

Production of Steel in Iran Has Risen 9% in the 10 Months of 2022, as Compared to the Same Period of Time Over Past Year, The World Steel Association Announced in Its Recent Report

Permanent Mission of Iran to the United Nations Announced That Significant Steps Have Been Taken So Far in the Collaborative Dialogue Between Iranian and Ukrainian Defense Experts

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No One Knows About Iran Military Technology

IRANNNEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran has military technologies that no one knows about, and the Americans will know about them when Iran uses them, said Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the IRGC, Admiral Ali Fadavi, reports Mehr.

He noted that during the war with Iraq, the Iranian armed forces imported all their military equipment from outside, while now the country has made great progress in building its own defense capabilities.

We could not even produce barbed wire inside the country, but today we have been able to sell some of our military equipment to world powers. Some people said that we don't need to produce speedboats and warships and we should buy this equipment, but we were able to produce speedboats, which the Americans admitted that they are not capable of facing Iran's speedboats," the IRGC deputy commander said.

"In the maritime field, we purchased surface-to-surface missiles from China in 1984, but then we decided to start to produce missiles ourselves, and today we have been able to produce a cruise missile with a range of 2,000 kilometers," he continued.

The United States had many warships in the Persian Gulf in the past, he said, but today the Americans don't have the same presence. "Today the Americans have escaped from the region despite having 373 warships and aircraft carriers in the Persian Gulf. Because they knew that if there had been a war, the American warships would have sunk."

According to Fadavi, "We have technologies in the military field that no one knows about, and the Americans will know about them when we use them."

European Parliament Cuts Ties With Iran

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - In an undiplomatic move aimed at extending support for the riots in Iran, lawmakers in the European Parliament have cut ties with Tehran over what they claim Iran's "unacceptable" sanctioning of several members of the house.

"In response to the unacceptable Iranian sanctioning of this house, there shall be no direct contact between European Parliament delegations and committees with official Iranian counterparts until further notice," said EU Parliament President Roberta Metsola in a statement. **See Page 7**

Iran Starts Enriching Uranium To 60% Purity at Fordow



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran started enriching uranium to the purity level of 60% at its Fordow nuclear facility following the recent resolution that the US and the European troika initiated at the UN nuclear agency's Board of Governors to mount pressures on the Islamic Republic.

According to a report published by Student News Network news agency, Tehran has informed the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) of its decision in a letter sent to the United Nations' atomic watchdog.

It described the move to enrich uranium up to 60% purity as a strong message to the recent anti-Iran resolution passed by IAEA's Board of Governors.

Iran's other action included installation of two new IR2M and IR4 cascades at Natanz and Fordow facilities, which have now reached the stage prior to the injection of uranium gas into centrifuges. This means that Iran has practically imitated uranium enrichment by means of the new cascades, and the process will finish within the next few days.

Moreover, Iran has fitted and launched new centrifuges at two empty halls in Fordow and Natanz nuclear sites, in what is deemed as a decisive response to the resolution against the country.

The halls, under Iran's commitment to the terms of the landmark 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), had been vacant, but centrifuges have been installed there once again.

The report went on to point to the replacement of IR1 centrifuges at Fordow nuclear facility with IR6 as Iran's fourth important move against the IAEA resolution, stressing that the measure will increase enrichment at the site by 10 times.

The latest measures are said to be in line with a law approved by the Iranian Parliament to counter unilateral sanctions imposed by the United States, the European Union and the IAEA on Tehran to their full extent.

In December 2020, the Iranian Parliament passed a law - dubbed the Strategic Action Plan to Counter Sanctions - that prompted the Iranian administration to restrict the IAEA's inspections and accelerate the development of the country's nuclear program beyond the limits set by the JCPOA.

Iran took five steps in scaling back its obligations, among them abandoning operational limitations on its nuclear industry, including with regard to the capacity and level of uranium enrichment.

All those measures were adopted after informing the IAEA beforehand, with the Agency's inspectors present on the ground in Iran.

The recent anti-Iran resolution at the UN nuclear agency's Board of Governors, 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.

Iran Snubs Russian, Chinese Firms for Works on Low-Production Oil Wells

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iranian Oil Ministry officials have denied reports suggesting Russian and Chinese companies have been awarded the right to control and revive low-production oil wells in the country.

Mohammad Esmail Kefayati, who leads Iran's PetroPark, an Oil Ministry company responsible for innovation and technology projects, said on Monday that domestic companies will remain in charge of works at low production wells where output hardly exceeds dozens of barrels per day.

"Based on plans, domestic technology-based companies will revive these wells and no foreign company has been considered for the job under any circumstances," Kefayati was quoted as saying by the official IRNA news agency.

The Iranian government has earmarked around \$700 million for development and revival of some 750 low-production or inactive oil wells in the country.

Estimates suggest the plan could increase Iran's annual crude oil output by 83 million barrels in three years. Iran's current oil output is believed to be nearly one billion barrels per year from some 2,700 active oil wells.

Oil Ministry figures show reviving a low-production oil well costs around \$1 million, around 90% cheaper than developing a new oil well.

Reports earlier this week showed that Russian and Chinese companies had submitted proposals to Iran for works on low-production oil wells in the country.

However, PetroPark official say they will use the services of at least 40 domestic companies in a first phase of the project to revive 50 oil wells in Iran.

ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

Iran Drones a Pretext for Arms Supplies to Ukraine

The Westerners in recent weeks have resorted to another pretext for sales and supplies of arms to Ukraine and they have found no better country than the Islamic Republic of Iran to be used as a pretext for supplies of attacking weapons to Kyiv.

The Islamic Republic of Iran's drones and missiles progresses have become a pain for the Westerners and they want to confront with these progresses in any condition and now war in Ukraine has become a good opportunity for the Westerners to increase pressure on Tehran by accusing Tehran of selling drones and missiles to Russian forces while one can realize that there is other reason behind this claim.

In the early days of Ukraine war, the Westerners claimed that they would only supply defensive arms to Ukraine to defend itself but after a while and in order to change the balance of the war in favor of Ukraine they have decided to send offensive weapons to Ukraine but this decision needed a pretext and Iran's drones supply to Russia was the very pretext for it and it seems the U.S. and some Western countries have decided to supply offensive arms to Ukraine, and at the same time to increase pressure on Tehran for its cooperation with Russia.

Tehran has repeatedly rejected this claim of the Westerners that it sells drones and missiles to Russia but the West insists otherwise and repeats its claim as a justification for supplies of weapons to Ukraine and increasing pressure on Tehran.

On Sunday, Iran once again rejected a report on an agreement between Tehran and Moscow to assemble Iranian-designed drones on Russian soil for the Ukraine war, saying the Islamic Republic has had and will have defense cooperation with Ukraine.

In a report on Saturday, The Washington Post claimed that Moscow has quietly reached Tehran to begin manufacturing hundreds of unmanned weaponized aircraft on Russian soil.

The report quoted three officials familiar with the matter as claiming that Russian and Iranian officials "finalized the deal" during a meeting in Iran in early November, and the two countries are moving rapidly to transfer designs and key components that could allow production to begin within months.

In response to the allegations, the Iranian mission the UN said important steps have been taken so far in joint interaction between the Iranian and Ukrainian defense experts, and this cooperation will continue until any misunderstanding in this regard is cleared. **See Page 7**

Iran Not to Compromise National Security In Talks With Iraq

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's Ambassador to Baghdad Mohammad Kazem Alesadeq says the Islamic Republic has told Iraq's central government and the Kurdistan region that it is serious about its national security after a number of sensitive Iranian military centers have been targeted from the Kurdistan soil.

"Some of our vital military centers have been attacked from the Iraqi Kurdistan region's soil and we have informed the Iraqi side, both the authorities of the Iraqi Kurdistan region and the central government in Iraq, of this issue. We [provided them] with maps and documents, and they understood this reality," he said.

Alesadeq made the remarks in an exclusive interview with Iran's Arabic-language television news network al-Alam TV.

The ambassador denied reports about Iran's land advance into the Iraqi Kurdistan region, saying, "Iran respects Iraq's sovereignty and has carried out several measures to [improve] stability, unity and prosperity in that country."

Alesadeq said Iran has political, geographical, historical and ideological relations with Iraq while the two neighboring states' people enjoy cordial relations, adding, "Therefore, it is not possible that Iran conducts land operations against Iraq." **See Page 7**

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40 Foreigners Affiliated With Riots Nabbed

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The spokesperson for the Iranian Judiciary said on Tuesday that 40 foreign nationals affiliated with riots were arrested.

Addressing his press conference on Tuesday, Masoud Setayeshi said that the enemies' dreams will not come true. The enemy's plot was to use the capacity of the people in the form of protesting against some bodies, which did not succeed, he added.

The terrorists have had the scenario and they provoke those people on the street and target women, children, and security defenders, he noted. Elsewhere in his remarks, Setayeshi referred to the Izeh terror attack, saying that 57 people were arrested in this regard.

Belarus PM In Tehran

TEHRAN (IRNA) - First Vice-President Mohammad Mokhber welcomed the visiting Belarusian Prime Minister Roman Golovchenko here.

The ceremony was held at Saadabad Historical Complex in northern Tehran while the two officials reviewed the guard of honor after the anthems of the two countries were played. Then, the two started official talks.

Golovchenko arrived in the Iranian capital on Tuesday heading an eco-political delegation to discuss ways to develop ties.

Upon arrival at Mehrabad Airport, western Tehran, Golovchenko was welcomed by Iran's Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade Reza Fatemi-Amin.

His Tehran visit takes place after the agreement reached by the Iranian and Belarusian presidents on the sidelines of the September summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Uzbekistan.

Golovchenko's day-long visit will focus on talks on expansion of ties in



technological, agricultural, energy, trade, and transit fields, according to a political official at Iran's Presidential Office.

Mohammad Jamshidi said that holding a joint meeting between Iranian and Belarusian economic businesses is among the plans.

President Accepts Road Minister's Resignation

TEHRAN (MNA) - The Iranian Road and Urban Development Minister Rostan Ghasemi resigned on Tuesday and President Ebrahim Raisi has accepted his resignation.

President Raisi expressed his appreciation for the efforts made by Ghasemi during his tenure in the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development and wished him a speedy recovery from the illness.

The cause for Ghasemi's resignation was his deteriorating health condition.

President Raisi further expressed hope that his skills and abilities can be used after his full recovery in the future.

Ghasemi's deputy Shahryar Afandi Zadeh has been appointed as the caretaker minister to replace his former boss by the president.

Iran's First Fishery Park Goes Operational

TEHRAN (MNA) - Agriculture Minister Javad Sadatinejad has announced the launch of the country's first fishery industries park, IRIB reported.

Making the announcement on the sidelines of the 6th International Fisheries Industry Exhibition (IFEX 2022), Sadatinejad said the country's first fishery park was put into operation in which every year 1,000 tons of shrimp will be produced.

According to the official, the volume of shrimp production in this park will increase to 2,000 tons by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2023).

Sadatinejad stressed his ministry's support for the companies active in the fishery sector, saying: "The Ministry of Agriculture and Iran Fisheries Organization (IFO) support investors active in the field of fisheries and seafood production, which in addition to improving the economy, increasing exports and foreign revenues, it also brings job creation."

The minister also announced the growth of the export of aquatic and fishery products, including caviar, in the current year.

Iran's 6th International Fisheries Industry Exhibition was opened at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds on Sunday.

Iran Registers Highest Oil, Petchem Export Record

TEHRAN (MNA) - Oil Minister Javad Owji said the country has reached the highest record of oil, gas condensate, and petrochemical exports since 2017 (when the U.S. started re-imposing sanctions on Iran's oil industry) in the eighth Iranian calendar month of Aban (October 23-November 21), Shana reported.

The minister made the statement at a gathering of oil industry employees on Tuesday.

"Iran's oil industry is now at the forefront of the economic war and the toughest sanctions have been imposed on this industry," he said, noting that the industry has thrived despite the mentioned pressures.

Iran has been ramping up its oil production and exports over the past year as the country has been implementing new strategies to overcome U.S. sanctions.

The Islamic Republic's oil revenues increased by eight times in the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-August 22) with respect to the same period of the previous year, according to official statistics.

As Tasnim news agency reported, Iran's oil revenues also increased by 11 times in the previous year.

President Hopes Tehran-Astaneh to Be Further Strengthened



TEHRAN (MNA) - President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi spoke on phone with the re-elected president of Kazakhstan, during which he stressed that bilateral relations between Tehran and Astana will be further strengthened.

"The relationship between Tehran and Astana has constantly been growing and I hope that the interactions and relations between the two countries will be further strengthened during the new term of your Excellency's presidency," President Raisi told re-elected Kazakh president Kassym-Jomart Tokayev.

Raeisi further said that "The 18th meeting of the Tehran-Astana Cooperation Commission will be held in the near future, which can have fruitful and effective results for implementing bilateral agreements and enhancing the level of relations between the two countries, especially in the economic field," president Raisi added.

The re-elected Kazakh president, for his part, said that Iran is a close neighbor and friend for Kazakhstan, and the two countries have many capacities and shared fields to expand bilateral and regional cooperation.

Tokayev added that he has ordered his respective government to cooperate maximumly to strengthen and deepen the relations between the two countries, especially in the economic field.

Enhanced Ties With Armenia Improve Stability, Security in South Caucasus

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Ali Bagheri Kani says the expansion of relations with Armenia in various fields will serve the two nations' interests and improve stability and security in the South Caucasus region.

In a meeting with visiting Armenian Deputy Foreign Minister Mnatsakan Safaryan in Tehran, Bagheri Kani said the Islamic Republic is resolute on further promotion of bilateral cooperation.



The Armenian diplomat, for his part, hailed Iran's support for his country's territorial integrity and said Yerevan is determined to bolster cooperation with Tehran, particularly in the trade and economic fields.

He expressed hope that Iran and Armenia would continue to boost growing ties.

Bagheri Kani and Safaryan also discussed the latest developments in the region and stressed the importance of strengthening cooperation among regional countries.

Iranians Standing Firm in Arena

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Minister of Interior of Iran Ahmad Vahidi has said that the Iranian people are strong and resilient on the scene of defending the Islamic Republic and the administration is at the Iranian people's service.

Vahidi made the remarks in a Tuesday ceremony of appreciating both former and new governors-general of Tehran Province, saying that one of the reasons behind the recent unrest is that the enemies do not want to allow the people of Iran to be able to be informed of the big jobs done in different sectors of the Islamic country.

Referring to separation between people and the Islamic System as another goal of the foes in triggering the riots, he noted that the million-man participation of the Iranians in the rallies of the National Day of Fighting Global Arrogance in Iran, as well as commemoration of security martyrs in different cities, indicate that realities on the ground are different from the propaganda campaign.

He also pointed to the fact that some Iranians have been offended by the sacrilege of the Holy Quran and the national flag of the country, adding that the Iranian people are heartbroken by watching the scenes of attacks on the Iranian youths.

The head of Iran's security council further underlined that the enemy is trying to implement the last phase of its plots, but the people are standing firm and resilient in the scene, and the government is at the people's service.

Vahidi appreciated efforts made by the outgoing governor-general of Tehran, thanking God for the fact that representatives of the Islamic Revolution have proven their capabilities in the administration of President Ebrahim Raisi.

In the Tuesday ceremony, Mohsen Mansouri was replaced with Alireza Fakhari as Tehran governor-general.

Modern Military Equipment to Join Army Navy

TEHRAN (MNA) - The commander of the Iranian Army Navy said on Tuesday that modern military equipment including helicopters and long-range drones will join Army Navy soon.

In a press conference on Tuesday, Rear Admiral Shahram Irani said that today the army of the Islamic Republic of Iran due to its scientific and industrial capabilities in the field of manufacturing all kinds of vessels and flight equipment as well as all kinds of strategic weaponry has a pivotal role in securing the region and world.

Pointing to the latest achievements of the Army Navy, Irani reiterated that for the first time, naval attack helicopters will be joined Iran's Navy Army, which will greatly help naval operations, especially escorting vessels.

In the field of drones, Iran's army navy will have up-to-date drones with a range of more than 2,000 kilometers, which means that Iran's Strategic Navy would cover at least a radius of more than 2,000 kilometers, and also it will enjoy strong maritime diplomacy in the fields of missile systems.

Pasargad Oil Flag-Bearer of High-Quality Bitumen Production

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The CEO of Pasargad Oil Company says the company is the flag-bearer in high-quality bitumen production in the country as the company has produced over 200,000 tons of bitumen so far this year and it is predicted the production to grow 50% by the end of the year comparing to the preceding year.

Speaking in a press conference on the sidelines of the 13th Exhibition on Bitumen, Asphalt and the Related Industries in Tehran, Masoud Esfandiar highlighted major performance of the company and its achievements.

Esfandiar added that Pasargad Oil Company, with six affiliate factories which requires to purchase its raw material, should compete with small and medium companies and in such a condition, prices without any controlling cap sometimes increase two times of the base price.

He went on to say that the amount of vacuum bottom production of the country is 12m tons, noting that about 6m tons belong to bitumen and other

6m tons belong to kerosene while the bitumen capacity production of the country has increased to 52m tons per year.

Esfandiar then pointed to the quality of products of affiliate factories of Pasargad Company and said that these factories have acted successfully in environment protection as the company has been named model unit in the green industry and it moves ahead in terms of observing environmental issues above the standards.

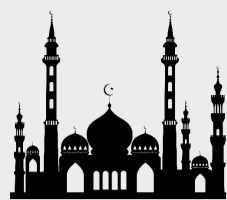
He then criticized import of low-quality raw material from some countries like Iraq, and stipulated that some producers use low quality raw material in bitumen production to reduce costs while it harms reputation of Iran's exporting bitumen and expressed hope the related bodies would take necessary action in this regard.

He reiterated that the priority of company is to provide its required materials and equipment from the domestic market and then it thinks of export, adding that so far the company has not received any help regarding exports.

Esfandiar went on to say that Pasargad Company is the only company in the bitumen industry of the country which can load over 40,000-ton capacity vessels, adding that the company is planning to eliminate middlemen in the field of exports and to enter new export markets directly like in the African states as some talks have started with some European countries for exporting polymeric bitumen.

He also said that the company continues research and development as it has published 10 scientific and research articles in the famous international magazines.





PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	11:50
■ Evening (Maghreb)	17:13
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:21
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:49

38. "Behold! We sent to thy mother, by inspiration, the message:
39. "Throw (the child) into the chest, and throw (the chest) into the river:
the river will cast him up on the bank, and he will be taken up by one who is an enemy
to Me and an enemy to him': But I cast (the garment of) love over thee from Me:
and (this) in order that thou mayest be reared under Mine eye. Surah 20. Ta-ha (38 - 39)

Iran Ready to Increase Electricity Export to Iraq

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Head of Iran's Power Generation, Distribution, and Transmission Company (TAVANIR) says increasing electricity export to Iraq hinges on Iraq's needs but currently Iran has required infrastructures for increasing exports.

Speaking to ILNA Arash Kordi touched upon the program for increasing electricity export to Iraq and noted that currently electricity export to Iraq continues based on the five-year contract between the two states.

On increasing exports to Iraq, he said that Iran is ready to increase the amount of electricity export to Iraq if the country is interested and there is no problem for Iranian side.

Kordi reiterated that Iran has required infrastructures for increasing exports to Iraq, adding that Iran still seeks ways to get its money from Iraq for its electricity exports. He reiterated that due to sanctions, Iraq has problem in paying its debt to Iran and settling the account but Iran worked hard to stop rise of the amount of the debts through cooperation with Central Bank and government bodies.

He reiterated that Iran seeks export of electricity as this policy is on the agenda, adding that the total amount of its electricity export based on its agreements is between 1000 to 1500 megawatts and it can increase it to 2000 to 2100 megawatts.



Meanwhile on the sidelines of the 22nd Electricity Industry Exhibition, the CEO of Thermal Power Plants Holding Company Mr. Abdolrasul Pishahang said that the company has increased 4400 megawatts more to the national electricity production capacity and it has also improved the new units by 1035 megawatts, noting that therefore 5500 megawatts of electricity has been added to the production capacity, and with production of renewable energy, this capacity reached 6,000 megawatts.

He noted that the country has set 4 records in the past year in the electricity industry, adding that the first record was the increasing the readiness of power plants by 98% through repairing and 94,000 megawatts has been added to the capacity.

Pishahang went on to say that the company could install and launch a unit in just 8 months while in the past the unit was installed and launched normally in 36 to 40 months.

He said that some 132 power plants and power plants units are in the country and ownership of 68% of them is in the hands of the private sector while the government owns the remaining 32%.

Pishahang then pointed to developing new power plants and improving the existing power plants, adding that the company has planned to add 3025 megawatts of electricity to the grid. He reiterated that the second fuel of 14 power plants out of 132 is fuel oil and the remaining is gas oil, it means only 10% can use fuel oil and other ones are unable to use this fuel.

Tehran Develops Customs Diplomacy With Neighboring Countries

TEHRAN (IP) - In line with the development policies of economic diplomacy with other countries, the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) has put bilateral and trilateral meetings and negotiations with the countries, especially the neighbors, on the agenda.

According to Shada, Hossein Kakhki, the Director General of the International Customs Cooperation Office of Iran, stated: "This year (starting from March 20, 2022), 10 documents have been signed with the customs offices of other countries for cooperation.

The Republic of Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Russia, Turkmenistan, China, and Thailand, the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on trilateral transit cooperation between Iran, the Republic of Azerbaijan, and Russia, and the agreement between economic operators with Bolivia are among the documents signed by IRICA.

The Director General of the International Customs Cooperation Office of Iran says: "The Customs document between Iranian and Russian economic operators, which was signed during the visit of the head of Iran's Customs to Russia, made it possible to set up the facilitated customs corridor.

Speaking about the signing of the tripartite transit MoU between Iran, Russia, and the Republic of Azerbaijan, he noted: "The MoU will facilitate the transit from the Islamic Republic of Iran to Russia, which will lead to the development of Iran's foreign trade with Russia."

"Signing Customs documents with other countries, in addition to developing diplomacy and establishing close relations with the Customs of the countries will promote joint cooperation in various fields and the exchange of Customs information," Kakhki added.

Number of Knowledge-Based Firms Active In Oil Industry Triples



TEHRAN (MNA) - The number of knowledge-based companies active in Iran's oil industry has increased from 150 in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20) to 550 in the current year, an official with the country's Oil Ministry said.

Vahid Zeydifard, deputy oil minister for engineering, research, and technology, made the remarks on the sidelines of the first conference and exhibition of technology management of knowledge-based products in Iran's oil industry (Petrotech 2022), Shana reported.

Organized by the ministry on the occasion of the Research Week, Petrotech is aimed to provide the country's knowledge-based companies with a platform to get familiar with each other and with the needs of the industry, the official said.

Earlier this month, the head of the Iranian Petroleum Industries Equipment Manufacturers Association (known as SIPIEM) said over 17 percent of the country's knowledge-based companies are active in the oil, gas, and petrochemical sectors.

Speaking at another conference on the promotion of knowledge-based companies dubbed "Development of relations with knowledge-based and technological companies", Ehsan Saqafi said the financial turnover of knowledge-based companies has increased 10 times over the past five years, from 350 trillion rials (about \$988.7 million) to 3.5 quadrillion rials (about \$9.88 billion) at the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year.

The current Iranian calendar year 1401 is named "Knowledge-Based Production and Job Creation" by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei.

In a meeting with some officials of the country in April, the Leader referred to the motto of this year and called the oil-free economy a long-term goal, saying that at least two governments in eight-year responsibilities must work to solve this problem (reliance on oil income).

In line with materializing the motto of the year, Oil Ministry and all of its subsidiaries have announced strong determination and prepared plans to this end.

Tehran, Jakarta to Develop Economic Ties

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran and Indonesia will develop economic relations in the field of Halal trade.

During the meeting between the Iranian delegation which participated in the Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC) and officials of the National Standardization Agency of Indonesia (BSN), the two sides stressed developing scientific and specialized cooperation as well as implementing the draft of the MoU aiming to promote economic activities. Institute of Standards and Industrial Research of Iran will cooperate with Indonesia in training and developing standardization.

According to its official website, "The Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC), as an institute developing necessary mechanisms for the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) countries,



aims at setting new standards in the Member States and eliminating technical barriers to trade consequently increasing the trade among them."

"The Institute also aims to establish conformity assessment schemes for the purpose of expediting exchange of materials, manufactured goods and products among Member States beginning with mutual recognition of certificates."

"The SMIIC also seeks for achieving uniformity in metrology, laboratory testing and standardization activities among Member States and ensuring education and training and providing technical assistance to the OIC Members in the domain of standardization and metrology."

"Hence, the Institute may cooperate with other regional and international organizations interested partially or wholly in standardization, metrology or related fields."

Iran Mulling Increased Re-Export Activity in Qatar

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran is planning to increase its presence in the re-export market in Qatar, says an official in the country's trade ministry, amid efforts to bypass the American sanctions that restrict the country's routine access to global export markets.

Deputy trade minister and head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization Alireza Peymanpak said on Monday that Iran has developed a roadmap to increase its annual trade with Qatar to \$3 billion.

"A major part of this roadmap is related to re-export so that we can tap this potential in Qatar for exporting Iranian goods to other countries," said Peymanpak.

The official said Qatar had significantly decreased its tariffs on imports of goods from Iran that are meant for re-export. He said the arrangement could also help Iran increase its imports from other countries via Qatar.

The announcement comes amid Iran's efforts to find ways around US sanctions that target its normal trade ties with the rest of the world.

Peymanpak said Iran had also agreed to facilitate the presence of Qatari investors in manufacturing projects in Iran to boost supply of goods and products to the Arab country's re-export market.

Iran and Qatar have sought closer economic ties in recent years amid political differences between Doha and several Arab states of the region.

Role of Chadormalu Co. in Iran Economy Explained



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Managers of Chadormalu Mining and Industrial Company, during the visit of some artists and authors of the field of art, explained activities and non-stop efforts of the company in creating value in the national economy with using its capabilities and capacities of the talented Iranian forces with reliance

on the knowledge of its managers and staff.

The visitors saw the outcomes of these efforts nothing less than jihadis of the Sacred Defense era and termed it source of pride for Islamic Iran.

It is worth noting that Chadormalu Mining and Industrial Company with annual production of 18m tons of steel chain products has considerable share in providing this strategic product of the country, job creation and earning forex.

Sponge Iron Production Up 19% in 7 Months

TEHRAN (MNA) - Production of sponge iron in Iran has risen 19 percent in the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-October 22), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, the Iranian Steel Producers Association (ISPA) announced.

According to the ISPA's released data, Iran has produced 20.737 million tons of sponge iron in the seven-month period.

Direct reduced iron (DRI), also called sponge iron, is produced from the direct reduction of iron ore (in the form of lumps, pellets, or fines) into iron by a reducing gas or elemental carbon produced from natural gas or coal. Many ores are suitable for direct reduction.

While Iran is fighting the U.S. severe sanctions on its economy, and the country's different industrial and economic sectors have been affected by the limitations and difficulties caused by the sanctions condition, the country's mining sector is moving forward noticeably, overcoming such barriers.

Among the mining sector's different products, sponge iron is an outstanding example, as the production of this item is rising more and more in the country.

Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO), Iran's largest metals and mining holding, has stated that one of the most important reasons for the increase in sponge iron production in Iran is the establishment of new sponge iron plants, adding that in recent years, with its new strategy and with the participation of the private sector, the organization has been able to launch several projects to produce sponge iron.

Meanwhile, in last July, IMIDRO reported that Iran's Mines and Metals Company (MME) has established China's first gas-based sponge iron production unit using the Persian Direct Reduction (PERED) technology.

"As the world's first manufacturer of gas-based sponge iron, Iran is now transferring the technology to the world's biggest steel producer", IMIDRO announced at the time.

The deal for the construction of the first gas-based sponge iron plant was concluded between China's CSTM Company and MME Company from Iran as the license owner of PERED technology.

With a capacity of 300,000 tons, the plant has been launched in China's Taiyuan city.

PERED is a new technology for producing sponge iron using natural gas as fuel, which according to MME is a masterwork of the Iranian steel industry and is more efficient and effective in all respects such as the degree of metallization of the product, fuel consumption, operating costs and ease of operation compared to similar technologies.

This technology is already being used in several production units across Iran including Shadegan Steel, Miyaneh Steel, Neyriz Steel, and Baft Steel companies.

E. Africa Troops to Enforce Peace in East DR Congo



KINSHASA (Dispatches) - Kenyan President William Ruto said that East African troops would "enforce peace" in embattled eastern DR Congo, where the M23 armed group have launched an offensive.

Kenyan troops, deployed as part of an East African Community (EAC) force, arrived in the volatile region on November 12. The regional force will "enforce peace on those who are hellbent on creating instability," Ruto said in a news conference in the Democratic Republic of Congo's capital, Kinshasa.

The M23, a largely Congolese Tutsi militia, has seized swathes of territory across North Kivu province, edging towards the region's main city of Goma.

Netherlands to Cull Another 29,000 Chickens



AMSTERDAM (Dispatches) - The Netherlands is to cull another 29,000 chickens on a farm in the north of the country after the detection of a highly infectious strain of bird flu, the government said.

The farm is in the town of Koudum, 100 km west of Groningen. A transport ban has been imposed on seven other nearby farms, a government statement said.

It is the third case of the form of avian flu to have been reported in the country in recent days, and the sixth case this month, following dozens of cases earlier in the year. Some 6 million birds have been culled in the Netherlands since the new variant of the disease was first detected on Oct. 26 last year, the Dutch food safety authority said last month.

Top Russian Official Warns of Possible Nuclear Accident at Zaporizhzhia



MOSCOW (Dispatches) - The head of Russia's state-run atomic energy agency, Rosatom, warned there was a risk of a nuclear accident at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, Europe's largest, following renewed shelling over the weekend. Moscow and Kyiv have traded accusations of shelling the facility for months since Russian forces took control of it in March, shortly after invading Ukraine. Renewed shelling on Sunday triggered fresh fears of a possible disaster at the site.

"The plant is at risk of a nuclear accident. We were in negotiations with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) all night," Interfax quoted Rosatom CEO Alexei Likhachev as saying.

Rosatom has controlled the facility through a subsidiary since President Vladimir Putin in October ordered Russia to formally seize the plant and transfer Ukrainian staff to a Russian entity. Kyiv says the transfer of assets amounts to theft.

The IAEA has called for the creation of a security zone around the plant, something Likhachev said would only be possible if it was approved by the United States.

"I think the large distance between Washington and Zaporizhzhia should not be an argument for the United States to delay the decision on a security zone," Interfax quoted him as saying.

The Rosatom head also said it appeared Kyiv was willing to "accept" a "small nuclear accident" at the nuclear power station

"This will be a precedent that will forever change the course of history. Therefore everything must be done so that no one has in their minds to violate the security of the nuclear power plant," TASS quoted him as saying.

Meanwhile Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy urged NATO members to guarantee the protection of Ukraine's nuclear plants from Russian sabotage, a day after the Russian-controlled Zaporizhzhia plant was rocked by heavy shelling.

"All our nations are interested in not having any dangerous incidents at our nuclear facilities," Zelenskyy said in a video address to NATO's Parliamentary Assembly in Madrid.

"We all need guaranteed protection from Russian sabotage at nuclear facilities," he added.

The Russian-controlled Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant in southern Ukraine was shelled on Saturday and Sunday, raising concern about the potential for a serious accident just 500 km (300 miles) from Chernobyl, site of the world's worst nuclear disaster in 1986.

Russia and Ukraine each blame the other for attacks on the plant, which is located in Russian-held territory near the front line. Reuters was unable to independently verify which side was responsible for the weekend shelling.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the United Nations' nuclear watchdog, said such attacks risked a major disaster.

Russia said earlier on Monday that Zaporizhzhia's shelling could unleash a grave nuclear accident, repeating its accusations that Ukrainian forces were to blame.

EU Warns of Escalating Serbia, Kosovo Car Plates Dispute



BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - The European Union warned of "escalation and violence" after emergency talks between Kosovo and Serbia failed to resolve their long-running dispute over car licence plates used by the ethnic Serb minority in Kosovo.

"After many hours of discussion ... the two parties did not agree to a solution today," EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said in a statement to the media.

"I think that there is an important responsibility on the sides of both leaders for the failure of the talks today and for any escalation and violence that might occur on the ground in the following days."

Kosovo has attempted this year to require its Serb minority to change their old car plates that date before 1999 when Kosovo was still part of Serbia. This move has been met with strong and sometimes violent resistance by Serbs living in the northern part of the country, but Kosovo has said it will start issuing fines from Tuesday.

Borrell said an EU proposal could have avoided increased tensions, but the proposal, which was accepted by Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic, was not accepted by Kosovo Prime Minister Albin Kurti.

Borrell said he would inform the EU member states of the two countries' "lack of respect for their international legal obligations" and warned that, given their commitment to joining the bloc, they should act accordingly. "The Serbian side was completely constructive and we were accepting the texts that were changed 10 times, but the Albanian side did not want to accept anything, not for a second, they would always add something that was clearly not possible," Vucic told reporters after the meeting.

Kurti said he was ready to hold further meetings to normalise relations between Belgrade and Pristina, not just to deal with one issue. "We cannot be irresponsible and not treat the actual issues ... We cannot turn ourselves into state leaders that are dealing only with car plates and are not talking how to normalize their relations," he told reporters in Brussels.

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Indonesia Quake Kills Over 160

CIANJUR (dispatches) - A powerful earthquake killed more than 160 people in Indonesia's West Java province, with rescuers searching for survivors trapped under the rubble amid a series of aftershocks.

The epicentre of the 5.6 magnitude quake was near the town of Cianjur in mountainous West Java, about 75 km (45 miles) southeast of the capital, Jakarta. The region is home to over 2.5 million people.

West Java governor Ridwan Kamil said on Instagram that 162 people had been killed and 326 were injured.

Indonesia's disaster mitigation agency (BNPB) still placed the death toll at 62 and rescuers were searching for 25 believed to be trapped under rubble and its spokesperson said the search would continue through the night.

Ridwan told reporters that given many buildings have collapsed, the death toll could rise.

"There are residents trapped in isolated places ... so we are under the assumption that the number of injured and deaths will rise with time."

Indonesia straddles the so-called "Pacific Ring of Fire", a highly seismically active zone, where different plates on the Earth's crust meet and create a large number of earthquakes and volcanoes.

The BNPB said more than 2,200 houses had been damaged and more than 5,300 people had been displaced. Ridwan put that number at 13,000 and said they would be spread out at various

evacuation centers across Cianjur.

A 5.6 magnitude earthquake hit Indonesia's Java island on Monday

Electricity was down, disrupting communications, authorities said, while landslides were blocking evacuations in some areas.

Hundreds of victims were being treated in a hospital parking lot, some under an emergency tent. Elsewhere in Cianjur, residents huddled together on mats in open fields or in tents while buildings around them had been reduced to rubble.

Ambulance were still arriving at the hospital late into the night, bringing more people to the hospital.

Officials were still working to determine the full extent of the damage caused by the quake, which struck at a relatively shallow depth of 10 km, according to the weather and geophysics agency (BMKG).

Vani, who was being treated at Cianjur main hospital, told MetroTV that the walls of her house collapsed during an aftershock.

"The walls and wardrobe just fell ... Everything was flattened, I don't even know the whereabouts of my mother and father," she said.

Ridwan said 88 aftershocks were recorded while weather agency BMKG warned of more landslides in the event of heavy rain.

Cucu, 48, was searching for one of her seven children.



Colorado Springs Shooting Suspect In Custody



COLORADO SPRINGS (Dispatches) - A Colorado man was under arrest on Monday after police said he fatally shot five people and injured 25 others inside an LGBTQ nightclub over the weekend before two "heroes" rushed him and stopped the attack.

Colorado Springs police identified the suspect as Anderson Lee Aldrich, 22, who was taken into custody early Sunday after the attack at Club Q, a night spot patronized by gay, lesbian and transgender people in Colorado's second-largest city. Police said they had yet to determine a motive for the shooting.

A state judge sealed court records related to the arrest until prosecutors finish the investigation, according to a court filing in El Paso County, where Colorado Springs is located.

Local media reported that Aldrich was charged with counts of first-degree murder and bias crimes but a court official said that formal charges had yet to be filed.

Aldrich was hospitalized and has not made any statements to investigators, Colorado Springs Deputy Police Chief Adrian Vasquez told CNN on Monday. Police will hold a news briefing by noon local time (1900 GMT).

Multiple firearms were found at the scene of the brief attack, according to police, who said Aldrich used a "long rifle" to shoot his victims.

The shooting - which Colorado Springs Mayor John Suthers said "had all the appearances of being a hate crime" - recalled the 2016 Pulse club massacre when a gunman killed 49 people at the gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida, before he was fatally shot by police.

Aldrich was known to law enforcement before the nightclub shooting. He was arrested in June 2021 after his mother reported to authorities that he had threatened to detonate a bomb and harm her with multiple weapons, according to a press release from the sheriff's office in El Paso County.

Sheriff's deputies evacuated about 10 nearby homes until Aldrich eventually surrendered. They found no explosives but Aldrich was booked into the county jail on two counts of "felony menacing" and three counts of "first-degree kidnapping," the press release said. It was unclear when and how he was released.

Leslie Bowman, 41, an account manager in Colorado Springs who rented out the room where Aldrich's mother was living at the time of the 2021 incident, said those charges against Aldrich had not been pursued.

Artemis Flight: NASA Expects Humans To Live on Moon This Decade

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Humans could stay on the Moon for lengthy periods during this decade, a NASA official says.

Howard Hu, who leads the Orion lunar spacecraft programme for the agency, said habitats would be needed to support scientific missions.

He told Sunday with Laura Kuenssberg that Wednesday's launch of the Artemis rocket, which carries Orion, was a "historic day for human space flight".

Orion is about 134,000km from the Moon today.

The 100m-tall Artemis rocket blasted off from the Kennedy Space Centre as part of NASA's mission to take astronauts back to Earth's satellite.

Sitting atop the rocket is the Orion spacecraft which, for this first mission, is uncrewed but is equipped with a 'manikin' which will register the impacts of the flight on the human body.

Wednesday's flight followed two previous launch attempts in August and September that were aborted during the countdown because of technical woes.

Hu told the BBC that watching Artemis lift off was "an unbelievable feeling" and "a dream".

"It's the first step we're taking to long-term deep space exploration, for not just the United States but for the world," he said.

"And I think this is an historic day for NASA, but it's also an historic day for all the people who love human space flight and deep space exploration.

"I mean, we are going back to the Moon, we're working towards a sustainable program and this is the vehicle that will carry the people that will land us back on the Moon again."

Hu explained that if the current Artemis flight was successful then the next would be with a crew, followed by a third where astronauts would land on the Moon again for the first time since Apollo 17 50 years ago in December 1972.

The current mission was proceeding well, he said, with all systems working and the mission team preparing for the next firing of Orion's engines (what is known as a burn) at lunchtime on Monday to put the spacecraft into a distant orbit of the Moon.

Hu admitted that watching the mission from Earth was not unlike being an anxious parent, but he said seeing the images and the videos coming back from Orion "really gives that excitement and feeling of, 'wow, we are headed back to the Moon'".

One of the most critical phases of the Artemis I mission is getting the Orion module safely back to Earth. It will re-enter the planet's atmosphere at 38,000km/h, or 32 times the speed of sound and the shield on its underside will be subjected to temperatures approaching 3000degC.

Once the safety of Artemis's components and systems has been tested and proven, Hu said the plan was to have humans living on the Moon "in this decade".

A large part of the reason for going back to the Moon is to discover whether there is water at the satellite's south pole, he added, because that could be converted to provide a fuel for craft going deeper into space - to Mars, for example.

"We're going to be sending people down to the surface and they're going to be living on that surface and doing science," Hu said.

"It's really going to be very important for us to learn a little bit beyond our Earth's orbit and then do a big step when we go to Mars.



No Longer Evergreen: Germany Eyes Diversity To Save Forests

BRANDENBURG (Dispatches) - Once a sea of green, thousands of spruces with brown crowns and charred trunks now stand in a forest in eastern Germany, testament to one of the most ferocious forest fires to have ravaged the region in years.

Germany recorded its worst bout of forest fires in 2022, and experts believe such calamities will only intensify in the coming years because of climate change.

Foresters are now racing to make the woods more resilient, including by giving Germany's forests — known for its acres of evergreens — a complete makeover.

If they are successful, Germany's forests will in the future no longer be populated primarily by rows of spruces, but by a mish-mash of tree species like oaks, aspens and lindens.

Walking through the tree skeletons in the dry woods near the town of Beelitz, forester Martin Schmitt peeled off the black bark of a tree, saying: "You can clearly see the charred tree trunks that have burnt down on the outside. If we look up now, we can already see a lot of brown crowns.

"Many, many trees are now dead, as we can see... And these trees will also not recover."

In June and July, the fires that consumed 200 hectares of the forests in Brandenburg swept close to Beelitz town itself.

Across the state of Brandenburg where Beelitz is located, about 1,411 hectares were affected this year alone, about three and a half times as much as the annual average of the past 10 years.

Besides recurring drought, the monoculture composition of the forests has also made them more vulnerable. For foresters, an urgent task at hand is to introduce diversity in the tree population.

"Forest transformation is the core work of my generation of foresters," said Schmitt.

The patch of woods with charred trees will now be left alone for a while, to determine which trees might recover. In time, the plan is for deciduous trees to take over the space occupied by spruces that fail to regenerate.

A polyculture forest is generally more resistant to the consequences of climate change such as drought or pest infestation, the forester said.

Deciduous trees in particular release water into the air in a process called transpiration at a higher rate than conifers, and as a result, "the forest is ultimately much, much cooler and therefore the fire risk is much lower than in a pure pine forest," said Schmitt.

Post-war Germany had turned to the rapidly growing spruces and pines to repopulate woodland stripped for energy and other necessities during the conflict. The conifers also proved valuable commercially as the manufacturing giant revived its economy.

But as the weather warms, the evergreens with their shallow root system are left gasping for water, and as a consequence, are unable to produce vital resin that helps protect them against insects.

In recent years, mass deaths of forests in iconic places such as the Harz mountain region where Goethe once hiked and composed odes to nature, have traumatised Germans, who see forests as a part of the national soul.

A desperate search for a cure is on, and the agriculture ministry has ploughed over a billion euros (dollars) into reviving the country's forests.

With its huge swathes of woodland, Brandenburg state began its shift away from monoculture evergreens in the 1990s but it is a task that takes decades.

Ironically, the recent acceleration in frequencies of forest fires may speed up the process.

A short drive away from the tree skeletons, Schmitt pointed to a patch of spruce forest that burnt down in 2018.



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Saudi Minister Denies Output Increase Discussion

DUBAI (Dispatches) - Saudi Arabian energy minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman said the kingdom is not discussing a potential oil output increase with other OPEC oil producers, state news agency SPA reported, denying a Wall Street Journal report earlier on Monday.

"It is well-known that OPEC+ does not discuss any decisions ahead of the meeting," the prince was quoted as saying, referring to the group's next meeting in December.

"The current cut of 2 million barrels per day by OPEC+ continues until the end of 2023 and if there is need to take further measures by reducing production to balance supply and demand we always remain ready to intervene."



Recession-Hit UK Needs More Migrant Labor

BIRMINGHAM (Dispatches) - Britain needs more migrant labor to boost productivity as it faces a toxic mix of soaring inflation and shrinking growth, the country's main business lobby group warned.

The verdict from the Confederation of British Industry came at its annual gathering in Birmingham, Britain's second biggest city. The CBI conference comes after the government of Prime Minister Rishi Sunak slashed spending and hiked taxes in a budget, despite admitting that the inflation-wracked economy had fallen into recession.

"We come together, once more in extraordinary times," CBI director-general Tony Danks told delegates in Birmingham, central England. "Britain is in the middle of stagflation — rocketing inflation and negative growth — for the first time that probably most of us can remember."

"We know how to fight inflation. We know how to fight recession. But we don't really know how to fight them together."

Sunak, who also addressed the CBI today, took office one month ago after predecessor Liz Truss delivered an unfunded tax-slashing mini-budget that tanked the pound and sent UK borrowing costs soaring.

UK inflation sits at a 41-year peak of 11.1 per cent on rocketing food and energy costs in the wake of the Ukraine war. Consumer prices have also raced higher as demand rebounds following the lifting of pandemic lockdowns.

That has worsened a cost-of-living crisis for businesses and individuals, hit also by soaring interest rates as the Bank of England seeks to cool runaway inflation. The UK has forecast the economy to shrink 1.4 per cent next year, hit also by fallout from Brexit which has resulted in foreign workers returning home.

"When you look at the (growth) data, the only thing holding it up, actually, is higher hours worked due to higher immigration," Danks added.

"People are arguing against immigration — but it's the only thing that has increased our growth potential since March."

"Let's be honest — we don't have the people we need, nor do we have the productivity."

Sunak, addressing the conference, ducked the CBI's call for more legal migrant labor — and stressed that he was focussed on curbing illegal migration.

"The country's number one priority right now, when it comes to migration, is tackling illegal migration," he said.

"When people see that happening, it undermines trust in the system, it doesn't seem fair that people are able to break the rules."

"That's what I'm absolutely determined to fix."

He also told CBI delegates that last week's budget sought "to grip inflation and balance the books".

"The best way to help people is by stopping mortgages, rents and food prices from spiralling out of control," Sunak said.

"Re-establishing stability is the critical first step. But there is so much more we need to do," he added, stressing he wants to see more business innovation to boost economic activity.

Hungary Caps Interest Rates on Large Commercial Bank Deposits

BUDAPEST (Dispatches) - Commercial banks in Hungary cannot pay an interest rate higher than the three-month discount bill yield on deposits by certain large institutional and private investors, the Minister for Economic Development said.

Marton Nagy, a former central bank deputy governor, told state news agency MTI that the step was aimed at investors who took advantage of high central bank rates by investing their money in central bank deposits through commercial banks.

The National Bank of Hungary announced an emergency rate hike last month and introduced a quick deposit facility with an 18% interest rate.

Under the measure outlined on Monday, until March 31, 2023, commercial banks cannot pay an interest rate that is higher than the yield on the three-month discount bill on deposits by investment companies, savings banks, building societies, investment funds and private citizens' deposits of more than 20 million forints (\$49,980.01).

These investors made use of high central bank rate and "they realized a risk-free interest rate of up to 18% that was, in the end, paid by the state," Nagy said.

The yield on the three-month discount bill was about 12% on Monday.

The central bank did not immediately respond to questions from Reuters on the new regulation.

"This means that (the government) is neutralizing part of the monetary policy transmission mechanism. There will be a segment of the economy where high interest rates will not apply as some market participants will not be able to access them," Peter Virovacz, senior economist at ING said.

Long-term government bond yields dropped after Nagy's announcement and were about 25 basis points lower on the day by late afternoon, a fixed-income trader in Budapest said. The yield on the 10-year bond was about 7.90%.

"Investment funds started to buy the short end soon after the announcement, and that had an effect on the long end as well," a fixed-income trader in Budapest said.

"Yields first dropped by about 50 basis points, then climbed back 25 points. We do not know the technical details of the new rules yet, so there is a lot of confusion in the market."



Europe Rushes to Fill up on Russian Diesel Before Ban Begins

LONDON (Dispatches) - European traders are rushing to fill tanks in the region with Russian diesel before an EU ban begins in February, as alternative sources remain limited.

The European Union will ban Russian oil product imports, on which it relies heavily for its diesel, by Feb. 5. That will follow a ban on Russian crude taking effect in December.

Russian diesel loadings destined for the Amsterdam-Rotterdam-Antwerp (ARA) storage region rose to 215,000 bpd from Nov. 1 to Nov. 12, up by 126% from October, Pamela Munger, senior market analyst at energy analytics firm Vortexa, said.

With few immediate cost-effective alternatives, diesel from Russia has made up 44% of Europe's total imports of the road fuel so far in November, compared with 39% in October, Refinitiv data shows.

Although Europe's reliance on the Russian fuel has fallen from more than 50% before Moscow's February invasion of Ukraine, Russia is still the continent's largest diesel supplier.

"The EU will have to secure around 500-600 kb/d of diesel to replace the Russian volumes, replacements will come from the US as well as east of Suez, primarily the Middle East and India," Eugene Lindell, refining and products market analyst at FGE, said.

The Russian gasoil heading into ARA tanks is likely to be used or sold quickly as a result of backwardation in Ice gasoil futures, where the current value is higher than it will be in later months, Lars van Wageningen, at Dutch consultancy Insights Global, said.

Part of the influx comes as ICE Futures Europe bans low-sulphur gasoil of Russian origin ahead of EU sanctions.

From Nov. 30, traders must prove to ICE that no Russian product has entered any tanks in the wider ARA region - including Flushing and Ghent - that will be used for January delivery through the ICE futures contract.

Russian gasoil can still arrive in ARA storage tanks in December, but it must be moved to other tanks from which no delivery can be made, according to ICE.

Some market players expect little impact from the ICE move given low storage levels in the ARA for both Russian and non-Russian gasoil as well as declining delivered volumes.

"Volumes delivered upon expiry are actually pretty small ... it just adds an extra layer of logistical challenge," Neil Crosby, senior analyst at oil analytics firm OilX, said.

In January 2022, 70,000 tons of gasoil were delivered through the Ice gasoil futures exchange's website shows.



German Industry Calls for More Support to Diversify Beyond China

BERLIN (Dispatches) - One of Germany's main industry lobby groups called for more support for industry to diversify trade beyond China, as the government prepares new policies aimed at reducing the German economy's dependence on Beijing.

Planned measures such as stress tests and greater scrutiny on investments in China, outlined in a draft document seen by Reuters, would be an administrative burden for businesses, the Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce (DIHK) said.

"Everything we have heard so far about the German government's China strategy is extremely defensive," said Volker Treier, head of foreign trade at DIHK.

"There is a lack of an encouragement strategy for building out sustainable economic relations, particularly in the wider Asia-Pacific realm, to avoid one-sided dependencies."

Russia's war in Ukraine, which German officials say revealed the economy to be too dependent on Russian energy, has prodded a reexamination of relations with Beijing, with which German businesses have close relations, especially in manufacturing.

Just four German companies - carmakers Mercedes-Benz, BMW and Volkswagen and the chemicals giant BASF - accounted for a third of all European investment in China in 2018-2021, according to a study by research company Rhodium Group.

The foreign ministry document, which still has to be agreed by other ministries, said key industries including autos and chemicals must avoid the risk to companies and the country of investing too heavily in China.

A spokesperson for Mercedes-Benz declined to comment on the specific policies in the document but said the company sees it "as our task to work on greater diversification of our supply chains".

India's Growth to Slow in 2023 on Fading Reopening Impact

MUMBAI (Dispatches) - Goldman Sachs expects India's economic growth to slow to 5.9% next year, from an estimated 6.9% growth in 2022, as the boost from the post-COVID reopening fades and monetary tightening weighs on domestic demand.

"We expect growth to be a tale of two halves in 2023, with a slowdown in the first

half (due to dwindling reopening effects)," Santanu Sengupta, India economist at Goldman Sachs, said in a note.

India's growth in the seven months since March 2022, which Goldman Sachs considers the post-COVID reopening, was faster than most other emerging markets in the first seven months after they reopened, the U.S. investment bank said.

"In the second half, we expect growth to re-accelerate as global growth recovers, the net export drag declines, and the investment cycle picks up," Sengupta said.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), last week, pegged the domestic growth rate at 7% for 2022-23.

Sengupta expects the government to continue its focus on capital spending and sees signs of the nascent investment recovery continuing, with conducive conditions helping the economy pick up in the second half.

Goldman Sachs expects headline inflation to drop to 6.1% in 2023, from 6.8% in 2022, saying government intervention was likely to cap food prices and that core goods inflation had probably peaked.

"But upside risks to services inflation are likely to keep core inflation sticky around 6% year-on-year," Sengupta added.

Goldman Sachs expects the RBI to hike the repo rate by 50 basis points (bps) in December 2022 and by 35 bps in February, taking the repo rate to 6.75%. The forecast is more hawkish than the market consensus of 6.50%.

On India's external position, Sengupta reckons the worst is over, with the dollar likely near the peak. He expects the current account deficit to remain wide due to weak exports, but said growth capital may continue to chase India.

Sengupta pegs the USD/INR at 84, 83, and 82 over 3-, 6- and 12-month horizons, respectively, compared with 81.88 currently.

Deutsche Bank Sees U.S. Leveraged Loan Defaults Near Record Highs in 2024



BERLIN (Dispatches) - Default rates on U.S. leveraged loans will hit a near-record high of 11.3% in 2024, while defaults on euro leveraged loans will hit 7.1%, as the global economic outlook deteriorates, Deutsche Bank said.

For 2023, however, Deutsche Bank expects default rates to be kept in check given the lack of near-term maturities.

The bank said in a research note it expects a 5.6% default rate in the United States and 3.7% rate in the euro market respectively in 2023.

But it expects default rates to rise from then onwards.

Leveraged loans are usually taken out by companies with already high levels of debt and with below-investment grade credit ratings.

Deutsche Bank analysts said companies with a high total debt-to-earnings ratio will face a significant hit to their profit margins with the U.S. economy likely to slip into a recession in the second half of next year.

This will lead to more distressed exchanges and missed interest payments, triggering an increase in default rates in 2024.

The expected increase in defaults will be accompanied by lower recovery rates, meaning that creditors may only recoup 50-60% of face value if the loans default in the upcoming recession.

On a brighter note for European issuers, leverage, despite being high, has not increased as much as in the U.S. credit markets, while the euro high-yield bond market has higher credit ratings than its U.S. counterpart, Deutsche Bank said.

The bank also suggested that European credits should fare better in the upcoming downturn than their U.S. counterparts as there is scope for the European Central Bank's Transmission Protection Instrument backstop and additional fiscal spending across the euro area to prevent a larger wave of defaults.

Iran Ready to Repair Venezuelan Power Plants

TEHRAN (MNA) - The Managing Director of Iran Power Plant Repairs Company announced readiness to carry out power plant repairs in Venezuela. "Venezuela has announced the need to repair 10,000 megawatts of power plants, and a memorandum of understanding has been signed in this regard," said Masoud Moradi at the news conference on the sideline of the 22nd Iran International Electricity Exhibition.

The issue will be pursued to be implemented during the visit of Iran's parliament speaker to Venezuela, he added. "We have the capability to repair the 10,000 megawatts of Venezuelan power plants fully."



COP27 Deal Delivers Landmark on "Loss and Damage", But Little Else

SHARM EL-SHEIKH (Dispatches) - Countries adopted a hard-fought final agreement at the COP27 climate summit early on Sunday that sets up a fund to help poor countries being battered by climate disasters - but does not boost efforts to tackle the emissions causing them.

After tense negotiations that ran through the night, the Egyptian COP27 presidency released the final text for a deal and simultaneously called a plenary session to quickly gavel it through.

The swift approval for creating a dedicated loss and damage fund still left many of the most controversial decisions on the fund until next year, including who should pay into it. Negotiators made no objections as COP27 President Sameh Shoukry rattled through the final agenda items. And by the time dawn broke over the summit venue in the Egyptian resort of Sharm el-Sheikh on Sunday, the deal was done.

Despite having no agreement for tougher emissions reductions, "we went with what the agreement was here because we want to stand with the most vulnerable," said Germany's climate secretary Jennifer Morgan, visibly upset.

Delegates praised the breakthrough on setting up the fund as climate justice, for its aim in helping vulnerable countries cope with storms, floods and other disasters being fuelled by rich nations' historic carbon emissions.

When asked by Reuters whether the goal of stronger climate-fighting ambition had been compromised for the deal, Mexico's chief climate negotiator Camila Zepeda summed up the mood among exhausted negotiators.

"Probably. You take a win when you can."

The two-week summit has been seen as a test of global resolve to fight climate change - even as a war in Europe, energy market turmoil and rampant consumer inflation distract international attention.

Billed as the "African COP," the summit in Egypt had promised to highlight the plight of poor countries facing the most severe consequences from global warming caused mainly by wealthy, industrialized nations.

The United States also supported the loss and damage provision, but climate envoy John Kerry did not attend the session after testing positive for COVID-19 this week.

Negotiators from the European Union and other countries had said earlier that they were worried about efforts to block measures to strengthen last year's Glasgow Climate Pact.

"It is more than frustrating to see overdue steps on mitigation and the phase-out of fossil energies being stonewalled by a number of large emitters and oil producers," German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said in a statement.

In line with earlier iterations, the approved deal did not contain a reference requested by India and some other delegations to phasing down use of "all fossil fuels".

It instead called on countries to take steps toward "the phasedown of unabated coal power and phase-out of inefficient fossil fuel subsidies," as agreed at the COP26 Glasgow summit.



"Too many parties are not ready to make more progress today in the fight against climate crisis," EU climate policy chief Frans Timmermans said, describing the deal as "not enough of a step forward for people and planet."

The text also included a reference to "low-emissions energy", raising concern among some that it opened the door to the growing use of natural gas - a fossil fuel that leads to both carbon dioxide and methane emissions.

"It does not break with Glasgow completely, but it doesn't raise ambition at all," Norway's Climate Minister Espen Barth Eide told reporters.

Small island nations facing a climate-driven rise in sea level had pushed for the loss and damage deal, but lamented the lack of ambition on curbing emissions.

"I recognise the progress we made in COP27" in terms of establishing the fund, the Maldives climate minister, Aminath Shauna, told the plenary. But "we have failed on mitigation ... We have to ensure that we increase ambition to peak emissions by 2025. We have to phase out fossil fuel."

The climate envoy from the Marshall Islands said she was "worn out" but happy with the fund's approval.

"So many people all this week told us we wouldn't get it. So glad they were wrong," Kathy Jetmil-Kijiner said by email. Still, "I wish we got fossil fuel phase out. The current text is not enough."

For daily comprehensive coverage on COP27 in your inbox, sign up for the Reuters Sustainable Switch newsletter here.

France, Germany, Spain Agree On Moving on With FCAS Warplane Development



BERLIN (Dispatches) - France, Germany and Spain have reached agreement on starting the next phase of development of a new fighter jet dubbed FCAS, Europe's largest defence project at an estimated cost of more than 100 billion euros (\$103.4 billion), the German government said.

The Defense Ministry said in a statement that an industrial agreement was achieved after intense negotiations, confirming an earlier Reuters story saying the three countries and their respective industries had struck a deal. The ministry said it was agreed at the highest government level that a cooperative approach on an equal footing would be pursued in the project, which is under overall French responsibility.

The Spanish Defense Ministry said Madrid would spend 2.5 billion euros (\$2.58 billion) on the project, of which 525 million euros (\$542 million) would be paid in 2023. The ministry said that the cabinet agreed to this expenditure but did not give other details.

"The political agreement on FCAS is a great step and - especially in these times - an important sign of the excellent Franco-German-Spanish cooperation," German Defense Minister Christine Lambrecht said.

"It strengthens Europe's military capabilities and secures important know-how not only for our, but also for the European industry." Previously, sources had said that the next development phase for the Future Combat Air System (FCAS) was expected to cost about 3.5 billion euros, to be shared equally by the three countries.

France's Dassault, Airbus and Indra - the latter two representing Germany and Spain, respectively - are involved in the scheme to start replacing French Rafale and German and Spanish Eurofighters from 2040.

"Now, a number of formal steps in the respective countries have to be taken in order to allow a speedy contract signature which we will have to adhere to," Airbus said in e-mailed comments. French President Emmanuel Macron and then German Chancellor Angela Merkel first announced plans in July 2017 for FCAS, which will include a fighter jet and a range of associated weapons, including drones.

China's Fast-Growing Renewables Limit Coal Generation

LONDON (Dispatches) - China's massive deployment of renewable generators is starting to limit its heavy reliance on coal-fired power stations, ensuring the government remains on track to achieve its target of overall emissions peaking before 2030.

Total electricity generation increased by 240 billion kilowatt-hours (kWh), or 3.6%, between January and October compared with the same period in 2021, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).

Reflecting the impact of repeated lockdowns, growth was the slowest since the pandemic in 2020 and before that the broad economic slowdown in 2015 ("Output of energy products", NBS, Nov. 15). But zero-emissions sources accounted for almost 74% of the total increase in generation, with thermal generators, overwhelmingly coal, contributing just 26%.

Generation from wind farms increased by 100 billion kWh (22%) compared with the previous year, while output from solar power increased by 45 billion kWh (30%).

There were smaller proportional contributions to growth from thermal generators (63 billion kWh, just 1%), hydro-electric units (28 billion kWh, 3%) and nuclear (4 billion kWh, 1%).

The massive increase in wind and solar generation is the result of a huge expansion of installed capacity over the last two years.

Iran Not to Compromise...

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He pointed to recent talks between Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC)'s Quds Force Brigadier General Esmail Qa'ani and senior Iraqi officials, including new Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani, in Baghdad, where he reiterated the Islamic Republic's support for Baghdad to settle the existing crises and provide better services to the people of the Arab country.

Alesadeq noted that Iran has always made efforts to settle problems with Iraq through dialogue, and close and strong relations between Tehran and the Kurdistan region should not allow separatist elements to infiltrate into Iran to kill Iranian security forces and blow up the country's security centers.

The Iranian diplomat pointed to several rounds of fruitless talks with Iraq's Kurdistan region and said sometimes the ethnocentrism view affects political and diplomatic issues, "Therefore, we had to ask the central Iraqi government to intervene in this regard."

Since September 24, the IRGC has frequently launched air raids against the positions of the terrorists, who are holed up in Iraqi Kurdistan.

The elite force has on several occasions urged the central Iraqi government and the Kurdistan region to meet their commitments toward Iran and take necessary measures to secure the common borders.

Alesadeq said officials of the Kurdistan region have insisted that the central government is responsible for securing common borders.

He added that Iran has called on the Iraqi officials to disarm terrorist groups in the Kurdistan region and transfer them from border areas to refugee camps because they are "considered as refugees and this is while a refugee does not carry weapons, does not

conduct military exercises and does not destroy."

The central government in Iraq is determined to find a solution in this regard because the country's constitution allows no attack on neighbors from the Iraqi soil, which is a positive issue, he explained.

The Iranian ambassador expressed hope that the Baghdad government would take control of borders and disarm terrorist groups and that criminals would be expatriated between the two countries.

Alesadeq said Iran has presented more than 70 documents about the bases, educational centers and meetings of the armed terrorists and separatist groups in the Kurdistan region to the Iraqi officials who have pledged to investigate them.

He added that officials in the Kurdistan region are capable of countering terrorist groups "and we will achieve this goal through negotiations."

The Iranian diplomat further said Tehran has deep-rooted ties with Iraqi Kurdistan region and has supported it even during former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's rule.

"Currently, there are strong relations between the authorities [of the Kurdistan region] and the two nations. There are also economic relations and medical tourism," he said, adding that Iran expects Kurdish officials to be serious about solving problems.

Alesadeq also said Iran has strong relations with popular Shia cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, a "prominent figure respected and accepted by all parties," emphasizing that this relationship has never been broken up.

He expressed his regret over Sadr's decision to quit political life and close his political offices and said the old and great Iraq's Sadrism movement has its roots in the Iraqi society.

Iran Drones a Pretext for...

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Iran believes that the misunderstandings that have arisen in this regard can be resolved through joint interaction with Ukraine on the issue of alleged drones, it added.

The mission noted that following the claims about Russia's use of Iranian-made drones in the war against Ukraine, Tehran has called for a joint meeting with the Ukrainian authorities to discuss the issue.

Based on bilateral agreements, Iran and Russia have had defense, scientific and research cooperation for many years before the start of the Ukraine war, it emphasized.

It said a decade-long UN arms embargo on Tehran was terminated in 2020 and Iran is allowed now to have defense cooperation with other countries in proportion to its needs and priorities.

The longstanding UN ban on the sale of arms from/ to Iran was terminated on October 18, 2020, under the terms of the UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which was passed by the world body to uphold the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), signed between the Islamic Republic and world powers.

Since the outset of the crisis in Ukraine in February, Iran adopted "clear, consistent and unwavering" positions and emphasized that all members of the United Nations must fully respect the principles and goals enshrined in the UN Charter and the international law, including national sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of countries.

Both Iran and Russia have repeatedly denied claims that Tehran has provided Moscow with drones to be used in the war in Ukraine.

The anti-Iran claims first emerged in July, with US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan alleging that Washington had received "information" indicating that the Islamic Republic was preparing to provide Russia with "up to several hundred drones, including weapons-capable UAVs on an expedited timeline" for use in the war.

The U.S. and its allies mainly the Western allies is better to seek other logical pretext for increasing pressure on Iran and supplies of arms to Ukraine and instead, the U.S. is better to work on peace and put an end on war in Ukraine than fanning the flame of war because this war has affected the whole world and ending any war in the world will bring peace and prosperity to the nations and will help economies to bounce back otherwise continuation of wars in any part of the world will deteriorate living conditions of nations.

The Westerners are better to stop blame game on Iran or Russia and they are better to work on peace and their domestic issues because most of Western countries are challenging with their economic problems that war in Ukraine has been the main reason for those problems and Iran's drones and missiles should not be blamed because this claim is essentially baseless and rejected.

European Parliament...

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The statement further voiced its ill-intentioned support for foreign-instigated rioters, saying, "We will not look away from those who look to us on the streets of Iran. We are with you. We will stay with you."

In response to Western countries' actions against Iran over human rights excuses, Iranian officials have said politicizing the issue of human rights is not productive in any way and using the issue as a tool cannot help promote human rights in the international community.

Riots have broken out in Iran since 22-year-old woman Mahsa Amini died in hospital on September 16, three days after she collapsed in a police station. An investigation has attributed Amini's death to her medical condition, dismissing allegations that she was beaten by police forces.

On October 26, a Daesh-affiliated terrorist attacked the Shah Cheragh shrine in the southern province of Fars before the evening prayers, killing at least 15 pilgrims — including a woman and two children — and injuring 40 others.

At least seven people were also killed after terrorists opened fire at people and security forces at a crowded market in Khuzestan province's Izeh around sunset last Wednesday.

In October, the EU foreign ministers decided to levy sanctions against 11 Iranian individuals and four entities over the country's response to the foreign-backed riots.

Moreover, earlier this month, the European Union imposed sanctions on a number of Iranian institutions and individuals, including Press TV, over alleged "rights violations" following the recent foreign-backed riots in the country.



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American Sargeant to Race for Williams in 2023

LONDON (Dispatches) - American rookie Logan Sargeant will drive for Williams next season, the British Formula One team confirmed.
After just one season in Formula Two, Sargeant will take a seat alongside Thai driver Alex Albon having secured enough points in the final F2 race of the season in Abu Dhabi to earn his licence for the top tier.
The 21-year-old has come through the Williams academy and learned his trade mainly in Europe in karting and F3.

Ko Wins LPGA Player of the Year

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Former world number one Lydia Ko showered herself in early wedding presents as she secured the LPGA's season-ending title, the tour's Player of the Year award and a big winner's cheque in her last tournament before tying the knot.
Ko's two-stroke win at the CME Group Tour Championship in Florida left her with three titles for the season, her best haul since 2016, when the New Zealander dominated the women's game as a teenage colossus.

Irving Returns, Helps Nets Top Grizzlies

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - November 21 - Kevin Durant scored 20 of his 26 points in the second half and the host Brooklyn Nets pulled away in the fourth quarter for a 127-115 victory over the Memphis Grizzlies in Kyrie Irving's return from a team-imposed suspension.
Irving was the focal point of controversy for posting a link to an anti-Semitic film on Oct. 27 and was handed at least a five-game suspension when he did not apologize following a contentious media session at practice on Nov. 3. He finished with 14 points while logging 26 minutes after sitting out the past eight games.
The Grizzlies lost for the third time in four games and struggled without Ja Morant (sprained left ankle), who was injured in the fourth quarter Friday. Dillon Brooks led all scorers with 31 points but shot 13 of 30 as the Grizzlies saw their seven-game winning streak over Brooklyn halted. John Konchar added 16 while Steven Adams contributed 15 and 10 rebounds as the Grizzlies shot 43.4 percent.
Brooklyn took a 96-93 lead into the fourth after Durant found Yuta Watanabe for a layup right before the horn. Watanabe's 3 pushed the lead to 101-93 less than a minute into the fourth and two more 3s by Watanabe in a span of 37 seconds gave the Nets a 112-98 edge with 7:15 remaining.



Nuggets 98, Mavericks 97
Bones Hyland scored a career-high 29 points, Michael Porter Jr. had 14, including a go-ahead 3-pointer in the final minute, and visiting Denver beat Dallas.
Bruce Brown scored 12 points and DeAndre Jordan had 17 rebounds for the short-handed Nuggets. Denver was without Nikola Jokic and Aaron Gordon for the third straight game, and Jamal Murray has missed the last two. Jokic and Murray are in health and safety protocols and Gordon is out with a non-COVID illness.
Josh Green scored 23 points, Luka Doncic had 22 points, nine rebounds and eight assists, Davis Bertans added 15 points and Spencer Dinwiddie and Dwight Powell finished with 11 points apiece for the Mavericks.

Suns 116, Knicks 95
Cameron Payne scored a team-high 21 points and flirted with a triple-double for Phoenix, which nearly led wire-to-wire in a win over visiting New York.
Payne, playing in place of injured All-Star point guard Chris Paul, added nine assists and seven rebounds, while Deandre Ayton (13 points, 11 rebounds) had a double-double and scored the basket that put the Suns ahead for good with 8:28 left in the third quarter. Jalen Brunson scored 27 points for the Knicks, who lost their second straight.
The Suns led 90-75 at the end of the third and removed any doubt when Damion Lee and Payne combined to score all the points in an 11-0 run that put the hosts ahead 105-79 with 6:29 left.

Wizards 106, Hornets 102
Kyle Kuzma's 28 points and Bradley Beal's 26 carried host Washington to a victory over Charlotte. Kuzma, who also had 10 rebounds, shot 10-for-18 from the field, making four 3-pointers. His offense early in the fourth quarter set the tone for the rest of the game as the Wizards won for the sixth time in their last seven games.
The Hornets have lost 11 of their last 12. Kelly Oubre Jr. pumped in 23 points, Gordon Hayward added 20, P.J. Washington had 13 and Nick Richards provided 11 off the bench.

Warriors 127, Rockets 120
Klay Thompson scored a season-high 41 points, Stephen Curry posted a season-best 15 assists and Golden State recorded its first road victory of the season with a hard-fought decision over Houston.
Curry added 33 points and seven rebounds. He and Thompson were a combined 17 of 27 from deep. Andrew Wiggins added 22 points for the Warriors, who shot 53.5 percent and were 24 of 47 on 3-pointers. The Rockets gave a spirited effort, led by Kevin Porter Jr. (30 points, six assists) and Jabari Smith Jr., who scored a career-high 22 points and grabbed seven rebounds. Fellow rookie Tari Eason added a career-high 19 points with eight rebounds and three steals. KJ Martin scored 12 points off the bench.



Djokovic Wins Record-Equaling Sixth ATP Finals Title
TURIN (Dispatches) - Novak Djokovic beat Norway's Casper Ruud 7-5 6-3 to collect a record-equalling sixth ATP Finals title on Sunday, earning the biggest paycheck ever in tennis - \$4,740,300 - for completing the season-ending tournament unbeaten.

Djokovic sealed victory in style with his ninth ace to collect the title for the first time since 2015 in front of a rapturous crowd.
"Got to stay focused the entire match, every single point, the momentum can switch to the other side really quickly," the Serbian said in a televised interview after the match.
"The fact that I waited seven years makes this victory even sweeter," he added as he matched Roger Federer's haul of six titles in the season-ending event.
The 23-year-old Ruud has enjoyed the best tennis of his career in 2022 and battled toe-to-toe with the 21-times major winner early on but produced two clumsy errors to hand Djokovic the break at the end of the first set.
Djokovic put his foot on the accelerator from there on, harnessing his mighty forehand to break Ruud in the fourth game of the second set.
The Norwegian threw everything he had at the veteran in a 36-shot penultimate rally but the Wimbledon champion was simply too sharp, outlasting his opponent in the marathon exchange and holding his arms out wide after clinching the title.

Qatari Press Pans Team For World Cup Loss

DOHA (Dispatches) - Qatari media laid into a "weak" performance by the national team after the hosts' much-heralded World Cup debut ended in a tame 2-0 defeat by Ecuador.
Any buzz from the opening ceremony soon fell flat as Qatar shipped two goals in the first half, with thousands of fans leaving Al Bayt Stadium well before the game had finished.
While Qatar's press praised the opening ceremony, which included US actor Morgan Freeman and a severely disabled Qatari man, they were critical of coach Felix Sanchez's team.
"The Maroons stumbled," wrote Al Raya newspaper, adding: "Our players didn't perform as needed." Al Watan said: "Our national team skipped the opening."
"Our national team paid the price for its weak start," Al Watan added.
"Our team was not at their best, even not their usual (standard)," it said. "It seems that the weight of responsibility and the pressure of the World Cup and the opening were an obstacle to the performance of all players."
It was a grim evening for Qatar's team, the Asian champions who had been preparing for their big moment for years, backed by no-expense-spared facilities and coaching.
Ecuador had a goal disallowed for a barely visible offside before Enner Valencia scored a penalty and then a sublime header. Qatar barely threatened at the other end, finishing with zero shots on target.
"It was always going to be a tall order for Qatar but the manner in which they crumbled against Ecuador would have disappointed the home fans," said the Gulf Times, an English-language daily.
"Ecuador -- 44th in the FIFA rankings -- are only six places above Qatar, but last night they showed they are miles ahead of the Asian champions."
The Qatar Tribune praised the "extraordinary" opening ceremony but lambasted a "nightmare start" by the team, highlighting the "nervousness" of goalkeeper Saad Al Sheeb.
Al Sharq said fans walked out "because they couldn't bear seeing the loss".

Row With Man United Not to Shake Portugal Team



DOHA (Dispatches) - Cristiano Ronaldo said Monday that his row with Manchester United would not have an adverse effect on the Portugal team at the World Cup in Qatar.
Reduced to a peripheral role at United this season, the superstar last week lashed out at his club and United coach Erik ten Hag in a TV interview.
"I have no doubt that this recent episode, that interview, and other episodes with other players that happen sometimes, can sometimes shake the player but won't shake the team," Ronaldo said at a press conference at the Portugal camp.
Ronaldo was suspended for the Premier League club's 1-1 draw at Chelsea after refusing to come on as a substitute against Tottenham last month.
The 37-year-old claimed during the interview with British journalist Piers Morgan that he felt "provoked" into that reaction by Ten Hag.
The five-time Ballon d'Or winner remains the spearhead for Portugal despite his struggles at club level and hopes to keep playing until he is 40.

Netherlands Strike Late to Beat Senegal

DOHA (Dispatches) - Late goals by Cody Gakpo and Davy Klaassen gave the Netherlands a 2-0 victory over African champions Senegal on Monday on their return to the World Cup stage.
With Senegal missing injured star man Sadio Mane and the Dutch without their main attacking threat Memphis Depay at kick-off, the Group A encounter in Doha looked set to end in a goalless draw.
But with just six minutes remaining PSV Eindhoven forward Gakpo got up in front of Senegal goalkeeper Edouard Mendy to head in a floated Frenkie de Jong cross from the left.
Substitute Klaassen then secured the victory deep in injury time, following up to score after Mendy had saved from Depay, who had also come off the bench.
The result leaves the Netherlands level at the top of the group with Ecuador, who beat hosts Qatar 2-0 in the tournament's opening match on Sunday. Louis van Gaal's side play Ecuador on Friday, while Senegal now face a must-win contest against Qatar.
Senegal saw Bayern Munich superstar Mane -- who came second in this year's Ballon d'Or -- pull out of the squad with a leg injury on the eve of the tournament.
His absence was clearly felt as the contest at Al Thumama Stadium -- played out to the backdrop of the non-stop drumming and dancing of the Senegal support, but also in front of a considerable number of empty seats -- never lived up to its billing.
Everton midfielder Idrissa Gana Gueye came closest to scoring for Senegal with a strike on the half-volley from the edge of the box that was beaten away by Netherlands goalkeeper Andries Noppert in the 73rd minute.



England Showed Their Quality in Iran Defeating

DOHA (Dispatches) - Bukayo Saka said England sent a statement of what they can achieve at the World Cup after defeating Iran 6-2 to launch their campaign in style.
The Arsenal winger scored twice on his World Cup debut as Jude Bellingham, Raheem Sterling, Marcus Rashford and Jack Grealish also struck to end a six-game winless run for Gareth Southgate's men.
"We needed that good start. We haven't played the best coming into the tournament. There was a lot of talk and speculation about our form but we showed everyone how much quality we have and what we can do," Saka told the BBC.
"It is amazing to get the win under so much pressure. But we have to be consistent because we have the next game coming up in a few days and we have to win again."
Saka missed the decisive penalty as England lost the Euro 2020 final to Italy 16 months ago. But he has bounced back in style at club level to help Arsenal to the top of the Premier League and justified Southgate's call to start him ahead of Manchester City's Phil Foden.
"I can't describe the feeling, it is amazing. I am so happy and so proud. We got the win as well so it is a really special day," added Saka.
"I feel in a good place. I feel the support and love from the fans, the coaching staff and my teammates. That is all I need. I feel ready to give 100 percent and I will continue to do that every time I put the shirt on."
Bellingham opened the floodgates with a deft header to score his first England goal.
"I told you I wanted to try and score more goals for Dortmund and England," said the Borussia Dortmund midfielder.

