

The Spokesman for the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade Said That Iran's Exports to Qatar Have Seen 30% Growth in One Month Compared With the Same Period Last Year

# IRAN NEWS

Health Ministry Announced on Sunday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran Stayed Unchanged at **144,633** With **Zero** Deaths for the Third Consecutive Day

VOL. XXVIII, No. 7647 TEHRAN Price 50,000 Rials

www.irannewsdaily.com

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## Non-Oil Exports Increase 4.4% in 8 Months yr/yr

TEHRAN (MNA) - The value of Iran's non-oil export rose 4.44 percent during the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-November 21), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, the spokesman of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) said.

According to Morteza Emadi, Iran exported 70.402 million tons of goods valued at \$32.368 billion in the mentioned eight months, registering a 16-percent decline in weight, IRIB reported.

Liquefied propane, methanol, liquefied butane, polyethylene, bitumen, urea, liquefied natural gas, iron and steel ingots, and light oils were the main exported products in the said time span.

Major export destinations of the Iranian non-oil goods were China, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Turkey, and India, according to the official.

The Islamic Republic has also imported 23.405 million tons of non-oil commodities worth \$37.116 billion in the first eight months of the present year, with a 15.25-percent growth in value and a 12.44-percent decrease in weight, year on year.

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## Iraqi Premier to Visit Iran Soon

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) - Prime minister of Iraq Mohammed Shia' Al Sudani is going to visit Tehran in the coming days at an invitation by Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi.

Informed sources have told IRNA correspondent in Iraq that the visit would be held in the near future, but the exact time of the trip is not yet clear.

On Saturday, Al Sudani received Iran's ambassador to Baghdad Mohamad Kazem Al-e Sadeq in Baghdad, when the envoy extended the Iranian president's invitation for the Iraqi prime minister's visit to Tehran.

The two sides also held talks on bilateral relations between the two neighboring countries.

The Iraqi premier's media office announced that they discussed joint economic and investment cooperation, underlining the need for keeping on negotiations between officials from both sides on security issues in order to preserve sovereignty of both countries, and consolidate interests of the two nations and regional security.

Meanwhile criticizing the tension-causing policies of the US in the region during Trump's administration, Iraq's foreign minister emphasized that Baghdad is ready to help resume negotiations between Tehran and Riyadh.

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## IRGC Commander Warns Against Seditious Attempts of Enemies



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The chief commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has warned against seditious attempts by the United States, the Israeli regime, and their cohorts to sow discord and division in Iran through inciting riots, emphasizing that the Islamic Republic will comprehensively thwart the hostile plots.

Major General Hossein Salami made the remarks in an address to a group of members of the Basij volunteer force in the southeastern Iranian city of Zahedan on Sunday.

"The U.S., Britain, Israel, Germany, France, and the House of Saud are all trying to provoke tensions in Iran by means of their divisive media outlets. However, the [Iranian] nation is fully vigilant. Enemies have many pipe dreams and are living in delusions. They do not know that Iran and its Islamic establishment are fairly strong," the IRGC chief commander pointed out.

"Rest assured that the Zionist regime will fall apart, but the Islamic establishment will be out of harm's way. The delusions of the enemy will not get anything as the establishment is so powerful," he added.

Salami highlighted that the U.S. and Britain seek to restore their political, economic, and cultural dominance over Iran, stressing that the history of both countries are replete with crimes and acts of aggression.

He said while the U.S., British, Israeli, and Saudi leaders are all on one side, the Iranian nation and security forces are on the other.

Enemies are acting against the Islamic Republic with maximum power, Salami added, stressing that the "major sedition and world war" will turn into a graveyard for Americans, the Tel Aviv regime, and their acolytes.

"The United States, which has decimated tens of millions of people in various wars and is the exporter of instruments of torture and weapons of mass destruction, and Britain, which has committed massacres all over the world and has a colonial mindset, are nowadays trying to harm the Iranian nation. They will never succeed, however," he underscored.

The IRGC commander-in-chief emphasized that Iranians are all patriotic, and well know that security is a God-given gift.

## Hamas Warns Against Israeli Threats Against Gaza

GAZA (Dispatches) - The Palestinian Hamas resistance movement has responded to new Israeli threats against the besieged Gaza Strip, warning that the entire occupied territories will be turned into a battlefield in case Gaza comes under attack.

The Hamas's response came after two separate explosions rocked the holy city of al-Quds earlier this week, for which the regime holds the group responsible.

"Returning to the assassination policy will trigger the flame of a new massive wave of retaliatory operations, in addition to the explosion of the Gaza Strip in the face of the occupying regime," Lebanese Arabic-language daily newspaper al-Akhbar cited Hamas as saying in a message passed to Israeli officials through an Egyptian mediator.

Israeli authorities announced that the regime was "to resume targeted assassinations if a link between the bombing and Hamas was revealed."

Al-Akhbar noted that the Palestinian resistance movement had reinforced its forces to be ready for any possible Israeli act of aggression.

Meanwhile, the Israeli Hebrew-language newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth wrote that, "Currently, there is no information about Hamas's connection to the bombing in Jerusalem (al-Quds), but [the regime's so-called internal security service] Shin Bet had undermined plans for past bombings mostly run directly from the Gaza Strip."

At the same time, Shin Bet warned that Israel would never allow exploitation of measures to ease the siege imposed on the coastal sliver by Palestinian factions.

On Wednesday's twin blasts, which hit bus stops at the occupied West Bank city of al-Quds's western exit, two Israelis were killed and 22 others were injured.

The explosions came hours after 16-year-old Palestinian teenager, Ahmad Amjad Shehadeh, was killed by Israeli forces in the occupied West Bank city of Nablus.

He was shot with a bullet in the heart during a raid by Israeli military forces in Nablus.

At least five other Palestinians were injured after being shot with live ammunition and stun grenades, the Palestinian Health Ministry said, including one in serious condition with a bullet to the stomach.

Israeli forces have recently been conducting overnight raids and killings in the northern occupied West Bank, mainly in the cities of Jenin and Nablus, where new groups of Palestinian resistance fighters have been formed. Since the start of 2022, Israeli troops have killed more than 200 Palestinians, including more than 50 children, in the occupied West Bank and East al-Quds as well as the besieged Gaza Strip.

According to the United Nations, the number of Palestinians killed by Israel in the occupied West Bank this year is the highest in 16 years. Local and international rights groups have condemned Israel's excessive use of force and "shoot-to-kill policy" against Palestinians.

## ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

## UNHRC Disappointing Independent States

On Thursday, the world once again witnessed another biased and better to say an unfair decision by one of the most important international bodies which questioned its impartiality especially when it comes to defend the rights of the independent states.

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) on Thursday under the pressure of the Western countries approved a resolution against the Islamic Republic of Iran by accusing the country of violating human rights and Germany was behind this resolution, of course, everybody knows well that Germany followed the order of its lord, the U.S., in pushing UNHRC for approval of the resolution.

Reacting to this unfair and politically motivated resolutions, many political analysts and personalities lashed back and condemned the UNHRC for this biased decision.

One of these persons was the journalist and political analysts Elijah Magnier who slammed the recent United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) resolution against Iran as a "mockery" that aims to impose the US' will on Iran.

Magnier made the comments on Friday in an interview with Press TV following a UNHRC meeting convened at the request of Germany and Iceland to discuss alleged human rights violations in Iran during the handling of recent foreign-backed riots in the country.

During the Thursday session, the council members adopted an anti-Iranian resolution, calling for the establishment of an international fact-finding mission to probe Iran's response to the protests. Iran strongly condemned the resolution as politically-motivated.

Magnier described the UNHRC resolution as "a mockery and a theater" as the Israeli regime, killing the Palestinians, violating human rights by arresting children, and condemning Palestinians to jail without taking them to trial is among the countries adopting the resolution.

The U.S. is behind it, he said, and the West is just following it, and the aim is "to impose their will on Iran," which is not going to happen.

Magnier is really right when he says the U.S. is behind this scenario because this time this arrogant country has used Germany as its tools to show the world that the U.S. is not the only country condemning human violations in Iran and even country like Germany has become upset about Iran's behavior.

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## U.S. Violating FIFA Rules By Displaying Iran Flag Without Emblem

TEHRAN (PressTV) - The U.S. men's football team displayed Iran's national flag on social media without the emblem of the Islamic Republic ahead of the two nations' World Cup match on Tuesday, saying it supports "protesters" in Iran.

The Twitter account of the US men's team displayed a banner with the squad's matches in the group stage, with the Iranian flag only bearing its green, white and red colors. The same could be seen in a post on its Facebook and Instagram accounts laying out the point totals so far in its group.

According to FIFA regulations, the US soccer team has to be punished with a suspension lasting at least ten matches by violating Iran's national and religious identity.

FIFA says "any person who offends the dignity or integrity of a country... person or group of people through contemptuous, discriminatory or derogatory words or actions (by any means whatsoever) on account of race, skin color, ethnic, national or social origin, gender, disability, sexual orientation, language, religion, political opinion, wealth, birth or any other status or any other reason, shall be sanctioned with a suspension lasting at least ten matches or a specific period, or any other appropriate disciplinary measure."

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## Amirabdollahian Extends Condolences Over Death of Belarus FM

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian on Saturday offered his condolences over the sudden death of his Belarusian counterpart Vladimir Makei.

In his message, the top Iranian diplomat expressed his deep regret over the death of Makei, praising him for his great efforts to expand relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Amirabdollahian also expressed sympathy with the late Belarusian foreign minister's family as well as the people and government of that country. Belarus's state news agency, Belta, on Saturday reported that Makei had passed away suddenly at the age of 64.

## President Urges Speedy Development of Strategic Makran Coasts

**BANDAR ABBAS (IRNA) - President Ebrahim Raisi has called for a speedy development of the country's southeastern coasts along the Sea of Oman which is referred to in history books as Makran.**

Raisi said on Sunday in a speech in Jask in the southern province of Hormozgan that people in the relatively impoverished region could benefit from government and private sector plans for the development of Makran coasts.

"There is a huge potential in Makran coasts which can turn these coasts into a very important and economically strategic zone for trade, tourism and manufacturing in the country," Raisi said in an address to the people of Jask.

Makran is an Iranian historical territory that stretches along the Sea of Oman from mountains located to the west of Jask all the way to the southwestern regions of Pakistan's Balochistan province.

Iran has built major maritime and business facilities in various regions in Makran in recent years, especially in Chabahr port which is a major trade gateway between the Indian Ocean and landlocked countries in Central Asia.

Also on Sunday, Raisi toured the Iranian Navy's base in Jask and get acquainted with the force's subsurface, surface and aerial capabilities.

Raisi also underscored that the enemies' 43-year-long conspiracies have failed to stop the Iranians from achieving their goals.

He made the remarks in a gathering in Jask city, noting that the great Iranian nation succeeded in disappointing the enemies to reach their objectives and that this is not the first time that the foes hatch plots against the Islamic country, but they have sowed discord over the past 43 years, including the eight-year-long imposed war on Iran and the imposition of economic sanctions,



which could not disappoint the Iranians from reaching their sublime objectives.

As to Saturday statements by the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, the president said that the Supreme Leader's remarks was enough to get more acquainted with the position of Basiji forces, who have done the praiseworthy job for the country.

The Basiji forces have been serving Iranians in different hardships, including earthquakes, floods and the COVID-19 pandemic, Raisi said.

He further expressed gratitude to the army and all other armed forces, who play key roles in protecting the Islamic country and showed that they are insightful guards of the nation.

The chief executive also discussed the challenges of the residents of Jask city in eastern Hormozgan province, vowing that he would ask the provincial governor general to form a special team to resolve the problems of the people.

Jask is one of the six port cities in Hormozgan province, which is located near the Strait of Hormuz and Makran Sea in southern Iran.

Iran's Supreme Leader and some top military commanders have emphasized the need for developing Makran shores because of its importance in the International North-South Transport Corridor.

## Kyrgyzstan Ready to Cooperate With Iran in Joint Investment

BIRJAND (IRNA) - Kyrgyzstan's Ambassador to Tehran Tordogan Sydykov has expressed readiness to develop cooperation with Iran in direct investment in main infrastructural projects.

The Kyrgyz envoy made the remarks in a meeting with provincial officials of South Khorasan province on Saturday, noting that the investments can be in hydropower plants, roads, industrial and constructional fields, transformation industries, agriculture, health and tourism.

Sydykov also said that Kyrgyzstan's officials will help absorb tourists and tradesmen and that Bishkek will provide Iranian businessmen with special visa facilitations.

To this end, Iranian civilians and trade delegations are provided with two-month-long visa between Mashhad and Bishkek, he added.

Authorities are coordinating to pave the ground for creating Tehran-Bishkek flights, he said, noting that Kyrgyz officials have conducted negotiations with IranAir Company.

According to the official, the Kyrgyz government plans to ease investments by foreigners.

25 years ago, Iran and Kyrgyzstan signed a memorandum of understanding to promote and support mutual



investments; therefore, there is no obstacle in the way of pursuing trade cooperation, he argued.

He further invited tradesmen and representatives of South Khorasan province to visit Kyrgyzstan and take part in an investment seminar in Bishkek slated for December 8 and 9.

Sydykov also announced an agreement with the governor general of South

Khorasan Province, which aims to boost bilateral cooperation supported by universities in the eastern Iranian province.

Sydykov, speaking at a meeting with academics and university professors in South Khorasan, said that the cooperation between his country and the Iranian province will include many areas and will receive scientific support by the universities in that province.

He added that those areas of cooperation include agriculture, process industries as well as tourism.

The Kyrgyz ambassador hailed progress made by the South Khorasan universities, calling on them to exchange their experiences with Kyrgyzstan's Ministry of Science.

Sydykov arrived in South Khorasan Province earlier on Saturday for a daylong trip.

He visited Birjand Special Economic Zone as well as a number of factories in the city plus tourism attractions in the province.

## Basij, Backbone of Defending Islamic Revolution

TEHRAN (IP) – Majlis Speaker, in his pre-agenda speech on Sunday morning, called Basij (voluntary force) the backbone of defending the Islamic Revolution.

Majlis Speaker, in his pre-agenda speech in the open parliament session held on Sunday morning, said: The only way out of the country's problems, especially in the field of economy, is the modernization of the governance system by returning to the people and emphasizing the belief in God as the two main pillars of the Basiji culture, which should be addressed by our officials.

Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf also congratulated Iran's national football team on their recent victory and expressed hope that the people of Iran will celebrate the promotion to the next

stage for the first time with the grace of God and the efforts of the players of the national team.

He also added: "I also congratulate the Basij members of the whole country on the anniversary of the formation of Basij of the underprivileged by the order of Late Imam Khomeini (RA). "He further called Basij the backbone of defending the Islamic Revolution, adding: "This army which is loyal to God has proven at every moment that the storm of events and hostilities against the Islamic Revolution will not shake the strong mountain of Basij."

Qalibaf pointed out that the sacrifice, martyrdom, and injury of a group of Basij members who put themselves in danger to protect the safety of the people was another honor that was recorded in the golden record of the Basij, he continued: "People still appreciate the sincere and jihadi actions of the Basij and They have not forgotten the efforts of the IRGC in the challenges that have arisen."

Basij has proven that it can be a point of support and hope for people to overcome challenges at any time and in any special situation that happens to people, he added.

Qalibaf noted: When we urgently needed basic medical equipment due to the spread of COVID-19, or when social distancing had caused problems for the livelihood of the deprived people, or when the widespread flood caused a crisis in the central and southern provinces of the country, or even the earthquake caused problems for the countrymen in Khoi, Sisakht, Varzghan, and Hormozgan."

He added: Despite the inefficiencies of many years that have slowed down the country's progress, the effective and efficient presentation of the Basij and the IRGC has only one reason, and that is the Basij culture that the Imam (may God have mercy on him) instilled in the people of Iran and The holy defense crystallized and grew.

Qalibaf further said: "The healing version of the Basiji culture relied on the people and believing in divine traditions, and it is on this basis that I make it clear that these two beliefs are not the basis of planning and action in the economic, social, cultural and political fields. , we will not be able to solve the challenges of these fields, so I emphasize that the only way out of the country's problems, especially in the field of economy, is the modernization of the governance system by returning to the people and emphasizing the belief in God as the two main pillars of the Basiji culture, which must be addressed by our officials."

## Multilateralism Reality of This Century

TEHRAN (MNA) - Multilateralism is the reality of this century, the Iranian foreign minister said, referring to the approval of the bill on Iran's permanent membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in the Iranian Parliament.

Parliament's decisive vote for the bill on Iran's permanent membership in Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) shows the country's determination and seriousness to develop regional, international, and economic cooperation with Asian countries, Hossein Amirabdollahian tweeted on Sunday.

The approach of multilateralism is the reality of this century, he added.

Earlier on Sunday morning, the Iranian lawmakers approved the bill with 205 votes in favor, 3 votes against, and 4 abstentions out of a total of 237.

Iran signed a memorandum of obligations to join the Shanghai Cooperation Organization on September 15. As announced by Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian on his Instagram page, "By signing the document for full membership of the SCO, now Iran has entered a new stage of various economic, commercial, transit and energy cooperation."

The president of Uzbekistan formally announced Iran's full membership in the SCO at the Samarkand summit. The SCO had accepted Iran's application for membership last year and it will take a year to complete all the formalities. Most probably, Iran's full membership is scheduled to take effect from April 2023. But from now on, Iran will now be permitted to attend members-only meetings of the organization. Previously, Iran only enjoyed observer status.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is a Eurasian political, economic, and security organization. It is the world's largest regional organization in terms of geographic scope and population, covering approximately 60% of the area of Eurasia, 40% of the world population, and more than 30% of the global GDP.

## Tehran, Damascus to Upgrade Cooperation in Medical Equipment

SHIRAZ (IRNA) - Syrian and Iranian officials have discussed the expansion of collaborations between the two countries in terms of medical equipment and supplies.

Director General of Medical Equipment and Supplies of Iran Food and Drug Administration (IFDA) Ruhollah Mazinani held talks with the director of the medical infrastructure and medical equipment of the Syrian Health Ministry on the sidelines of the first specialized exhibition of medical services, and health tourism as well as the 15th exhibition of medical equipment in Shiraz, Fars Province, on Saturday. Mazinani said that the two sides reached an agreement that gives the Syrians an opportunity to present a list of their medical requirements to the IFDA.

The meetings between Syrian and Iranian officials are being held with the aim of presenting Iranians' experiences and engineering capabilities, he said, adding that the export of products made by Iranian knowledge-based companies to Syria is among the main topics of these negotiations. The Islamic Republic is ready to have a joint investment in Syria to set up a production line of medical equipment and supplies in the Arab country, he added.

The first specialized exhibition of medical services, and health tourism as well as the 15th exhibition of medical equipment kicked off on Wednesday and it comes to an end on Saturday.





## PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	11:52
■ Evening (Maghreb)	17:11
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:25
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:53

45. They (Moses and Aaron) said: "Our Lord!  
We fear lest he hasten with insolence against us, or lest he transgress all bounds."  
46. He said: "Fear not: for I am with you: I hear and see (everything)."  
Surah 20. Ta-ha ( 45 - 46 )

## Iran, Kazakhstan Eye Setting Up Joint Transportation Consortium

**IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

**TEHRAN - A senior member of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (ICCIMA) has called for the formation of a joint transportation consortium with Kazakhstan.**

Speaking during a meeting with a Kazakh visiting delegation, Behnam Faramarzian, the director of international transportation and TIR carnet department of Iran Chamber of Commerce, said that the Iranian private sector is ready to launch a regular Ro-Ro shipping line between Kazakhstan's ports of Aktau and Kuryk and the Iranian northern ports.

Kazakhstan's Deputy Minister of Trade and Integration Kulbatyrov Nurlan, who led that Kazakh delegation to Tehran, said that one of the top priorities of his government is to make use of the transit capacities of Iran.

Noting that Iran and Kazakhstan have targeted a \$3 billion annual trade, he said that the Iran's exports to Kazakhstan are insignificant while the capacities are very high.

He said that one of the main agendas of the visit to Tehran by Kazakhstan's delegation is to review potentials for trade with Iran and find ways for the problems on the way of exchanges.

Speaking in the meantime, Alireza Yavari, the deputy for international affairs of



Iran Chamber of Commerce, said that Kazakhstan is a top priority of Iran for enhancement of trade cooperation.

He said that Iran plans to provide Kazakhstan with facilities in its southern ports so that the country would be able to export its commodities to Far East.

Then Faramarzian, for his part, said that although Iran and Kazakhstan are old members of TIR Carnet Convention, the volume of TIR Carnet between the two countries is low in so far this year out of 3,700 items of road transportation operations, only 119 have been under TIR Carnet process.

He reiterated that unconventional process and ways of trade will take time and it will have no economic justification for the economic enterprises of the two states.

Addressing Nurlan, Faramarzian said that Iran's southern ports have required infrastructures and they have required facilities for export to or import from Kazakhstan, adding that Kazakhstan has also concentrated on the target markets like Iraq, the UAE, Pakistan, India, Turkey and Turkmenistan and Iran can be a good route for combined transportation and it has a large number of advantages for both sides.

## State Management, Root of Problems in Auto Industry



**IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

TEHRAN – Deputy Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade and Head of Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO) says the root cause of problems in management of the state sector is not the enterprise itself but the state management in the auto industry.

Speaking in the third brainstorming meeting of the auto industry activists which was held in the presence of Economy Minister at Amir Kabir University, Mr. Ali Nabavi pointed to the unprofitable auto-makers and said that if even the private sector takes over IRAN KHODRO and SAIPA car-making companies, with such system of pricing would definitely suffer losses and their accumulated losses could eventually reduce from 120,000b toman to 80,000b toman.

He emphasized that the root cause of management in the state sector is not the enterprise but it is the state management in the auto industry. Nabavi added that the industry ministry with coordination with all effective bodies defines the roadmap of this industry for the future custodians and we insist that internal shares should be handed over.

Nabavi stated that one of the issues is to form a competitive market, adding that the economic climate of the country in the past decades has shown us that our economy has not shown any determination for direct link to the international markets.

## Caspian Sea Enjoys 120% Growth in Shipping Export Container Cargos

**IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

TEHRAN – Head of Iran's Khazar Sea Shipping Lines said that the shipment of export container goods has risen 120 percent in the Caspian Sea in the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-October 22) compared to the previous year.



Kambiz Jahanbani also announced that the transit of goods along the International North-South Transit Corridor (INSTC) has increased by 350 percent in the first seven months of this year from the previous year.

According to Jahanbani, new developments in Iran's economic relations with Russia and the booming of trade and transit along the International North-South Transit Corridor has been the main reason for the mentioned increase. Considering the new developments in Russia and in the region's cargo transportation routes, the demand for exports to this country is growing, the official said.

Emphasizing that the fleet of Khazar Sea Shipping Lines is operating at 100 percent capacity to handle the shipping demand along the INSTC from the northern ports of the country, Jahanbani noted: "Khazar Sea Shipping Lines is trying to fulfill its role and duty in the field of transporting export goods, especially along the North-South corridor."

He stated that nearly 38 percent of the country's export cargoes are transported by Khazar Sea Shipping Lines, adding: "This is despite the fact that only 20 percent of the fleet commuting to the northern ports of the country belongs to the Khazar Sea Shipping Lines and the rest belong to foreign companies or the domestic private sector."

According to Jahanbani, in recent years, with the development of container transportation in the Caspian Sea, over 83 percent of container freight from the northern ports of Iran is shipped to the ports of Russia and Kazakhstan by Khazar Sea Shipping Lines.

The Islamic Republic has been taking serious measures for the development of its ports and shipping infrastructure in order to make the best use of the opportunities that the INSTC project has presented.

Using the capacities of INSTC, Iran will be able not only to expand the volume of trade with Russia and the countries of the region, it can also gain a huge share of the mentioned countries' annual transit.

Besides linking India to Europe via this corridor, Iran can connect Central Asia to the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf. Landlocked countries in Central Asia can use the corridor's railway to access the high seas. Over time, Iran's place in the corridor would become known to all.

INSTC can also join the Chinese Road and Belt project, which seeks to revive the ancient Silk Road. As one of Iran's major trade partners China has also shifted to Central Asia and the Caspian Sea to transit its goods to Europe after the eruption of the Ukraine crisis and Iran could play a significant role in delivering Chinese goods to their destinations.

## Iran Monthly Vehicle Output Hits 5-Year Record

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Figures by Iran's ministry of industries (MIMT) show vehicle output in the country hit a five-year record of 122,000 in the calendar month to November 21.

MIMT's head of Vehicle Industries Office Abdollah Tavakoli said that output of vehicles in Iran had reached more than 122,000 units in the month to late November.

Tavakoli said the output was an increase of over 30% compared to November last year.

He said Iran's vehicle output had reached a total of nearly 750,000 units in the eight months to late November, up some 15% compared to March-November 2021.

The official said the pace of vehicle output growth in Iran had accelerated in June after manufacturers decided to speed up the completion of unfinished cars.

Figures by European Automobile Manufacturers' Association (ACEA) published earlier this week showed that car output in Iran had surged by 31.2% year on year in the nine months to September 2022 to reach a total of 949,817 units.

The figures meant Iran was the 10th largest car producer in the world in January-September based on data in ACEA's ranking tables.

Industry analysts say sanctions imposed by the US on Iran in 2018 led to a boom in the country's car manufacturing sector as automotive companies gradually dominated a domestic market left by major foreign brands.

That comes as sanctions also forced Iranian carmakers to start local manufacturing for parts that they used to import from other countries.

## New Head of POGC Appointed

**IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK**

TEHRAN – Head of National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) Mohsen Khojasteh-Mehr appointed Mohammad Hossein Motejali as the new managing director of Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC), the company's portal announced on Saturday.

Motejali has previously served as the acting head of POGC.

In his appointment decree, Khojasteh-Mehr asked Motejali to pay special attention to the completion of



South Pars development projects, especially in phases 11, 12, 13, 14.

Also, the implementation of new development projects, especially recovery improvement and maintenance projects at South Pars have been stressed to be the priority of the POGC's new head.

Pars Oil and Gas Company is a major NIOC subsidiary that is in charge of developing Iran's giant South Pars gas field in the Persian Gulf.

## Over 260 Companies to Participate in IPCC 2022

TEHRAN (MNA) - The 22nd edition of Iran's International Paint, Resin, Coatings, Composites and Plating Industries Fair (IPCC 2022) is going to be held at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds from November 30 to December 3.

As IRNA reported, during this four-day event the latest products and services of more than 260 domestic and foreign companies active in the field of paint and related industries are going to be presented.

Chemical industry companies, paint, adhesive, and resin manufacturers, as well as companies active in the electroplating industry are going to participate in the IPCC 2022 which is Iran's most prestigious event in the paint and coating industries.

Considering the Islamic Republic's recent housing development plans, the construction industry in the country is booming, and holding such exhibitions is going to be a very significant step in meeting the needs of the mentioned sector.

## MAPNA Unveiling Its Capacities in Repairing Passenger Aircraft Engines

**IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

TEHRAN – MAPNA Group is for the first time to unveil its capacities in the field of repairing passenger aircraft engines and this engine is of the types of engines used in the national passenger planes fleet where repaired parts by the experts of MAPNA in accordance with the international air laws are used. Earlier, the first phase of testing and launch of passenger aircraft engines of the turbofan type on a designed home-manufactured stand had been conducted successfully.

The main goal of ground testing is the primary launch of aircraft engine after manufacturing the parts or repairing the parts and conducting some tests which require an open space. The conducted test is considered as a very important test in achieving the possibility of testing all passenger and commercial aircraft engines in the country.

This achievement will lead to improvement in the safety quality of passenger flights in the air passenger fleet.

MAPNA Group announced that all of these repairs and reconstruction of passenger aircraft engines has been materialized after getting official certificates from the National Aviation Organization.

The group is to test it live during an international air show which will be held on Kish Island on December 13-16.



## KSC to Host 3rd Provincial Conference On Indigenizing Iron and Steel Chain

**IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

TEHRAN – The third provincial conference of Committee for Indigenization and Developing Technology of National Steel and Iron Chain was hosted by Khorasan Steel Complex Company (KSC) and Science and Technology Park of Khorasan Razavi in collaboration with Iranian Mines, Mining Industries Development and Iran Steel Producers.

Addressing the opening session of the event, Deputy Head of KSC Mr. Saleh Mohammadzadeh briefed the participants of the capabilities of the company and its actions in the field of indigenization.

Then the Secretary of Iran Steel Producers Mr. Khalife Soltan said that fortunately the important issue in holding such a gathering and festival is the issue of indigenization and developing technology, adding that the committee for indigenization and steel chain has taken professional steps in two categories of creating comprehensive sharing (business link system) system for providers and producers and also setting up the research and steel technology fund.

Then Head of Science and Technology Park of Khorasan Razavi Mr. Masoud Mirzaee said that 400 out of 800 technology companies of the province are active and the park is famous for its IT and energy issues in the province. He noted that some important actions have been taken for attracting companies and activists in the field of mining and steel industries in the park of the province.

On the sidelines of the event, Khorasan Steel Company signed a MoU on the process of indigenization with Sima Tarahan Mobtaker Toos Company.





## Protests Erupt in Xinjiang, Beijing After Deadly Fire

BEIJING (Dispatches) - Public anger in China towards widening COVID-19 lockdowns across the country erupted into rare protests in China's far western Xinjiang region and the country's capital of Beijing, as nationwide infections set another record.

Crowds took to the streets on Friday night in Xinjiang's capital of Urumqi, chanting "End the lockdown!" and pumping their fists in the air, after a deadly fire on Thursday triggered anger over their prolonged COVID-19 lockdown according to videos circulated on Chinese social media on Friday night. Videos showed people in a plaza singing China's national anthem with its lyric, "Rise up, those who refuse to be slaves!" while others shouted that they wanted to be released from lockdowns.



## Belarus Foreign Minister Makei Dies

MINSK (Dispatches) - Belarus Foreign Minister Vladimir Makei has died at the age of 64, state news agency Belta reported on Saturday.

"Foreign Minister Vladimir Makei has passed away suddenly," Belta reported.

Makei had held his post since 2012. He had attended a conference of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) - a military alliance of several post soviet states - in Yerevan earlier this week and was due to meet Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov on Monday. Before the presidential elections and mass anti-government protests in Belarus in 2020, Makei had been one of the initiators of efforts to improve Belarus' relations with the West and had criticised Russia.



## Ukraine Marks Soviet-Era Famine As Russia's War Rages On



KYIV (Dispatches) - Ukraine accused the Kremlin of using the same "genocidal" tactics that it used against it in the 1930s under Josef Stalin as Kyiv commemorated a Soviet-era famine that left millions of Ukrainians dead during the winter of 1932-33.

Ukraine this year holds its memorial day for the victims of the "Holodomor" famine as it grapples to repel invading Russian forces and deals with massive power outages across the country after waves of Russian air strikes on vital infrastructure.

"Once they wanted to destroy us with hunger, now - with darkness and cold," President Volodymyr Zelenskyy wrote on his Telegram channel. "We cannot be broken."

In November 1932, Soviet leader Stalin dispatched police to seize all grain and livestock from newly collectivized Ukrainian farms, including the seed needed to plant the next crop.

Millions of Ukrainian peasants starved to death in the following months from what Yale University historian Timothy Snyder calls "clearly premeditated mass murder".

"The Russians will pay for all of the victims of the Holodomor and answer for today's crimes," Andriy Yermak, the head of Ukraine's presidential administration, wrote on Telegram.

Russia has targeted critical infrastructure across Ukraine in recent weeks through waves of massive air strikes that have sparked widespread power outages and killed civilians.

Millions of Ukrainians were still without power after fresh strikes this week, Zelenskyy said late on Friday.

The Kremlin has denied that its attacks, which have only galvanized Ukrainian public anger, were aimed at civilians but said on Thursday Kyiv could "end the suffering" by meeting Russia's demands to resolve the war.

In a statement on Saturday, Ukraine's foreign ministry accused Moscow of reviving the tactics of the 1930s.

"On the 90th anniversary of the 1932-1933 Holodomor in Ukraine, Russia's genocidal war of aggression pursues the same goal as during the 1932-1933 genocide: the elimination of the Ukrainian nation and its statehood," it said.

"The political and ideological narratives of the Stalinist era, in particular presenting the image of the so-called 'hostile West' and the denial of the existence of Ukraine as an independent state, are actively reproduced today," the statement added.

Ukraine was a part of the Soviet Union until it declared independence in 1991. Part of Russian President Vladimir Putin's justification for the invasion he launched on Feb. 24 was what he portrayed as the West's efforts to bring Ukraine into its fold, which he presented as a threat to Russia.

The ministry also slammed what it said were Russia's current attempts to weaponize food by undermining a U.N.-brokered deal to unblock Ukrainian grain exports through the Black Sea.

## Maduro, Opposition Sign Social Protection Agreement

CARACAS (Dispatches) - The government of Nicolas Maduro and the Venezuelan opposition broke a political stalemate Saturday with a broad social accord, and the US government responded by allowing a major US oil company to resume operations in Venezuela.

The breakthrough signaled a potential easing of a grinding economic and political crisis in Venezuela. It will impact world oil markets and could ease a massive flow of refugees from Venezuela throughout the region.

The accord reached at a hotel in Mexico City represents "hope for all of Latin America," said Mexican Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard, a sponsor of the talks. The two sides signed a humanitarian agreement on education, health, food security, flood response and electricity programs, and agreed to continue talks on presidential elections scheduled for 2024.

Venezuela's political crisis has worsened since Maduro declared himself victor of a contested 2018 election, which was widely seen as fraudulent, and generated widespread street protests.



### Xi Tells Kim China Willing to Work With N. Korea for World Peace

SEOUL (Dispatches) - Chinese President Xi Jinping told North Korean leader Kim Jong Un that Beijing was willing to work with Pyongyang for world peace, North Korean state media said.

The message from Xi came days after North Korea fired an intercontinental ballistic missile in one of its most powerful tests yet, declaring it would meet perceived US nuclear threats with nukes of its own.

North Korea has conducted a record-breaking blitz of missile launches in recent weeks and fears have grown that it is building up to a seventh nuclear test, its first since 2017.

In his message to Kim, Xi said Beijing was ready to work with the North for "peace, stability, development and prosperity of the region and the world," Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported.

Xi said he was willing to collaborate with Pyongyang as "changes in the world, times, and history are taking place in unprecedented ways," KCNA said, quoting from the message it said was received in response to congratulations from Kim after the Chinese Communist Party Congress last month handed Xi a third term.

Days before North Korea's ICBM launch, Xi met on the sidelines of a Group of 20 summit in Bali with US President Joe Biden, who voiced confidence that Beijing does not want to see a further escalation by Pyongyang.

Washington has said it wants China, Pyongyang's most important ally and economic benefactor, to use its influence to help rein in North Korea.

The November 18 missile launch appeared to be Pyongyang's newest ICBM with the potential range to hit the US mainland. The UN Security Council convened an open meeting over the launch, with the United States, Britain, France and India among 14 nations to "strongly condemn" Pyongyang's actions.

But a Western diplomat told AFP that China and Russia had chosen not to put their names to Monday's statement.

Earlier this month, the United States accused Beijing and Moscow of protecting Pyongyang from further punishment.

## Several Killed in Two School Shootings in Brazil

BRASILIA (Dispatches) - At least three people including an adolescent girl were killed and 11 others wounded when a 16-year-old shooter wearing Nazi symbols opened fire on two schools in southeastern Brazil, officials said.

Authorities in the city of Aracruz, in Espirito Santo state, said the shooter fired on a group of teachers at his former school, killing two people and leaving nine others wounded. He then left that school -- a public primary and secondary school -- and went to a nearby private school where he killed an adolescent girl and wounded two other people, officials said.

Authorities have arrested the shooter, said Governor Renato Casagrande, who declared three days of mourning in the state.

"He was a student at (the first) school until June, a 16-year-old minor. His family then transferred him to another school. We have information he was undergoing psychiatric treatment," Casagrande told a news conference. He said some of the survivors' lives remained at risk from their wounds. "We are rooting and praying for them to recover," he said.

Security camera footage aired on Brazilian media showed the shooter running into the school dressed in military-style camouflage and brandishing a gun. He then sprinted through the hallways, sending staff fleeing in terror as he began firing shots.

Investigators said he had a swastika on his fatigues and that they were looking into whether he had links to any extremist organizations.

Officials said the shooter, a policeman's son, used two handguns in the attack, both registered to his father -- one his service firearm, the other a privately registered weapon.

Casagrande said the boy appeared to have planned the attack carefully, breaking in through a locked door and skirting the school's security guard.

He then entered the teachers' lounge -- the first room he came to -- and opened fire, the governor said.

"He was looking to shoot people. He opened fire on the first people he came across," he said. Civil police commissioner Joao Francisco Filho told reporters it appeared the suspect had been planning the attack for "two years," and that he did not seem to have a "definite target."

Investigators could be seen carrying victims' bodies in coffins and loading them into police trucks outside the school, which was cordoned off with crime scene tape, an AFP photographer said. The city has a population of around 100,000 people.

School shootings are relatively rare in Brazil, but have been increasing in recent years. Brazil's deadliest school shooting left 12 children dead in 2011, when a man opened fire at his former elementary school in the Rio de Janeiro suburb of Realengo, then killed himself.



## South Korea Transport Ministry to Meet With Striking Truckers Union

SEOUL (Dispatches) - South Korea's transport ministry plans to meet with the striking truckers union on Monday for negotiations, a ministry official said on Saturday, with the impact of the strike expected to be more keenly felt through the country early next week.

Thousands of unionized truckers launched their second major strike in less than six months on Thursday, seeking better pay and working conditions. The action is already disrupting supply chains across the world's 10th largest economy, affecting automakers, cement and steel producers.

"We requested dialogue with the union and the truckers union replied that they would meet with us on Monday at 2 p.m. ... the talk is not yet finalized, but we plan to meet with the union and talk," the ministry official told Reuters.

"We are ready to talk about reasonable demands of the trucker union at any time and will make efforts to solve the issues," the ministry said in a statement on Saturday, adding it expects to see the effects of the action across industries such as steel by early next week.

Damage is already visible at construction sites, while workers at Hyundai Motor's (005380.KS) Ulsan factory are delivering new cars by driving them directly to customers.

A union official confirmed Monday's meeting, which would be the first official dialogue between the two sides.

The transport ministry said about 5,000 people took part in the strike on Saturday in 136 locations nationwide, down from 9,600 on the first day of the strike.

Container traffic at ports dropped to 19% of normal levels as of 5 p.m. (0800 GMT) on Saturday, the transport ministry said, down from 35% of normal levels in the morning.

The transport ministry expressed concerns about disruption in the supply of gasoline and kerosene if the strikes are prolonged, as about 80% of truckers carrying oil products for major refiners such as SK Innovation's (096770.KS) SK Energy and S-Oil Corp (010950.KS) are members of the trucker union.





# Egypt Not out of the Woods After IMF Rescue Deal

CAIRO (Dispatches) - Egypt's finances remain in a precarious state despite two major currency devaluations this year and a brand new \$3 billion International Monetary Fund rescue package, economists say.

With debt interest payments set to soak up over 40% of the government's revenues next year and a lack of foreign currency still hurting the economy, investors remain cautious despite a post-IMF bounce in sentiment.

Bankers in north Africa's largest economy point out that the Egyptian pound's black market rate of 26-26.5 per dollar is still 8% below the 24.53 official rate despite a 36% overall devaluation this year.

Foreign exchange traders, meanwhile, seem convinced it will be 28 to the dollar this time next year and Japanese bank Nomura has just put Egypt top of its list of countries at high risk of a currency crisis.

"The Egyptian pound will likely remain under pressure until more U.S. dollar inflows from GCC (Gulf nations) and committed foreign direct investment materializes," said Carla Slim at Standard Chartered Bank.

Last month's IMF deal has provided some respite.

Egypt's soon-to-pay-out government bonds have rallied some 15% and the premiums demanded by investors to hold them rather than U.S. Treasuries have shrunk by almost a third. , (JPMEGDEGYR)

Bonds that won't have to be paid for another 15-20 years have also gained sharply, although at 65-70 cents in the dollar and a third below their face value, analysts stress they still indicate danger.

“Egypt has got a high debt load and arguably it is more vulnerable even than Pakistan in terms of debt payments as a share of revenues,” said Renaissance Capital’s chief economist Charlie Robertson.

“But the difference is, it has been proactive and been quick to go to the IMF,” Robertson added, noting Egypt also has strong support from rich Gulf countries.

Sales of Egyptian short-term treasury bills to foreigners - a key source of government finance until the Ukraine crisis - have also remained relatively stagnant at around 4-6 billion Egyptian pounds (\$163-244 million), two bankers in Egypt who requested anonymity for this story estimated.

This is partly because of the government's reluctance to raise the interest rate -- or yield -- on the bills above the rate of inflation, particularly when another sharp currency devaluation is being priced in.

Egypt's swollen current account deficit and \$33.9 billion of international debt payments due for the three years to mid-2025 leave Egypt vulnerable, ratings agency Fitch said this month when it slapped a downgrade warning on the country's credit rating.

Only default-stricken Sri Lanka and soon-to-default Ghana spend more than the 41% of government revenues Egypt is forecast to spend on interest payments on its debt next year.

With very limited amounts of dollars and other foreign exchange available in Egypt, importers continue to face problems financing goods from abroad, creating bottlenecks for factories and retailers, bankers say.

Farouk Soussa, an economist at Goldman Sachs, said a backlog of corporate demand for foreign exchange and tight liquidity in the system would continue to push the pound weaker if it were allowed to trade freely.

“Fundamental valuation models suggest the pound is undervalued by as much as 10% at the moment,” Soussa said, while James Swanston of Capital Economics said the pound probably had to weaken to at least 25 to the dollar to account for the inflation differential with Egypt’s main trading partners.

Egypt's IMF negotiations dragged on for seven months and drove its second big devaluation of the year. The central bank continues to allow the pound to weaken incrementally by 0.01 or 0.02 pounds each trading day.



# A Village Divided: Spat Over Secret Garden Divides Montmartre

PARIS (Dispatches) - Imagine being a member of Paris' coolest club, housed in a leafy haven tucked away at the top of Montmartre, only to learn that you're about to be kicked out as a richer rival moves in.

For 50 years, the walled garden on the ultra-chic Rue Lepic has resonated with the metal clacks of petanque, the French national bowling pastime, defying the gentrification that drew envious eyes.

Montmartre in the north of Paris is one of the few elevated areas in the relatively flat French capital and “the butte”, as it is known, had for many years a rural feel that captivated artists.

Even now, with the area absorbed into the urban sprawl of central Paris, most residents still call it a village. The garden is maintained by the non-profit organization Lepic-Abbeses Petanque Club (CLAP) and

its 257 members, who say nothing less than the neighbourhood's soul is at stake as City Hall considers rival commercial projects for the site.

“You have job-seekers, pensioner and CEOs, a chef, a teacher. A 16-year-old can play with someone who’s 80. Here you find all types, and it’s this incredible social fabric that makes us what we are,” said Maxime Liohier, the club’s communications manager.

The players took over the 765 square metres (8,200 square feet) of playing grounds, a rare remnant of the vegetation that once covered the butte, after the city bought the land from a daughter of a resident painter in 1972.

No formal contracts were signed but the city gave its tacit approval, connecting water and electricity for the clubhouse and letting the club reserve entry to members only.

The status quo prevailed until a few months ago, when the luxury boutique hotel next door filed a plan to turn the site into a for-profit affair. What better setting for lush wedding receptions or cocktail parties?

Under a 2017 law, the city had to publish the proposal for use of public land and invite competing offers that are due by November 28.

The move caught the CLAP off guard, especially since it had been trying to regularise its situation with local officials.

“Two months isn’t a lot of time for us to come up with a project!” Liogier said. An online petition to save the club has garnered around 4,300 signatures, though members seem to accept that their days of exclusive access are numbered.

"We want to keep the site in its current state, while opening it up as much as possible to the neighbourhood," Liogier said.

To that end, the club held an open house on Saturday, with members suggesting that schools would soon be invited so children could learn an activity more often associated with pensioners enjoying a game between glasses of beer or pastis.

"When a unique place like this is in danger, it breaks your heart," French tennis great and neighbour Yannick Noah told AFP.

But not everyone will be sad to see the club go. Alain Coquard, the influential president of the

“Republic of Montmartre” preservation society, calls the CLAP an “unaccountable clique that claims dominion over a “magical site” that should be open to everyone.

The stakes are high for the butte as it seeks to join UNESCO's ranks of protected World Heritage Sites.



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## Portugal's Parliament Passes 2023 Budget Bill

LISBON (Dispatches) - Portugal's parliament on Friday passed the majority Socialist government's 2023 budget, which aims to further slash the deficit and debt even as economic growth is expected to slow down sharply.

On its final reading, the bill was backed only by the 120 Socialist lawmakers in the 230-seat house. Two parties with one seat each abstained, and all other parties voted against.

The budget sees growth slowing down to just 1.3% in 2023 from 6.5% this year, with private consumption - which represents two-thirds of gross domestic product - almost stagnating as families struggle with high energy and food prices as well as rising interest rate hikes.



## China Frees Up \$70b for Banks To Underpin Slowing Economy

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China said it would cut the amount of cash that banks must hold as reserves for the second time this year, releasing about 500 billion yuan (\$69.8 billion) in long-term liquidity to prop up a faltering economy hit by record COVID-19 cases.

The People's Bank of China (PBOC) said it would cut the reserve requirement ratio for banks by 25 basis points (bps), effective from Dec. 5.

The central bank hopes to spur more lending into the economy but analysts are skeptical it could achieve quick results, as new COVID outbreaks throw factories and households into lockdown, with little appetite for new credit, while the outlook for already slower-than-expected growth has darkened.

"The reduction ... will help banks follow through on a directive to defer loan repayments from firms struggling with widening lockdown restrictions," Mark Williams, chief Asia economist at Capital Economics, said in a note.

"But few firms or households are willing to commit to new borrowing in this uncertain environment."

The PBOC has been walking a tightrope on policy, seeking ways to support the slowing economy while avoiding big rate cuts that could fuel inflationary pressures and risk outflows from China, as the Federal Reserve and other central banks raise interest rates to fight inflation.

"We see limited room for further monetary easing in the medium term as the PBOC becomes more mindful of the inflation risk once China moves towards the post-pandemic era," analysts at Citi said in a note.

On Monday, the central bank kept its benchmark lending rates unchanged for a third straight month, as a weaker yuan and persistent capital outflows limited Beijing's ability to ease monetary conditions to support the economy.

The world's second-largest economy suffered a broad slowdown in October and the recent spike in COVID cases has deepened concerns about growth in the last quarter of 2022. The economy was already under pressure from a property downturn and weakening global demand for Chinese goods.

Chinese cities have imposed lockdowns and other curbs, dampening both the economic outlook and hopes that China would soon back away from its harsh, outlier stance on COVID.

The economy grew just 3% in the first three quarters of this year, well below the annual target of around 5.5%. Full-year growth is widely expected by analysts to be just over 3%.

The central bank has cut the reserve ratio 14 times since early 2018, when it was at 14.9%, pumping more than 10 trillion yuan into the economy.

The government in recent months has also rolled out a flurry of policy measures to support growth, focusing on infrastructure spending and limited support for consumers, while loosening financing curbs to rescue the property sector.

The PBOC this week outlined 16 steps to support the property sector, while sources with direct knowledge of the matter said on Friday it will also offer cheap loans to financial firms to buy developers' bonds, China's strongest policy support yet for the crisis-hit sector.

## S.Korea's Central Bank Slashes 2023 Growth Outlook to 1.7%

SEOUL (Dispatches) - South Korea's central bank on Thursday slashed its 2023 growth outlook for the economy amid rising worries about an economic downturn caused by rapid interest rate hikes.

Bank of Korea (BOK) said after the rate-setting meeting that the economy was forecast to grow 1.7 percent in 2023. It was down from 2.1 percent estimated in August.

The BOK estimate was lower than outlooks from the International Monetary Fund (IMF)'s 2 percent, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)'s 1.8 percent and the Korea Development Institute (KDI)'s 1.8 percent.

The BOK predicted the economy to expand 2.6 percent in 2022, unchanged from the previous estimate.

The downward revision for next year's growth outlook came on the back of sluggish export and private consumption.

The country's export reduced 5.7 percent in October from a year earlier. For the first 20 days of November, outbound shipments tumbled 16.7 percent compared to the same period of last year.

Consumption recovery, driven by eased measures against the COVID-19 pandemic, was expected to cool down amid the faltering housing market, high inflation and fast interest rate hikes.

The BOK decided earlier in the day to raise its benchmark interest rate by 25 basis points to 3.25 percent, delivering six back-to-back rate hikes for the first time. Export for goods was forecast to increase 3.4 percent in 2022 before growing 0.7 percent in 2023. Goods export jumped 10.5 percent in 2021.

Private consumption was expected to climb 4.7 percent this year and 2.7 percent next year.

Facility investment was projected to contract 2.0 percent in 2022 and 3.1 percent in 2023 owing to higher borrowing costs and weaker global demand.

Investment in the construction sector was predicted to dwindle 2.4 percent in 2022 and 0.2 percent in 2023 due to the sagging real estate market.

Intellectual property investment was forecast to grow 4.7 percent this year and 3.6 percent next year amid lower corporate earnings, caused by the global demand slump.

The BOK said the global economy would slow down as central banks in major economies hiked policy rates rapidly amid the still high energy costs.

The outlook for next year's headline inflation was revised down to 3.6 percent from the previous 3.7 percent.



## Sri Lankan Central Bank Threatens Measures to Bring Down Market Rates

COLOMBO (Dispatches) - Sri Lanka's central bank threatened administrative intervention to control high market interest rates that it regarded as out of line with its policy rates and the outlook for falling inflation.

Any such action, interpreted by economists as a downward push, would cut high deposit rates and borrowing costs for business - and eventually, as depositors sought alternatives, for the government of the crisis-hit country.

The Central Bank of Sri Lanka (CBSL) also confirmed an expected decision to hold its two policy rates steady, citing a need to curb demand in the economy. The Standing Lending Facility rate was kept at 15.50% and the Standing Deposit Facility Rate at 14.50%.

"The Board noted with concern the anomalous rise in market interest rates, particularly deposit interest rates and short-term lending interest rates ..." the CBSL said in a statement announcing its policy decision.

"If an appropriate downward adjustment in the market interest rates would not take place in line with the envisaged disinflation path, the central bank will be compelled to impose administrative measures to prevent any undue movements in market interest rates," it said.

In a later press conference, CBSL Governor P. Nandalal Weerasinghe said challenges in government financing could be "managed with interest rates", indicating that the central bank wanted lower yields on public debt, too.

Market rates on government bonds and treasury bills are about twice as high as the policy rates for overnight money.

Business is suffering, too, from lending rates well above levels available before the country entered a severe economic crisis in March.

"The central bank has previously imposed caps and can do the same again but would prefer to let markets adjust and respond to the situation," Weerasinghe said. "Already, longer-term rates are trending down and that is positive."

Interest rates on government securities are high in part because creditors fear debt restructuring will result in a haircut - partial cancellation of the obligations.

"The government has been borrowing even at the long end at rates above 30%, which could beg the question of a possible haircut being factored in at the decision," said Nikita Tissera, vice president, corporate advisory, at NDB Investment Bank.

"The decision to keep rates steady is also a way of signalling intent of lowering rates in the future".

## Pakistan Central Bank Lifts Key Rate In Surprise Move on Inflation



ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - Pakistan's central bank raised its key policy rate by 100 basis points to 16% on Friday in an unexpected move to ensure high inflation does not get entrenched.

Including this increase, the central bank has raised its key rate by 625 basis points cumulatively in 2022. It kept the rate unchanged at its last two meetings in October and September.

"This decision reflects the MPC's view that inflationary pressures have proven to be stronger and more persistent than expected," the central bank said in a statement after a meeting of its monetary policy committee.

State Bank of Pakistan Governor Jameel Ahmad said at an analyst briefing after the move that the tightening so far was enough to achieve the central bank's objectives at this time.

Despite the likelihood of inflation being more persistent than previously anticipated, the bank said it still expected it to fall toward the upper range of a 5-7% medium-term target by the end of the financial year 2024.

"Maintaining fiscal discipline is needed to complement monetary tightening, which would together help prevent an entrenchment of inflation and lower external vulnerabilities."

A majority of respondents in a survey by Topline Securities earlier this month forecast no change to the policy rate, and a cut by the end of the current financial year in June 2023.

Pakistan has been grappling with persistently high inflation, with a 26.6% year-on-year rise in the consumer price index (CPI) in October, despite devastating floods and attempts to maintain fiscal discipline leading to an economic slowdown.

"Looks like SBP is more concerned with rising inflation. Moreover IMF talks for next tranche is under way and is delayed, that may have also compelled the committee to take this step to fight inflation," Topline analyst Mohammad Sohail said.

## German Consumer Sentiment Stabilizes With Help of Energy Measures

BERLIN (Dispatches) - German consumer sentiment is set to barely change in December as government energy measures help stabilize morale at a level that is just above a record low set two months earlier and still signals declining consumption, a GfK institute survey showed on Friday.

The institute said its consumer sentiment index rose to negative 40.2 heading into December from a reading of negative 41.9 in November, and below forecasts from analysts polled by Reuters of negative 39.6.

October marked the lowest reading in over a decade at negative 42.8.

A negative reading suggest a year-on-year drop in private consumption.

"The long-lasting fear of consumers regarding exploding energy prices has currently weakened somewhat, which has a slightly positive effect on the consumer climate," said GfK consumer expert Rolf Buerkl.

While a one-off gas relief payment for households in December and a cap on gas and electricity prices next year helped improve the mood, the situation remains tense and there will not be any significant, sustainable recovery in morale as long as energy supply doubts remain, added Buerkl.

The subindex measuring willingness to buy was the only one to fall in November, dropping to -18.6 from -17.5 in October, as consumers are still putting aside money in anticipation of exploding energy bills in the coming months, said the GfK.

Prices portal Verivox said last week that many German households face another 50%-plus hike in power and gas costs in January due to the lag in suppliers passing on higher wholesale market prices and rising grid fees.

## Japan Factory Output Seen Down for Second Month

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Japan's factory output likely fell for a second straight month in October, while retail sales probably grew at the fastest pace since May 2021, according to a Reuters poll of 17 economists, underscoring an uneven recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The mixed batch of indicators underscores the challenge for the world's third largest-economy to get on a sustainable growth path as Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, whose public support is falling, rolls out more

stimulus to curb cost-push inflation.

Adding to the pain of higher costs of living and doing business due to the excessively weak yen, the spectre of a global recession looms large, undermining business sentiment, analysts say.

Data from the industry ministry, due out at 2350 GMT Nov. 29, is expected to show industrial output fell 1.5% in October from the previous month, following the prior month's 1.7% decline, Reuters poll showed.

That marked a second straight month of declines.

"While auto output is recovering from supply disruptions such as chip shortages, concerns about the faltering global economy are rising, weighing on demand for electronics parts and devices which are sensitive to the economic outlook," said Takeshi Minami, chief economist at Norinchukin Research Institute.

In a glimmer of hope for recovery in private consumption, which makes up more than half of the economy, separate data due on 2350 GMT Nov. 28 is expected to show retail sales grew 5.0% in October from a year earlier, the fastest annual gain since May 2021.

The subsiding of a seventh wave of COVID infections unleashed pent-up demand for various items including cars whose production rebounded from the previous year, analysts say.

Other data out at 2330 GMT Nov. 28 will likely show the job market remained tight in a sign that a shortage of workers could intensify at labor intensive industries such as service-sector firms, possibly putting upward pressure on wages.

The job data will probably show the jobless rate slipped to 2.5% in October from the previous month's 2.6%.

The job availability likely stood at 1.35 in October, up slightly from 1.34 seen in the previous month, meaning that more than 10 jobs were available per 13 job-seekers.

Land ministry data due out at 0500 GMT Nov. 30 likely showed housing starts fell 1.3% year-on-year in October, swinging from a 1% gain seen in the previous month.



## Venezuela's Main Tour Operator to Open Office in Iran

TEHRAN (MNA) – Venezuela’s main tour operator, Venezolana de Turismo, plans to open offices in several countries including Iran, media sources reported.

The other countries that Venezolana de Turismo plans to open offices in are Russia, Mexico, and Cuba.

The project was presented on Saturday at the International Tourism Fair of

Venezuela (FITVen) in the state of Anzoategui in the west of the country, TASS quoted the Prensa Latina news agency as saying.

“This initiative seeks to position the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela as a megadiverse, inclusive, peaceful and open to future destinations, under the policies promoted by the Maduro administration in order to turn tourism into one of its main economic engines,” the news agency said.



## Poland Seeking German Support to Sanction Russian Druzhba Oil Pipeline

WARSAW (Dispatches) - Poland is seeking German support to slap EU sanctions on the Polish-German section of the Druzhba crude pipeline so Warsaw can abandon a deal to buy Russian oil next year without paying penalties, two sources familiar with the talks said.

The sources also said the pair are nearing an agreement for Poland to coordinate seaborne oil supplies to Germany via Gdansk and part of Druzhba to facilitate Poland’s purchase of the Russian-owned Schwedt refinery in Germany.

The EU has pledged to stop buying Russian oil via maritime routes from Dec. 5 but Druzhba is currently exempt from sanctions. That presents a problem for Polish refiner PKN Orlen (PKN.WA) which has a long-term deal to purchase Russian oil via the pipeline and would need to pay penalties to break the contract.

If the EU were to impose sanctions on Druzhba - or at least its northern section supplying Poland and Germany - both countries would be able to get out of their Russian oil importing commitments penalty-free.

The southern section of the pipeline supplies Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic which, unlike Poland and Germany, would struggle to diversify their oil imports.

According to the sources, the Polish climate ministry and German economy ministry are in the final stage of talks on a memorandum of understanding on oil logistics, which could unlock non-Russian flows and help Poland’s top refiner pursue its interest in Schwedt.

Germany remains committed to not using Russian oil from 2023 and is working on a solution with Poland to secure the supply of Schwedt, a spokeswoman for the economy ministry in Berlin said on Friday. The Polish climate ministry was not immediately available to comment.

Germany has put Schwedt under a six month trusteeship, stopping short of nationalising the refinery, and is seeking ways to supply it with oil.

Poland and Germany promised in spring to try to end Russian oil imports via Druzhba’s northern leg by the end of year but Orlen remains tied to its contract with Russian oil and gas company Tatneft.

The Polish refiner has nominated supplies for Druzhba for 2023 as stipulated



by the contract but these would stop if the pipeline is hit by sanctions, one of the sources said.

Orlen declined to comment on Friday.

The company has already cut its reliance on Russian oil to 30% of its requirement, replacing it with deliveries from Saudi Arabia and Norway among others.

Kommersant newspaper reported earlier this month that Orlen had submitted an application to the Russian oil pipeline operator Transneft for the supply of 3 million tons of oil to Poland through Druzhba in 2023.

Control over Schwedt, which also supplies western Poland, would boost Orlen’s refining capacity and control over the flows of oil and its products in the region with assets in Poland, Czech Republic, Lithuania and Germany.

## Europe's Heatwave May Caused More Than 20,000 Excess Deaths

LONDON (Dispatches) - Summer heatwaves in France, Germany, Spain and Britain led to more than 20,000 “excess” deaths, a report compiling official figures said.

Temperatures hit nearly 40 degrees Celsius or above from Paris to London in 2022 and climate scientists from the World Weather Attribution group found that such high temperatures would have been “virtually impossible” without climate change.

A heatwave in 2003 caused more than 70,000 excess deaths across Europe, largely in France, and led many countries to implement measures such as early warning systems, asking people to check on others and opening air-conditioned schools.

This and related action plans may have eased some of the impact of heatwaves in 2022, but the death toll was still “higher than expected,” Chloe Brimicombe, a heatwaves researcher at the University of Graz in Austria, said. “I consider this ... the most impactful heatwave since 2003,” she told Reuters.

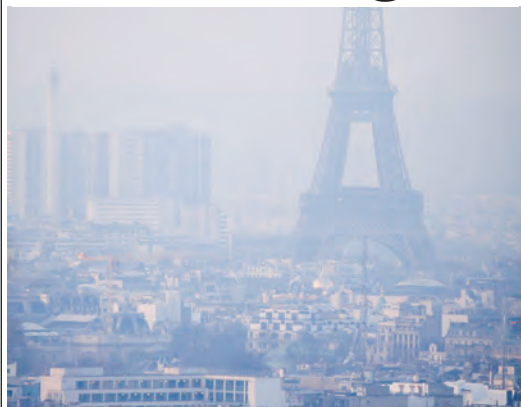
Because authorities do not attribute most deaths directly to heat, statisticians use the excess formula to give an estimate, looking at how many more people died in a given period than would be expected compared with a historical baseline.

Heat can kill by inducing heatstroke, which damages the brain, kidneys and other organs, but it can also trigger other conditions such as a heart attack or breathing problems.

The World Meteorological Organization said this month that Europe had warmed more than twice as much as the rest of the world over the past three decades, while the Copernicus Climate Change Service said summer 2022 was the hottest on record.

France reported about half of the summer’s excess deaths in Western Europe, with 10,420 fatalities in total.

## Air Pollution Stifles Europe's Health Targets



LONDON (Dispatches) - Air quality in Europe is improving but still poses high risks, the European Environment Agency (EEA) said, as fine particles exposure led to at least 238,000 premature deaths in the 27-nation EU in 2020.

“Air pollution is still the largest environmental health risk in Europe,” the EEA said. “While emissions of key air pollutants and their concentrations in ambient air have fallen significantly over the past two decades in Europe, air quality remains poor in many areas.”

Between 2005 and 2020, the number of early deaths from exposure to fine particulate matter fell by 45% in the European Union, in line with the bloc’s zero pollution action plan target of a 55% cut in premature deaths by 2030.

However, 96% of the EU’s urban population was still exposed in 2020 to concentrations of fine particulates that were above the World Health Organization’s guideline level of 5 micrograms per cubic meter.

Air pollution aggravates respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, with heart disease and stroke cited as the most common causes of related early deaths.

“Further efforts will be needed to meet the zero pollution vision for 2050 of reducing air pollution to levels no longer considered harmful to health,” the EEA said.

The European Commission proposed in October to set stricter thresholds for air pollution but also to enhance the right of citizens to clean air. This could include provisions to claim compensation for health damage in case of quality standards breaches.

But air pollution does not only damage health.

According to the EEA, 59% of forested areas were exposed to harmful ground-level ozone in the European Economic Area, damaging vegetation and reducing biodiversity.

In 2020, critical levels of nitrogen deposition were found in 75% of the ecosystem of the 27 member states. This represents a fall of 12% since 2005, against the EU objective for a 25% decline by 2030.

## U.S. Violating FIFA...

FROM PAGE 1

The Islamic Republic emblem is four curves with a sword between them. It represents the holy verse: “There is no god but Allah.” It also resembles a tulip or lotus. At the top and the bottom of the flag, there are 22 inscriptions of “God is Great” as well, which honors the date on the Persian calendar when the Islamic Revolution took hold.

Meanwhile, Iran’s football coach Carlos Queiroz called for Jurgen Klinsmann to resign from FIFA’s World Cup Technical Study Group, calling his remarks on the Iranian team a “disgrace to football”.

In a series of tweets on Sunday, Queiroz described Klinsmann’s remarks as “outrageous”, trying to undermine Iran’s team efforts, sacrifices and skills.

He invited Kinsmann as a guest to Iran’s National Team Camp to “socialize with Iran players and learn from them about the Country, the people of Iran, the poets and art, the algebra, all the millennial Persian culture...”

“Yes, that’s their culture,” Klinsmann, a member of FIFA’s seven-member technical study group that is analyzing the World Cup in Qatar, said. “Their way of doing it, and that is why Carlos Queiroz fits really well [with] the Iranian national team.”

“This is just part of their culture and how they play,

then they work the referee, you saw the bench always jumping up, working the fourth official and the linesman, constantly in their ears, constantly in your face,” the former Germany football player and USA coach in 2014 World Cup added. “They worked the referee. They work the linesman and fourth official, they are constantly in their ear. There were a lot of incidents we didn’t see. This is their culture, they take you off your game.”

Iran’s Portuguese coach Queiroz shot back, “No matter how much I can respect what you did inside the pitch, those remarks about Iran Culture, Iran National Team and my Players are a disgrace to football.”

Queiroz then called into question Klinsmann’s official role with FIFA. “At the same time, we just want to follow with full attention what will be the decision of FIFA regarding your position as a member of Qatar 2022 Technical Study Group. Because, obviously, we expect you to resign before you visit our camp.”

At the same time, we just want to follow with full attention what will be the decision of FIFA regarding your position as a member of Qatar 2022 Technical Study Group. Because, obviously, we expect you to resign before you visit our camp.

## Iraqi Premier...

FROM PAGE 1

“Our relations with neighboring Iran are strong, and we, in fact, through many times, seek to restore Iranian-Persian Gulf relations,” said Fuad Hussein on Sunday in an interview with the Bahraini Alwatannews about the impact of Iran-Iraq relations on the nature of relations with Bahrain and the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council states.

According to him, strengthening these relations will help the security of the region, and improving security at the regional level will strengthen the internal security of Iraq and other countries.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he emphasized that the tensions between Tehran and Washington during Trump’s administration had a strong impact on Iraq’s internal situation.

Criticizing Trump’s policies towards Tehran, he added that Iraq did not agree with Trump’s policies.

Regarding the negotiations between Tehran and Riyadh, he emphasized that whenever these two countries are ready to resume negotiations, Baghdad is ready to help in this regard.

## UNHRC Disappointing...

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He further criticized the Europeans for having no will and following the U.S., condemning Iran for violations of human rights and closing their eyes on what is happening in Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain.

The U.S. is planning on gathering a “coalition against Iran” to bring Iran back to the negotiation table in Vienna without offering a guarantee, Magnier said, pointing to the stalled talks to remove anti-Tehran sanctions following the US 2018 unilateral withdrawal from the 2015 Iran deal.

Magnier also slammed western media for ignoring what has happened in Yemen, Libya, Iraq, and Syria by manipulating information.

Western media “manipulate the information so the best way is to strengthen your media to counter this information and to expose their lies one needs to really have an aggressive stand against the mainstream media because we have to acknowledge that it is really powerful and very strong and is capable of brainwashing the population,” he warned.

Hafsa Kara-Mustapha, journalist and political commentator, also blasted the “UN neo-colonialist attitude” for imposing its will on sovereign nations.

“Let’s remember then when the French had their yellow vest movement in which countless protesters were seriously injured, no international commission such as this was sent out to investigate France,” Mustapha told Press TV.

The lies about Iran, she said, are just propaganda operations designed to weaken Iran at all costs, and those who are collaborating from Iran in aiding these propaganda operations, are doing it to bring down their own country.

The West has tried to fan the flame of recent unrests in Iran as it has turned the unrests into riots while the Islamic Republic of Iran has always said that it supports legal and peaceful protests and it will not let any illegal and violent protests in the country.

And now the West this time by using UNHRC as its tool has tried to blackmail Tehran on different issues like the JCPOA or its regional affairs and defense programs, and human rights issue is a mouth-watering stuff which can attract many countries to vote against Tehran as the West succeeded in fooling most countries and they voted against Tehran.

Of course Iran is not a country to tremble with bully of such international bodies or arrogant powers which mostly ignore the rights of the independent states, and UNHRC disappointed most independent countries by siding unfairly with the West’s false claim against Tehran. This happens while the Western countries are the major violators of human rights and they escape any even small warning and Iran is condemned while it has to take action against the rioters like any other countries.

If international bodies like UNHRC acts in this way and cause disappointment, independent countries are better not to pin any hopes to them in case of fighting for their rights.

## Non-Oil Exports...

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The first five items of goods imported into the country in the said period include corn, rice, wheat, soybeans, sunflower seed oil, cell phones, flour and unrefined sugar, according to Emadi.

The United Arab Emirates was the top exporter to Iran in the mentioned eight months, followed by China, Turkey, India, and Germany.

Reportedly, the value of Iran’s non-oil trade rose 10 percent during the mentioned period, as compared to the same eight months in the past year.

Iran traded 93.807 million tons of non-oil products worth \$69.484 billion with other countries in the mentioned period.

As previously announced by the IRICA head, the value of Iran’s non-oil trade rose 38 percent in the past Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20), as compared to its previous year.

Alireza Moqadasi put the country’s non-oil trade at 162 million tons worth \$100 billion in the past year.

He said that Iran exported 122 million tons of non-oil products worth \$48 billion in the previous year, which was \$14 billion (41 percent) more than the figure for the preceding year.

The country’s non-oil trade record in 1400 was reached while the toughest sanctions were imposed on Iran, but thanks to God and the efforts of entrepreneurs, producers, and the cooperation of foreign trade-related organizations, a historical record was achieved in the past year which was unprecedented in recent decades, the official has underlined.





## Smith Takes Three-Shot lead Into Final Round

**S**YDNEY (Dispatches) - Home hero Cameron Smith carded a two-under-par 69 to take a three-shot lead into the final round of the Australian PGA Championship, inching closer to a third title at the A\$2 million (\$1.35 million) event.

British Open champion Smith got off to a strong start with four of his six birdies coming in his first six holes, but the world number three struggled on the back nine in windy conditions.

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info@irannewsdaily.com  
**ISSN 1024-6053**  
**P.O. Box:** 15875-8551  
**Address:** No 13, Pajouhesh St.,  
Golestan II St, Golestan St.Marzdaran  
Blvd., Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran  
**Printed by:**Honar Sarzmin Sabz  
**Distributed by:**  
Cities of Iran Cultural and  
Artistic Institute  
**Managing Director:** Fereydoon Taherpour Asl

## Ferrari F1 Team Boss Binotto to Quit

**M**ILAN (Dispatches) - Ferrari's Formula One team boss Mattia Binotto has decided to quit, daily Corriere della Sera said on its website, citing a loss of confidence by Chairman John Elkann.

A spokesperson for Scuderia Ferrari said the company did not comment on speculation.

Binotto, whose contract is set to expire at the end of 2023, and Ferrari are discussing the terms of his early departure, Corriere reported, adding an announcement was expected soon.

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SPORTS

MONDAY NOVEMBER 28, 2022

# Lakers Down Spurs In James's Return

**L**OS ANGELES (Dispatches) - LeBron James returned from a five-game injury absence to score 21 points as the Los Angeles Lakers beat the Spurs 105-94 in San Antonio for their first road win of the NBA season.

James pulled down eight rebounds and handed out five assists with three steals and a blocked shot in 33 minutes on the floor, with Lakers coach Darvin Ham saying the four-time NBA champion looked "phenomenal" after missing five games with a groin injury.

The Boston Celtics, led by 30 points from Jayson Tatum, downed the red-hot Sacramento Kings 122-104 to improve their league-leading record to 15-4.

Meanwhile, on a busy night in the NBA after a day off for the US Thanksgiving holiday, the Milwaukee Bucks rallied for a 117-102 win over the Cleveland Cavaliers in a battle for second place in the Eastern Conference.

In San Antonio, all eyes were on James, who is on pace -- if he stays healthy -- to surpass Kareem Abdul-Jabbar as the league's all-time leading scorer as early as February.

He scored the first basket of the contest as the Lakers quickly powered to a double-digit lead. They led 59-41 at halftime, but the young Spurs team had sliced the deficit to 81-78 by early in the fourth.

The Lakers responded, with James pushing the ball up the court on the way to a dunk that took the lead back to 10 points.

"I felt pretty good," James said. "I've been non-stop around the clock (getting treatment) for the last couple of weeks to get back on the floor."

Anthony Davis scored 11 of his 25 points in the final period, finishing with a double-double that also included 15 rebounds.

"It was a great first half for us," said Davis, who had stepped up to help the Lakers go 3-2 in James's absence. "We came out in the fourth quarter and turned it back up."

Ham was delighted with what he saw from his superstar, James's nine turnovers notwithstanding.

"He was moving great," Ham said. "Obviously there's going to be some rust there ... but I thought he looked great."

James said he expected to be back on the floor when the Spurs hosted the Lakers again Saturday -- and he expects to see improvement.



"My rhythm, my timing was a little off on a few of my passes," he said. "But I'll be a lot better as the games go on."

In Boston, the Celtics survived a sloppy third quarter to down the Kings, whose eight wins in November included a seven-game winning streak that ended with a loss to Atlanta on Wednesday. Boston led by as many as 16 early in the second quarter, but the Kings used a 40-point second period to cut the deficit to two points at halftime.

The Kings kept pushing in a third quarter that featured four lead changes. The game was tied 84-84 when Boston reserve Payton Pritchard drained a three-pointer and Tatum fed Luke Kornet for an alley-oop dunk. Tatum then came up with a steal and a basket, a rebound and a three-pointer to give the Celtics a 94-84 lead going into the fourth.

In Milwaukee, Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 38 points to lead the Bucks past the Cavaliers, who led by 16 in the first half but were out-scored 35-10 in the third quarter as the hosts turned things around.

It was a battle of the top two picks in the 2019 draft in New Orleans, where Ja Morant scored 23 points with four rebounds and 11 assists to lead the Memphis Grizzlies to a 132-111 victory over Zion Williamson's Pelicans.

Williamson scored 14 points with five rebounds and four assists, but it was a more complete effort from the Grizzlies -- who had double-digit contributions from Dillon Brooks, Jaren Jackson, Steven Adams, Brandon Clarke and David Roddy.

## No Political Football for Iran World Cup Clash

**D**OHA (Dispatches) - United States coach Gregg Berhalter said politics would not come into his team's must-win World Cup clash with Iran following the Americans' battling draw with England.

Berhalter was a satisfied man after watching his youthful US team hold mighty England to a 0-0 draw at the Al Bayt Stadium in Group B.

The result sets up a tantalizing clash with Iran next Tuesday when a victory for either side would guarantee a place in the last 16.

The eagerly awaited clash is a repeat of the politically-charged 1998 World Cup game between the geopolitical foes, won 2-1 by Iran, dubbed the "Mother of all football matches."

Berhalter however insisted that while tensions between the US and Iranian governments remain, politics would not enter Tuesday's occasion.

"I've played in three different countries, and I coached in Sweden, and the thing about soccer is you meet so many different people from all around the world, and you're united by a common love of the sport," Berhalter said.

"I envision the game being hotly contested for the fact that both teams want to advance to the next round -- not because of politics or because of relations between our countries."

"We're soccer players and we're going to compete and they're going to compete and that's it."

Berhalter acknowledged however that the stakes for the game could not be higher, describing it as his team's "first knockout game" of the World Cup.

"We win or we're out of the World Cup, and that's going to be the focus of ours in preparing the team," Berhalter said.

"But most of all we will need to understand the intensity Iran's going to bring."

"We're going to have to be up for it if we want a chance to advance."

The USA are currently third in Group B with two points from two draws, trailing Iran in second, who reignited their campaign with a 2-0 win over Wales earlier Friday.



# Belgium's Golden Generation Past Best

**D**OHA (Dispatches) - Eden Hazard admitted that Belgium's best chance to win the World Cup had come and gone but said they still have the quality and experience to lift the trophy in Qatar.

Belgium, who finished third at the tournament in Russia in 2018, are still ranked second in the world but many of the much-vaunted "Golden Generation" are now in their 30s.

In Milwaukee, Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 38 points to lead the Bucks past the Cavaliers, who led by 16 in the first half but were out-scored 35-10 in the third quarter as the hosts turned things around.

win the competition. We have a few guys, they are a bit older now but we have experience and the best goalkeeper in the world (Thibaut Courtois).

"We have one of the best midfields in the world, right now. We have good strikers. We have the team and I think it's just the desire to want to win, and the mentality."

He added: "Belgium can win the World Cup if we are in form. If we are not it will be tough."

The Real Madrid forward said he was not over-worried by Belgium's struggles in their opening Group F match against Canada, which they won 1-0, but he urged the team to play without fear.

"The first match you always have a bit of fear, you don't always want the ball," he said.

"Now we need to get over that. We need to not be afraid to dribble, to play the killer pass. That's what was missing in the first match."

## Messi Goal Helps Keep Argentina World Cup Hopes Alive

**D**OHA (Dispatches) - Lionel Messi helped keep Argentina's World Cup bid alive with the first goal in a 2-0 victory over Mexico.

Defeat to outsiders Saudi Arabia in their opening Group G match in Qatar had left Argentina on the brink, knowing another loss would spell the end of their tournament chances.

But the Albiceleste just edged a disjointed and tetchy affair against their fellow Latin Americans at the Lusail stadium in Doha.

And who else but the mercurial Messi should be the hero, firing home a low shot from 20 yards on 64 minutes, before Enzo Fernandez added a thunderbolt second goal for Argentina three minutes from time.

Messi's goal meant he tied fellow Argentine icon, the late Diego Maradona, on eight goals and 21 appearances at the World Cup for Argentina.

It came a day after Argentines marked the second anniversary of Maradona's death.

The goals were two rare moments of quality in a poor and tense encounter where the occasion seemed to get to everyone, except seven-time Ballon d'Or winner Messi.

But Argentina still need to win their final group match against Poland to guarantee a place in the knock-out stages.

The first half was an entirely fractious and forgettable affair.

Mexico's back five and aggressive approach left Argentina with little space or time to construct anything.



## Lewandowski Off The Mark as Poland Close in on Last 16

**A**L RAYYAN (Dispatches) - Robert Lewandowski scored his first ever World Cup goal as Poland brought Saudi Arabia back down to earth with a bump on Saturday with an 2-0 Group C victory that rejuvenated their tournament campaign.

Lewandowski, who missed a penalty in Poland's opening draw with Mexico and was visibly emotional after finding the net, pounced on a mistake in the 82nd minute to double Poland's lead after Piotr Zielinski had given them a first-half lead.

After completing one of the tournament's greatest ever shocks when they cut Argentina down to size in their opener, the Saudis, who failed to convert a first-half penalty, found Poland a tougher nut to crack at the Education City Stadium.

The win moved Poland to four points, one more than the Saudis, and left them needing a draw in their final game against Argentina next Wednesday to guarantee their spot in the knockouts.

The Saudis, the second lowest ranked team in the tournament, will head into their final match against Mexico with all still to play for.

There were half-chances for both sides before the game sprang to life in the 39th minute when Poland shook themselves from their slumber to take the lead.

Matty Cash skipped down the right and crossed low for Lewandowski who lifted it over the keeper and pulled it back for Zielinski to fire into the roof of the net.

Their hopes of cruising through to halftime, however, were ended four minutes later when Krystian Bielik made minimal contact with the back of Saleh Al-Shehri's leg and he hit the turf.

The referee had initially waved away Saudi appeals but he was instructed to look at the VAR monitor and pointed to the spot, sparking celebrations from the Saudi players.



## Ronaldo's Total Genius Won World Cup Penalty

**D**OHA (Dispatches) - Cristiano Ronaldo showed "total genius" by winning a controversial penalty in Portugal's World Cup win over Ghana, FIFA technical study group member Sunday Oliseh said.

The veteran striker went down after a tackle by Mohammed Salisu on Thursday before scoring the resulting spot-kick to become the first man to net at five World Cups.

Ghana coach Otto Addo described the penalty decision as a "gift" to Ronaldo and said it was a "really wrong decision".

"Maybe the strikers are getting smarter," former Nigeria international Oliseh told a press conference when asked why more penalties were being awarded at the tournament so far than in previous years.

"If you look at the penalty Ronaldo got, let's face it, people can say what they want about this man, but the genius thought to just be patient and put my foot to touch the ball first before you, continue my leg so that you make contact with my leg -- that is total genius."

"Let's give the strikers the compliment for getting smarter."

Nine penalties were awarded in the first round of group-stage matches.

"VAR is also a major reason why this (more penalties being awarded) is happening because the referees can now look at it three or four times and decide," added Oliseh.

