavi said that petrochemical industry is a rewarding industry and if the country seeks sustainable economy, it should focus fully on this industry. He went on to say that petrochemical industries in last decade used to challenge with the primary sanctions and economic war and after U.S. President Donald Trump left the JCPOA and reimposed sanctions, this industry with its exports, production and earning forex helped the national economy.

He reiterated that currently the companies pre-sell their products, adding that today the world is moving towards using new technology and petrochemical products are turned into more value added and this industry today enjoys having a special stance and has considerable role in the people's lives and this role increases more day in day. He reiterated that everybody who seeks economic growth in the country should help this industry.

Mahdavi went on to say that 39.6% of the non-oil exports in the first half of the current year belong to the petrochemical sector and this industry should be developed in order to meet the Iranian calendar year 1404 targets and 140m tons of production.

He also said that currently some 17,000 people are busy and active in the downstream units of this industry, adding that the industry sells some 6 to 7 billion dollars of its products in the domestic market which are used in the complementary industries and after being converted into the final goods, they are exported.



Mahdavi predicted that the petrochemical products exports would hit \$17b by the yearend and this year \$15b would be injected into the NIMA system. He admitted that the Ukraine war has also affected Iran's petrochemical sector, adding that consequences of this war o Iran is doubled because the country is also under the sanctions, adding that while the price of gas has increased, the price of methanol in China has declined and since the country is under sanction, China takes advantage of this situation. He reiterated that petrochemical units should be helped in a way that they do not lose the market and also continue the previous route of exports because Iran can turn into the hub of methanol production of the world in the near future.

He pointed to the amount of the non-oil exports of the country in the current year which stands at \$24.251b, adding that \$9.605b of this figure belongs to the petrochemical industry.

He reiterated that in the first half of last year, the amount of petrochemical products exports was \$6.95b but this year it has increased to \$9.605 and in fact the non-oil exports have not grown except in the petrochemical sector.

He stated that the amount of petrochemical production in the first seven months of last year was 38.66m tons but the figure has increased to 41.55m tons in the same period this year and it shows 7% growth.

Iran Trade With EAEU Hit \$1.8b

TEHRAN (MNA) - Trade between Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) member states exceeded 3.38 million tons.

According to the data released by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration, the trade between Iran and the EAEU member states exceeded 3.38 million tons worth \$1.8 billion during the current Iranian year's first seven months (March 21-Oct. 22).

Russia was Iran's main trade partner among the countries under review with more than 2.3 million tons worth \$1.32 billion. It was followed by Armenia with 524,076 tons worth 229.84 million and Kazakhstan with 506,724 tons worth \$181.28 million, Financial Tribune reported.

Iran's exports to EEU members stood at 1.63 million tons worth \$760.25 million during the period.

Investment in Anzali Free Zone Increases 26%

TEHRAN (MNA) - Domestic investment making in Anzali Free Zone in north of Iran rose 26 percent in the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 21), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, the managing director of Anzali Free Zone Organization announced.

Isa Farhadi said that 22.92 trillion rials (about \$79 million) has been invested by the Iranian investors in the zone in the current year, while the figure was 18.234 trillion rials (about \$62.8 million) in the previous year.

In early September, Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber launched and inaugurated 71 investment projects in free trade zones and special economic zones of the country.

The projects were to make investments in the industrial and development sectors of four free trade zones, namely Arvand, Kish, Aras, and Anzali, and five special economic zones namely Pars, Petrochemical, Arg-e Bam, Sahlan, and Lorestan, and create direct and indirect jobs for over 22,000 persons.

In mid-August, the previous secretary of Iran's Free Zones High Council said that the trade balance of the country's free trade zones has become \$35 million positive for the first time in 30 years.

According to Saied Mohammad, there are currently 15 free trade zones and 33 special economic zones active in the country and the necessary licenses have also been obtained for the establishment of 79 new special economic zones.

The official noted that although the overall trade balance of the free trade and special economic zones together has always been positive, but this is the first time that the foreign trade balance of the free trade zones becomes positive separately.

Underlining the important role that free trade and special economic zones play in the country's economic growth, Mohammad said: "The main function of free zones is to facilitate export, production, foreign exchange, entry of new technologies and promotion of knowledge-based companies."

Tractors Exports to Afghanistan Begin

TEHRAN (MNA) - Consulate of Iran in Mazar-e-Sharif has announced the beginning of the export of tractors from Iran to Afghanistan, Fars News Agency reported.


As reported, Iran Tractor Manufacturing Company, a major Iranian tractor manufacturing company, has opened a representative office in Mazar-e-Sharif and the first cargo of the mentioned company's tractors has arrived in the mentioned province.

Iranian manufacturers are currently producing 35,000 heavy duty tractors every year, 10,000 of which the country can export.

People's Privacy in Domestic Messengers Is Protected

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - IT minster in open session of Majlis stated that the Leader has strongly emphasized on the violation of privacy in domestic platforms.



In the open session of Majlis on Tuesday, Mojtaba Rezakhah, Ahmad Amirabadi Farahani and a number of other representatives questioned the Minister of Communications and Information Technology Isa Zarepour regarding the measures taken by the Ministry to develop the national information network.

Zarepour said: "No one has the right to access people's information on internal platforms. Last week, the head of the judiciary announced that according to Article 25 of the Constitution, no one has the right to access people's information. Therefore, to protect people's data, we have prepared a bill that will be sent to the parliament soon."

Referring to the various capabilities of internal platforms, Zarepour stated: Audio and video communication has been made possible in internal social networks, and soon people will be able to call on landlines as well and we are trying to meet all the needs of people on these platforms.

The Minister of Communications and Information Technology went on to say that In order to support businesses, it has been stated that there is no need to obtain a license when business enters join the internal platform. Also, it has been emphasized that the business and small household jobs that do not have a history of paying taxes will be exempted from tax for up to two years.

Stating that people are joining internal platforms daily, he said: In one day, we have seen 17 million users joined the internal platform, and in an internal program, more than 35 million users used it monthly. Domestic Internet traffic has increased from 40 to 60 compared to foreign networks, and this is the first time that domestically produced traffic has been doubled.

Regarding the support of internet businesses, Zarepour explained that regulation has been prepared in this field, which foresees more than 30 types of support for domestic businesses and platforms, and its implementation measures will start soon.

Meanwhile MPS were convinced with the explanations of the minister regarding the measures taken to develop the national information network on a conditional basis.

Grains Output Up by 13.5% in Year to August

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's agriculture minister Javad Sadatinejad says the country's grains output rose by 13.5% in the year to late August.

Sadatinejad said that Iran's total production of wheat, barley and corn rose to 20.3 million metric tons (mt) in the year to August 22, up from 17.9 million mt reported for the year to late August 2021.

The minister made the remarks in a speech in the central Iranian city of Qom about efforts to ensure Iran's food security at the time the country faces US sanctions.

Giving a breakdown of the grains output figures, Sadatinejad said Iran's production of barley and animal feed corn had surged by 30% and 18%, respectively, in the year to late August.

He said Iran's rice production increased by 25% over the same period while wheat purchases from domestic famers increased by 55%.

Elaborating on other achievements in Iran's farming sector, Sadatinejad said agricultural exports from the country hit historic highs in the year to August, adding that vegetable exports had risen by 20% over the period to reach a total of \$1.2 billion in value terms.

He said Iran is now a major supplier of agricultural products to other countries, adding that apple and chicken exports to Iraq and Pakistan have risen in recent months while Iran has been able to launch exports of four agrifood products to China despite US restrictions on trade with the rest of the world.

Instagram Accounted for 7.3% of Iran's Digital Economy Before Shutdown

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Figures by Iran's Supreme Council of Cyberspace (SCC) show that business activity on Instagram accounted for a tiny share of the country's total digital economy before September when the U.S.-based social media platform was shut down in Iran because of its role in fomenting street unrest.

SCC figures published in a Monday report by the official IRNA news agency showed that total turnover from activity on Instagram by Iranian small businesses had amounted to around 700 trillion rials (over \$2 billion) per year before September.

The figure amounted to 7.3% of the total turnover from the Iranian digital economy, said the SCC, adding that a bulk of the revenues derived from Instagram in Iran had been collected by internet providers at about 300 trillion rials.

SCC figures showed retail sales on Instagram had reached 250 trillion rials per year while advertisement and logistics revenue had amounted to 150 trillion rials per year before restrictions were imposed on the platform in Iran in September.

The figures came in response to criticism about alleged losses inflicted on small businesses in Iran since access to Instagram was blocked in the country.

The SCC said the business activity on Instagram had been very tiny when compared to the total economic activity in the country.

The SCC's report also contained tables that showed a comparison between functions and applications offered by Instagram and those offered by home-grown social media and online business platforms.

Statements by Iranian government authorities, including SCC's Secretary Abolhassan Firouzabadi, have indicated that the country has no immediate plans to roll back restrictions on Instagram.

Firouzabadi said recently that domestic platforms are quite capable of providing various services to online businesses in Iran as he reiterated that the government will offer financial support to businesses migrating to Iranian platforms.

2nd Train of SP Phase 14 Refinery Goes Operational

TEHRAN (MNA) - The second train of the South Pars phase 14 refinery has gone operational, the acting managing director of Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC), which is in charge of developing South Pars gas field, announced.



Mohammad-Hossein Motejalli said that putting this train of refinery into operation, the refining capacity of phase 14 reached 28 million cubic meters (mcm) per day.

The first train of phase 14 refinery had gone operational in mid-March.

Phase 14 development is aimed at producing 56.6 million cubic meters per day of rich gas, 75,000 barrels/day of gas condensate and 400 tons/day of sulfur, and 1 million tons/year of liquefied petroleum gas and one million tons/year of ethane to be fed to petrochemical plants.

South Pars gas field, which Iran shares with Qatar in the

Persian Gulf water, is divided into 24 standard phases of development in the first stage. Most of the phases are fully operational at the moment.

The huge offshore field covers an area of 9,700 square kilometers, 3,700 square kilometers of which are in Iran's territorial waters in the Persian Gulf. The remaining 6,000 square kilometers, called North Dome, are situated in Qatar's territorial waters.

The field is estimated to contain a significant amount of natural gas, accounting for about eight percent of the world's reserves, and approximately 18 billion barrels of condensate.

As announced last week by the deputy head of POGC's Reservoir Operations Engineering Unit, the company is planning to drill 35 new wells to enhance and maintain gas production in the massive joint field.

German Upper House Blocks Landmark Welfare Reform

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Germany's conservative opposition held up a major welfare reform, setting the scene for a mediation process to find a compromise that could still allow the introduction of ambitious measures to support the unemployed in gaining vocational skills.

The overhaul is aimed at putting more money into the pockets of people on state benefits and to address a shortage of skilled workers in Europe's largest economy.

The welfare reform would introduce Buergergeld, or "citizens' money", to replace the Hartz IV system brought in from 2005, which sanctions people who reject job offers.



Pension Reform Boosts Chilean President's Approval Rating

SANTIAGO (Dispatches) - Chilean President Gabriel Boric's approval rating rose for the first time since mid-September after he sent a bill to Congress to change the country's controversial pension system, according to a poll released Sunday night.

The weekly survey by private pollster Cadem said support for the progressive president rose eight percentage points to 33%, while disapproval fell 11 percentage points to 58%.

At the beginning of November, Boric's approval fell to 25% and disapproval rose to 69%, according to the pollster, weighed down by a September plebiscite rejecting a proposal for a new constitution.



Biden, Xi Clash Over Taiwan, But Military Action Unlikely



NUSA DUA (Dispatches) - U.S. President Joe Biden said he told his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping that the United States would enhance its security position in Asia if Beijing is unable to rein in North Korea's weapons development programs.

Biden told a news conference after his first face-to-face talks with Xi since taking power that they had blunt talks over a wide array of issues that are contributing to the worst U.S.-Chinese ties in decades.

In a statement after their meeting, Xi called Taiwan the "first red line" that must not be crossed in U.S.-China relations, Chinese state media said.

Biden said he sought to assure Xi that U.S. policy on Taiwan has not changed, seeking to lower tensions over the self-ruled island. "I do not think there's any imminent attempt on the part of China to invade Taiwan," he told reporters.

He said if Beijing is not able to rein in North Korea, the United States would move to further protect U.S. allies in the region.

The two sides had set up a mechanism for more frequent communications and Secretary of State Antony Blinken will travel to China to follow-up on discussions, he said.

"I think we understand each other," Biden said.

Ahead of their talks, the two leaders smiled and shook hands warmly in front of their national flags at a hotel on Indonesia's Bali island, a day before a Group of 20 (G20) summit set to be fraught with tension over Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

"It's just great to see you," Biden told Xi, as he put an arm around him before a meeting that lasted a little over three hours.

However, Biden brought up a number of difficult topics during the meeting, according to the White House, including raising U.S. objections to China's "coercive and increasingly aggressive actions toward Taiwan", Beijing's "non-market economic practices", and practices in "Xinjiang, Tibet, and Hong Kong, and human rights more broadly".

Biden said beforehand he was committed to keeping lines of communication open on a personal and government level.

"As the leaders of our two nations, we share responsibility, in my view, to show that China and the United States can manage our differences, prevent competition from turning into conflict, and to find ways to work together on urgent global issues that require our mutual cooperation," Biden said in remarks in front of reporters.

Neither leader wore a mask to ward off COVID, though members of their delegations did.

Xi said before the meeting the relationship between their two countries was not meeting global expectations.

"Resolving the Taiwan question is a matter for the Chinese and China's internal affair," Xi said, according to state media.

Zelenskiy Vows to Drive Russia From All of Ukraine

KHERSON (Dispatches) - Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy visited Kherson, the biggest prize his troops have won so far, vowing to press on until Kyiv reclaims control of all its occupied territory.

Zelenskiy's visit came as the heads of U.S. and Russian intelligence met in Turkey for the highest level publicly acknowledged face-to-face U.S.-Russian talks since the Russian invasion in February.

Washington said Kyiv was aware of the meeting, which would focus on preventing an inadvertent escalation and not involve discussion of any settlement of the conflict. Zelenskiy, in a casual grey winter jacket, shook hands with soldiers and waved to civilians looking out from surrounding flats as he was escorted by armed bodyguards through the Kherson streets, just three days after his troops swept into the city.

He told a gathering of soldiers that they had "proved it was impossible to kill Ukraine", then held a minute's silence for troops who died during the offensive. Residents had also turned out, some with children or baby strollers, some waving Ukrainian flags or draped in them

- a stark contrast with the early days of the Russian occupation in March when people gathered to berate Russian soldiers.

No senior Russian official had made an analogous visit during eight months of occupation of the city, which President Vladimir Putin proclaimed "eternally Russian" six weeks ago.

Speaking later to reporters, Zelenskiy said Ukraine was ready for peace, but only on its terms that would restore all occupied territory: "You see our strong army. We are step by step coming through our country, through the temporarily occupied territories." Minutes before he arrived, nearby shelling could be heard, and after he finished speaking several more blasts of artillery echoed over the city.

Earlier, Zelenskiy said Ukraine had already gathered evidence of at least 400 war crimes committed by Russian troops during their occupation of the area, including killings and abductions. They left destroyed infrastructure and land mines littered behind them when they withdrew across the Dnipro River.



Slovenia Elects First Female President

LJUBLJANA (Dispatches)- Natasa Pirc Musar, a lawyer, won the second round of Slovenia's presidential election and will become its first female head of state, preliminary results showed.

Pirc Musar, 54, won 53.86 percent of votes in the runoff, while her rival, right-wing politician and former foreign minister Andze Logar, won 46.14 percent, according to election commission data based on 99 percent of the votes counted.

Turnout was 49.9 percent, the commission data showed.

"I will do my best to be a true president for all, to work for fundamental and constitutional human and democratic rights and democracy," Pirc Musar told reporters after claiming victory.

Although the role is mostly ceremonial, the president is commander in chief of the armed forces and also nominates several top officials, including the central bank governor. Most of the nominations have to be confirmed by parliament.

The new president of Slovenia, an EU and NATO member state, will replace Borut Pahor who has been active in politics for 30 years. A former fashion model who served two five-year terms, Pahor is often referred to in public as the Instagram president for his frequent use of the social network.

"I expect the next president to care about us, the citizens, to represent Slovenia in a good manner," Uros Pinter said after casting his ballot in Ljubljana. "I think it is time for a female president."

Pirc Musar, a former TV presenter who became an influential lawyer, campaigned on human rights, the rule of law and social welfare issues.

Her rival Logar, 46, is a member of the right-wing Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS) of former Prime Minister Janez Jansa, who lost April's parliamentary election to the environmentalist Freedom Movement of Robert Golub.

Commenting on the outcome of Sunday's presidential election, Golub told reporters: "I am confident that we will work well together to address the common challenges of the future."

U.S. House Control Hinges on Tight Races

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Control of the U.S. House of Representatives hinged on several tight races that could secure a majority for Republicans following midterm elections that saw President Joe Biden's Democrats beat expectations and retain the Senate.

Republicans were closer to taking the House, having won 211 seats compared to Democrats' 206, with 218 needed for a majority. But the final outcome might not be known for days as officials continue counting ballots nearly a week after Americans went to the polls.

After clinching the Senate over the weekend and dispelling Republican hopes for a "red wave" of gains, Democrats portrayed their performance as vindication of their agenda and a rebuke of Republican efforts to undermine the validity of election results.

Other high-profile uncalled races include the Arizona governor contest, in which Republican Kari Lake, who promoted former President Donald Trump's baseless 2020 election fraud claims, was trailing her Democratic opponent.

There are still some 18 outstanding House races, including 13 considered closely competitive, according to a Reuters compilation of the leading nonpartisan forecasters. Ten of the remaining contests

were in liberal-leaning California.

A Republican victory in the House would set the stage for two years of divided government while giving Biden's opponents the power to limit his political agenda and launch potentially damaging probes into his administration and family.

Jim Banks, a Republican congressman from Indiana, said he expects his party to win a slim majority in the 435-seat chamber and serve as "the last line of defense to block the Biden agenda," while launching probes into the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, the origin of COVID and pandemic lockdowns.

"That has to be a focal point of every single committee in the Congress, especially in the House under Republican control," Banks told Fox News on Sunday.

The Democratic speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi, said on Sunday she would not make any announcements about whether she planned to remain in leadership until after control of the chamber was decided.

There had been speculation Pelosi would resign if Democrats lost their majority, especially after her husband was attacked by an intruder at their San Francisco home last month.



Turkey Blames Deadly Bomb On Kurdish Militants



ISTANBUL (Dispatches) - Turkey blamed Kurdish militants for an explosion that killed six people in Istanbul and police detained 47 people including a Syrian woman suspected of planting the bomb.

No group has claimed responsibility so far for Sunday's blast on the busy pedestrian Istiklal Avenue, and the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) denied involvement in it.

The explosion wounded 81 people, sending debris flying into the air and hundreds of shoppers, tourists and families fleeing from the scene.

Interior Minister Suleyman Soyulu said the PKK and the Syrian Kurdish YPG militia were responsible for the blast, an incident that recalled for Turks similar attacks in years past.

Ankara says the YPG is a wing of the PKK. The United States has supported the YPG in the conflict in Syria, stoking friction between NATO allies.

As international condemnation of the attack poured in, Soyulu, a fierce critic of Washington, likened U.S. condolences for the victims to "the murderer arriving as one of the first at the scene of the crime".

In a statement on its website, the PKK denied involvement and said it would not attack civilians. SDF commander Mazloum Abdi denied involvement on Twitter.

Police named the suspected bomber as Ahlam Albashir, a Syrian national, who was detained in an overnight raid.

According to police, Albashir said during questioning that she was trained by Kurdish militants and entered Turkey through Afrin, another northern Syrian town.

Earlier television news reports showed images of a person, who appeared to be a woman, leaving a package below a raised flower bed in the middle of the avenue just before the attack.

A Turkish official said the possibility of Islamic State being responsible for the attack was "not entirely disregarded."

Six Turkish citizens, two members each of three families, were killed in the attack.

Social worker Yusuf Meydan and his nine-year-old daughter died during the attack while his wife was inside a shop and survived the blast, according to Demiroren agency.

The Meydan family was supposed to go back to their hometown Adana on Sunday after attending an engagement ceremony of a relative in Istanbul, the cousin of Yusuf Meydan said in an interview with Demiroren.

Mediterranean Marine Heatwaves Threaten Coastal Livelihoods

KERKENNAH ISLANDS (Dispatches) - A decade ago, Tunisian fisherman Ahmed Chelli's nets bulged with fish and octopus that he sold at the local market in the Kerkennah islands. Today, he pulls up only "ISIS" — the name locals have given to the blue crabs that have invaded their fishing grounds in the fast-warming waters of the Mediterranean.

"The fisherman, ... instead of finding fish to provide an income, he finds something that cuts his nets," Chelli complained.

For more than 70 days this summer, a marine heatwave cooked the waters of the western Mediterranean.

It was the worst swelter for the western part of the basin in the last four decades, said marine ecologist Joaquim Garrabou at Spain's Institute of Marine Sciences, who monitors temperature gauges in the sea's near-coastal waters.

Temperatures climbed higher, and the heatwave lasted longer, than any other to hit the waters west of Sicily since record-keeping began in 1982, Garrabou said, based on preliminary findings from his analysis, shared exclusively with Reuters.

"We've been witnessing marine heatwaves during the last 20 years," said Garrabou, who's also coordinator of the T-MEDNet marine monitoring network. He and his colleagues have found that about half of the worst heatwaves on record in the entire basin have hit since 2015.

"Almost every year, some area of the Mediterranean suffers," he said.

Measurements taken by European Space Agency satellites show that, from June through September, the waters off north Africa and southwest Europe were 2 to 5 degrees Celsius above the 1985-2005 daily averages. Temperatures peaked at nearly 31C in some parts.

By September, populations of sponges, sea-stars, fish, and mollusks were dying en masse in the waters off France and Spain. Corals bleached to bone white.

Around Tunisia, the underwater warmth encouraged reproduction among invasive species such as the blue crab, said Hamdi Hached, an environmental consultant in Tunis at the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom.

The crabs likely first arrived from the Indo-Pacific via ship ballast water, and were first documented in the Mediterranean in 1898. But, with the last decade of warming, the population has exploded - eating and outcompeting valuable native species.

With blue crab larvae thriving at water temperatures around 30C, there's no end in sight.

Hached said the pincer-crustacean's "ferocity and the destructive ability" has inspired the caliphate-themed nickname "ISIS" by the fishermen of the Kerkennah islands - which lie about 20 km (12 miles) off the northern coast of Tunisia.

"It has a very large appetite to devour all the creatures around it, becoming a curse on the fishermen in the region."

While tourism drives most of the sea's economic activity, worth \$450 billion in 2017 according to the World Wildlife Fund, there are millions who rely on the sea's bounty for their livelihoods.

But as climate change makes the Mediterranean among the world's fastest warming seas — with temperatures rising about 20% faster than the global ocean average — that bounty is under threat.

The rapid warming is due partly to the fact that the Mediterranean is a relatively shallow and contained basin. With an area of about 2.5 million square kilometers (970,000 square miles), it is a "climate change hotspot because it's a small sea," Garrabou said.



There are few connections between the sea and the Atlantic Ocean to the west, so there are "not a lot of ways out for warm water," he said. The overall water temperature is now 0.4C higher on average than it was 30 years ago, data show.

Acute marine heatwaves can form when warm air temperatures coincide with stable ocean conditions - when there is less mixing between the colder, deeper layers of water and the warmer surface layer.

This summer, southern Europe suffered blistering temperatures on land, which scientists said provided the perfect set-up for an ocean heatwave to unfold in the waters, as the ocean absorbs excess heat in the atmosphere.

The Mediterranean isn't the only sea in hot water.

A 2016 marine heatwave along Chile's southern coast caused huge algae blooms that wiped out fish farms and cost the aquaculture industry some \$800 million, said scientist Kathryn Smith with the Marine Biological Association of the United Kingdom.

Another heatwave in Australia's Tasman Sea lasted more than 250 days between 2015 and 2016, triggering disease outbreaks on shellfish farms.

As the world warms, marine heatwaves are expected to become more frequent, according to the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Already, climate change has helped to drive the annual number of ocean heatwave days up 54% in the period from 1925 to 2016, a team of international scientists found in 2018.

Scientists say the Mediterranean could suffer at least one long-lasting, severe heatwave every year between now and 2100, according to 2019 research in the journal Climate Dynamics.

Blue crabs aren't the only animals invading the warmer Mediterranean. Nearly 1,000 alien species have entered the sea, according to a 2021 report by WWF, mostly by hitching a ride on ships. But warmer temperatures have made it easier for some stowaways to establish populations.

Today, about 10% of these species are considered invasive, meaning they're likely to cause environmental or economic harm.

The bright yellow rabbitfish, for example, overgrazes seagrass beds, destroying plants that provide a key habitat for local species and sequester carbon.

Though economists have yet to account fully for the impacts of marine heatwaves, recent experience has many concerned.

In waters off Greece, where the coastal zone accounts for about 69% of the national economy, a marine heatwave last year ravaged the country's mussel harvest, halving production and wiping out 80% of the baby mussel seed for this year.

Mediterranean fisheries are valued at over \$3.4 billion, a 2022 IPCC report said, with more than 76,000 fishing vessels trawling the cerulean waters for anchovy, bluefin tuna, and red mullet in 2019.

The impact of such heatwaves is especially keen in North Africa where many "communities are involved in small-scale fisheries," said Mauro Randone, who manages WWF's Mediterranean program focused on the regional economy. "They are one of the most impacted sectors."

North African countries have begun strategizing for how they'll adapt to climate change, said Naguib Amin who leads Clima-Med, an EU-funded climate action group launched in 2018.

Speaking at the COP27 climate summit in Egypt, Amin told Reuters the group was working to develop climate action strategies for cities along the Mediterranean's southern coast.



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Indonesia Oct. Trade Surplus Seen at \$4.5b

JAKARTA (Dispatches) - Indonesia's trade surplus is seen narrowing slightly in October to \$4.5 billion, amid weakening in global trade and moderating commodity prices, a Reuters poll showed.

Exports from Southeast Asia's biggest economy have been buoyed since last year by high commodity prices, but prices of some key commodities like palm oil have been declining in the past few months.

The median forecast from 15 economists in a Reuters poll was for a \$4.5 billion

surplus in October, below September's surplus of nearly \$5 billion.

Export growth was seen at 13.85% annually in October, slower than September's 20.28%, while imports were seen up 23.62% on a yearly basis, versus 22.02% in September.

Bank Mandiri's economist Faisal Rachman, who predicted a \$4.42 billion October surplus, said while export growth was slowing, demand for imports was rising in preparation for year-end needs. Still, the Indonesian government has forecast the resource-rich nation will book its biggest exports on record this year of \$292 billion.



OPEC Cuts Oil Demand Growth Forecast Again

LONDON (Dispatches) - OPEC cut its forecast for 2022 global oil demand growth for a fifth time since April and further trimmed next year's figure, citing mounting economic challenges including high inflation and rising interest rates.

Oil demand in 2022 will increase by 2.55 million barrels per day (bpd), or 2.6%, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) said in a monthly report, down 100,000 bpd from the previous forecast.

"The world economy has entered a period of significant uncertainty and rising challenges in the fourth quarter of 2022," OPEC said in the report.

"Downside risks include high inflation, monetary tightening by major central banks, high sovereign debt levels in many regions, tightening labour markets and persisting supply chain constraints."

This report is the last before OPEC and its allies, together known as OPEC+, meet on Dec. 4. The group, which recently cut production targets, will remain cautious, the energy minister for Saudi Arabia, the OPEC+ de-facto leader, was quoted as saying last week.

Next year, OPEC expects oil demand to rise by 2.24 million bpd, also 100,000 bpd lower than previously forecast.

Despite commenting on the rising challenges, OPEC left its 2022 and 2023 global economic growth forecasts steady and said while risks were skewed to the downside, there was also upside potential.

"This may come from a variety of sources. Predominantly, inflation could be positively impacted by any resolution of the geopolitical situation in Eastern Europe, allowing for less hawkish monetary policies," OPEC said.

Oil maintained a decline after the report was released, trading around \$95 a barrel.

For October, with oil prices weakening on recession fears, the group made a 100,000 bpd cut to the OPEC+ production target, with an even bigger reduction starting in November.

Saudi Arabia said the latest cut was necessary to respond to rising interest rates in the West and a weaker global economy. U.S. President Joe Biden criticized the decision, calling it shortsighted.

OPEC said in Monday's report that in the second and third quarters of this year, global oil supply outpaced total oil demand by 200,000 bpd and 1.1 million bpd respectively, having been in a deficit of 300,000 bpd in the first quarter.

OPEC said its output in October fell by 210,000 bpd to 29.49 million bpd, more than the pledged OPEC+ reduction, led by a 149,000 bpd cut by Saudi Arabia. The figures are compiled by OPEC using secondary sources.

Saudi Arabia itself, however, reported to OPEC a smaller drop of 84,000 bpd, bringing its October output to a shade below 11 million bpd.

China Seen Leaving Medium-Term Policy Rate Unchanged

SHANGHAI (Dispatches) - China's central bank is likely to fully roll over maturing medium-term policy loans while keeping the borrowing cost unchanged for the third straight month this week, a Reuters survey showed.

Worsening COVID-19 outbreaks across the country in recent weeks and weak demand from both home and abroad have weighed on the world's second largest economy, with a slew of recent economic data pointing to a further loss of momentum.

Meanwhile, global tightening was yet to see a clear sign of pivot, limiting Beijing's room to maneuver its monetary easing.

In a poll of 31 market watchers this week, all participants predicted that the People's Bank of China (PBOC) would keep the interest rate on the one-year medium-term lending facility (MLF) unchanged at 2.75%.

Among them, 22 respondents anticipated the PBOC to fully roll over 1 trillion yuan (\$142 billion) worth of such loans due to expire on the same day.

In the remaining nine traders and analysts, five expected a partial rollover, while the other four believed that the central bank would inject additional fresh funds to support the slowing economy.

"We expect a full or near-full rollover to support liquidity while the chance for a reduction in the reserve requirement ratio (RRR) to replace part of the facility appears slim as policy measures are targeted," said Frances Cheung, rates strategist at OCBC Bank.

The heavy MLF loan maturity of 1 trillion yuan, the biggest this year, prompted some market debates whether the PBOC would cut the amount of cash banks must set aside as reserves to make up the liquidity shortfall, but some traders said a RRR reduction would be too strong a policy easing signal.

China, along with Japan, has been a major outlier in the global tightening spree with Beijing focused on stimulating its



COVID-hit economy. But investors have been worried that the widening monetary divergence could trigger capital outflows and yuan depreciation.

China's decision to lower the MLF rate in August widened the yield differentials against the United States and accelerated yuan's declines.

China's central bank "is walking a fine line between stimulus and financial instability as too much credit-fueled activity was the ultimate source of the current property market slump," said Win Thin, global head of currency strategy at Brown Brothers Harriman.

Official data showed that new bank lending in China tumbled more than expected in October from the previous month while broad credit growth slowed, as COVID-19 outbreaks and a property sector downturn weighed on credit demand.

Polish Inflation to Return to Target Range in 2025

WARSAW (Dispatches) - Inflation in Poland will not return to the National Bank of Poland's (NBP) target range until the third quarter of 2025, its latest projections showed on Monday.

The NBP left its main interest rate on hold this month, with Governor Adam Glapinski saying the bank wanted to return price growth to the 1.5-3.5% target range gradually to avoid suffocating the economy.

Glapinski has repeatedly pointed to factors out of the bank's control - such as the war in Ukraine, rising commodities prices and the economic rebound after the COVID-19 pandemic - as responsible for inflation.

The bank said that the withdrawal in 2023 of anti-inflation measures such as cuts to VAT on fuel and gas would add 1.9 percentage points to inflation.

Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki this month said that the measures cutting VAT on gas and fuel would be replaced in 2023 by a new system that would require energy companies to shoulder the burden of keeping household bills down. According to the NBP's latest gross domestic product (GDP) projections, the Polish economy will shrink in the first quarter of 2023 but will avoid the two consecutive quarters of contraction viewed by many economists as a recession.

On an annual basis, GDP growth is expected to slow to 0.7% in 2023 from 4.6% in 2022. It had previously forecast GDP growth of 1.4% in 2023. "The downward revision of domestic economic growth in 2023 is a consequence of the stronger negative impact of the Russian military aggression against Ukraine on economic developments in Poland and abroad," the report said.

Sri Lanka Budget Lays Down Plans to Clinch IMF Deal

COLOMBO (Dispatches)- The crisis-hit Sri Lankan economy can turn around by the end of 2023 if budget policies, which are not limited to the International Monetary Fund's recommendations, are followed, President Ranil Wickremesinghe said.

IMF recommendations have only been looked at to stabilise the economy, Wickremesinghe, who is also the country's finance minister, told parliament, delivering the first annual budget since he took office in July.

The budget included measures aimed at reducing the government's deficit as Colombo seeks to secure an IMF bailout package to help the country recover from its worst financial crisis in decades.

Soaring inflation, a weakening currency and low foreign exchange reserves have left the island of 22 million people struggling to pay for imports of essentials such as food, fuel and medicine.

Mass unrest forced the previous president and prime minister out of power, and the country remains vulnerable to political instability as fears of a global recession have added to the problems for an economy that suffered a catastrophic contraction.

Wickremesinghe laid down several medium-term targets for the government: increasing international trade as a percentage of GDP by more than 100%, annual growth of \$3 billion from new exports over the next 10 years as well as attracting \$3 billion in foreign direct investment over the same period.

He also said the government planned to reduce debt to less than 100% of GDP over the medium term and achieve economic growth of around 7-8%.

"With a lot of taxes already implemented, on the revenue side the budget primarily seems to be aiming towards tax administrations, reducing the leakages and broadbasing the tax net," said Trisha Peries, head of research at CAL Group.

Sri Lanka's international bonds showed little impact from the latest announcements.

Some issues gained as much as 1.6 cents in the dollar, but this was broadly in line with wider market moves and the country's dollar-bonds are still bid at deeply distressed levels of 23-25 cents, according to Tradeweb.

"We expected more targeted policies," said Dimantha Mathew, head of research at investment firm First Capital.

Mathew said debt restructuring would be a crucial short-term solution to the island's problems, but reforming loss-making state-owned enterprises, which was listed in the budget, would be critical in putting the economy back on track over the longer-term.

U.S. May Skirt Recession in 2023, Europe Not So Lucky

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Britain and the euro zone economies are likely to tip into recession next year, Morgan Stanley said, but the United States might make a narrow escape thanks to a resilient job market.

At the same time, China's expected reopening after almost three years of COVID-19 curbs is set to lead a recovery in its own economy and other emerging Asian markets, the investment bank's analysts said in a series of reports published.

"Risks are to the downside," the reports said, projecting the global economy to grow by 2.2% next year, lower than the International Monetary Fund's latest 2.7% growth estimate.

Next year, Morgan Stanley predicts a sharp split between developed economies "in or near recession" while emerging economies "recover modestly" but said an overall global pickup would likely remain elusive. China's economy was predicted to grow 5% in 2023, outpacing the average 3.7% growth expected for emerging markets, while the average growth in the Group of 10 developed countries was forecast at just 0.3%.

Central banks across the globe have raised interest rates this year to curb raging inflation, and in the United States, Morgan Stanley predicted the Federal Reserve to keep rates high in 2023 as inflation remains strong after peaking in the fourth quarter of this year.

"The U.S. economy just skirts recession in 2023, but the landing doesn't feel so soft as job growth slows meaningfully and the unemployment rate continues to rise," the report said, predicting a 0.5% expansion next year.

"The cumulative effect of tight policy in 2023 spills over into 2024, resulting in two very weak years," the report added.

Globally too, the peak in inflation should come in the current quarter, the analysts said, "with disinflation driving the narrative next year". * U.S. core inflation to fall to 2.9% at end-2023, headline inflation to 1.9% * Asia growth to dip to 3.4% in 1H23 before recovering to 4.6% in 2H23, fuelled by domestic demand * Cross-asset returns - especially in fixed income - will look much better in 2023 than in 2022, driven by cheaper starting valuations * High-grade fixed income to outperform global equities * EM and Japan stocks to outperform, with U.S. shares lagging

Rosneft to Pay \$3.6b in First Nine-Month Dividend



MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russian state energy company Rosneft said it plans to pay a dividend on its nine-month results, the first such payment in its history, which is expected to total 216 billion roubles (\$3.6 billion) and to boost the nation's budget.

The importance of dividends by state companies, including Rosneft and Gazprom, as a source of revenues has increased after Western sanctions shut down nearly all external funding options, placed exports under pressure and drove away foreign investors.

The Russian budget is set to post a 1.3 trillion roubles deficit this year, or 0.9% of the gross domestic product (GDP), after initially projecting a surplus.

On Monday, Rosneft, one of the biggest oil-producing companies globally, which is headed by Igor Sechin, a close ally of President Vladimir Putin, said its board recommended paying 20.39 roubles per share in nine-month dividends.

The dividend proposal should be paid early next year following approval at a shareholder meeting, Rosneft said in a regulatory filing disclosed on Monday. Reuters calculations found the payout would be 216 billion roubles.

In reply to a Reuters request, Rosneft said the board had recommended paying the nine-month dividend as 50% of net profits earned in the first six months, declining further comments.

Previously, the company paid dividends either annually or twice a year on its six-month results.

In January-October, the budget showed a surplus of 128.4 billion roubles, reflecting a one-off mineral extraction tax on Gazprom. To meet the 1.25 trillion roubles in MET hike, Gazprom cancelled dividends for first time since 1998.

In October, the finance ministry started to spend its National Wealth Fund to meet social obligations and cover payouts Moscow promised to the reservists called up for what it calls a 'special military operation' in Ukraine.

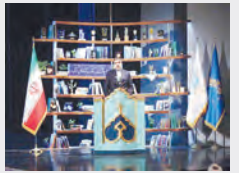
Next year, the finance ministry forecasts the deficit will double to 3 trillion roubles, or 2% of GDP, and analysts say the gap could be up to 4.5 trillion roubles.

Iran Spearheads Muslim States in Library Numbers

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance of the Islamic Republic of Iran Mohammad Mehdi Esmaeili announced the country's considerable number of libraries, which shows Iran's superiority among Muslim states.

Mohammad Mehdi Esmaili made the remarks on the national day of commemorating books, book-reading, and librarians in Tehran. He said that Iran has 3,800 libraries which make the country first among Muslim countries.

Commenting on the provincial trips of the incumbent government during the current Iranian year, he underlined the role of the officials in following up on incomplete projects.



At COP27 Climate Talks, Slow Progress Stokes Worry Over Final Deal

SHARM EL-SHEIKH (Dispatches) - One week into this year's U.N. climate summit in Egypt, frustrations were starting to flare as negotiators worried about resolving myriad details in time for a deal by the summit's scheduled close on Friday.

With a long list of demands for COP27, country delegates said on Sunday there had been little progress so far on the technical details of how to deliver on deals and pledges made in previous years.

Those pledges include making steep cuts in climate-warming emissions within this decade and contributing to hundreds of billions of dollars needed each year by developing nations already struggling to cope with the impacts of climate change.

One frustrated senior negotiator, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the slow pace so far meant the second week of talks, being held in the Red Sea resort town of Sharm el-Sheikh, would be bogged down with too many unresolved agenda items.

That could also complicate the talks among government ministers on the so-called cover decisions - which make up the core political deal from the two-week summit.

COP27 featured no public events on Sunday, dubbed by organizers as a "day of rest," during which thousands of attendees hit the local beaches and tourist shops.

National negotiators, however, continued their work.

"There's just a lot to get done in five days," said Tom Evans, a policy analyst for the E3G non-profit think tank.

"We haven't seen huge solidarity between the developed and developing countries" but instead "disappointing commitments and action this year, which has dented trust."

This year's talks for the first time include the thorny issue of what is known in COP parlance as "loss and damage" - financial support for developing countries already being hit by climate-fueled disasters, such as floods or crop-withering drought.

For some countries, the outcome on funding will determine whether the summit has been a success.

"A lot needs to be done to ensure that the finance commitment is going to be new, additional, and accessible," Rwanda negotiator Ineza Umuhoza Grace said.

Developing nations have demanded that COP27 agree to launch a special fund to address loss and damage. The United States and other rich nations are wary of this idea, saying these rapid funds are better channeled through existing programs.

"Developing countries continue to push for the set up of a finance facility for loss



and damage to make it fully operational by 2024," said one negotiator from Latin America, speaking on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the talks.

He said there were worries that the issue was being stonewalled. The United States and European Union have blocked calls for a new fund in previous years, but the 27-country EU has said it is open to discussing the idea.

A Panamanian negotiator described the lack of progress in one eight-hour session on loss and damage as "outrageous," as delegates wrangled over the language in the preamble of an eight-page document.

"While developed countries continue to block progress on loss and damage, my home region of Azuero in Panama has been suffering from the worst flooding in our history," said the negotiator, Juan Carlos Monterrey, who is also vice chair for implementation at the U.N. climate agency, UNFCCC.

"Very poor people are losing everything. We don't demand charity, we demand justice."

Uncertainty About Chinese Production Weighs on Construction Metals



LONDON (Dispatches) - The November Construction MMI (Monthly MetalMiner Index) dropped by 4.16%. The trend over the past 3-4 months reflects a more sideways market than a bullish one. However, October to November proved a particularly volatile month for the construction index. Meanwhile, fluctuating steel prices have put all eyes on China.

The market remains plagued with widespread uncertainty, especially for companies that source construction materials from China and Europe. Chinese President Xi appears reluctant to call off zero-COVID measures after nearly three years. Meanwhile, the strict policy continues to drive down domestic Chinese demand and limit industrial output. This amounts to both fewer materials produced and exported.

For their part, the individual branches of the construction index moved sideways, up, and down all in one month. This drove the index in all different directions. Bar fuel surcharges traded up, for instance. European aluminum also went up, possibly due to the energy crisis and supplies being so pinched. Meanwhile, iron ore traded sideways with no change in price, and h-beam and rebar steel prices dropped.

The Fed continues to raise interest rates in light of unrelenting inflation and low unemployment percentages. Meanwhile, steel prices and other construction materials markets continue to feel the impact of high construction costs.

A highlight in MetalMiner's last weekly newsletter mentioned how Idaho's Statesman recently reported that CBH Homes had begun to downsize and lay off workers. CBH Homes is Idaho's largest home-building company, and such layoffs do not bode well for the future of the industry.

But while CBH Homes downsizes, other construction sectors continue to struggle with labor shortages. According to a recent article in McKinsey, construction labor shortages will worsen in the short term and possibly the long term. Currently, the U.S. construction sector has roughly 440,000 job openings. Therefore, getting construction projects completed on time remains increasingly difficult, especially with high-interest rates and fewer workers on the job.

A significant factor pulling the index down month-over-month was steel prices. Most steel forms within the construction index, including h-beam and rebar, dropped in price. And despite carbon steel holding a more sideways trend over the past few months, this wasn't enough to drive the construction index up come November.

India to Be One of Top Three Economic Powers in Next 10-15 Years

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - India has emerged as one of the fastest-growing major economies in the world and is expected to be one of the top three economic powers globally over the next 10-15 years, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said.

Speaking at the U.S.-India Businesses and Investment Opportunities event here, Sitharaman said, the global economic outlook remains challenging and the Indian economy is not insulated from the impact of global economic developments. However, she said, India has carved out its growth trajectory supported by the above-normal south-west monsoon, public investment, strong corporate balance sheets, upbeat consumer and business confidence and receding threat of the Covid pandemic.

"India has emerged as one of the fastest-growing major economies in the world. It has recently surpassed the UK to become the fifth-largest economy in the world and is expected to be one of the top three economic powers globally over the next 10-15 years," she said.

Listing out some of the important measures taken by the government to boost the economy, the finance minister mentioned about Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes across sectors, PM GatiShakti program and semiconductor mission.

"We recognize foreign capital flows as a vital component of India's growth story. Key reforms include simplification and rationalization of the Foreign Portfolio Investor (FPI) regulations, increase in aggregate foreign investment limit, introduction of Common Application Form (CAF) for registration of FPIs, and opening of new channels of debt investments like the Voluntary Retention Route (VRR) and Fully Accessible Route (FAR)," she said.

The success of these measures is reflected in the sustained investment flows entering India through the FPI route, she said.

Significantly, she said, the U.S. is the top source country of FPI investment in India, with the Asset under Custody (AUC) of FPIs from the USA standing close to USD 234 billion as on September 30, 2022.

On India's digital prowess, Sitharaman said it will define India's growth and development in the next decade — medium to long term. India has built an entirely new digital economy by leveraging the foundations of over a billion bank accounts, a billion mobile phones, and a billion digital identities (Aadhaar), she said. "Today, we have a powerful story on Digital Public Goods (DPG) to tell the world. The economy is seeing an exponential increase in new-age FinTech firms. India has the highest FinTech adoption rate as compared to the global average," she said.

Bangladesh Urges Developed Countries to Double Climate Financing by 2025

DHAKA (Dispatches) - Climate experts joining this year's COP27 from Bangladesh has said that they have asked the developed countries to double their funds to climate-vulnerable countries within 2025 under a new roadmap.

Talking to UNB, experts said that they've demanded an increase in climate financing because the amount that was calculated earlier isn't enough to meet the current challenges. "We've asked for a roadmap where it'll be clearly stated that which country will provide how much funds to which sector. The developed countries have to reiterate their pledges to provide funds for adaptation to and mitigation of climate change," said Ziaul Haque, a climate expert and a representative from Bangladesh to COP27.

Official Blasts Role of...

FROM PAGE 1

Pointing to Iran's recent designation of the London-based news network Iran International as a "terrorist organization" for instigating deadly riots in Iran following the death of a young Iranian woman two months ago, the Iranian official warned that the same fate also awaits the UK's state-funded BBC Persian.

Gharibabadi further noted that in his talks with representatives from some 100 countries, he explained that the UK's state-funded BBC Persian and Saudi-funded Iran International have conducted hundreds of interviews with members of separatist and terrorist groups who incited violent and criminal acts in Iran.

The talks focused on giving correct and true explanations about developments in Iran and what is called "peaceful" gatherings by some Western countries and the United States, he said. The European Union and some Western countries have imposed sanctions on Iran over its approach toward the recent riots. 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.

Tehran Condemns EU...

FROM PAGE 1

The bloc targeted 29 individuals and three entities with asset freezes and travel bans for their role in both the death of Mahsa Amini and the response to the ensuing nationwide riots.

The bloc's sanctions targeted Iranian Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi, four members of the police squad that arrested Amini, high-ranking members of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), including its provincial commanders, and the commander of the Iranian Army's Ground Force.

It also sanctioned Press TV news channel, which it accused of airing "forced confessions of detainees."

On the same day, Britain also imposed sanctions on Iranian officials, including Iranian telecoms minister Issa Zarepour and a range of local law enforcement and security officials over what it claimed to be a "violent repression of protests" in the country. The sanctions include asset freezes and travel bans.

Sanctions or...

FROM PAGE 1

In a first round of sanctions earlier in October, the EU imposed travel bans and asset freezes on 15 Iranian individuals and institutions linked to Amini's death and the clamp-down on protests.

Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian warned in October that Tehran will take reciprocal action if the European Union imposed any restrictive measures against the Islamic Republic over the recent riots in the country.

Earlier in the month, Iran's Intelligence Ministry said the United States and the United Kingdom were "directly" involved in the unrest, adding that dozens of terrorists affiliated with the Israeli regime and anti-revolution groups have also been detained in the unrest.

Britain also on Monday imposed sanctions on Iranian officials, including a government minister, over what it claimed to be a "violent repression of protests" in the country.

The British government said it had added 24 designations under its Iran sanctions regime related to human rights.

The sanctions included Iranian Communications Minister Issa Zarepour and a range of local law enforcement and security officials, the British foreign office said in a statement.

These sanctions target officials within the Iranian government who are responsible for human rights violations, Foreign Secretary James Cleverly said.

He also called for an end to what he alleged to be a violent crackdown on protests and freedom of expression. The sanctions include asset freezes and travel bans.

Of course everyone knows this point that the West usually imposes sanctions on the countries or individuals when it sees the countries and individuals do not follow them blindly, and through sanctions, it tries to bring down to the knees its targets and now that the West has realized that Tehran will not bow to its excessive demands during the JCPOA talks or regional issues it has taken advantage of the current riots in Iran to use it as a tool for increasing pressures on Iranian officials to give concessions during the JCPOA talks and to reduce its regional influence.

According to evidences, these riots are supported by some certain countries and recent rude remarks of French President Emmanuel Macron is a clear evidence for this claim that Westerners are supporting these recent riots in Iran either verbally or in practice.

The Islamic Republic of Iran for over four decades has been challenging with such plots and claims of regime change but it has continued its path stronger than before and this time it will also recover from the current plot and it will sail the ship of the country safely to the shores of peace and prosperity, and the West once again will be a loser and their resorting to sanctions or to blackmail Iran will be failed and the Islamic Republic of Iran will stand firmer than before against enemies' plots.

Germany in Talks...

FROM PAGE 1

With the inauguration of the new Iranian government in August 2021, efforts to ramp up Iran's oil exports and develop the petroleum industry after a period of hibernation gathered momentum, and in the very first months, Iranian oil flowed back to the market through new routes so much so that President Ebrahim Raisi announced a 40% increase in oil exports at the end of the last Persian year in March.

Last month, Minister of Petroleum Javad Owji said Iran's crude oil and petrochemical exports continue without disruption after the Biden administration announced a new round of sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

"With the new procedures presented by my colleagues in the international affairs of the National Iranian Oil Company, we have been able to find good and attractive markets for Iran's crude oil, gas condensate, oil products and petrochemical products," he said.

Owji said his ministry had found new markets and export processes through which, "we have been able to transform the export of crude oil and gas condensate compared to the last few years".

His remarks came after the US Treasury announced new measures, targeting several firms based in China, the United Arab Emirates, Hong Kong and India that the United States accuses of involvement in the sale of Iranian petroleum and petrochemical products.

Owji said "the sanctions of Western countries have not had any effect on our country's oil exports".

Government data also showed Iran's income from the export of oil and oil products rose by 11 times last year which ended in March and eight times in the five months of this year.



Korda Wins Pelican Championship

MIAMI (Dispatches) - Nelly Korda fired seven birdies in a six-under par 64 on Sunday to seize victory in the LPGA Pelican Women's Championship and return to the top of the world rankings.

The American's storming last round saw her defend the title she won last year and lift her first trophy of what has been a tough 2022.

Korda missed much of the first half of the season because of a blood clot in her arm that required surgery.

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Australia to Host LIV Golf Event Next April

SYDNEY (Dispatches) - LIV Golf announced on Sunday a multi-year commitment to bring league events to Australia starting next April at The Grange Golf Club in Adelaide.

The April 21-23 tournament at The Grange will be one of 14 events on LIV Golf League's 2023 schedule and will give fans a chance to see reigning British Open champion Cameron Smith and fellow Australians Marc Leishman and Matt Jones in action.

Russell Takes First GP Win In Mercedes One-Two

SAO PAULO (Dispatches) - George Russell took an emotional first Formula One Grand Prix victory to end a season-long blank for Mercedes in a one-two with seven-times world champion Lewis Hamilton in Brazil.

Russell led from the start at Sao Paulo's Interlagos circuit after winning Saturday's 100km sprint, a race that determined Sunday's starting grid, to halt a run of nine wins in a row by champions Red Bull.

"This is just the beginning," Russell shouted over the team radio after being told he was a Formula One winner, the 113th in the history of the sport.

"I knew we could do this. I might need some tissues — I'm crying."

Hamilton, winner of a record 103 races and three in Brazil, congratulated his team mate for an "amazing drive". "He did an amazing qualifying yesterday, so he truly deserves it... this is an incredible result," said the 37-year-old.

In a lively race with two safety car periods, honorary Brazilian Hamilton overcame an early collision with Red Bull's double world champion Max Verstappen to race back in front of a cheering crowd.

Ferrari's Carlos Sainz finished third, with team mate Charles Leclerc fourth and unhappy that Ferrari did not order a switch given his battle with Red Bull's Sergio Perez for second in the championship.

Verstappen, who won his second title with four races to spare, helped Leclerc out by refusing to give back sixth place to Perez — who had earlier let him through — despite the team asking him to if he could not pass Alpine's Fernando Alonso.

"I have given you my reasons," said the Dutch driver by way of explanation.

Russell led away cleanly from the start, with Hamilton slotting in behind, but the safety car was deployed when McLaren's Daniel Ricciardo and Haas's Kevin Magnussen collided on the opening lap.

Magnussen, who took his first pole position in Friday qualifying and scored a point in the Saturday sprint, was hit from behind by the McLaren and smashed back into it after spinning around.

Verstappen and Hamilton then made contact at the re-start on lap seven as they fought for second place, with the pair dropping to eighth and ninth respectively.



Race stewards decided the Red Bull driver was the offending party and handed him a five-second penalty for causing the collision.

"Where did they expect me to go?" Verstappen said when informed by his team over the radio. "He just closed the door on me."

McLaren's Lando Norris also collected a five-second penalty for causing a collision when he tangled with Leclerc, who was sent spinning into the tyre wall but was able to keep going. Hamilton's car was undamaged in the incident with Verstappen and he was third by lap 18.

The Briton took the lead on lap 25 when Russell made his first pitstop and stayed there until the end of 29 when he came in to switch from soft to medium tyres, returning in fourth place.

Verstappen was running in 15th place at the half distance after two pitstops in which he had a new front wing, served his penalty and suffered a further delay with a slow rear tyre change.

There was late drama when the virtual safety car was deployed on lap 53 after Norris stopped on track, and it then became a full safety car.

"So what are we doing?" Russell asked over the radio as the field bunched up again with Hamilton right behind. "Are we racing or are we securing the one-two?"

"You are racing, just be respectful," came the reply from the pit wall.

Scolari Retires From Management

RIO DE JANEIRO (Dispatches) - Former Brazil coach Luiz Felipe Scolari, who guided them to victory at the 2002 World Cup, announced his retirement from management.

Scolari, who took over at Brazilian Serie A side Athletico Paranaense earlier May, made the announcement after they won 3-0 against Botafogo on Sunday in their last clash of the 2022 season, to finish sixth in the standings.

"I'm retiring as a manager. I'm appointing (assistant) Paulo Turra to be the next manager of our team and I'll be the technical director," Scolari told Furacao Live.

Scolari managed Brazil on two occasions — from 2001-2002, when he took them to their fifth and most recent world title, and again between 2012-2014, winning the 2013 Confederations Cup.

At club level, Scolari won the Copa Libertadores with Gremio back in 1995 and Palmeiras in 1999, as well as the Brazilian Serie A title with both of those sides, in 1996 and 2018, respectively.

He also coached Portugal (2003-2008) and Premier League side Chelsea (2008-2009), among others.

Phrygian Caps to Be the Paris 2024 Games Mascots

PARIS (Dispatches) - Phrygian caps will be the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games mascots as organizers look to celebrate the French revolution's spirit.

"Phryges' aim to show that sport can change everything, and that it deserves to have a prominent place in our society," Paris 2024 brand director Julie Matikhine said.

The Phrygian caps were favoured over animals, who have mostly been the first choice in other Olympics - such as the 'Bing Dwen Dwen' panda at the 2022 Winter Games in Beijing this year.

"We were almost ready not to make a mascot if we didn't find a real reason to do so, and a real message to convey," said Matikhine.

"The mascot must embody the French spirit, which is something very fine to grasp. It's an ideal, a kind of conviction that carries the values of our country, and which has been built up over time, over history."

The red Phrygian caps come in two versions - the Olympic and the Paralympic one - with a blade leg.

The Olympic Games will be held from July 26-Aug. 11 and the Paralympics from Aug. 28-Sept. 8.

Switzerland Win First Billie Jean King Cup Title

GLASGOW (Dispatches) - Switzerland won their first Billie Jean King Cup title after Belinda Bencic saw off Australia's Ajla Tomljanovic in straight sets in the second match of the finals to give them an unassailable 2-0 lead.

Jil Teichmann had earlier prevailed 6-3 4-6 6-3 over Storm Sanders in a thrilling contest to put last year's finalists Switzerland ahead before Olympic champion Bencic dismissed Tomljanovic 6-2 6-1 to clinch the best-of-three contest.

The teams also clashed in the semi-finals of last year's event in Prague, where Teichmann overcame Sanders and Bencic defeated Tomljanovic before Switzerland went on to finish runners-up to Russia.

Ronaldo Claims He Is Being Fforced out of Man United



MANCHESTER (Dispatches) - Cristiano Ronaldo said he felt "betrayed" by Manchester United as he claimed manager Erik ten Hag and other senior executives are trying to force him out of the club in an explosive interview.

The five-time Ballon d'Or winner has been a peripheral figure on the field for United since Ten Hag took charge in May.

Ronaldo was disciplined after refusing to come on as a substitute in a 2-0 win over Tottenham last month, but had returned to the side in recent weeks and even captained the Red Devils in a 3-1 loss at Aston Villa last weekend.

However, the 37-year-old was absent from the squad in Sunday's 2-1 victory over Fulham in United's last match before a six-week break for the World Cup.

"I don't have respect for him because he doesn't show respect for me," Ronaldo said of Ten Hag in an interview with the Piers Morgan Uncensored TV show.

"Not only the coach, but another two or three guys around the club. I felt betrayed."

When quizzed again if senior club executives were trying to oust him, Ronaldo replied: "Yes, I felt betrayed and I felt like some people don't want me here, not only this year but last year too."

Ronaldo returned to Old Trafford in August 2021 from Juventus. His first spell at United had been a glorious one under the tutelage of Alex Ferguson, winning three Premier League titles, the Champions League and the first of his Ballon d'Or crowns as the best player in the world.

Despite his 24 goals in all competitions last season, United endured a terrible campaign as they finished sixth in the Premier League and failed to qualify for the Champions League.

Ronaldo then reportedly tried to engineer an exit before the start of this season, but no agreement could be found with another club. "Since Sir Alex left, I saw no evolution in the club. Nothing had changed," said Ronaldo on what he found on his return to United. "I want the best for the club. This is why I come to Manchester United."

"But you have some things inside that don't help (us) reach the top level as (Manchester) City, Liverpool and even now Arsenal...a club with this dimension should be top of the tree in my opinion and they are not unfortunately."

United are fifth in the Premier League, 11 points behind leaders Arsenal.

Embiid's 59 Points Lead Sixers Past Jazz



LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Joel Embiid scored 59 points to carry the Philadelphia 76ers to a 105-98 victory over Utah, just one of two 50-point performances that lit up the NBA night.

Cleveland guard Darius Garland scored 27 of his 51 points in the fourth quarter, but his heroics weren't enough to prevent the Cavaliers from surrendering their first defeat on their home floor, 129-124 to the Minnesota Timberwolves.

Embiid's epic, which improved on his prior career best of 50 points, proved to be all the 76ers needed to hold off the tenacious Jazz.

The Cameroonian big man added 11 rebounds and eight assists along with seven blocked shots, all just a day after he scored 42 points in a victory over the Atlanta Hawks.

"I've never seen a more dominating performance, when you combine defense and offense," 76ers coach Doc Rivers said after Embiid became the first player in league history with 50 points, 10 rebounds, five assists and five blocks in a game since blocks became an official statistic in the 1973-74 season.

With the Jazz pressing late, Embiid scored 26 of Philadelphia's 27 points in the fourth quarter. Chants of "M-V-P" were raining down at the Sixers' Wells Fargo Center as Embiid poured it on.

The teams were tied heading into the final period, and Embiid's turnaround jump shot with less than six minutes remaining knotted the score at 94-94. He hit two free throws on Philadelphia's next possession for a 98-96 Sixers lead. His fadeaway jump shot with a minute remaining put Philadelphia up 103-98 and he closed out the scoring with a pair of free throws.

Fritz Stuns Nadal, Ruud Beats Auger-Aliassime



TORONTO (Dispatches) - Taylor Fritz stunned Rafa Nadal 7-6(3) 6-1 to make a winning debut at the ATP Finals in Turin while Norway's Casper Ruud kick-started the round-robin stage earlier with a win over Canadian Felix Auger-Aliassime.

Spanish top seed Nadal arrived in Italy having only competed in one singles match since his fourth-round US Open loss two months ago and his lack of recent competition showed as he was unable to keep pace with Fritz as the match wore on.

"I need more matches to play at this kind of level, even if I am practising well, much better than how I am competing, without a doubt. That's normal," Nadal told reporters.

"At the end is not the ideal tournament and probably part of the season to come back after a couple of months without being on the tour because you don't have time to get confidence."

Nadal grabbed a 6-5 lead in the opening set when he held to love for a fifth time but then lost the opening three points of the tiebreaker and could not find his way back.

After neither player dropped serve in the first set, Fritz broke early in the second for a 3-1 lead and again to pull ahead 5-1 before closing out the match on his next service game when Nadal sent a forehand long.

For Fritz, the victory marked his first over a top-three opponent in 12 attempts and improved him to 2-2 in head-to-head meetings with Nadal having beaten him at Indian Wells in March.

Canadian Auger-Aliassime has been in sublime form at the end of the season, winning three tournaments in a row before a semi-final run at the Paris Masters, but was not at his best while falling 7-6(4) 6-4 to Ruud.