

Iran's Ambassador to the United Nations Office in Vienna Reacted To the UN Atomic Watchdog's Board of Governors' Anti-Iran Resolution and Warned That the Move Can Have an Impact on Iran's Cooperation With IAEA

IRAN NEWS

Iran's Foreign Minister and his South African Counterpart Discussed the Development of Bilateral Relations as Well as Some International Issues in a Phone Call on Wednesday Evening

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Tehran Strongly Condemns IAEA Resolution

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's ambassador to the international organizations in Vienna has condemned as "unconstructive and political" a recent anti-Iran resolution passed by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors.

The draft resolution, ratified on Thursday, has criticized Iran for what it called a lack of cooperation with the agency. It was put forward by the United States, Britain, France and Germany, in continuation of their political pressures on Iran. Russia and China voted against the motion.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran strongly condemns the approval of this nonconsensual resolution presented by three European countries and the United States in today's meeting of the Board of Governors as a political, unconstructive and incorrect action and considers it unacceptable and rejected," Mohsen Naziri-Asl said after the resolution was passed. He said that in the course of discussing the issue, "the supporters of the draft resolution presented fake information and baseless claims to justify their unconstructive approach to the Board of Governors and tried to turn the meeting into a tool to pursue their short-sighted political goals while going beyond the framework of the agency's duties and powers."

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Conveying Martyrs Message To New Generation Necessary



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution says the new generations must be informed about the martyrs' message and what happened in the past, their motives and their thoughts.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, met with organizers of the second National Congress for Martyrs in Qom Province on October 30, 2022 whose details were published on Thursday.

In the meeting, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution emphasized that the need to keep the memory of the martyrs alive and hear the message of the martyrs are two essential features that the congress may meet.

Ayatollah Khamenei added, "We are in need of the martyrs' messages. We should not assume, 'Well, everyone knows the messages of the martyrs.' No, not everyone knows them. The new generations must be informed about what happened in the past, the motives, their thoughts, and such things. Activities that convey a message have this great benefit."

He stated that the language of art is the best language for conveying the memory and message of the martyrs and referred to Martyr Mahdi Zeinoddin as being one of the eminent martyrs of Qom Province who became a commander at a young age, "This martyr showed great skill, courage, acumen, and creativity on the battlefield as well as in the fields of ethics, religion, and Islamic matters. These need to be shown, and they cannot be conveyed in any language other than the language of art."

Ayatollah Khamenei continued to describe the importance of using art to explain the messages of the martyrs and spoke of the Ba'ath regime's air attack on a teenage group singing an anthem and their martyrdom in Qom Province. The Leader stressed the need to investigate and explain the different aspects of this tragedy, which also bears a message.

In another part of his speech, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution described martyrdom as a deal with God that ensured the nation's interests and said, "So, on the one hand, martyrdom is a deal with God. On the other hand, it ensures the national interests. Martyrdom for the cause of God secures national interests and the interests of the nation."

Ayatollah Khamenei also spoke of how martyrs, martyrdom, and the nation's understanding are components that promote national identity and added that the Iranian nation had achieved greatness in the eyes of the world because of their enthusiasm for martyrdom, "The Iranian nation achieved greatness in the eyes of those who heard about these martyrdoms. Whenever any news leaked out about them, it created greatness for this nation."

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution likened martyrdom to a rosary bead and described it as being the cause of the solidarity that exists between ethnic groups inside the country and explained this in the following way, "A martyr who was from the north or one who was from the east of the country were all in the same line. They were martyred for a common purpose, for the honor of Islam, for the greatness of the Islamic Republic, and for strengthening Iran. This is what connects these tribes, cities, and regions together. This is the nature of martyrdom."

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Iran Blasts Canada-Drafted UN Resolution

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran has rejected a Canadian-proposed resolution approved by the United Nations General Assembly's Third Committee on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic, condemning it as an example of exploiting human rights to advance political goals.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani on Thursday said the resolution, which was drafted by Canada with the backing of some Western countries, was a mere repetition of "baseless accusations" leveled against Iran based on "misinformation" and "dishonest generalizations."

The "one-sided" and "unrealistic" resolution thus lacks legitimacy and is categorically rejected, Kanaani added. "The move by the Canadian government and other supporters of the resolution is a clear example of misusing sublime concepts and values of human rights in order to advance short-sighted political goals," he said.

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West Not Needed to Play Role of Supporter of Iranian Women

NEW YORK (IRNA) - Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Zahra Ershadi has underlined that the Western states are not needed to play the role of fake supporters of the Iranian women.

Ershadi made the remarks at the meeting of the United Nations in New York, saying that the Iranian women are intelligent, educated, selfless and patriotic; so, there is no need that the Western countries see themselves as their advocate and the false claimants of the Iranian women.

The countries, which pursue an anti-Iran human rights resolution, promote dissemination of fake information, provocation of public opinion, training of sabotage, as well as financial and military support for terrorist groups under the guise of backing the rights of the Iranian women, she noted.

The Iranian ambassador addressed the United Nations General Assembly Third Committee, saying that the Islamic Republic categorically rejects and condemns the draft resolution against Iran, which has been prepared based on unfounded data and biased treatment of a special rapporteur.

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U.S. Sanctions 13 Companies for Facilitating Iran Petchem Sales

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The US Department of Treasury has added the names of 13 companies to its Iran sanctions list, accusing them of commercial liaison with the Islamic Republic's energy sector.

The sanctions were announced by the department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) on Thursday.

The companies in question, the OFAC announced in a statement on its website, were slapped with the coercive measures for "facilitating the sale of hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of Iranian petrochemicals and petroleum products to buyers in East Asia."

The targeted entities would function as front companies "on behalf of sanctioned Iranian petrochemical brokers Persian Gulf Petrochemical Industry Commercial Co. (PGPICC) and Triliance Petrochemical Co. Ltd. (Triliance), as well as the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) and its marketing arm, Naftiran Intertrade Company Ltd. (NICO)," it added.

The OFAC said the sanctions marked the fifth round of designations targeting Iran's petroleum and petrochemical trade since June 2022.

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Iran Confirms It Released Greek Tankers

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has confirmed reports it released two Greek-flagged tankers that had been confiscated in the country's waters in the Persian Gulf in May after an Iranian-flagged tanker was allowed to leave Greece.

In a statement issued on Wednesday, the Iranian Foreign Ministry said the Greek tankers had left Iranian waters earlier in the day based on an understanding reached between maritime authorities of Iran and Greece.

The statement indicated that Iranian-flagged tanker Lana had set sail from Greece hours earlier and seven months after it was seized in the country because of US pressure.

Tanker tracking services said on Wednesday that Lana was underway from Greece and Istanbul was listed as its destination. Data from those services showed Greek tankers Delta Poseidon and Prudent Warrior were underway from Iran and were sailing to ports in the United Arab Emirates for inspections before returning to Greece.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry said in its statement that Iranian and Greek maritime authorities had signed a memorandum of understanding to increase their cooperation in order to improve maritime security.

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Russia Rejects Allegations of Iran Drone Deliveries

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - The Western accusations that Iran allegedly supplies Russia with drones are unfounded, said Sergey Vershinin, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation.

In this way, Vershinin stated, the Western countries are trying to justify their own illegal arms supplies to Kiev. By such actions, they discredit themselves as conscientious participants in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), he told RIA Novosti.

"The co-authors of the politically motivated stuffing about the alleged deliveries of unmanned aerial vehicles from Iran to Russia deep down themselves understand the hopelessness of their efforts," Vershinin added. Earlier, the European Union expanded sanctions against Iran for allegedly supplying Russia with drones.

Last week, the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman, Nasser Kanaani, said that the allegation of weapons sales to Russia against Iran is aimed at legitimizing the daily shipment of weapons to Ukraine.

Referring to the "baseless accusation" that Iran supplied weapons to Russia during the Ukraine war, Kanaani stressed that these unfounded claims are made daily to justify the regular practice of shipping weapons to Ukraine. "The people who accuse Iran are to blame for both the start of the war and its continuation. Iran is opposed to war and is in favor of a cease-fire and peace," the Iranian spokesperson said.

In another statement, Kanaani once again rejected Ukraine's repetitive and groundless accusations that Iran has provided Russia with weapons.

He also repeated Iran's position of "active neutrality" concerning the ongoing war in Ukraine, urging Kiev to stop its "blame game".

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We Seek to Preserve Islamic Iran's Honor

KISH (IP) - The Minister of Sports and Youth said that our goal in participating in international arenas, including the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 is to preserve the honor of the Islamic Republic.

Hamid Sajjadi said at the meeting of the presidents of Iran's sports federations, referring to the terrorist attacks in the cities of Isfahan and Izeh, said: "There is no doubt that the Islamic Republic of Iran will give a crushing answer to those who have been prattling and the

terrorists who endanger Iran's security in the shortest possible time."

Referring to the meeting of the president of Iran with the members of the national team and the celebration of the women medalists of Iran in the presence of President Ebrahim Raisi, he said: "To succeed in achieving the elevation of Islamic Iran in the international sports fields, it is necessary to penetrate the hearts of the athletes and among them to be present."

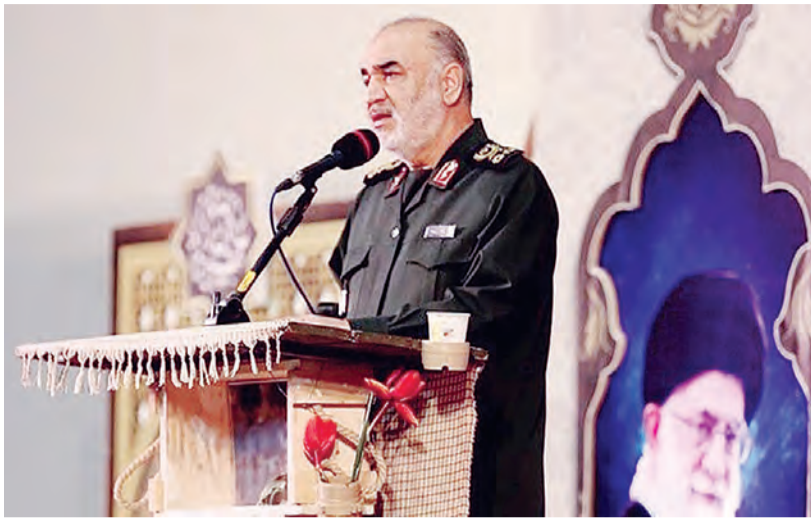
U.S. Dream of Disintegrating Iran Will in No Way Come True

TEHRAN (PressTV) - The chief commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has highlighted the Iranian nation's resolve to foil plots by the United States and Western governments in recent violent riots across the country, saying Washington intends to foment further unrest and see Iran disintegrated but its evil dreams will in no way come true.

Major General Hossein Salami made the remarks in a ceremony held in commemoration of Qom's martyrs in the holy Iranian city on Thursday.

Pointing to the latest riots in Iran and the West's unwavering support for the unrest, Salami said, "We are now witnessing a political arrangement on the global arena," with the US, the UK, Germany, France, Israel, Saudi Arabia and others having come to fight in the evil front.

Stressing that the enemy's formation against Iran shows the depth of a "massive conspiracy" against the Iranian nation, the IRGC chief said, "Our high-ranking martyrs stood up to the enemy barehanded, but managed to weaken the enemy ... with confidence and strong hearts."



The enemy thinks that it can expose this glorious revolution to harm by bringing a few fooled people to the stage, Salami said, while the Iranian nation is alive and the enemy has had disturbing dreams.

The commander said that the US seeks to prevent the progress and development of Iran, saying, "The US likes to see our streets smoke-filled and on fire; it likes us not to send spaceships to the sky; it likes us to be needy, poor and crippled. It would like our patients not to have access to medicine."

Underlining that Washington likes to see Iranian youths killed in the street, Salami said, "The US likes to divide our nation, it likes to disintegrate Iran, and these evil dreams will never come true. The Iranian nation is standing firm."

Recent Terrorist Operations Stem From Enemy Frustration

TEHRAN (MNA) - Referring to the terrorist operations in Khuzestan and Isfahan, the Iranian government spokesman said that such terrorist activities are rooted in the enemies' frustration with the media terrorism being waged against country.

In reaction to separate terrorist shooting attacks that hit the central cities of Semirum and Malekshahr as well as the southwestern city of Izeh that left a number of civilians and security forces dead and injured, Ali Bahadori Jahromi on Thursday said, "Those who played into media terrorists should be accountable for the actions of their outgrowths on the streets of Izeh and Isfahan."

The assaults will not go unanswered, he added, saying, "Enemies and [those waging] media terrorism try to advance their agenda by spreading propaganda [against Iran] and by resorting to different types of media hype and through methods that are unclear and unfamiliar, but when they lose hope, they have no other way than terror."

They are not concerned about Iranian children and women, the spokesman said, adding, "They chant slogans [in support of] freedom and women but they are [in reality] flag-bearers for acts of terrorism."

At least seven people were killed after terrorists opened fire at people and security forces at a crowded market in Izeh in southwestern province of Khuzestan on Wednesday.

Three people were also killed and eight security forces injured during riots in Semirum in the central Iranian province of Isfahan.

Enemy Seeks to Create Despair Among Iranians

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi says the enemy seeks to create despair among people, urging all to create hope in the society.

Raisi made the remarks Thursday at the opening ceremony of the National Conference on Jihad of Explanation at the Iran International Conference Center.

He was referring to the role of foreign countries using their media to fuel the recent riots that have hit various Iranian provinces after a 22-year-old Kurdish woman named Mahsa Amini died in hospital despite intensive medical care and resuscitation efforts.

Raisi said that today, Iran is facing a media war and it must create a defense structure to confront it.

The president stated that the Islamic culture has the Jihad of explanation, which the Leader of the Islamic Revolution had expressed and emphasized at some point.

He said that according to the holy Qur'an, gossips and liars are like hypocrites and infidels, and the role of liars and gossips who want to shape perception and knowledge as they want is like hypocrites.

He added that these people are trying to change perceptions, exaggerate the weak points and depict the strong points as insignificant and undervalued. "This is the same media war that Iran is facing today. Today, there is no suitable tactic for this war in Iran."

President Raisi called on the informed people, managers and public relations officials across Iran to act well and avoid being passive in the face of the media war.

Underlining that it is vital to provide awareness, transparency and timely information and hope-giving information, he pointed out: "The enemy's strategy is promoting desperation; public relations and media must explain that 'we can'."

Later in another event on Thursday, Raisi said that launching a translation movement will inspire high human and Islamic values.

In a message on the occasion of the closing ceremony of the International Conference of "Translation Campaign and Promoting Sacred Defense Concepts", President Raisi underlined the role of translation.

Launching a movement to translate valuable written works in the field of Sacred Defense can inspire people in the world on high human and Islamic values, including reliance on God, combating arrogance, promoting freedom-seeking, and defending the oppressed people.

The Islamic Revolution, in its second step, aims at presenting its causes and significant principles, he said.

Achieving the causes through translation could be admirable, he further noted.

Holding this conference and introducing and translating the great literary works in the field of Sacred Defense into the world's living languages will play a key role in the Islamic awakening, he noted.

Iran Categorically Rejects Claims of Smuggling Missile Fuel to Yemen

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has categorically rejected the US Navy's claims that the country was trying to smuggle 70 tons of a missile fuel component hidden among bags of fertilizer aboard a ship bound for crisis-stricken Yemen.

In a statement on Thursday, the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations in New York dismissed the allegations as baseless, saying Tehran stands fully committed to the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2216, which imposes an arms embargo on Yemen.

Iran "has not taken any action against the resolution, and is actively cooperating with the sanctions committee formed to oversee the arms embargo," said the statement, adding that none of the accusations leveled against Iran about arms smuggling to Yemen have been substantiated.

The diplomatic mission further said that "Iran is doing its utmost to restore the truce agreement, and facilitate dialogue among Yemeni groups as soon as possible in order to establish peace and stability in Yemen."

The US Navy claimed on Tuesday that Coast Guard ship USCGC John Scheuerman and guided-missile destroyer USS The Sullivans stopped a traditional wooden sailing vessel, known as a dhow, in the Sea of Oman on November 8.

It claimed that sailors discovered bags of ammonium perchlorate hidden inside what initially appeared to be a shipment of 100 tons of urea. The forces further alleged that the amount of ammonium perchlorate discovered could fuel more than a dozen medium-range ballistic missiles that fighters for the popular Ansarullah resistance movement have used to target facilities inside Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in retaliatory strikes.

Earlier this month, the head of Yemen's Supreme Political Council hit out at US Special Envoy for Yemen Tim Lenderking for scuttling efforts to extend a UN-brokered truce, describing the situation in his country as a time bomb.

Tehran, Jakarta Hail Maritime Cooperation

TEHRAN (MNA) - The development of maritime relations between Iran and Indonesia will cause progress and pride in the Islamic world, the commander of the Iranian peace and friendship flotilla said.

Captain Farhad Fattahi, the commander of the Iranian peace and friendship flotilla met and held talks with Agus Hariadi, the commander of the Indonesian Navy.

Many commercial fleets of the Islamic Republic of Iran pass through Indonesian waters, and this doubles the necessity of increasing bilateral cooperation, the Indonesian commander said in this meeting.

Saying that peaceful relations with the countries of the



world are the strategy of this country, he added that bilateral relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran are of great importance to Indonesia.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has made significant progress in various fields, especially in marine industries, despite the cruel sanctions of the arrogant powers, Captain Fattahi said in this meeting.

Fattahi also considered the development of maritime relations between Iran and Indonesia will cause progress and pride in the Islamic world.

On Sunday, the peace and friendship flotilla of the Iran Army Navy docked at the Port of Jakarta in Indonesia.

Iran, Turkey Slam Terrorist Acts in Two Countries

TEHRAN (IP) - The ministers of interiors of Iran and Turkey, in a telephone conversation, condemned the terrorist acts that happened in the two countries and called for the expansion of bilateral and regional relations and cooperation.

Ahmad Vahidi and Süleyman Soylu also emphasized the joint fight against terrorism, the extradition of criminals and the fight against drug trafficking.

While expressing sympathy with his Turkish counterpart for the recent terrorist explosion in Istanbul, the Minister of Interior of Iran said: "Iran and Turkey have common enemies and there should be more serious cooperation in the field of dealing with terrorism and perpetrators of insecurity in the two countries."

Vahidi pointed out the recent support and actions of the United States, Britain, the Zionist regime and Saudi Arabia for the recent riots and incitement of rioters in Iran and said: "In the past, their plans to conspire and support secession failed, and they will definitely taste failure in the recent events." Iran's Minister of Interior noted: "The Islamic Republic of Iran always supports a strong and stable Turkey and we believe that the authority and security of the two countries will benefit both sides and the region."

Vahidi appreciated his Turkish counterpart for inviting him to visit Ankara and expressed his hope that this trip would take place in the near future.

Turkish Interior Minister Soylu also considered the relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkey as strategic and historical in this telephone conversation and said: "We always seek to strengthen and cement the relations between Ankara and Tehran as much as possible, and we consider this to be in the interest of the two nations and the countries of the region." He added: "There are those who seek to weaken the relations between the two countries, and the officials of Turkey and Iran should not give an opportunity to the ill-wishers of the two nations by strengthening relations in all aspects."

He continued: "We are confident that the authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran will manage the recent riots with tact and authority which are directed by some governments."

Soylu added: "In the discussion of border interactions, we see good and favorable cooperation between the two sides, and the video surveillance that we have created in the border areas will help to strengthen the security of the common borders."



Iran Plans to Host Big Ministerial Meeting on Afghanistan

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iranian president's special envoy for Afghanistan Hassan Kazemi Qomi said that Iran has plans to host a major ministerial conference on Afghanistan in the near future to help improve the security conditions in the neighboring country.

Kazemi Qomi made the remarks speaking at a meeting in Moscow on Afghanistan.

The US policy is based on assassination and terrorism, he said, noting that what is going on in Afghanistan is the consequence of 20 years of US occupation.

He warned that if the friendly countries fail to manage the conditions in Afghanistan, everything may go worse.

The Iranian envoy expressed hope that formation of an inclusive government in Afghanistan will help improve Afghanistan's conditions and help the recognition of the country's government by international community.

He also voiced concern about US proxies that are carrying out terrorist attacks in Afghanistan.

No Limits in Expanding Ties With Pakistan



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Senior Iranian Army Official Brigadier General Nasser Mokhtarzadeh said that Iran possesses good capabilities in defense and military fields as well as technological innovations that remove any limitations in expanding ties with Pakistan.

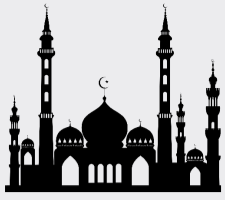
Brigadier General Mokhtarzadeh is the deputy chief for information communications and technology affairs at the Iranian Army. He made the comments during a meeting with Pakistan's Minister of Defense Production Muhammad Israr Tareen in the city of Karachi, southern Pakistan.

Mokhtarzadeh is heading an Iranian military delegation taking part in the 11th International Defense Exhibition and Seminar (IDEAS) 2022 in Karachi. The four-day event kicked off on Tuesday, November 15.

The Iranian military official hailed the exhibition, saying that Iran and Pakistan are two friendly countries which should use their capacities to further strengthen bilateral ties especially in defense and military fields.

The military cooperation between Tehran and Islamabad will definitely improve tranquility and stability in the region, he added.

The Pakistani minister on his part said that his country is determined to explore ways aimed at further boosting relations with Iran.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	11:49
■ Evening (Maghreb)	17:14
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:17
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:45

30. "Aaron, my brother;
31. "Add to my strength through him,

Surah 20. Ta-ha (30 - 31)

Tehran, Budapest Sign Cooperation Document

BUDAPEST (IRNA) - Hungarian foreign minister, after signing the protocol of the 3rd Iran and Hungary Joint Economic Cooperation Commission, said his country supports Iran's right to use the nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

The protocol of the 3rd Iran and Hungary Joint Economic Cooperation Commission was signed by the Iranian Economy Minister Ehsan Khanduzi and the Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs Peter Siarto on Thursday evening.

The two sides referred to the 55% increase in bilateral trade between the 2nd and the 3rd Joint Economic Cooperation Commission, deducting that this is a good sign of the significance of that commission.

Also, in the agricultural field, the two countries reached important agreements, including three cooperation documents in agricultural, animal husbandry health, and plants quarantine, which will in near future be turned into signed documents.

In the field of exchange of university students, too, that in accordance with the previous agreements Hungary had accepted to allocate 100 scholarships to Iranian students, so far over 600 Iranian students have used such scholarships.

The Iranian economy minister said at the end of the meeting that the two countries have agreed to increase the level of their bilateral trade to 100 million dollars annually.

Khanduzi referred to the role played by the two countries' university students as the cultural ambassadors, expressing hope that more Hungarian students will visit Iran in the future.

"Iran and Hungary are two countries with very similar standpoints in various economic, political and cultural fields," he added.

The economy minister said, "The message of the two countries' economy ministers is not limited to their economies only, as they both can contribute to resolving the



regional conflicts and disputes."

The Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs Peter Siarto, too, said in the joint press conference with the Iranian economy minister after the 3rd Iran and Hungary Joint Economic Cooperation Commission that the two countries must cooperate to lower the level of regional tensions.

He referred to the 85th anniversary of the establishment of the two countries' diplomatic relations, arguing, "96 Iranian and Hungarian companies were present in this bilateral economic meeting."

The top Hungarian diplomat also referred to over 50% growth of the two countries' economic trade during the current Christian year, arguing that it is one of the positive effects of last year's bilateral economic meeting.

Siarto said that the two countries' cooperation in agricultural, university exchange and scholarships, technological and industrial products has increased, and appreciated the role that the Islamic Republic of Iran is playing in blocking the path for Afghan refugees' immigration to Europe, and especially to Hungary.

Gov't Bans Import Of French Cars

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – The government has banned the import of French cars, a government spokesman announced on Thursday.

Omid Qalibaf, spokesman for the Iranian Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade, said his ministry has banned the import of French cars because of "the unprofessional behavior of the French in the past years," the Asbe-Bokhar news website reported.

The ministry has not issued any license for importing French cars over the past months, Qalibaf was quoted as saying.

"Iran will not allow them (French) to put pressure on Iran's automobile industry and market with sanctions," he said.

Active Presence of Oil Firms in Iran Exclusive Turkmenistan Fair

TEHRAN (Shana) -- Oil companies will actively participate in Iran's exclusive exhibition in Turkmenistan, which is to be held in December.

Iran's exclusive exhibition will be held in mid-December at the Chamber of Commerce of Turkmenistan in Ashgabat after four years.

The relations between Iran and Turkmenistan warmed up after the visits of the officials of the two countries, as well as the signing of the gas swap agreement, which led to an increase in the economic exchanges of the rest of the sectors.

Iranian oil companies will have a prominent presence in the showcase.

Petrochemical companies, equipment manufacturers, government and non-government companies, etc., will attend the special exhibition of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan.

Exploration Activities of NIOC To Go Beyond Iran Borders



TEHRAN (Shana) -- The Director of Exploration of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) announced the development of the activities of the Ministry of Petroleum in the overseas sector, focusing on exploration activities and providing equipment.

Mehdi Fakur said that without a doubt, the industry would not have been able to develop to its current position in the absence of domestic manufacturers of the oil industry and owes a part of its life to domestic manufacturers."

He stated that in the field of exploration, each region needs its appropriate equipment for activity, and acknowledged: "As we move forward, we need deeper wells and, as a result, a product with more special features."

The Director of Exploration of the NIOC stated that the domestic manufacturers are now making goods that are needed abroad, and clarified: "Unfortunately, there are issues in the field of domestic manufacturing, such as the fact that the domestic manufacturers are not known abroad and sometimes the construction process is long and this shows the superiority of foreign manufacturers."

Fakur said: "The Ministry of Petroleum has decided to move the frontiers of exploration out of the Islamic Republic."

He added: "This issue is also emphasized in the roadmap of the Ministry of Petroleum, and meetings with foreign countries have been held in this regard, and the issue of Venezuela is not hidden from anyone."

Fakur underlined the trip of the exploration management board of the NIOC to Tajikistan, and said: "According to the order of the oil minister, a visit was made to the infrastructure of the oil industry in this country to examine the field of development and production activities."

Iran Air to Increase Fleet Size by 5 Aircraft Till March

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's flag carrier Iran Air says it is planning to increase its active fleet size within the next few months despite difficulties facing the airline because of US sanctions on Iran.

Iran Air spokesman Hessam Qorbanali said five aircraft will be added to the airline's active fleet until the end of the Iranian calendar year in late March.

Iran Air's current active fleet consists of 17 aircraft, including eight Airbus planes, said Qorbanali.

He said that the planned increase in Iran Air fleet size will rely on repairs services offered by Iranian companies as well as on parts supplied from abroad.

"In cooperation with (domestic) technology-based companies, we managed to carry out repairs on several aircraft parts," the spokesman said in an interview with the ILNA news agency.

Iran Air had placed orders for dozens of new aircraft from international plane manufacturers like Boeing and Airbus after Iran and world powers signed a landmark deal on Iran's nuclear program in 2015.

However, the supply of the planes were suspended after a handful of deliveries in 2018 and after the United States withdrew from the nuclear deal and threatened international companies with sanctions if they engage in transactions with Iran.

Oil Minister in Turkmenistan to Discuss Energy Ties

TEHRAN - Oil Minister Javad Owji traveled to Turkmenistan to discuss growing ties between the two energy-rich countries.

Owji had met Turkmenistan's President Serdar Berdimuhamedov, foreign minister Raşit Meredow and the country's top petroleum official Shahin Abdul Rahmanov during his one-day trip to Ashgabat.

The report said Owji had discussed Iran's gas arrears to Turkmenistan, which amount to 470 million euros, as well as plans to expand swap agreements between the countries for transfer of natural gas, oil and oil products.

Iran is currently receiving around 5-6 million cubic meters per day of natural gas from Turkmenistan for consumption in its northeastern regions while delivering the same amount from its own natural gas supply to Azerbaijan in Iran's northwest.

Iran, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan have declared they are ready to double the amount of gas swapped under an agreement signed in November last year.

Media reports and government statements have indicated that gas pipelines from Turkmenistan to Iran could be used for potential swap agreements between Iran and Russia.

That comes as Russia is searching for new markets for its surplus gas output to offset the impacts of Western sanctions on its energy sector.

Turkmenistan's official TDH news agency said president Berdimuhamedov had also received Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexei Overchuk on Thursday to discuss growing cooperation between the two countries in various areas, especially on oil and gas projects.

On Wednesday Turkmen President Berdimuhamedov

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

received Owji.



Expressing gratitude for the time devoted to the meeting, the guest conveyed cordial greetings from the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Seyed Ebrahim Raisi, who wished peace, happiness and prosperity to the head of Turkmenistan.

Thanking for the kind words, the President of the country addressed the best wishes in return to the top leadership of the friendly country.

As the head of state emphasized, this year we are celebrating a significant date - the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between our states. In this regard, the productivity of long-term cooperation built on a solid foundation of mutual respect, mutual trust, spiritual kinship between the two peoples and the primordial traditions of good neighborliness was noted with satisfaction.

As part of the meeting, which was held in a businesslike, constructive manner, President Berdimuhamedov and his guest discussed key aspects of Turkmen-Iranian cooperation in the fuel and energy sector, which is strategic for the national economies of both countries, the development of which both Turkmenistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran pay paramount attention to.

As noted, having a colossal resource and economic potential, supported by an important geographical factor, the two neighboring states intend to continue to build up traditional cooperation on the principles of equality and mutual benefit.

At the end of the meeting, Berdimuhamedov and Owji expressed confidence in the further progressive development of traditional bilateral cooperation, which has received new dynamics and content in recent years.

Iran, Iraq Boost Energy Cooperation

TEHRAN (IP)- The ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Baghdad consulted with two Iraqi energy ministers regarding the implementation of energy projects in Iraq.

Mohammad Kazem Al-Sadegh, the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Iraq, met with the Iraqi Oil Minister, Hayyan Abdul Ghani, on Thursday, and the two sides discussed the oil and gas cooperation between the two countries and the ways to develop this cooperation.

In this meeting, while explaining the capacities and capabilities of Iranian companies in the implementation of oil resource exploitation, drilling and seismography projects, the readiness of Iranian companies to participate in Iraqi oil and gas industry projects was emphasized.

On Wednesday, the Iranian ambassador to Baghdad met with the Iraqi Minister of Electricity, Ziad Ali Fadhlil, and the two sides discussed issues of common importance based on the interests of the two nations.

Iraq's Minister of Electricity said that the experience of Iranian companies' activities in Iraq's gas stations were successful and we are trying to expand this cooperation in the field of electricity supply.

The Iraqi minister added: "We have successful experiences of the activities of Iranian companies in Sadr and Al-Haydriya gas power plants, and we are looking for its development through joint cooperation in the field of electricity."

In this meeting, the two sides discussed issues of common importance, especially the ties and neighboring rights between the two countries.



Iran to Pursue Nation's Rights in Response to Google's Recent Move

TEHRAN (IP)- Minister of Information and Communications Technology, in response to Google's action in removing several Iranian platforms, said that he would do the necessary follow-up in international authorities in order to fulfill the rights of the elites and the people of Iran.

In the past few days, several Iranian platforms (applications) that provide services in the field of messaging and transportation were removed from the foreign software store (Google Play Store).

Issa Zarepour stated: "The owners of some prominent platforms in the world, who consider themselves the exclusive owners of the information technology field, have tried to prevent the growth and development of technology in Iran for many years by adopting monopolistic policies and multiple standards, and this is not the first time that under the pretext of sanctions, people and even Iranian users all over the world are deprived of using products made by young Iranian experts."

Zarepour said: "Although this issue has been done many times under various pretexts, repeating it in the current situation where Iranian platforms have developed well in various fields, and people have shown interest in using them, strengthens the suspicion that such decisions are political."

The Iranian official added: "Not long ago, the US administration announced that it lifted the sanctions in the field of information technology for Iran so that the people of Iran could benefit from American technological services! But at the same time, they limit access to popular Iranian services that are the result of the efforts of Iranian elite youth in knowledge-based companies!"



3 Sentenced to Life in Prison For Downing of MH17



AMSTERDAM (Dispatches) - Dutch judges convicted three men of murder for their role in the 2014 shooting down of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 over Ukraine, and sentenced them to life in prison in absentia.

MH17 was a passenger flight that was shot down over eastern Ukraine on July 17, 2014, killing all 298 passengers and crew. "Only the most severe punishment is fitting to retaliate for what the suspects have done, which has caused so much suffering to so many victims and so many surviving relatives," Presiding Judge Hendrik Steenhuis said, reading a summary of the ruling.

Erdogan to Maintain Relation With Biden With Mutual Respect



ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan told Israel's former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who won an election this month, that it is important to maintain relations on a basis of respect for mutual interests, the Turkish presidency said.

In a phone call, Erdogan told Netanyahu he was saddened by "events two days ago in the West Bank". Netanyahu offered his condolences for those who died in a bomb attack in Istanbul on Sunday, the presidency said. "The two leaders agreed to work together to create a new era in relations between Turkey and Israel," Netanyahu's Likud Party said in a statement, adding that they discussed how to strengthen economic and diplomatic ties.

Russian Missiles Pound Ukraine Power Supply



KYIV (Dispatches) - Missiles rained down on Ukrainian energy facilities, as Russian forces stepped up attacks in eastern Ukraine, reinforced by troops pulled from Kherson city in the south which Kyiv recaptured last week.

Explosions resounded in cities including the capital Kyiv, the southern port of Odesa, the central city of Dnipro and the southeastern region of Zaporizhzhia.

"Punishment for all Russian atrocities - both present and past - will be unavoidable," President Volodymyr Zelenskiy wrote on Twitter, as news came that a Dutch court had ruled a passenger airliner shot down over eastern Ukraine in 2014 was hit by a Russian-made missile.

The court sentenced two former Russian intelligence agents and a Ukrainian separatist leader to life in prison for the downing of Malaysian Airlines Flight MH17 on July 17, 2014, killing all 298 passengers and crew.

The court also said Russia had "overall control" of the separatist forces in eastern Ukraine at the time. A deal aimed at easing global food shortages by facilitating Ukraine's agricultural exports from its southern Black Sea ports was extended for 120 days, though Moscow said its own demands had yet to be fully addressed.

As the winter's first snow fell in Kyiv, authorities said they were working to restore power nationwide after Russia earlier this week unleashed what Ukraine said was the heaviest bombardment of civilian infrastructure of the nine-month war.

Zelenskiy posted video footage, apparently shot from a car cam, showing a huge blast in Dnipro that sent flames and black smoke pouring into the sky.

At least 15 people were wounded in Dnipro, three were hurt in the northeastern city of Kharkiv and at least one was injured in Odesa, officials said.

State energy company Naftogaz said gas production facilities in eastern Ukraine had been damaged or destroyed. Other sites struck included the huge Pivdenmash defense plant in Dnipro.

The United Nations' humanitarian office (OCHA) warned of a serious humanitarian crisis in Ukraine this winter, with millions facing "constant power cuts".

NATO and Poland concluded that a missile that crashed in Poland on Tuesday, killing two people, was probably a stray fired by Ukraine's air defenses and not Russian. Zelenskiy contested this view in a rare public disagreement with his Western allies.

Polish President Andrzej Duda said the missile, the war's first deadly extension into NATO territory, appeared to be a Soviet-made S-300 rocket most likely fired accidentally "by Ukrainian anti-aircraft defence", not by Russia. Russia and Ukraine both use the missile.

An adviser to Duda said Ukraine was likely to get access to the site of the blast that it has requested.

U.S. President Joe Biden disputed Zelenskiy's assertion that the missile was not Ukrainian, telling reporters at the White House on Thursday: "That's not the evidence."

Moscow had denied responsibility. Russia's Foreign Ministry said accusations of Russian involvement in the blast were "part of a systematic anti-Russian campaign by the West".

Kazakhstan Says Coup Bid Foiled Ahead of Presidential Election



ASTANA (Dispatches) - Kazakhstan said Thursday it had prevented a coup attempt by supporters of an exiled opposition figure as it arrested seven people ahead of a presidential election this weekend.

On Sunday, Kazakhstan will hold a snap presidential vote expected to cement incumbent Kassym-Jomart Tokayev's grip on power, months after deadly unrest shook the Central Asian country and left more than 230 people dead.

The National Security Committee said a group of seven people planned to "organize riots and a coup and proclaim a provisional government," adding that the suspects "share the views of exiled opponent Mukhtar Ablyazov".

Ablyazov, a former energy minister and bank chairman, is a hugely controversial figure whom Kazakhstan has tried and sentenced in absentia for murder and embezzlement.

The France-based Ablyazov has vociferously encouraged protests through his social media channels.

The security service said the group was trying to organize large-scale riots and planning to attack administrative buildings and law enforcement offices with arms and projectiles.

Weapons including Kalashnikov assault rifles, sawn-off shotguns, ammunition and materials for Molotov cocktails as well as walkie-talkies were confiscated, it said.

Tokayev, 69, became leader in 2019 and consolidated power by sidelining his predecessor Nursultan Nazarbayev after the January unrest.

He has touted himself as a reforming leader capable of uniting the country.

Tokayev has vowed to build "a new Kazakhstan" by liberalizing the judicial system, tackling corruption and undertaking reforms.

But deep social inequality that was at the origin of the January protests remains a problem and a potential political threat.

Tokayev is facing five little-known challengers as he seeks a seven-year term in the early vote he initiated in September, saying he needed a "new mandate of trust from the people."

Thousands Protest Sudan Coup, Call for Justice

KHAROUM (Dispatches) - Thousands of Sudanese demonstrated calling for justice for scores of people killed since last year's military coup which deepened the country's political crisis, AFP correspondents said.

Unrest has gripped Sudan since October 2021, when army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan led a military takeover that derailed the country's transition to civilian rule, established following the 2019 ouster of dictator Omar al-Bashir.

Near-weekly anti-coup protests have been met with a violent crackdown that has so far left at least 119 people dead, according to pro-democracy medics -- feeding into Sudan's deepening unrest.

Thursday's protests, which drew the largest crowds in northern Khartoum, marks one year since November 17, 2021. That day saw 15 people killed, the deadliest single-day crackdown on anti-coup demonstrations.

"The martyr's blood did not go in vain," demonstrators chanted, while others called for the military to "go back to the barracks."

Some protestors criticized a possible deal between the military and Sudan's main civilian bloc, the Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC), which was ousted in the coup.

Ongoing talks between the FFC and the military, which have lasted for weeks, are the latest bid to break the political stalemate.

The two sides recently welcomed a transitional constitution developed by the Sudanese Bar Association as a basis for a lasting agreement.

On Wednesday, the FFC said it had approved a two-phase political process based on the Bar Association's initiative.

The initial component would cover a constitutional framework establishing civilian government, while the second comprises a final deal tackling issues including transitional justice and reforms to the military.

On Sunday, Burhan said the military was presented with a "document" on the political process.

North Korea Fires Missile, Vows Fiercer response to U.S.

SEOUL (Dispatches) - North Korea fired a ballistic missile as it warned of "fiercer military responses" to U.S. efforts to boost its security presence in the region with its allies, saying Washington is taking a "gamble it will regret."

North Korea has conducted a record number of such tests this year, and also fired hundreds of artillery shells into the sea more recently as South Korea and the United States staged exercises, some of which involved Japan.

South Korea's military said the ballistic missile was launched from the North's east coast city of Wonsan at 10:48 a.m. (0248 GMT), flying 240 km (150 miles) to an altitude of 47 km (29 miles) at the speed of Mach 4.

The latest launch came less than two hours after North Korea's foreign minister, Choe Son Hui, slammed a Sunday trilateral summit of the United States, South Korea and Japan, during which the leaders criticized Pyongyang's weapons tests and pledged greater security cooperation.

At the talks, U.S. President Joe Biden reaffirmed a commitment to reinforce extended deterrence and defend the two Asian allies with a "full range of capabilities", including nuclear weapons.

Choe said the three countries' "war drills for aggression" failed to rein in the North but would rather bring a "more serious, realistic and inevitable threat" upon themselves.

"The keener the U.S. is on the 'bolstered offer of extended deterrence' to its allies and the more they intensify provocative and bluffing military activities ... the fiercer the DPRK's military counteraction will be," Choe said in a statement carried by the official KCNA news agency.

She referred to her country by the initials of its official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

"The U.S. will be well aware that it is gambling, for which it will certainly regret," Choe added.

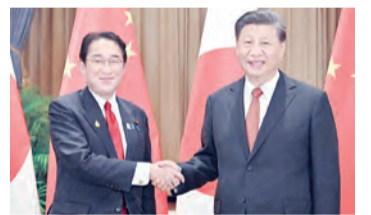
The South Korean and U.S. militaries carried out missile defense drills after the North's latest launch, Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff said, strongly condemning it.

"We urge an immediate halt of North Korea's series of ballistic missile launches, which is a grave provocation damaging peace and stability," the joint chiefs said in a statement. A U.S. State Department spokesperson also condemned the launch, saying that, like the others this year, it violated multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions and posed a threat to North Korea's neighbors and the international community.

"We remain committed to a diplomatic approach to the DPRK and call on the DPRK to engage in dialogue," the official said, adding: "Our commitment to the defense of the Republic of Korea and Japan remains ironclad."



Xi, Kishida Meet as Tensions Grow Over Taiwan, East China Sea



TOKYO (Dispatches) - Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said he conveyed concerns over regional security to Chinese leader Xi Jinping amid growing tensions in Asia over China's maritime ambitions.

Xi was quoted by Chinese state broadcaster CCTV as telling Kishida that China and Japan should deepen trust, areas of cooperation and regional integration, and resist "conflict and confrontation".

The two leaders met in Thailand on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit, marking the first leadership-level talks between the two countries in almost three years.

Regional tensions have been rising over self-governed Taiwan, which Beijing claims as its own territory. China has never renounced the use of force to bring Taiwan under its control, and earlier this year staged war games near the island.

The democratically-elected government in Taipei rejects Beijing's claims and says only its people can decide its future.

Japan also lodged a diplomatic complaint in August after five ballistic missiles launched by the Chinese military fell into Japan's exclusive economic zone, near disputed islands known as the Senkaku in Japan and the Diaoyu in China.

"I reiterated the importance of peace and security in the Taiwan Strait," Kishida said to reporters after the summit, stopping short of suggesting how China responded to his concerns.

"I conveyed my grave concerns about the situation in the East China Sea, including the Senkaku Islands, as well as China's military presence such as their launching of missiles," Kishida added.

Xi told Kishida the issue of Taiwan needed to be handled properly and in good faith as it touched on the political foundation and basic trust of China-Japan relations, according to CCTV.

Xi then went on to say that "China does not interfere in the internal affairs of other countries, nor does it accept anyone interfering in China's internal affairs under any pretext", CCTV reported.

The Japanese premier took a at an East Asia Summit held in Cambodia last week, openly criticizing China for "violating" Japan's sovereignty in the East China Sea.

Why Daylight Saving Time Just Isn't Healthy

LONDON (Dispatches) - Daylight saving time has ended, and most Americans have turned their clocks back an hour. My sixth-grader is in heaven.

At 6:50 a.m. these days, our once testy tween zombie is now ... moderately awake and relatively lucid.

Instead of rising to gauzy predawn light, she's got glowy morning sunshine beaming around her curtains. When she sets off for school, the sun has been up nearly a full hour. Just a 60-minute change has lightened both the morning and her mood. At breakfast today, I think I even spied a smile.

On November 6, every state in the United States except Hawaii and most of Arizona switched from daylight saving time, or DST, to standard time (those two states don't observe DST). That switch shifted an hour of light from the evening to the morning. In March, we'll move in the other direction when we "spring forward," trading morning light for brighter evenings.

The United States' biannual time change has been lighting up headlines since the U.S. Senate's unanimous vote in March to make daylight saving time permanent. The Sunshine Protection Act would forgo turning clocks to and fro, repeating an unpopular experiment Congress tried in the 1970s and prioritizing evening light throughout the year. But the health case for staying on daylight saving time is pretty dim. And what such a shift could mean for adolescents is especially gloomy.

Even the name "daylight saving time" isn't quite right, says Kenneth Wright, a sleep and circadian expert at the University of Colorado Boulder. There's no change in the amount of daylight, he says. "What we're doing is changing how we live relative to the sun." When we move our clocks forward an hour, noon no longer represents when the sun is near its highest point in the sky. Suddenly, people's schedules are solarly out of sync.

That's a big deal biologically, Wright says. Humans evolved with a daily cycle of light and dark. That sets the rhythms of our bodies, from when we sleep and wake to when hormones are released. Morning light, in particular, is a key wake-up signal. When we tinker with time, he says, "we're essentially making the choice: Do we want to go with what we've evolved with, or do we want to alter that?"

From a health perspective, if he had to rank permanent daylight saving time, permanent standard time or our current practice of biannual clock changing, Wright says, "I think the answer is incredibly clear." Permanent standard time is healthiest for humans, he says. In his view, permanent daylight saving time ranks last.

Wright is not alone. As daylight saving time ticked toward its yearly end, sleep experts across the country stepped out in favor of standard time.

Scientists have linked sleep loss, heart attacks and an increased risk of dying in the hospital after a stroke to the transition to daylight saving time, neurologist Beth Malow wrote in *Sleep* in September. She testified to that this year before a U.S. House of Representatives subcommittee. "My overall message was that permanent standard time was a healthier choice," says Malow, of Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville.

For both Malow and Wright, some of the most compelling studies examine U.S. time zone borders. Living on the late sunset side of a border takes a toll on people's health and sleep compared with those living on the early sunset side, scientists suggested in 2019. A similar study in 2018 also found an increased risk of liver cancer the farther west people lived within a time zone, where the sun rises and sets later in the day.

But the downsides of nighttime light are not always crystal clear. A November study, for example, suggested that year-round daylight saving time would reduce deer-vehicle collisions (SN: 11/2/22). But studies like these can be hard to interpret, Malow says. Other factors may come into play, like deer's seasonal activity and changing roadway conditions. "The car-crash literature has been so mixed," she says. "I've seen stuff come out on both sides."



New Brain Implants Read Words Directly From People's Thoughts

SAN DIEGO (Dispatches) - Scientists have devised ways to "read" words directly from brains. Brain implants can translate internal speech into external signals, permitting communication from people with paralysis or other diseases that steal their ability to talk or type.

New results from two studies, presented November 13 at the annual meeting of the Society for Neuroscience, "provide additional evidence of the extraordinary potential" that brain implants have for restoring lost communication, says neuroscientist and neurocritical care physician Leigh Hochberg.

Some people who need help communicating can currently use devices that require small movements, such as eye gaze changes. Those tasks aren't possible for everyone. So the new studies targeted internal speech, which requires a person to do nothing more than think.

"Our device predicts internal speech directly, allowing the patient to just focus on saying a word inside their head and transform it into text," says Sarah Wandelt, a neuroscientist at Caltech. Internal speech "could be much simpler and more intuitive than requiring the patient to spell out words or mouth them."

Neural signals associated with words are detected by electrodes implanted in the brain. The signals can then be translated into text, which can be made audible by computer programs that generate speech.

That approach is "really exciting, and reinforces the power of bringing together fundamental neuroscience, neuroengineering and machine learning approaches for the restoration of communication and mobility," says Hochberg, of Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School in Boston, and Brown University in Providence, R.I.

Wandelt and colleagues could accurately predict which of eight words a person who was paralyzed below the neck was thinking. The man was bilingual, and the researchers could detect both English and Spanish words.

Electrodes picked up nerve cell signals in his posterior parietal cortex, a brain area involved in speech and hand movements. A brain implant there might eventually be used to control devices that can perform tasks usually done by a hand too, Wandelt says.

Another approach, led by neuroscientist Sean Metzger of the University of California, San Francisco and his colleagues, relied on spelling. The participant was a man called Pancho who hadn't been able to speak for more than 15 years after a car accident and stroke. In the new study, Pancho didn't use letters; instead, he attempted to silently say code words, such as "alpha" for A and "echo" for E.

By stringing these code letters into words, the man produced sentences such as "I do not want that" and "You have got to be kidding." Each spelling session would end when the man attempted to squeeze his hand, thereby creating a movement-related neural signal that would stop the decoding. These results presented at the neuroscience meeting were also published November 8 in *Nature Communications*.

This system allowed Pancho to produce around seven words per minute. That's faster than the roughly five words per minute his current communication device can make, but much slower than normal speech, typically about 150 words a minute. "That's the speed we'd love to hit one day," Metzger says.

To be useful, the current techniques will need to get faster and more accurate. It's also unclear whether the technology will work for other people, perhaps with more profound speech disorders. "These are still early days for the technologies," Hochberg says.

Progress will be possible only with the help of people who volunteer for the studies. "The field will continue to benefit from the incredible people who enroll in clinical trials," says Hochberg, "as their participation is absolutely vital to the successful translation of these early findings into clinical utility."



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Air France-KLM Shares Fall After Bond Sale Announcement

PARIS (Dispatches) - Air France-KLM shares fell more than 10 per cent after the European airline group announced the sale of bonds convertible into new shares worth €300 million to pay back state aid and boost capital.

Air France-KLM made huge losses in 2020 and 2021 after the coronavirus pandemic slashed passenger numbers to around a third of normal levels, but has made a profit so far this year.

The French and Dutch governments provided €10 billion in loans to Air France-KLM to help the airline as planes were grounded during the outbreak.



UK Inflation Hits 41-Year High of 11.1%

LONDON (Dispatches) - Britain's inflation rate rose to a 41-year high in October, fueling demands for the government to do more to ease the nation's cost-of-living crisis when it released new tax and spending plans.

Consumer prices jumped 11.1% in the 12 months through October, compared with 10.1% in September, the Office for National Statistics said Wednesday. The new figure exceeded economists' expectations of 10.7%.

Higher prices for food and energy drove Britain's inflation rate to the highest since October 1981, the ONS said. It exceeds the record 10.7% inflation seen last month in the 19 European countries using the euro currency and the U.S. rate of 7.7%, which slowed in October.

The figures come a day before Treasury chief Jeremy Hunt is scheduled to unveil a new budget amid growing calls for higher wages, increased benefits and more spending on health and education as raging inflation erodes the spending power of people across the country.

Those demands are complicating Hunt's efforts to close an estimated 50 billion-pound (\$59 billion) budget shortfall and restore the government's financial credibility after former Prime Minister Liz Truss' disastrous economic policies undermined investor confidence and sparked turmoil on financial markets.

"We cannot have long-term, sustainable growth with high inflation," Hunt said after the inflation figures were released. "Tomorrow I will set out a plan to get debt falling, deliver stability, and drive down inflation while protecting the most vulnerable."

Governments and central banks around the world are struggling to contain widespread inflation that began to accelerate as the global economy recovered from the coronavirus pandemic, then soared after Russia's invasion of Ukraine restricted supplies of natural gas, oil, grain and cooking oil. While there is little policymakers can do to combat such external shocks, those price increases are becoming embedded as producers pass their costs on to consumers and workers demand higher wages, posing a longer term threat to economic growth.

The Bank of England earlier this month forecast that U.K. inflation would peak at around 11% in the fourth quarter and begin falling early next year. The bank has approved eight consecutive interest rate increases, pushing its key rate to 3%, as policymakers try to bring inflation back in line with their 2% target.

Hunt said the government had a duty to help the Bank of England control inflation and act responsibly with the nation's finances. The comment was a stark contrast to the message from Truss, who said it was the government's responsibility to spur growth, setting up a tug-of-war between a government with its foot on the economic gas pedal and a central bank attempting to cool the economy with higher borrowing costs.

The European and U.S. central banks also have been hiking rates aggressively, though the Federal Reserve is expected to temper them going forward after inflation slowed to 7.7% last month from 8.2% in September.

Some Major Economies Face Real Recession Risk

BALI (Dispatches) - Several major economies face a real risk of sliding into recession as the war in Ukraine, rising food and fuel costs, and soaring inflation cloud the global outlook, the head of the World Trade Organization (WTO) warned.

"It may not happen everywhere, but several key countries risk sliding into recession," WTO Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala told Reuters on the sidelines of the G-20 leaders meeting in Bali, Indonesia.

"Of course, the impact of that can be quite significant for emerging markets and poor countries, which need external demand from the developed countries to recover."

The Geneva-based trade body last month projected global trade to rise just 1% in 2023, down sharply from an estimated 3.5% rise for this year.

"There are so many uncertainties and most of the risks are on the downside," such as the fallout from the war in Ukraine and headwinds from inflation, she said.

Okonjo-Iweala said she has called on G-20 leaders to phase out food export restrictions, which have been on the rise and hurt poor countries by pushing up food prices.

Among the few bright spots that she noted, U.S. President Joe Biden and Chinese leader Xi Jinping met on the sidelines of the G-20 summit to mend strained bilateral ties that are among the uncertainties weighing on the prospects for global recovery.

"One doesn't want to read too much into it, but it's always good when the two biggest economies in the world talk to each other," Okonjo-Iweala said of the U.S.-China Summit.

Okonjo-Iweala said she was "very hopeful" some breakthrough will be made in reforming the WTO's dispute settlement system, which has been paralyzed since 2019 when the administration of former U.S. President Donald Trump blocked the appointment of judges for an appeals body arbitrating on global trade disputes.

"The Americans are consulting actively with other members at an informal level," she said, adding that the stronger U.S. engagement will help speed up progress on reform from the beginning of next year.

In a meeting in September, trade ministers of the G-7 advanced economies agreed to work towards having a functioning WTO dispute settlement system by 2024.



G-20 Vows to Calibrate Pace of Interest Rate Hikes, Avoid Spillovers

BALI (Dispatches) - Leaders of the world's biggest economies agreed to pace their interest rate hikes carefully to avoid spillovers and warned of "increased volatility" in currency moves, a change from last year's focus on mending the scars of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a leaders' declaration signed on Wednesday, the G-20 members said the world economy was facing "unparalleled multidimensional crises" ranging from the war in Ukraine to a surge in inflation, which are forcing many central banks to tighten monetary policy.

"G-20 central banks ... are closely monitoring the impact of price pressures on inflation expectations and will continue to appropriately calibrate the pace of monetary policy tightening in a data-dependent and communicated manner," said the statement signed after a two-day G-20 Summit held in Bali.

The central banks will also be mindful of the need to limit spillovers, the statement added, in a nod to emerging economies' concerns about the potential for huge capital outflows if aggressive U.S. rate hikes continue.

"Central bank independence is crucial to achieving these goals and buttressing monetary policy credibility," it added.

The emphasis on the need to fight inflation contrasted with the G-20 statement last year, which said central banks must avoid overreacting to transitory rises in inflation.

The G-20 leaders also called for "temporary and targeted" fiscal spending for low-income households, which are particularly vulnerable to rising living costs. Last year, the leaders warned against any premature withdrawal of support to ensure the global recovery remained intact.

The shift in tone underscores the rapid change in the global environment and policymakers' priorities, caused in large part by Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February.

An abrupt, sharp rise in inflation, driven by increasing commodity and fuel costs, caught many central banks off guard and forced them to shift gears toward rapid monetary tightening.

Now, policymakers are faced with the dilemma of having to combat inflation with interest rate hikes, without cooling economies that are already facing the risk of recession.

The head of the World Trade Organization (WTO) warned of the risk of various uncertainties clouding the global economic outlook.

"It may not happen everywhere, but several key countries risk sliding into recession," said WTO Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala.

Moody's Sees European Power Prices Staying High



FRANKFURT (Dispatches) - European power prices are likely to remain high in the medium term, Moody's Investors Service said in a report, citing technical problems at French nuclear plants, low water levels after droughts and risks to gas supplies.

"We expect wholesale power prices to remain at historically high levels in the medium term, albeit with marked differences between countries," it said.

"This is despite our expectation of lower power demand in 2022-23 due to industrial demand destruction, itself triggered by high energy prices, and voluntary energy saving measures," it added.

Germany's year-ahead baseload electricity contract, Europe's benchmark, closed at 329 euros (\$342) a megawatt hour on Tuesday, down two-thirds from August's record high of 1,050 euros but still almost four times above 87 euros a year ago, Refinitiv Eikon data showed.

In France, average power prices have been at a 23% premium to the German benchmark since January 2022 due to the problems at operator EDF's nuclear plants, the report said.

The premium is expected to continue to grow next year, a Moody's analyst said in an online discussion of the report.

Increased outages have also led to France becoming a net electricity importer after 20 years of net exports, and net imports are also expected to continue next year, the report said.

The report, which also looked at Italy, Spain, the Nordics and Britain, said a plunge in Russian gas supplies and lower French nuclear output were pressuring the entire region. France and Germany account for two-thirds of Western Europe's power consumption in an interconnected market.

Hot weather curbed wind and hydro production this summer, boosting demand from quick-to-activate gas turbines, which operate in competition with coal plants.

Crypto Turmoil Not a Surprise

FRANKFURT (Dispatches) - The recent collapse of a major cryptocurrency exchange platform that has sent shockwaves through the largely unregulated sector is "not a surprise", a top European Central Bank official said.

The popular FTX platform filed for bankruptcy in the United States last week with a reported US\$8-billion hole in its finances, sparking a confidence crisis among investors and dragging down key currencies like bitcoin.

ECB vice-president Luis de Guindos said the FTX failure "is not a surprise", given the "vulnerabilities and the weaknesses" of the burgeoning crypto industry.

But he said the turmoil remained confined to the crypto asset space and had not yet had any spillover effects. "So far it did not have implications in terms of financial stability for the broader financial markets," de Guindos told reporters in a call. But he acknowledged there were "obscure channels" between "the crypto space and the rest of the financial market", which the ECB was already watching "carefully".

Central banks around the world have long been critical of the volatile world of cryptocurrencies, which are issued privately and are often not backed by any tangible assets or public authority.

ECB chief Christine Lagarde in May said cryptocurrencies were "based on nothing" and "worth nothing". The spectacular failure of the FTX platform has revived memories of the downfall of the Lehman Brothers bank in 2008, which amplified the global financial crisis.

The crypto industry was already battered earlier this year by the collapse of virtual currency terra, which was supposed to be pegged to the US dollar, and of cryptocurrency investment platform Celsius.

Biden-Xi Meeting Constructive Signal for Trade

NUSA DUA (Dispatches) - President Joe Biden's meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping was a "very constructive" signal that may ease trade tensions between the world's two largest economies, International Monetary Fund Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said.

The leaders of top economies issued a "strong call" for an end to Russia's war in Ukraine, in part because the conflict is the single biggest factor slowing global growth, Georgieva told Reuters as a contentious G20 summit ended.

But the Biden-Xi meeting sent "a very significant message to the world that international cooperation is important for all of us," Georgieva said.

She noted that the IMF has warned that growth would suffer if the world fragments into geopolitical blocs led by the United States and Western allies on one side and China and other state-driven economies on the other, with competing technology and other standards. This would reduce global GDP output by US\$1.4 trillion to US\$3.5 trillion, the Fund estimates.

"Just imagine what the world can do with this kind of money," Georgieva said.

US tariffs imposed by former president Donald Trump in 2018 on hundreds of billions of dollars' worth of Chinese goods have largely been borne by American consumers and companies. In October 2019, the IMF blamed the US-China trade war for cutting global growth to the slowest pace for a decade.

"And at a time of high inflation, this is least desirable," Georgieva said of tariffs. "Also, China recognises that there has to be a reliance on mutual cooperation because we see the Chinese economy being in a very tough spot."

The G20 leaders expressed concern about a deteriorating debt situation in some middle-income countries, a statement that was "a recognition that more needs to be done," Georgieva said, adding that defining these steps was difficult.

The IMF has called for more predictability in the restructuring process, for countries who seek help under the G20's common debt restructuring framework to allowed to suspend servicing of their debts, and to include vulnerable middle-income countries like Sri Lanka.

Georgieva said she was pleased to see language in the G20 leaders' joint declaration calling for central banks to calibrate the pace of their interest rate hikes to avoid spillovers to other countries. This was because inflation had shot up in many emerging market economies due to the dollar's massive strength.

Tehran Condemns U.S. Sanctions on National TV

TEHRAN (MNA) – In a post on Twitter, the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani lambasted the United States for sanctioning Iranian national TV while letting anti-Iran TV channels wage propaganda warfare against the country. “Allowing terrorist networks and media to do acts of mischief against the Iranian nation while sanctioning IRIB and Press TV with the aim of blocking Iran’s viewpoints and opinion from getting to the world is a continuation of the flagrant violation of the

rights of the Iranian nation by the U.S. government,” Nasser Kana’ani, the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman said in a post on his Twitter account on Friday in reaction to the latest US move in sanctioning national TV (The Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB)) and Tehran-based English-language Press TV.

“There is no end in sight to America’s crimes against independent nations and governments,” the spokesman added.



Stray Missile Hit in Poland Casts Spotlight on NATO Air Defense Gaps

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - Poland had started to bolster its air defenses long before a stray missile landed just inside its border on Tuesday, but a robust shield for the skies along NATO’s eastern flank is still a long way off after decades of neglect following the Cold War.

The missile that hit Poland appears to have been fired by Ukraine’s air defenses rather than a Russian strike, NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg said.

But while it may have been a technical error that can happen in any conflict, the incident underlines the urgent need for NATO to plug gaps in its defenses because even mistakes like this could lead to a dangerous escalation.

“It was only a question of time for such an accident to happen,” an air defense expert from a NATO country, speaking on condition of anonymity, told Reuters. “It could also have been a stray Russian missile flying the wrong way, due to a technical or human error.”

While more advanced Western air defense missiles are designed to destroy themselves if they miss their target, older Soviet missiles do not have such a mechanism, the military source said.

“If they miss their target, they simply fly on until they have burned up all fuel - and then plunge down,” he said, adding that the older missiles also had a higher error rate.

Ground-based air defense systems such as Raytheon’s Patriot are built to intercept incoming missiles.

But after the Cold War, many NATO allies scaled down the number of air defense units to reflect the assessment that they would, from now on, only have to deal with a limited missile threat coming from countries such as Iran.

This perception changed drastically with Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, which sent NATO allies scrambling to increase stocks of ammunition and tackle air defense system shortfalls.

Germany had 36 Patriot units when it was NATO’s frontline state during the Cold War and even then it relied on support from NATO allies. Today, the German forces are down to 12 Patriot units, two of which are deployed to Slovakia.

“It used to be a real belt of air defense systems, and this is what people have in mind if the speak of protecting NATO’s eastern flank,” the military expert said. “But we are far away from such a scenario.”

Realising the need to plug the gap, more than a dozen NATO allies led by Germany in October kicked off an initiative to jointly procure air defence systems for several layers of threats, eyeing Israel’s Arrow 3, Patriot and the German IRIS-T among other systems.

The initiative comes as Ukraine, under heavy Russian attacks, desperately needs more air defence units, potentially exacerbating existing shortfalls in Western nations that are handing Kyiv some of their systems.



Poland, which together with the three Baltic states builds NATO’s new eastern frontier, has invested for years in bolstering its air defense capabilities which still partly rely on Soviet-era systems like the OSA and Kub air defense missiles.

“In the next decade, we are talking about Poland having a really state-of-the-art and very large air defense system,” Marek Swierczynski, a defense analyst for Polish think tank Polityka Insight said.

The implementation of these systems is slow, however, and they could still take years to become fully operational.

Poland has received additional support from Washington in recent months, but these systems, such as Patriot fire units stationed in Rzeszow, are not reactive and far-reaching enough to monitor every single gap in protection on the eastern flank, Swierczynski said.

However, even more air defense systems could not guarantee that another stray missile like the one on Tuesday is intercepted.

“This is the paradox: no matter how much money you spend on such an air defense system, you will never build something that is 100% impenetrable, so to speak, so there is always the possibility of such a situation arising,” Swierczynski said.

Russia Wants Global Food Security Efforts To Be Smooth



MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia wants no disruption of global food security efforts, Russia’s deputy foreign minister said in an interview with the Izvestia daily, signaling that a deal allowing Ukraine to export grain via the Black Sea could be rolled over smoothly.

The deal is due to roll over on Nov. 19 unless there are objections. Moscow has said its agreement depends on provisions to ensure it can export its grain and fertilizer despite the obstacles created by Western sanctions.

“We are people for whom the humanitarian dimension of the issue is not an empty word,” Sergei Vershinin was quoted as saying in the interview released by Izvestia early on Wednesday.

Both Ukraine and Russia are major global grain exporters. Russia is the world’s largest wheat exporter and a major supplier of fertilizers, crop and soil nutrients, to global markets.

If Western statements about exemptions from sanctions for Russia’s food exports are put into practice, “everything would continue on normal terms,” for the Black Sea grain deal, he said.

When asked if Russia would support Turkey’s recent proposal to remove a time frame from the deal, he said that the current duration period of 120-day-seems “justified.”

Vershinin also said that the state lender Rosselkhozbank, which has been the main part of Russia’s demands on the topic, was ready to provide guarantees for dealing with food and fertilizer transactions only if its access to the international SWIFT bank payments system was restored, Izvestia disclosed.

Iran Is No Libya or Sudan

TEHRAN (PressTV) - The Iranian foreign minister says enemies have targeted Iran’s territorial integrity and identity by fomenting terrorism inside the country, but they have been frustrated thanks to the nation’s clear-mindedness.

“Security services, the fake Israeli regime and certain Western politicians that have hatched conspiracies to trigger a civil war in Iran to destroy and disintegrate the country should know that Iran is neither Libya nor Sudan,” Hossein Amirabdollahian said in a post on his Twitter account on Thursday. He added that the enemies have taken aim at Iran’s territorial integrity and identity, emphasizing that people’s prudence disappointed them.

Using the protests as a cover, rioters and thugs — many of them later found to have links with foreign parties — went on a rampage, engaging in brutally attacks on security officers, vandalism, desecration of sanctities, and false-flag killings of civilians to incriminate the Iranian police.

Late last month, Iran’s main intelligence bodies reported multiple aspects of the role played by the US — backed by the UK, Saudi Arabia, Israel and other allies — in devising a multi-dimensional plot for instigating riots in the Islamic Republic and directing the wave of violence.

Iran Blasts...

FROM PAGE 1

“Such unconstructive measures will not only fail to help improve the human rights situation at a global level, but will lead to constant recourse to negative stereotyping and political labeling against independent countries,” he added.

Pointing to the Western countries’ attempts to spread Iranophobia and defame Iran, he said such states, which have a long record of systematic human rights violations, are not in a position to make recommendations on human rights to the Iranian government and nation.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran is based on religious democracy and has always been very serious about promoting human rights and fulfilling its [relevant] international obligations,” Kan’ani said, expressing Tehran’s readiness to “engage in dialog and constructive

cooperation based on its lofty principles in order to improve the human rights position in the world.”

Such dialog should be based on “mutual respect, equality, justice and fairness,” free from political purposes, and within the framework of all legitimate international mechanisms aimed at improving and supporting human rights, the Iranian spokesperson said.

The General Assembly’s Third Committee on Wednesday approved the draft resolution titled “Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran” by a vote of 80 in favor to 28 against, with 68 abstentions.

The draft resolution was proposed by the Canadian government over claims of a violent “crackdown” of protests in Iran, sparked by the death of Mahsa Amini, a young Iranian woman in police custody.

U.S. Sanctions...

FROM PAGE 1

The United States began a campaign of “maximum pressure” against Iran under former American president Donald Trump.

As part of the campaign, Trump took the US out of a nuclear deal between Iran and world countries, and returned all the sanctions that the accord had lifted.

On his campaign trail, his successor Joe Biden alleged an interest to return Washington to the deal. The Biden administration has, however, not only stopped short of doing so, but has also been bringing the Islamic Republic under multiple rounds of fresh economic measures, in what Tehran slams as the Biden team’s continuation of Trump’s anti-Iran policies.

On October 3, 2018, the International Court of Justice issued an order that temporarily but unanimously required the US to remove any impediments on the importation of foodstuffs as well as medicines and medical devices to Iran.

The United States has, however, been refraining from implementing the verdict too, although, Iran has brought Washington’s non-compliance with the order to the court’s attention on several occasions.

West Not Needed to...

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The member states of the United Nations General Assembly Third Committee voted to a Canadian-proposed draft resolution on the situation of human rights in Iran every year and this year’s draft resolution consists of unrest in recent week in the Islamic Republic.

The draft resolution on human rights in Iran was approved by a vote of 79 in favor to 30 against, with 71 abstentions.

According to press.un.org, Iran’s delegate called the draft an “insincere political move” that exposes a deliberate policy of incitement to “Iranophobia”.

She denounced that the cosponsors — Canada, the United States and “the child killer Israeli regime”, the main proponents of racism, occupation and abhorrent treatment of indigenous peoples — have come together to lecture others on human rights, the UN website reported.

Conveying Martyrs Message...

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Referring to the lasting effects and honor of events such as the Shah Cheragh tragedy in history, the Leader added, “Each one of the events that have taken place from the time of the Revolution and up until today has remained as a bright spot in history, like a star. The tragedy that took place in the Shahcheragh shrine a few days ago is an eternal star. It will remain in history and be a source of pride and honor. Yes, a number of people were left bereaved. Some of these events are tragic and fill the hearts of human beings with grief, but they are stars. They will remain in history.”

The Leader also referred to Qom’s role in the uprising of the Iranian people and said that the martyrs of the Islamic Revolution were raised in Qom. In speaking about Qom, the Leader said, “Qom [was the city that] opened the way and initiated the movement. Qom answered the call of the magnanimous Imam [Khomeini]. Who else could understand what Imam Khomeini was saying in 1962 and 1963? It was the people of Qom who entered the scene. Even when they felt that [the movement] had weakened a bit, the people of Qom rose up and attended Imam Khomeini’s lessons. Following the victory of the Revolution and up until today, our nation has faced continuous, successive tests, and the people of Qom have done very well in these tests.”

Tehran Strongly Condemns...

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He added that the US and E3 have “spared no effort in the past weeks to call into question Iran’s continuous interaction with the IAEA and to cast doubt on the prospect of reaching an agreement regarding the lifting of the oppressive sanctions against our country and the revival of the JCPOA.”

“We strongly believe that this resolution will not have any results for its founders, especially in terms of restoring their tarnished image as the main violators of the JCPOA and laying the groundwork for justifying more unilateral sanctions against the Iranian nation,” he said, referring to the fact that it was the US which violated the nuclear deal back in May 2018 and triggered the current crisis surrounding Iran’s peaceful nuclear program.

Given the ongoing “extensive” cooperation between Iran and the IAEA, using the Board of Governors as a tool is “unjustified and meaningless,” he added.

He also hailed the “constructive” interaction and cooperation between Iran and the IAEA to resolve the outstanding safeguards issues.

Iran, he went on, expects the IAEA to pursue an “independent, impartial and professional approach without being influenced by the political goals of some countries” on the path to resolve the remaining safeguards ambiguities, which, according to the IAEA, “do not have any non-proliferation concerns.”

Naziri-Asl further said that some of the mentioned ambiguities are related to old issues that had been closed by the agency’s board back in 2015.

“The political goals of the founders of this anti-Iranian resolution will not be realized, but its approval can affect the process of cooperation and constructive interactions between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the IAEA,” the Iranian diplomat said.

While adhering to its international commitments, the Islamic Republic of Iran is determined to defend its interests and rights and “confront the pressures and excessive demands” of the United States and Western countries, he added.

Iran has already voiced readiness to hold technical talks with IAEA experts to discuss the accusations related to so-called “undeclared” nuclear sites, which were made based on false reports provided by the Israeli regime.

Tehran has asked the IAEA to avoid politicizing the issue and focus on technical aspects in line with the organization’s mandate.

Iran has turned off a number of IAEA’s cameras which were functioning outside the Safeguards Agreement since early June after the IAEA Board of Governors passed a resolution that accused the country of not cooperating with the UN body.

Iran Confirms...

FROM PAGE 1

It said the agreement came following months of intensive negotiations between the two countries and allowed the confiscated vessels to leave on the same day.

The statement highlighted the fact that the United States had sought to confiscate an oil cargo on Lana under false accusations that it violated the unilateral American sanctions on Iran.

It described the move as a piracy and said it was in line with previous US attempts to confiscate Iranian oil in international or territorial waters.

Kiwi Golfer Hopes to Out-Fox McIlroy in Dubai

DUBAI (Dispatches) - New Zealand's Ryan Fox will lead the hunt to deny Rory McIlroy the honor of becoming only the second player in history to win both the FedEx Cup and Race to Dubai in a single year.

Fox is in the finest form of his career and is the man world number one McIlroy will have to watch as the \$10 million DP World Tour Championship gets underway. The 35-year-old Fox has had a spectacular 2022, winning twice and securing four second-place finishes, most recently last Sunday in the Nedbank Golf Challenge in South Africa.

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Rahm Blasts Golf Rankings System

DUBAI (Dispatches) - Spanish star Jon Rahm blasted the restructured point system of the Official World Golf Ranking (OWGR), calling it "laughable" adding he was in favor of awarding world ranking points to LIV Golf tournaments.

The new OWGR system, which came into effect on August 9 this year, has divided opinions among players and fans. While it is based on a more scientific base, with detailed calculations like the strength of field and shots gained taken into consideration before every tournament, it is skewed heavily towards the PGA Tour.

Celtics Down Hawks, Suns Beat Warriors

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Boston's bench came up big to help the Celtics notch an eighth straight NBA victory, 126-101 over the Hawks in Atlanta.

Jaylen Brown led the Celtics with 22 points and his fellow All-Star Jayson Tatum added 19, but Brown said it was the 44 points from the Boston reserves that ultimately made the difference.

The Celtics took their league-leading record to 12-3 while the team that beat them to the title in last season's Finals, the Golden State Warriors, fell to 6-9 with a 130-119 loss to the Suns in Phoenix.

Golden State star Stephen Curry poured in 50 points, but with little offensive aid for Curry and lackluster defense the Warriors fell to 0-8 on the road — their worst road start since they went 0-9 in 1989.

"There's no collective grit, we lack grit right now," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said. "And when you don't have grit the game is really easy for the other team."

Cameron Payne, standing in again for injured All-Star point guard Chris Paul, led the Suns with a career-high 29 points, Devin Booker added 27 and Mikal Bridges chipped in 23.

Curry did what he could to set an early tone, scoring 31 points in the first half. But Golden State trailed 72-65 at the break, and the Suns opened the third quarter on a 6-0 scoring run to push their lead to 13 points.

Phoenix, who made 21 three-pointers and shot 51.2 per cent from the field, led by 14 going into the final period on the way to their second win over the Warriors this season.

In Atlanta, the Celtics drained 21 three-pointers and held the Hawks to 41.6 per cent shooting from the floor.

Sam Hauser and Luke Kornet scored 15 points apiece off the bench for Boston and Payton Pritchard added 14, Brown saying the reserves' effort made up for the injury absences of Marcus Smart and Malcolm Brogdon.

Djokovic Very Happy With Visa Allowing Him to Play Australian Open

TURIN (Dispatches) - Novak Djokovic confirmed he has received a visa to travel to Melbourne to play in the 2023 Australian Open, after he was deported last January over his vaccine status.

"I was very happy to receive the news yesterday. It was a relief," the Serbian said after beating Andrey Rublev in the ATP Finals in Turin.

On Tuesday Australian media reported that the government had decided to grant the unvaccinated Serbian a visa, overturning a three-year ban after his ejection from the country.

This year's championship was overshadowed by nine-time Australian Open champion Djokovic being put on a plane on the eve of the contest after a high-stakes legal battle over his visa status.

Australia has lifted the requirement for visitors to show proof of Covid vaccination, and the three-year ban can be overturned at the discretion of Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's center-left government, which is different to the conservative coalition in power when he was kicked out.

Djokovic was speaking after securing a spot in the semi-finals of the season-ending Finals with a 6-4, 6-1 win over Rublev, his second straight sets victory in as many matches.

Having beaten Stefanos Tsitsipas in his first Red Group match on Monday, the Serb is guaranteed a spot in the last four regardless of his result on Friday against Daniel Medvedev.

UK, Ireland Euro 2028 Bid Announces 14 Candidate Venues

LONDON (Dispatches) - A joint bid by the five national associations of the United Kingdom and Ireland to host the 2028 European Championship published a shortlist of 14 venues for the tournament.

The British and Irish bid is the favorite to win hosting rights in September 2023 after abandoning plans to run for the 2030 World Cup.

Russia, whose national team and clubs are currently banned from UEFA competition due to the war in Ukraine, and Turkey are the other competing bids for Euro 2028.



Oklahoma City guard Shai Gilgeous-Alexander grabbed the game-winning three-pointer in the Thunder's 121-120 come-from-behind victory over the Wizards in Washington.

The Thunder trailed by 17 in the first quarter and were down by 13 at the half, but clawed their way back in a game that featured 15 lead changes.

Bradley Beal put the Wizards up 120-118 with a fadeaway jumper with 6.7 seconds remaining. But Gilgeous-Alexander had the answer with a step-back trey with 1.9 seconds on the clock.

The Wizards had one more possession, but an inbounds pass lofted across the court toward Beal was sent out of bounds by Lu Dort as time expired.

Gilgeous-Alexander matched his career-high with 42 points — 30 of them in the second half. He added six rebounds and seven assists for his third straight game of at least 35 points and five assists.

Beal, returning from a five-game absence because of Covid protocols, scored 25 points. Kristaps Porzingis led Washington with 27, but the Wizards' four-game win streak ended.

The Indiana Pacers stung the Hornets 125-113 in Charlotte, a defeat made even more painful for the hosts when guard LaMelo Ball, who missed the first 13 games of the season, reentered his left ankle with a couple of minutes remaining when he stepped on a fan's foot trying to chase down a loose ball.

The Minnesota Timberwolves romped to a 126-108 victory over the injury-depleted Magic in Orlando while the Houston Rockets sprung a surprise in Dallas with a 101-92 victory over the Mavericks.

Jalen Green and Kevin Porter scored 17 points each to lead seven Rockets players in double figures.

But Houston's most astonishing statistic was 19 blocked shots — including five from center Alperen Sengun.



BARCELONA (Dispatches) - Barcelona striker Robert Lewandowski has been given three-match ban in La Liga for showing "disrespect" towards a referee, which he will serve when Spanish domestic football resumes after the World Cup.

The Polish striker was sent off for two bookings against Osasuna on November 8 and made a gesture, touching his nose as he left the pitch, which was considered disrespectful to referee Jesus Gil Manzano.

In addition to the automatic one-match suspension, a further two matches were imposed on the striker for showing "an attitude of contempt or disrespect" towards the official, the Spanish FA said in a document.

Lewandowski, the league's top scorer on 13 goals, is set to miss the derby against Espanyol and games against Atletico Madrid and Getafe.

"It's funny, because the gesture was for Xavi, not for the referee," said Lewandowski last week at a ceremony where he received the Golden Boot for finishing as Europe's top scorer last season at Bayern Munich.

"Last week, I think, we already talked about being careful if we were booked, because something like that could happen, and, in the end, it did.

"It's my fault, I got two yellow cards, but the gesture was for (Xavi)."

Barcelona said later Wednesday that they would appeal the suspension.



Maradona "Hand of God" Ball Fetches £2m at Auction

LONDON (Dispatches) - The ball that Diego Maradona handled to score his infamous "Hand of God" goal for Argentina against England in the 1986 World Cup sold at auction on Wednesday for £2 million (\$2.4 million).

The white Adidas "Azteca" ball, which was owned by the Tunisian match referee Ali Bin Nasser, had been tipped to fetch up to £3 million (\$3.6 million) when it went under the hammer at UK-based Graham Budd Auctions.

It comes six months after the jersey Maradona wore in the historic quarter-final in Mexico City sold at auction for nearly \$9.3 million -- more than twice the value predicted by Sotheby's.

The auctioned ball -- inspired by the architecture and murals of the Aztec civilisation -- was used for the full 90 minutes of the 1986 game between Argentina and England, as it occurred years before the multi-ball system began in football.

The clash saw a heated build-up because of political tensions following the Falklands

War in 1982 and came to be defined by two contrasting goals scored by the late Maradona, who died aged 60 of heart failure in November 2020

For the first, Maradona ran into the box, rose with England goalkeeper Peter Shilton and punched the ball into the net.

He later said the goal had been scored "a little with the head of Maradona, a little with the hand of God".

The second came just four minutes later as Maradona sped past five English players and Shilton to score the "Goal of the Century", according to a 2002 FIFA poll.

Argentina won the grudge match 2-1 after Bin Nasser let Maradona's controversial first goal stand, and the team went on to win the World Cup.

Ahead of the sale, Bin Nasser said he felt it was the right time to share the item with the world and expressed hope the buyer -- who has not been disclosed -- would put it on public display.

The shirt auctioned in May will be on display in Qatar during the 2022 World Cup, which kicks off on Sunday.

No Way Back for Ronaldo at Man Utd

MANCHESTER (Dispatches) - Cristiano Ronaldo's contract at Manchester United should be terminated by the club, said former United captain Gary Neville.

In an explosive interview with TalkTV, Ronaldo has said he does not respect United manager Erik ten Hag and claimed he is being forced out of Old Trafford.

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

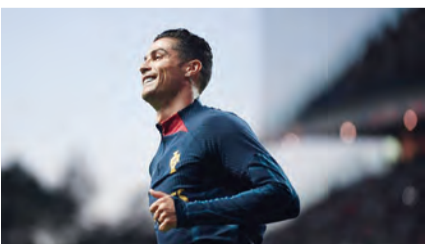
Ronaldo was disciplined after refusing to come on as a substitute in a 2-0 win over Tottenham Hotspur last month.

But his latest act has gone even further as he also criticized the club's owners, the Glazer family, claiming they "don't care" about the sporting success of the club.

"I don't think he wants a way back," Neville told Sky Sports. "He wouldn't have done this interview if he wanted a way back.

"He knew it would bring the headlines it has and be the end of his Manchester United career."

Ronaldo has just over six months left on his contract after rejoining United from Juventus in August 2021. The Portuguese won three Premier League titles and the Champions League during his first stint at Old Trafford.



Nadal Signs Off With Win

TURIN (Dispatches) - Rafa Nadal may be heading home but he made sure he avoided matching his worst ever losing sequence with a 7-5 7-5 victory over Norway's Casper Ruud at the ATP Finals.

Back-to-back straight sets defeats in the Green Group by Taylor Fritz and Felix Auger-Aliassime meant the 22-time Grand slam champion missed out on the semi-finals.

But the Spaniard was clearly eager not to end a season that began in such spectacular fashion by succumbing to a fifth successive defeat — something the 36-year-old had not experienced since before his career took off in 2004-05. With world number four Ruud already assured of a semi-final berth the match was in reality a dead rubber.

Even so the first set was full of intensity inside the Pala Alpitour where the afternoon crowd were firmly behind Nadal.

Nadal fought off a couple of break points at 4-4 in the opening set as Ruud threatened but after that the Mallorcan found the range on his forehand.

The 23-year-old Ruud went down 0-40 on serve at 5-6 and world number two Nadal needed just one chance to seal the set, punching away a volley into an empty court.

It was a similar story in the second set with nothing between the players until Nadal pounced again in the 12th game.

