

The 15th Int'l Conference on Islamic Capital Market (ICM) Kicked Off in Tehran on Sunday With 42 Participants From Russia, Kuwait, Indonesia, Syria, Iraq, Pakistan, Maldives, Malaysia, Turkey, India Along With More Than 200 Iranian Participants

IRAN NEWS

Iran Power Plant Repairs Company (IPRC) Has Managed to Achieve the Knowledge for the Domestic Production of More Than 6,300 Power Plant Parts and Equipment in the First Eight Months of the Current Iranian Calendar Year

2 DOMESTIC



Non-Oil Export to Africa Hits \$434m in 7 Months

> SEE PAGE 2

3 INTERNATIONAL

Hamas Frees Israeli, Thai Hostages in Temporary Truce

> SEE PAGE 3



CBI Dismisses Reports on Frozen Funds in Qatar



TEHRAN (IP) - The ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Qatar rejected the claims of some American officials regarding the blocking of Iranian assets in Qatar. In its framework for severe sanctions and maximum pressure policy against Iran, the US had illegally frozen some financial resources and assets of the Islamic Republic abroad. The agreement on the exchange of prisoners between Iran and the United States, and the release of Iran's frozen funds in South Korea resulting from the sale of Tehran's oil was carried out on September 18, 2023, after months of negotiations and consultations with the mediation of Qatar. This led to exchange of five Iranian-American prisoners for five Iranian prisoners. At the same time as the exchange of prisoners between Iran and the United States, the frozen Iranian money was released in South Korea. Mohammad Reza Farzin, the head of the Central Bank of Iran, announced the deposit of 5 billion 573 million 492 euros from Iran's frozen funds to the accounts of 6 Iranian banks in Al-Ahli and Al-Dkhan Banks in Qatar.

U.S. Will Pay Heavy Price for Israeli Crimes



TEHRAN (PressTV) - The Iranian defense minister has warned that the United States and Israel will pay dearly for all the crimes that they are committing in the region. "It has been proven to the whole that the Zionist regime is a criminal regime and that the U.S.'s biggest mistake is supporting the child-killing regime. They must know that they will definitely pay the price for all these crimes," Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Ashtiani said on Saturday. The defense minister referred to mounting political and economic pressure on Israel to end its bloody war on the besieged Gaza Strip, which began on October 7 after the Palestinian Hamas resistance group launched a surprise attack, dubbed Operation Al-Aqsa Storm, in the occupied territories. Ashtiani noted that Operation Al-Aqsa Storm "took the Zionist regime by surprise in all fields and put it in jeopardy," and inflicted a "heavy defeat" on the occupation. According to Ashtiani the operation essentially led to the collapse of the regime politically and militarily. "It also led the Americans to seriously feel the danger of the regime's complete ouster and thus to support it, a path also followed by some European countries," he said. The Iranian defense minister further advised the US and certain European countries to leave the region and not to seek to spark tensions, warning them of a reaction from the entire region and the Axis of Resistance. People in West Asia will witness that the usurping Israeli regime will be "completely overthrown" and that security will return to our region, he added. Since the start of the aggression against Gaza, the Tel Aviv regime has killed 14,854 Palestinians, including 6,150 children and 4,000 women, and injured at least 36,000 others. It has also imposed a "complete siege" on the coastal sliver, cutting off fuel, electricity, food, and water to the more than two million Palestinians living there.



Gaza War Inflicts Humiliating Defeat on Israel

TEHRAN (PressTV) - The chief commander of the Iranian Army says the weeks-long Israeli onslaught on the besieged Gaza Strip inflicted a "humiliating defeat" on Tel Aviv and exposed the "true face" of the U.S. and other supporters of the occupying regime. Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi made the remarks at a ceremony in Tehran on Sunday, saying that "The U.S. president went to meet the most hated person in the world [Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu] and supported him, but he adjusted his stance as the Zionist regime's crimes intensified." "This war led to the Zionist regime's humiliating defeat. The Zionist regime advocates apartheid ... and thus the leaders of the countries that support this regime are also pro-apartheid." Mousavi also noted that the bombardment of civilian targets does not constitute an achievement for Israel as it has lost many military equipment and personnel in the ground battle and failed to arrest Hamas leaders. For years, he added, the Zionists tried to "cosign the Palestine issue to the oblivion," but the Gaza war has turned the spotlight on the Palestine across the globe. "The U.S. spent a fortune and employed its media empire to portray itself as an advocate of human rights and democracy. However, this war laid bare the true nature and face of the U.S. and the countries supporting the Zionist regime," Mousavi said. Earlier this month, Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah called Israel "as fragile as a spider web," saying the deployment of US assets and troops, along with high-profile visits of US generals, proved the regime is weakened and "needs American support" to "stand on its own two feet." "As Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah said, the Zionist regime is weaker than a spider web," Mousavi highlighted. "Aircraft belonging to the U.S. and some regional states provided assistance worth billions of dollar to the regime, but it was defeated and brought to its knees by the people who have been living for years in an open-air prison," the Iranian Army chief asserted. Mousavi added that Tel Aviv had to accept a ceasefire which is based on Hamas' terms for truce. He also said that Operation Al-Aqsa Storm represented an "unprecedented development in the 75 years of the Palestinian struggle" to end the Israeli occupation. Since the start of the aggression against Gaza, the Tel Aviv regime has killed 14,854 Palestinians, including 6,150 children and 4,000 women, and injured at least 36,000 others. It has also imposed a "complete siege" on the coastal sliver, cutting off fuel, electricity, food, and water to the more than two million Palestinians living there.

Iran, Turkey Voice Support for Gaza



TEHRAN (Tasnim) - The foreign ministers of Iran and Turkey reaffirmed their countries' support for Palestine, backing efforts to extend a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip following weeks of severe Israeli attacks. In a telephone conversation on Saturday, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and his Turkish counterpart Hakan Fidan talked about the latest developments in Palestine in the wake of a four-day truce in Gaza. Stressing the need for a complete halt to the Zionist regime's atrocities against Gaza and the West Bank, Amir-Abdollahian said, "It is necessary for Iran, Turkey and other Muslim countries to take more forceful measures in support of the Palestinian nation." He also hailed the growing trend in cooperation between Tehran and Ankara in various fields, expressing hope that continued high-level diplomatic ties would expand and strengthen the relations between the two neighbors. For his part, Fidan reaffirmed Turkey's resolve to make efforts at the extension of the ceasefire in Gaza. He also hailed the rich and diverse relations between Turkey and Iran, expressing confidence that constant consultations and reciprocal meetings will enhance the bilateral relations. More than 14,800 Palestinians, including 6,150 children, have been killed in Gaza in the Israeli strikes since October 7.

Al-Aqsa Storm Palestinians' Natural Reaction to 75 Years of Israeli Occupation



TEHRAN - Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Ali Bagheri Kani has said that the large-scale anti-Israeli operation launched by the Gaza Strip-based Palestinian resistance movements was a natural reaction by Palestinians in the face of continued Israeli occupation. During a press briefing at the Iranian embassy in the Thai capital city of Bangkok on Sunday, Bagheri Kani told reporters that Operation Al-Aqsa Storm, carried out by Hamas on October 7, was a "legitimate reaction" to Israel's violence against Palestinians. "The crisis in the occupied [Palestinian] territories did not erupt as the result of the developments that took place on October 7. The operation launched by Hamas was the Palestinians' natural and legitimate reaction to the 75-years-long occupation of their land by the Zionist regime," he said. He also voiced concern about the fate of

foreign captives, especially Thai citizens, held in Gaza following the Hamas operation. According to Bagheri Kani the issue of Thai prisoners was seriously pursued by Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian during his recent trips to Lebanon and Qatar and meetings with senior representatives of Palestinian resistance groups there. Since Friday, Hamas released 14 Thais and a Filipino, along with 26 Israeli captives, including women and children, as part of a four-day truce that took effect in the Gaza Strip after seven weeks of bombardment. During his short stay in Bangkok, Bagheri Kani also met with high-ranking Thai officials, including President of the National Assembly Wan Muhamad Noor Matha, Deputy Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul and acting Chairman of the National Security Council Chatchai Bangchud.

Monthly Inflation Rate Drops to 2.2%



TEHRAN - Iran's monthly inflation rate has slightly declined to settle at 2.2% in the Iranian calendar month of Aban, ending on November 21, according to recent data released by the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI). The SCI report, published on Sunday, revealed that the month-on-month inflation rate in Iran decreased to 2.2% during the Iranian calendar month of Aban (October 23 - November 21), showing a 0.1% decrease compared to that of the previous month. The report also put Iran's annual inflation of Aban at 44.9% which is 0.6% down compared to annual inflation of the previous month. The point-to-point annual inflation of this month was also reported at 39.2% which indicates that the Iranian households are receiving the goods and services at prices which are 39.2% higher on average than the same month of the previous year.

IRAN NEWS



Envoy lauds Iran-Kuwait relations

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The Iranian ambassador to Kuwait has stated that the relations between Iran and Kuwait have improved under the current Iranian government. Mohammad Toutouchi made the remarks in a meeting with Ahmed Abdulaziz al-Sadoun the speaker of the Kuwaiti National Assembly. Appreciating the stances of the government, nation, and parliament of Kuwait toward the Palestinian nation, he said that Iran's parliament is ready for any cooperation in supporting the Islamic resistance of the people of Gaza. Toutouchi emphasized the importance of the parliamentary friendship groups' mutual visits. Meanwhile, Al-Sadoun said his country always tries to develop parliamentary relations with all neighboring countries, especially Iran, and has had many constructive meetings. Al-Aqsa storm operation changed the world's public opinion and revealed the criminal nature of the occupying regime even to the people of the Western world, he added.

FM Calls for Stabilization of Peace in Caucasus



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian has stressed the importance of establishing a stable peace and permanent tranquility in the Caucasus region without foreigners' interference. Amir-Abdollahian made the remarks after his Saturday meeting with Iran's Ambassadors to Armenia and Azerbaijan Republic Mehdi Sobhani and Abbas Mousavi respectively. As he wrote on his page in social media, the foreign minister underlined in the meeting the importance of promoting ties with the two northern neighboring states. He went on to say that Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy pays serious attention to the South Caucasus region. Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan located in South Caucasus -- a geographical region on border of Eastern Europe and West Asia -- are

Non-Oil Export to Africa Hits \$434m in 7 Months



TEHRAN - Some \$434 million worth of non-oil goods were exported from Iran to 38 different African countries in the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21 - October 22), according to an official with the knowledge of the matter. Rouhollah Latifi, the spokesman for the Trade Promotion Commission of Iran's House of Industry, Mine and Trade, said that Iran's exports to Africa in the seven-month period showed a 33 and 53 percent year-on-year decline in terms of tonnage and value respectively. The official also added that Iran imported 38,122 metric tons (mt) of goods valued at \$47.4 million from 19 different African countries in the timespan. He said that Iran's imports from the continent posted a 42 and 21 percent YOY decline in terms of tonnage and value respectively when compared to figures reported in last year's corresponding period. Latifi noted that Ghana was the first destination of Iranian exports to Africa from March 21 to October 22, 2023, followed by South Africa, Tanzania, Nigeria, Mozambique, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Libya, Djibouti, Algeria, Congo, and Ivory Coast.

Iran, India to Launch FTA to Cooperation in Agro Sector

TEHRAN (MNA) - A Free Trade Agreement (FTA) will be launched between Tehran and New Delhi in the field of agriculture, the deputy head of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran for the international businesses said. Mohammad Sadegh Qannadzadeh said expert-level talks have been conducted in the field of launching a Preferential Trade Agreement with India but the Indian side is interested in launching a Free Trade Agreement with Iran to boost bilateral ties. The FTA between Tehran and New Delhi will be

conducted in the field of agricultural products, the deputy TPOI stated. Iran exported 3.8 million tons of non-oil goods, valued at \$1.1 billion, to India in the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21 to September 22, 2023), showing a 68 and 15 percent hike in weight and value respectively compared to last year's corresponding period. Iran imported 775,000 tons of goods, valued at \$987 million, from India, registering a 17 and 31 percent decline in weight and value respectively.



Chinese Official Hails New Historic Start in Ties With Iran



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Head of China's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries Yang Wanming has said that Iran and China are two countries with ancient civilizations, whose ties are at a "new historic beginning". Yang Wanming made the comment during his speech at the 14th annual meeting of Iran-China Friendship Association in Tehran on Saturday. He said that relations between the two countries are progressing and moving forward, with both sides supporting each other in the face of global developments. Iran and China have constantly been deepening their strategic mutual trust and have been advancing their cooperation, the Chinese official added. He also hailed efforts by Tehran and Beijing to support international equality and justice, which he said has opened a new chapter in ties between the two sides.

Weekly Trade Volume on IME Up by 3.7%



TEHRAN - Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) last week witnessed trade of 3,020,058 tons of commodities and 57 vehicles with a total trading value of more than \$719m on its physical market, posting growths of 3.7% in volume and 10.9% in value of trades compared to the figures of the previous week. According to a report by the IME's International Affairs and PR, the exchange saw on its metals and minerals trading floor trade of 2,636,566 tons of commodities valued at more than \$551m. On this floor the IME sold 1,322,772 tons of cement, 612,000 tons of iron ore, 515,902 tons of steel, 170,000 tons of sponge iron, 8,953 tons of copper, 6,800 tons of aluminum, 1,500 tons of cast iron, 510 tons of zinc, 200 tons of molybdenum concentrate, 75 tons of lead, 42 tons of precious metals concentrate and 57 Capra Pickup trucks. Based on this report, the IME witnessed on both domestic and export rings of its oil and petrochemical trading floor 440,699 tons of commodities worth nearly \$163m. Commodities traded on this floor included 157,265 tons of bitumen, 82,435 tons of polymeric products, 56,800 tons of vacuum bottom, 24,322 tons of chemicals, 24,150 tons of sulfur, 17,000 tons of lube cut, 4,239 tons of oil and 300 tons of feedstocks. The IME also traded within the same week 15,585 tons of goods on its side market.



Iran, South Korea NPCs Sign MoU

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iran and South Korea National Paralympic Committees signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU). On the sidelines of the Asian Paralympic Committee (APC) General Assembly and Executive Board elections underway in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, the two NPCs signed the MoU. Iran and South Korea aim to further strengthen their cooperation in the fields of Paralympic sports. Head of Iran's NPC Ghafoor Kargari and Korea Paralympic Committee (KPC) President Jung Jin-owan signed the MoU. Iran aims to be considered a role model to other countries that are looking to change the perceptions of the public towards people with an impairment by promoting their capabilities.

China, U.S. Exchange Accusations Over U.S. Vessel in South China Sea

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China and the United States exchanged accusations at the weekend over the disputed South China Sea, after China's military said it had driven away a U.S. warship that the U.S. Navy said was on a routine freedom of navigation operation. According to a post on the official WeChat social media account of the Chinese People's Liberation Army Southern Theatre Command on Saturday, the Chinese military deployed its naval and air forces to "track, monitor and warn away" the U.S. destroyer. The U.S. Navy said on Sunday that the Hopper had "asserted navigational rights in the South China Sea near the Parcel Islands, consistent with international law". China claims almost the entire South China Sea, a conduit for more than \$3 trillion of annual ship-borne commerce, including parts claimed by the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei. The Permanent Court of Arbitration in 2016 said China's claims had no legal basis.



S. Korea, China, Japan Top Diplomats Seek to Boost Trilateral Cooperation



SEOUL (Dispatches) - The foreign ministers of South Korea, China and Japan meet in South Korea on Sunday, seeking to restart cooperation among the Asian neighbors and pave the way for a trilateral summit. While China and the United States have been mending frayed ties, including a summit this month between Presidents Xi Jinping and Joe Biden, Beijing is concerned that Washington and its key regional allies are strengthening their three-way partnership. Beijing, Tokyo and Seoul had agreed to hold summits every year starting in 2008 to bolster diplomatic and economic exchanges, but the plan has been blocked by bilateral rows and the COVID-19 pandemic. Their last trilateral leaders' meeting was in 2019. The three top diplomats are gathering in the port city of Busan, also the first such meeting since 2019. In September, senior officials from the three countries agreed to arrange a trilateral summit at the "earliest convenient time". South Korean Foreign Minister Park Jin met separately on Sunday morning with his Japanese counterparts Yoko Kamikawa and China's Wang Yi. Park and Kamikawa condemned North Korea's launch last week of its first spy satellite and agreed to boost responses to arms transactions between Pyongyang and Moscow, Seoul's foreign ministry said in a statement. Marring the cooperative tone, Kamikawa called an order by a South Korean court for Japan to compensate a group of women forced to work in Japanese wartime brothels "extremely regrettable" and requested the South Korean government take appropriate measures. Japan's Kyodo news agency reported. On Saturday, Kamikawa met Wang and expressed hopes for security dialogue between Tokyo and Beijing "in the near future". Wang highlighted the need for both sides to ensure that they "do not pose a threat to one another" and respect "each other's legitimate concerns", according to China's foreign ministry. South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida have taken steps to mend ties frayed by history and trade feuds, and held a historic trilateral summit in August with Biden. Wang warned in July that U.S. efforts to strengthen relations with Seoul and Tokyo could raise regional tension and confrontation.



Hamas Frees Israeli, Thai Hostages in Temporary Truce

GAZA (Dispatches) - Thirteen Israelis and four Thai nationals arrived in Israel in the second release of hostages from Hamas captivity in exchange for Palestinian prisoners in a deal briefly endangered by a dispute about aid delivery into Gaza. Although overcome by the mediation of Egypt and Qatar, the dispute that threatened the truce to free captives underscored the fragility of the pact meant to release 50 hostages held by the Palestinian militant groups and 150 prisoners held in Israeli jails over four days. Television images showed hostages on the Egyptian side of the Rafah border crossing after leaving Gaza, as Hamas handed the captives to the International Committee of the Red Cross late on Saturday. Six of the 13 Israelis released were women and seven were children and teenagers. "The released hostages are on their way to hospitals in Israel, where they will re-unite with their families," the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said in a statement. Israel released 39 Palestinians - six women and 33 minors - from two prisons, the Palestinian news agency WAFA said. Some of the Palestinians arrived at Al-Bireh Municipality Square in Ramallah in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, where thousands of citizens awaited them, a Reuters witness said. A Palestinian official familiar with the diplomatic moves said Hamas would continue the truce, the first halt in fighting since Hamas fighters rampaged through southern Israel on Oct. 7, killing 1,200 people and taking about 240 hostages. In response to that attack, Israel has vowed to destroy the Hamas militants who run Gaza, raining bombs and shells on the enclave and launching a ground offensive in the north. Some 14,800 people, roughly 40% of them children, have been killed, Palestinian health authorities said on Saturday. Saturday's swap follows the previous day's initial release of 13 Israeli hostages, including children and the elderly, by Hamas in return for the release of 39 Palestinian women and young people from Israeli prisons. On Friday Hamas also released a Philippine

national and 10 Thai farm workers. The four Thais released on Saturday "want a shower and to contact their relatives", Prime Minister Srettha Thavasin said a day later on social media platform X, adding that all were safe and showed few ill-effects. Eighteen Thais remain captive, Thailand's foreign ministry said on Sunday. "I'm so happy, I'm so glad, I can't describe my feeling at all," Thongkoon Onkaew told Reuters by telephone, after news of the release of her 26-year-old son Natthaporn Onkaew, the family's sole breadwinner. The deal risked being derailed when Hamas' armed wing said on Saturday it was delaying releases until Israel met all truce conditions, including committing to let aid trucks into northern Gaza. Ensuring that the deal did not collapse took a day of high-stakes diplomacy mediated by Qatar and Egypt, a process U.S. President Joe Biden joined, calling Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani. Hamas spokesperson Osama Hamdan said only 65 of 340 aid trucks that had entered Gaza since Friday had reached northern Gaza, which was "less than half of what Israel agreed on". Al-Qassam Brigades, the Hamas armed wing, also said Israel had failed to respect terms for the release of Palestinian prisoners that factored in their time in detention. The IDF said the United Nations and international organizations distribute aid inside the Gaza Strip. The U.N. said 61 trucks delivered aid to northern Gaza on Saturday, the most since the war began seven weeks ago. They included food, water and emergency medical supplies. Qatari foreign ministry spokesman Majed Al-Ansari said there had been "a lot of discussion" on how and whom to prioritize for release and that a key criterion for the Palestinian side was the length of time spent in Israeli prisons. "We are now hopeful that, with the second or the third day of this pause, we would be able to hash out a lot of these details that made this day so difficult," he told CNN.

Thousands March Across Globe to Denounce Violence Against Women



WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Thousands of people took to the streets across the world to condemn violence against women on the international day highlighting the crime. On the UN-designated International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, protesters marched in Europe and the Americas. "The scourge of gender-based violence continues to inflict pain and injustice on too many," US President Joe Biden said in a statement. "An estimated one in three women globally will experience physical violence, rape, or stalking at some point in their lifetimes. It's an outrage." Particularly in areas of conflict, countless women and girls suffer at the hands of perpetrators who commit gender-based violence and use rape as a weapon of war. In Guatemala, protesters kicked off commemorations on Friday evening, placing candles to write out 438 - the number of women killed so far this year. In the Chilean capital of Santiago, some 1,000 protesters marched through the streets Friday night, chanting "Not one step backward" and demanding action by the government to protect women. A women's advocacy group estimates that 40 femicides have occurred in the country this year. Along Rio de Janeiro's famed Copacabana Beach, protesters lined up 722 pairs of women's shoes, from high-heels to sneakers, each pair before a woman's name to represent the femicides recorded in 2022 - the highest number since 2019, according to the non-governmental Brazilian Forum on Public Safety. And in Argentina, demonstrators - including those concerned by the election of incoming president Javier Milei - in Buenos Aires combined a protest on violence against women with a show of support for the Palestinian people. Milei has suggesting eliminating the Ministry of Women, Genders and Diversity - in charge of preventing gender violence - and has taken hardline stances on issues including abortion and equal pay in Italy, which has been shaken by the murder of a 22-year-old university student allegedly by her former

boyfriend, some 50,000 people, according to the AGI news agency, demonstrated in Rome, where the Colosseum was to be lit up in red later on Saturday. The country has been horrified by the case of Giulia Cecchettin, who went missing for a week as she was due to receive her degree in biomedical engineering from the University of Padua. Her body was eventually found in a gully about 120 kilometers (75 miles) north of Venice, and her former boyfriend, 22-year-old Filippo Turetta, was arrested in Germany. "This year... takes on particularly important connotations for us... for those in this country who care about the rights, claims and emancipation of all women, following yet another femicide, the killing of Giulia Cecchettin," said Luisa Loduce, a 22-year-old librarian. In the year to November 12, there have been 102 murder cases with female victims in Italy, 82 of them by family members or current or former partners, according to the interior ministry. In Turkey, some 500 women gathered in the Sisli district in Istanbul, as riot police stood by, unfurling banners reading "We will not remain silent" and "Women are united and fighting against male-state violence." Protesters also took to the streets in Ankara. In France, several thousand people, many wearing purple, the color of women and gender equality, wove through the chilly streets of Paris and other cities, carrying signs reading: "One rape every six minutes in France" and "Protect your girls, educate your boys". "We don't want to count the dead any more," Maelle Lenoir, an official from the All of Us activist group, told reporters, urging the government to devote more money to eradicating violence against women. France has recorded 121 women killed so far this year in femicides, the killing of a woman due to her gender, compared with 118 in 2022, according to government data. Leonore Maunoury, 22, said that the justice system needed to be changed to deal effectively with the phenomenon, as she marched in the eastern city of Strasbourg.



Chinese Car Sales Boom in Russia Levels Off

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Chinese car sales in Russia appear to have peaked as domestic production recovers after the exodus of Western automakers, data shared with Reuters showed, but recent growth in the market may stall as high import costs and interest rates begin to bite. The figures are early indicators that Russia's car market, and China's role in it, have stabilised after nearly two years of upheaval caused by sanctions placed on Moscow and Western companies' sudden exit in the wake of the invasion of Ukraine. But the sector, which saw an almost 60% slump in sales in 2022 and production sink to a post-Soviet low, is still a long way from its pre-invasion levels. Sales and output in 2023 are set to be among the lowest in the last 10 years. Prior to the February 2022 invasion, Chinese cars accounted for less than 10% of the Russian market. In August this year, Chinese brands' share of sales peaked at almost 56%, data from analytical agency Autostat and its partner consulting company PPK showed. That percentage has now levelled off, with Chinese brands selling around 60,000 units each month since August, corresponding to a 53% share in September. Sales include imported vehicles and those made inside Russia. Chinese carmakers such as Haval, Chery and Geely are capitalizing on the departure of Western players that used to dominate the market before the invasion of Ukraine, showing Moscow's increasing dependence on Beijing and growing economic ties with China as the West shuns Russia over the war. Russia has jumped from 11th place to become China's largest export market for cars, reaching a value of \$9.4 billion in January-October, Chinese customs data showed. In the same period of last year, car exports to Russia amounted to \$1.1 billion. Overall, monthly car sales in Russia are now more than double what they were a year ago, Autostat data showed, while separate data from federal statistics service Rosstat showed car production was nearly three times higher in September year-on-year, underlining the sector's partial recovery. Chinese carmakers were crucial in that process, but with demand now largely satisfied there is a ceiling for their further expansion in the sector, Autostat Executive Director Sergei Udalov told Reuters. "The market has reached a state of equilibrium - the main Chinese brands have come to Russia and (pent-up) demand is satisfied," Udalov said. Russia's leading carmaker AvtoVAZ, which produces the most popular Lada cars, is catering to demand for cheap cars, while Chinese brands are filling the gap left by Western producers for more expensive vehicles, Udalov added. That trend could change should either AvtoVAZ or Chinese carmakers seek to dip their toes into different pricing categories, Udalov said, but for now, despite depressed sales and production, the market's prospects for growth are slim. Sanctions against Russia contributed to lower car production and sales most notably in 2022, but also after Moscow annexed the Crimean peninsula from Ukraine in 2014. Sales have not topped 2 million vehicles since 2014 and production has been lower, too. Just over 626,000 new cars were sold in Russia in 2022 and almost 830,000 were sold in January-October this year. A modest recovery is underway from 2022's lows, but the loss of Western technology and expertise is hurting the sector, analysts say, even as Chinese carmakers bed in at some of the factories vacated by their Western counterparts.

Support for Germany's Greens Falls Amid Budget Crisis



FRANKFURT (Dispatches) - The Green Party's popularity with voters has fallen to its lowest in over five years, a poll showed on Sunday, as Germany's coalition government grapples with a big hole in its budget. The so-called traffic light coalition - named to reflect the three party colours - is scrambling to plug a 60 billion euro (\$65 billion) budget gap after a court blocked the transfer of unused funds from the pandemic towards green initiatives and industry support. A weekly poll conducted by the INSA institute for the Bild am Sonntag newspaper showed 73% of respondents were dissatisfied with the federal government. The Greens, which include vice chancellor Robert Habeck and foreign minister Annalena Baerbock, are down one percentage point compared with the previous week, scoring 12% in the survey, which asks voters how they would vote in a snap election. The Social Democrats (SPD) and the Free Democrats (FDP) both remained stable at 16% and 6% respectively. "The coalition falls to 34%, 18 percentage points less than in the 2021 federal election," said INSA's head Hermann Binkert. "At the moment it does not look like the SPD or the Greens will be able to lead the government after the 2025 general election." The conservative opposition CDU/CSU remains the strongest scorer with an unchanged 30%, while far-right party Alternative for Germany (AfD) gained one percentage point reaching 22%. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz on Friday promised to finalise the 2024 budget by the end of this year, seeking to reassure citizens and investors that Europe's largest economy would not be derailed by the court ruling.

Ukraine Needs More Air Defenses to Protect Grain Exports

KYIV (Dispatches) - Ukraine needs more air defenses to protect its grain export routes as well as regions bordering Russia, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said, as he addressed an international summit on food security in Kyiv. "There is a deficit of air defense - that is no secret," Zelenskyy told the Grain from Ukraine summit, which was attended by senior officials from European countries, including Swiss President Alain Berset and Lithuanian Prime Minister Ingrida Simonyte. Zelenskyy was speaking after Russia attacked Ukraine with 75 drones overnight, the biggest drone assault of the war. The joint press conference of the three leaders was cut short by another air raid siren. Zelenskyy said Ukraine would be supplied by its foreign partners with vessels to accompany convoys of cargo ships from Ukraine's ports to guarantee their security. "I have agreements with several countries about powerful accompaniment of convoys by Ukrainians, but using (foreign) equipment," he said. Separately, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen pledged support in a letter to Zelenskyy that she shared on social media platform X, saying the Commission would make available 50 million euros for "quick repairs and upgrades of infrastructure in Ukraine's ports." The Ukrainian president said Kyiv hoped to solve its air defense shortage through new supplies from partners and increasing its own production capacity, something on which he said there had been progress. "As of today, I can't say details what we are making and where, but there is progress," he said. Ukraine, a major exporter of grain, has been exporting grain via unilateral corridors through the Black sea, after Russia withdrew in July from a UN-brokered deal to allow grain ships through its blockade. Ukraine's current Black sea grain export corridors all start from

ports in Ukraine's southern region of Odesa. "There are certain air defense systems... we are asking for them," Zelenskyy said. "We've already got an answer when those systems will start to guard that region. Because there, both the corridor and the people are important." Asked about the protests by Polish and Slovak truckers which have blocked much of Ukraine's road-based cargo supply in recent days, Zelenskyy blamed the problem on the internal politics of those countries. "I believe that there are difficulties on the border first and foremost because of certain political steps by our neighbours," he told a press conference after the summit. Zelenskyy said he was confident the issue would be solved if Ukraine's neighbours were given "a bit of time" to deal with the dispute.





Sinner Twice Beats Djokovic to Send Italy Into Davis Cup Final

MALAGA (Dispatches) - A "proud" Jannik Sinner beat world number one Novak Djokovic twice in one day to send Italy into the Davis Cup final with a 2-1 win over Serbia in Malaga. Italy, who won the trophy for the first and only time in 1976, will face 28-time winners Australia. Sinner, who has now triumphed three times in four clashes across 11 days against the usually unstoppable Djokovic, crucially kept Italy in the tie by beating the 24-time Grand Slam winner 6-2, 2-6, 7-5 in the second singles rubber. World number four Sinner saved three match points as he faced Djokovic in the singles, with the 36-year-old arriving in stellar form. "I have to be really proud about how I handled the situation," said Sinner. "Tomorrow we have a great opportunity, we know this but we try to stay as relaxed as possible, keeping the smile in our head." Djokovic, who has won seven titles this year including three Grand Slams, was aiming to send 2010 champions Serbia into the final for the first time in a decade. However Sinner claimed arguably the biggest win of his career, becoming the first man to beat Djokovic in a singles match at the Davis Cup since Argentina's Juan Martin del Potro in 2011, ending a 21-match streak. Sinner won the first of their four recent battles in the ATP Finals group stage, but although Djokovic took the second to bag the title, Sinner delivered twice more in front of a full house at the Martin Carpena arena. Djokovic created headlines in the week by rowing with noisy British fans and then showing his fury at being asked to take a doping control test before Thursday's last eight tie. The Serb was this time unimpressed by rowdy Italian fans in the doubles defeat as he ended a glittering year without the team title he craved. Sinner, 14 years the younger at 22, broke Djokovic in the third and fifth games, racing

into a 5-1 lead. The Italian finished his superb first set with an ace, hitting 12 winners to the subdued Djokovic's one, in only 38 minutes. For a moment he let it slip, double-faulting on the first break point he conceded to fall 3-1 behind in the second. Djokovic ruthlessly capitalised, sealing the set with another break when Sinner whipped a forehand wide. The Serbian had the momentum. Serbia's Novak Djokovic was not impressed by crowd noise during his team's Davis Cup defeat by Italy on Saturday. Djokovic was on top in the third set with Sinner saving two break points and unable to pressure the Serb's serve. Sinner appeared to crack in the wild 10th game, giving up three match points, but then won five consecutive points to hold for 5-5. He then broke Djokovic and held comfortably to triumph. Italy took the first set of the doubles by breaking Djokovic's serve in the sixth game, as the Serbian duo struggled for a connection. Both sides exchanged breaks in the second set, with Italy struggling through four Serbia break points to hold for 3-3. Djokovic responded to crowd noise from Italy fans between the points, sarcastically encouraging them to make more, before waving his hands like a conductor. It was Italy who were on song though and Sonogo put them a break up for 4-3 with a smash, Serbia's bid ending when Djokovic pushed a Sinner serve into the net. In the first singles rubber Kecmanovic lost a nail-biting first set to Musetti but responded brilliantly. He swept to victory with a powerful forehand winner, falling to the floor in delight, although by the end of a long day, he was left with the opposite feeling. Filippo Volandri's side return to the final 25 years after their last appearance, facing Lleyton Hewitt's Australia, who ended Finland's fairytale run on Friday.

Gut-Behrami Nabs Another Giant Slalom in Killington



KILLINGTON (Dispatches) - Switzerland's Lara Gut-Behrami made it two-for-two in World Cup giant slaloms this season as she powered to victory on the second leg in Killington, Vermont. Gut-Behrami followed up her season-opening win in Soelden last month, beating New Zealand's Alice Robinson by 62-hundredths of a second with US star Mikaela Shiffrin third for a women's record-extending 140th World Cup podium. "I'm just feeling confident now with my GS skiing so everything feels easier," said Gut-Behrami, who became the first Swiss woman to win back to back World Cup giant slaloms since Sonja Nef in 2001. "I'm enjoying what I'm doing so that helps." Skiing in the windiest conditions faced by the top starters on the first leg, Gut-Behrami posted the third-fastest time. An imperious second run saw her seize the lead from Shiffrin, then she watched as Sara Hector of Sweden and Robinson failed to get past her. "It's the first time actually that I'm racing with the red (leader's) bib in GS and I keep it, so that's a nice feeling too," said Gut-Behrami, the 2021 giant slalom world champion who also won the giant slalom at Killington last year. Gut-Behrami, 32, has enjoyed remarkable longevity since her World Cup debut nearly 16 years ago, and since her first victory in December of 2008. On Saturday she notched the 39th World Cup victory of her career - seventh on the all-time list. Also a specialist in super-G, where she is Olympic champion, and downhill, Gut-Behrami could be a rival for Shiffrin in the overall World Cup standings, which she won in 2016. However, Shiffrin, who posted a record-extending 89th career world Cup victory in a slalom at Levi two weeks ago - already leads the overall standings after four races, with 250 points to the Swiss racer's 200. Robinson captured her first podium finish since March of 2021 after two tough seasons that followed her breakout victory at the age of 17 in Soelden in 2019.

Lakers Edge Cavs on Road, 76ers Hold off Thunder

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Los Angeles big man Anthony Davis scored 23 of his season-high 32 points in the second half as the Lakers earned a third straight NBA road win with a hard-fought 121-115 victory over the Cavaliers in Cleveland. Davis added 13 rebounds and three blocked shots, helping the Lakers overcome a slow shooting night from superstar LeBron James against his former club, which honored the league's all-time leading scorer with a video tribute in the first quarter. James connected on just eight of 23 shots - one of nine from three-point range - on the way to 22 points in a nip-and-tuck game that featured 16 lead changes and never saw either team push its lead to double digits. The Cavs' 40-point first quarter saw them up by just five, and they led 71-70 at halftime. Davis's layup - after he rebounded a James miss, put the Lakers up 111-103 with 3:48 to play. The Cavaliers cut the deficit to one with less than two minutes remaining, but James drove for a layup, came up with a steal and threw down a dunk and the Lakers held on. But he hailed a "total team win" after seven of the eight Lakers players who took the court scored in double figures. Donovan Mitchell, back after missing four games with a hamstring injury, finished with 22 points and Jarrett Allen added 21 points and 14 rebounds for the Cavs. In Oklahoma City, Philadelphia's NBA Most Valuable Player Joel Embiid scored 35 points and drained six free throws in the final 9.8 seconds to help the 76ers hold off the Thunder 127-123. Embiid came up just shy of his first triple-double of the season, adding 11 rebounds and nine assists to go with four blocked shots and a steal to help the Sixers end the Thunder's six-game winning streak. Up by nine with 49 seconds remaining, the Sixers saw their lead cut to 121-118 on rookie center Chet Holmgren's dunk with 11.1 seconds to go. Embiid made two free throws, and he responded again at the line after Holmgren twice cut the deficit to two points. Tyrese Maxey scored 28 points and eight rebounds, and Tobias Harris added 16 points for Philadelphia. Holmgren delivered another impressive performance, leading the Thunder with 33 points to go with six rebounds and three blocked shots. Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 31 for the Thunder and guard Josh Giddey finished with 10 points seven rebounds and eight assists. Giddey started despite an investigation by the NBA into an accusation that surfaced on social media that he had an improper relationship with an underage girl. The 21-year-old Australian player has declined to comment on the matter, while Thunder coach Mark Daigneault said Friday that it was now "a league matter." In other games, the Brooklyn Nets snapped a three-game

losing streak with a 112-97 victory over the short-handed Miami Heat. Mikal Bridges scored 24 points and Cam Johnson added 19 points and 10 rebounds for the Nets, who had all five starters score in double figures. Caleb Martin scored 22 off the bench to lead Miami and rookie Jaime Jaquez Jr. scored 18 for the Heat, who played without Jimmy Butler and Bam Adebayo one day after surrendering a 21-point lead in a loss to the New York Knicks at Madison Square Garden.



Barca Fall Behind Atletico After Rayo Draw



MADRID (Dispatches) - Spanish champions Barcelona slipped up in a 1-1 draw at Rayo Vallecano in La Liga, continuing a worrying run of underwhelming performances. Surprise leaders Girona and Real Madrid in second now have the chance to extend their lead on the Catalans, fourth, over the next two days. Antoine Griezmann's header earned Atletico Madrid a 1-0 win over Real Mallorca later Saturday to take the Rojiblancos third, above Barcelona on goal difference, having played a game fewer. Unai Lopez drove Rayo ahead from long range in the first half but Barca levelled through Florian Lejeune's own goal in the 82nd minute. The draw adds to the doubts around Barcelona, who have not been at their best for several weeks and face Porto on Tuesday seeking Champions League knock-out round qualification. "I think it was a game of two halves, in the first we dominated but we weren't aggressive enough to cause damage," said Xavi. "In the second we were, we scored a goal and could have had others ... we need to win these games if we want to win the league." "We have to be self-critical, it's costing us too much this season giving things away... in modern football a lot changes when they score against you." Inaki Pena started in goal for Barca with Marc-Andre ter Stegen out with a back problem, while Xavi turned to the fit-again Frankie de Jong to replace the injured Gavi in midfield. The 19-year-old's cruciate ligament tear will keep him out for the season, with Barcelona losing a player the coach has described as the "soul" of the team. Barcelona players wore shirts before kick-off with his name on the back, and a message saying "we are with you, Gavi". Hosts Rayo started well, encouraged by having beaten Barca on three of their four previous clashes, including twice at their ramshackle Vallecas stadium. They took the lead after 39 minutes when Lopez hammered a superb effort into the bottom right corner from around 30 yards out after the ball was cleared into his path.

Liverpool Hold Man City as Arsenal Go Top

LONDON (Dispatches) - Trent Alexander-Arnold's late equaliser rescued Liverpool in their 1-1 draw at title rivals Manchester City, as Arsenal snatched top spot in the Premier League with a dramatic 1-0 win at Brentford. Alexander-Arnold struck 10 minutes from the end of a tense summit meeting at the Etihad Stadium after Haaland's landmark strike looked like extending City's record home winning run. City had won their previous 23 games on home turf in all competitions, but Liverpool's escape act gave Arsenal the chance to leapfrog both of them into pole position. Haaland converted Nathan Ake's pass with a fine finish from just inside the area in the 27th minute, reaching his half-century of Premier League goals in record time in his 48th appearance. Pep Guardiola's men went flat after that and Alexander-Arnold made them pay, drilling his shot into the bottom corner from the edge of the area before celebrating by putting a finger to his lips the City fans. "It's a tough place to come. If we'd played really well today, we could have won, but we didn't. We played OK," Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp said. "For the moment we're in, we should take the point as a success. I have nothing to complain about." Guardiola was involved in a heated exchange of words with Liverpool forward Darwin Nunez at the final whistle, with Klopp having to lead his player away from the confrontation. "That was an excellent performance. I'm really proud that after eight years we are still playing that way. We were really good in all departments and needed to be against an incredible team," Guardiola said. Arsenal made the most of that result, taking first place thanks to Kai Havertz's late goal in west London. Havertz was a Champions League final hero for Chelsea in 2021, but he has endured a torrid time since crossing London to join Arsenal in the close-season. The 24-year-old midfielder finally gave a glimpse of why Mikel Arteta splashed out £65 million (\$80 million) to sign him when he met Bukayo Saka's cross with a close-range header in the 89th minute. Havertz's second goal for Arsenal was his first in his last 10 appearances, moving his team one point clear of second placed Manchester City. At St James' Park, injury-hit Newcastle crushed Chelsea 4-1 as Blues

boss Mauricio Pochettino labelled his side "soft". Sixth placed Newcastle were stretched so thin that Eddie Howe had to name three goalkeepers

among his substitutes. But they ignored their fitness issues to bounce back from successive defeats against Bournemouth and Borussia Dortmund.

