

Health Ministry Announced on Tuesday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran Increased to 144,048 With 29 More Iranians Killed by the Virus Over the Past 24 Hours

IRAN NEWS

The First Iran Zameen (Homeland Iran) Cultural Exhibition Was Opened on The Kish Island in the Persian Gulf On Tuesday With the Aim of Promoting Tourism and Promoting Tourist Sites of the Island

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U.S. Urged to Abandon Excessive Demands In Vienna Talks

TEHRAN (PressTV) - The Iranian administration's spokesman has underlined the need for the United States to abandon its excessive demands in the Vienna talks aimed at reviving the Iran nuclear deal, saying the current U.S. administration must offer ironclad guarantees that it won't withdraw from the deal once again.

"We (Iran) have never left the negotiating table and we will not do so in the future as well. The opposite side must abandon its excessive demands, and the guarantees given during the negotiations must be reassuring," Ali Bahadori Jahromi told reporters in the capital Tehran on Tuesday.

He went on to point to Tehran's opinion on the US response to an EU draft text for the revival of the deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), stating that negotiations are underway.

"We have been following up on the four [main] issues of guarantees, practical verifications, removal of sanctions in a durable manner, and the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) political claims regarding the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement (CSA) from the onset of the talks," Bahadori Jahromi stated. **See Page 7**

President Administration Hailed For Neighborliness Policy



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The chairman of the Assembly of Experts Ahmad Jannati praised the 13th Iranian government under President Ebrahim Raisi for its good practices in the economic field and for not linking the economy with the nuclear talks.

The Assembly of Experts held its official session on Tuesday chaired by its chairman Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati on Tuesday. During today's session, Ayatollah Jannati hailed the 13th government led by President Ebrahim Raisi for good actions in different fields.

"The government took good measures in various fields and by staying away from the aristocracy and being among the people, we witnessed appropriate behavior from the president and members of the government," the chairman of the Assembly said.

Stating that the issue of the economy and people's livelihood is the country's first priority now, Ayatollah Jannati said, "During this period [since the start of President Raisi's administration], among other measures, the government initiated several economic reforms and brought them to a conclusion, and these reforms in various economic fields, including banking field, must accelerate."

Jannati emphasized that the way to solve the problems is to pay attention to instructions and advice from the Leader of the Islamic Revolution and said the Leader of the Revolution advised the new government to avoid waiting for the results of the talks and asked for not linking the country's economy to the negotiations. "Paying attention to this advice led to very good results."

The senior cleric further praised the neighbor-oriented policy by Raisi administration.

Jannati added that economy and livelihood are still the priority of the people, and the way out of the problems is to follow the recommendations of the leader.

Referring to the Arbaeen rally, he said: "This movement is a manifestation of the people's love for Imam Hussein, and this gathering shows that Imam Hussein's thoughts are becoming more popular every day."

Jannati pointed out that Iran would proceed on the path of growth and development of all institutions in all fields following the Leader's recommendations.

The Iranian official said that eight years of Sacred Defense, economic sanctions, and assassination of nuclear scientists had been big events, each of which was enough to destroy the identity of the nation; adding: "But relying on leadership, we passed through these crises and today we are witnessing the growth and progress of the country."

According to the announcement of Ahmad Khatami, member of the presiding board, the Assembly of Experts has the amendment of the election law on the agenda.

The members of the Assembly of Experts will meet with the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei for their annual meeting on Thursday.

Iran Seeks Expansion of Nuclear Power Plants

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) says the country pursues the "open door policy" and seeks to become a hub for designing and building nuclear power plants.

"We seek to create an open atmosphere and will pursue the open door policy. Fortunately, the preparations for the implementation of this policy have been made," Mohammad Eslami said, addressing a conference on the exchange of modern energy technologies.

He added that pursuing the open door policy as well as new innovations is high on the agenda of the Iranian government, which has prepared a number of strategic documents over the past year to achieve its objectives in this regard.

"We intend to provide various services in the field of nuclear technology, including the development of nuclear power plants and nuclear power generation," the nuclear chief said, adding that the country plans to convert 20 percent of its energy portfolio into nuclear power. **See Page 7**

U.S. Plots in Region to Face Crushing Defeat

TEHRAN (PressTV) - The chief commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Major General Hossein Salami says the United States is unable to implement whatever plots it has concocted for the region and they will "definitely fail."

"The U.S. has 50 percent of the world's military power but it is facing many internal problems," Salami said in an address to a conference of university professors of volunteer Basij forces from across the country in the city of Mashhad.

He said certain videos circulating online show the "collapse of humanity" in the United States. "There is no one to pay attention to the [people's] problems," he said, adding that many European countries also face similar problems.

"Today, the U.S. cannot implement whatever plot it has in the region and its plots will definitely fail," the IRGC commander said.

Salami also maintained that Iran is a frontrunner in many technologies, saying, "We have even surpassed the world's top powers in the field of air defense, to the extent that some superpowers are buying our weapons and offering joint cooperation [with Iran]." **See Page 7**

Europe Badly Needs Iran Oil at a Time of Soaring Gas Prices

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Oil Minister Javad Owji says Europe will badly need supplies of oil from Iran this winter as he insists skyrocketing prices of natural gas in the continent have already push many consumers to switch to crude-based fuels.

Owji said on Monday during a virtual meeting of the global OPEC+ oil producers that unit prices of natural gas had reached the equivalent of \$400 per oil barrel in Europe, forcing many to think of using oil as a cheaper alternative.

"This is a reality that increasing gas prices in the European market is pushing consumers to use oil and oil products and it will be very likely that demand for crude oil will increase in the continent," he was quoted as saying by the IRIB News.

Owji said that the global energy market is in dire need of increased oil and gas supplies from Iran as consumer nations are struggling to avoid a major fuel crisis over the winter.

He said, however, that Iran will be fully ready to make those increased supplies available if the country is relieved of American sanctions. **See Page 7**

Tehran, Moscow Prepare to Sign Tourism Cooperation Deal

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran and Russia have agreed to discuss a deal that will facilitate tourism cooperation between the two countries, according to a senior official in the Iranian tourism ministry (MCTH).

Leila Azhdari, who leads MCTH's Marketing and International Tourism Office, said on Monday that Iranian and Russian tourism authorities had agreed during a technical meeting held last week in Tehran to exchange draft documents that will lead to a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on tourism cooperation between the two countries.

Azhdari said the tourism MoU between Iran and Russia will cover a wide range of activities including training, educational tours and exhibitions.

She said Iran will propose a draft MoU to Russia's Federal Agency for Tourism (Rostourism) based on a timetable agreed in the August 31 meeting.

The official said the MCTH and Rostourism had also agreed to finally start implementing a 2017 agreement that waives visa requirements for group tours between the two countries.

Azhdari said the agreement, which allows visa-free stay in Iran and Russia for 15 days for groups of 5 to 50 travelers, will go into effect on January 1, 2023. **See Page 7**

Iran Not to Accept Ambiguities in Deal

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Russian envoy in Vienna said that it was clear that Iran wouldn't accept loopholes and ambiguities in a possible deal reached through the talk in the Austrian capital.

"It's clear that Iran will not accept loopholes and ambiguities," Permanent Representative of Russia to International Organizations Mikhail Ulyanov said in a tweet on Tuesday.

Ulyanov was responding to a tweet by the Iranian expert on nuclear talks Mohammad Marandi who criticized EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell for misidentifying Iran as the party responsible for the current stagnation in the talks.

Iran and the United States are exchanging comments via the EU coordinator on the recent draft proposed by Borrell to finalize the deal allowing the U.S. to rejoin the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"I am not sure that EU forgot who is responsible for the current situation," Ulyanov added, referring to the US withdrawal from the JCPOA in 2018, which caused all this mess.

The Russian diplomat also said, "Despite complicated character of international relations, participants in the Vienna Talks demonstrated so far the ability to be pragmatic."

Earlier the European Union's foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, said he is "less optimistic" about reaching a quick agreement on revival of the 2015 US-abandoned nuclear agreement, but will continue consultations with all parties to the deal, particularly the United States.

Borrell, who is coordinating bids to salvage the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), told reporters in Brussels on Monday that recent exchanges left him "less confident." **See Page 7**

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Armenia Extradites Six Iranian Prisoners

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Deputy for Human Rights and International Affairs of the Ministry of Justice Fattah Ahmadi said that Armenia extradited six Iranian inmates on Monday evening.

Ahmadi said that six Iranians imprisoned in Armenia for carrying narcotics and a variety of banned pills were transferred to prisons inside Iran to continue the rest of their sentences.

Referring to the current transfer, he noted that it is the 11th transfer of Iranian inmates from Armenia, which happened via Imam Khomeini Airport after the implementation of the agreement between the two states on the extradition of prisoners, he noted.

President Invites Knowledge Enterprises to Transform Agro Sector

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN – President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi has emphasized the need to take advantage of knowledge-based achievements in the field of agriculture, inviting Iranian knowledge enterprises to be widely present in the sector.

Raisi was delivering a speech during a ceremony on the occasion of the beginning of the agricultural year 1401-1402 and honoring the winners of the agricultural sector.

He called agriculture an important and privileged matter, and said, "Agriculture plays an important role in the country's economy and people's livelihood, and plays a very vital role in the country's self-reliance and independence."

The President said that production in the agricultural sector is one of the important components of the country's strength, and stated, "Self-reliance in the agricultural sector is important, and considering the large capacities in the country, we can achieve self-reliance in the field of food security, which is one of the plans of the Ministry of Agricultural Jihad in the 13th Administration".

He also said that the surge in production, self-reliance in agriculture, and food security of the country requires a jihadist approach of all sectors in the Ministry of Agricultural Jihad, and said, "I strongly ask you to increase your efforts for jihad in this direction, meaning that continue along the path quickly and wisely, and be mindful of an enemy before you who does not want you to be self-sufficient".



Raisi stated that we are producers in many sectors today and we have reached self-reliance, adding, "If the country moves with a jihadist approach as well as the correct management of water and agricultural resources, not only the food security of the country will be guaranteed, but the country will be able to reach the export stage".

The President also emphasized the need to take advantage of knowledge-based achievements in the field of agriculture and said, "University professors in the field of science and research in agricultural universities and thousands of academic staff members in these universities should make their efforts in science and research in such a way that our agriculture is done both science-based and knowledge-based."

Raisi said, "The presence of 12,000 faculty members in our agricultural universities is proof of the country's scientific capacity to make agriculture knowledge-based and multiply the results of farmers' efforts."

The President continued, "Universities should help the government and parliament in making decisions, in which case self-reliance can be reached in a limited time frame".

Raisi also emphasized special attention to increasing the productivity in the agricultural sector and stated, "Reforming and changing the cultivation pattern that is suitable for the climate, which is profitable for the farmers and also fulfills the country's need for basic and strategic products, is on the agenda of the government."

Iraq Reassures Security of Arbaeen Pilgrims

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Minister of Interior Ahmad Vahidi said on Monday that the Iraqi government has assured Iran that a good situation and security will be in Iraq for Arbaeen pilgrims.

Referring to the Interior Ministry's measures for Arbaeen pilgrims, Vahidi said that good work has been done at the borders of the country for the pilgrims and they can easily leave the country from the land borders and they have no particular problems in this regard.

Pointing to the issue of security in Iraq, he underscored that the Iraqi government has assured Iran that there will be good conditions and security for Arbaeen pilgrims in Iraq.

Every year, millions of Muslims from Iran, Iraq, and many other countries set out on an 80-kilometer-long walk from the holy city of Najaf, where Imam Hossein's father Imam Ali (AS)'s shrine is located, to Imam Hossein's shrine in Karbala.

Tehran Urges More Security For Embassies in Afghanistan

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has denounced a powerful explosion outside the Russian embassy in Afghanistan, which hit the diplomatic mission's premises in west Kabul's Darulaman neighborhood that killed more than a dozen people, including two employees of the embassy.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani expressed his sympathy with the Russian government and the families of the two victims, as well as those Afghans targeted in the terrorist attack.

He called on the Afghan authorities to take more serious measures to ensure the security of embassies and diplomatic premises in the country.

The Russian foreign ministry in a statement confirmed that two employees of the embassy were killed in the blast.

Earlier, Kabul police said a bomber detonated explosives near the entrance of the Russian embassy in Kabul, adding that the attacker was shot dead by armed guards as he approached the gate of the consular section.

Hours later, the Daesh terrorist organization claimed responsibility for the bombing near Russian embassy in Kabul.

Taliban Minister in Tehran to Discuss Bilateral Cooperation

TEHRAN (MNA) – Qalandar Ibad, the current acting Minister of Public Health of Afghanistan arrived in Tehran on Monday at the head of a health delegation.

According to the announcement by the Afghan Tolo TV channel, the delegation of the Taliban Ministry of Health will hold meetings with the officials of Iran's health ministry during the trip.

The Afghan delegation will focus their trip on cooperation and using Iran's experiences in health issues.

During a meeting with the Iranian health officials, the Taliban health delegation called for cooperation between Iran and Afghanistan in specialized and super-specialized areas.

Also in the meeting, Ibad described the enhancement of capacity and strengthening of educational programs an important issue.

The visit comes more than a week after the acting Taliban government's health minister met with the Iranian Ambassador Bahador Aminian, during which the two sides emphasized completing the construction of Imam Khomeini hospital in Afghanistan Bamyan province, training Afghan medical students in the cancer department, importing medicine and using Iran's health infrastructures.

MP Urges IAEA To Terminate "Accusatory Inspections"

TEHRAN (IRNA) - An Iranian lawmaker said that possible military dimensions (PMD) case for Iran should be closed by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), allowing to put an end to the "accusatory inspections" of the agency.

Fereidoun Abbasi, member of the Iranian Parliament's Energy Commission, underscored the necessity of the Iranian Foreign Ministry's insistence on the United States' providing assurances on a possible deal to revive the 2015 nuclear agreement.

Abbasi said that the West failed to implement 28 provisions of the 2015 deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which led to soaring of the dollar and depreciation of national currency in Iran.

This was followed by a lot of restrictions imposed on Iran and the U.S.' pull-out of the deal which deprived Iran of its real rights in the deal, the lawmaker added.

Asked if solving the safeguards-related issues would serve as a guarantee for a possible deal, he noted that the European participants and the U.S. have raised false allegations against Iran which are pursued by the IAEA.

Not only should the PMD case against Iran be closed, but also Iran should be able to reclaim the status of a normal member of the IAEA and be exonerated from accusatory inspections, the lawmaker continued.

Most IAEA inspectors visiting Iran have espionage motives, he quoted the former head of Atomic Energy Organization of Iran as saying and noted that those inspectors report false allegations and only lead Iran's nuclear issue into a challenging situation.

Abbasi accused the West of being willing to keep Iran's nuclear dossier alive despite Iran's efforts to answer their baseless allegations, underlining that the PMD case should be terminated for that reason.

He called on Iran's negotiating team to insist on Iran's principal stances, preserve the enriched uranium the West wants Iran to get rid of, and avoid reforming Arak heavy water reactor.

The lawmaker also called for lifting the JCPOA-related restrictions on Iran's ability to use plutonium, describing it as the future of the world's energy which Iran shouldn't be deprived of.

Abbasi also emphasized the necessity of the continuation of Iran's right to 90-percent enrichment for scientific and industrial use.

No Impediment in Expansion of Tehran-Vienna Ties

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran's Ambassador to Austria Abbas Ardakani has said that the two countries have great capacities in different fields, making them expand bilateral relations without any impediment.

The Iranian diplomat, who began his mission in Vienna in June 2020, made the comment in an interview with Austria's leading magazine for diplomacy, Cercle Diplomatique.

He said that Iran and Austria established their diplomatic ties 164 years ago when they signed a friendship agreement.

15 years after signing that agreement, the Austrian embassy was opened in Tehran, which was later followed by the opening of the Iranian embassy in the Austrian capital, Ardakani added.

He said that over the past decades, the two sides have kept their ties firm and have always been seeking to further expand their relations.

The Iranian ambassador also announced his country's readiness to deepen economic cooperation with Austria.

Iran Seeks Maximal Dollar Elimination From Foreign Trade

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - A lawmaker said that the government seeks to eliminate the U.S. dollar by as much as possible from its economic and trade exchanges with some countries.

"We are required to be able to carry out our bilateral transactions using the local currencies," Mohsen Zanganeh, vice chairman of the Iranian parliament's Planning and Budget Committee, said.

He also urged the removal of the infrastructure

barriers to accomplish the goal.

On the talks on the revival of a 2015 nuclear deal, Zanganeh said Iran should not tie the country's economy to the fate of the negotiations in order to reduce their impacts on the country's financial system.

The Iranian government's main goal in the nuclear negotiations is to lift the U.S. sanctions which have undoubtedly affected the country's economy and people's livelihood, he noted.

Iran Displays Its Defense Capabilities in Baku Exhibition

TEHRAN (MNA) - The Iranian Deputy Minister of Defense said that Iran has displayed a part of its defense capabilities and achievements in ground-, air- and sea combats at Azerbaijan International Defense Exhibition (ADEX).

The Deputy Minister of Defense Rear Admiral Rastegari along with the accompanying delegation arrived in Azeri capital of Baku on Tuesday with the aim of participating in the Azerbaijan International Defense Exhibition "ADEX".

In the exhibition, Iran has showcased some of its defense industry capabilities in the fields of ground-, air-, and sea combat and a number of new systems in the fields of electro-magnetics, telecommunications, radio and artificial intelligence, Rear Admiral Rastegari stated.

More than 200 companies active in the field of producing defense equipment and machinery from 26 countries have participated in the 4th International Defense Exhibition of the Republic of Azerbaijan and have showcased their latest achievements.

Holding bilateral meetings and expert-level sessions with the representatives of the defense industries of the participating countries in the exhibition have been announced as part of the three-day visit of the Deputy Minister of Defense to the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Sanctions Most Heinous Sort of Terrorism

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Syrian Minister of Foreign Affairs Faisal Mekdad has described the imposition of sanctions as the most malicious kind of terrorism, noting that Iran pursues the nuclear dossier courageously and tactfully.

The Syrian official made the remarks in a meeting with Iranian Vice President and Head of the Administrative and Recruitment Affairs Mesysam Latifi and his companions in Damascus on Monday.

Mekdad condemned the unilateral sanctions imposed by the United States and its Western allies against the Islamic Republic of Iran and Syria, saying that such unilateral actions are immoral and the most malicious sort of terrorism.

He also underlined that Syria stands with Iran when Tehran is following up the nuclear dossier tactfully and courageously.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the Syrian top diplomat referred to the depth of mutual ties between Syria and Iran, calling for the removal of obstacles in the way of

expansion of political and economic cooperation.

Damascus tries to take necessary actions in order to finalize administrative reforms and make use of an experienced and specialized workforce, Mekdad noted.

The Iranian official, for his part, underlined that the two friendly countries enjoy a deep relationship and are determined to enhance collaborations in all fields and make use of all equipment and workforce, which could be in favor of the people of both countries.

Latifi also emphasized that Damascus and Tehran are keen on adopting the necessary steps to strengthen administrative cooperation and implement signed agreements in this respect.

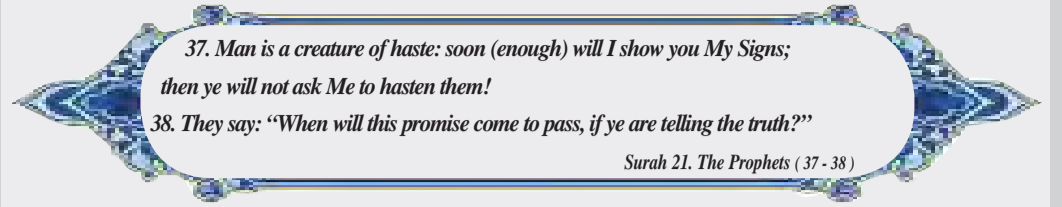
The vice president further noted that Iran is determined to continue support for Syria and its unity.

Prior to the meeting with the Syrian foreign minister, Latifi held talks with Syria's Prime Minister Hussein Arnous.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:02
■ Evening (Maghreb)	19:42
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:16
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:41



No Imports of Cars and Doctors From India

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – A member of board of directors of Iran-India Joint Chamber of Commerce rejected reports that Indian doctors are present in Iran and also reports of importing cars from India.

Speaking to ILNA, Mohammad Hassan Didehvar refuted some reports regarding the presence of Indian doctors in Iran and said it is just an assumption which has been raised by the Health Ministry due to shortage of educates and even this problem has gripped the knowledge-based companies, and in the near future Iran may be forced to import skillful forces like doctors but currently it is not true.

On Iran's frozen money in India, Didehvar said that the amount of Iran's frozen money in India is unknown. Touching upon the amount of the trade exchange between Iran and India, he said that the trade volume of Iran and India in the first 9 months of the year has been around \$2.4b and Iran's non-oil exports account for \$1.34b of the total volume, and the remaining amount accounts for Iran's imports from India. He added that the figure shows that Iran's exports in the first 9 months have increased by 74% comparing to the same period last year while the value of imports have decreased by 37% and this has helped the trade balance between the two countries to become positive in favor of Iran.

Didehvar went on to say that rice is dominating import of Iran from India which is valued around \$220m in 9 months. Black tea and aluminum oxide and green banana are of the major imports of Iran from India, he added.

He said that methanol and ammonia top the list of Iran's exports to India and iron products, pistachio and steel shit are the other major exports of Iran to India. He expressed hope for the rise in exports to India and said that rice is the major traded goods between the two countries.



On the latest agreements and MoUs between Iran and India, Didehvar said that health ministries of the two countries have reached agreements on medicines and they are to implement them. He added that there are some agreements in the field of energy and the government is trying to reduce the levied tariff by India for Iranians, reiterating some of the agreements are being implemented or they are under study.

On the imports of car from India, he said this is not true because India is too weak in exporting cars, and cars in India are manufactured based on the country's climate condition especially fuel and metal used in the cars, adding that ultimately Indians may be able to export some parts. He reiterated that in Iran's car market, the Chinese have been successful and they are working hard to export their products which Iran's market needs.

On the problem of human capital flight and brain wash, he said that some of the top educates of Iran's top industry have left the county and some have remained for serving their military services, reiterating that this problem affects all fields of studies like medical or engineering fields.

Inauguration of Branch for Direct Supply of Speedy Engine Oil in Tehran

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – The ceremony for signing a memorandum of understanding for cooperation between Sepahan Oil Company and Union of Sellers of Filter, Tire and Oil Change Shops of Tehran for direct supply of Speedy engine oil was signed in Tehran on Monday.



According to reports, the CEO of Sepahan Oil Company Mr. Mohammad Amir Nikoo Hemmat, Head of board of directors of Sepahan Oil Company Mr. Mohammad Zeinulabeddini, the CEO of Kimia Speedy Company Mr. Ahmad Hashemi and Head of the Union of Sellers of Filter, Tire and Oil Change Shops Mr. Mohammad Al-e Sara were present in the ceremony where the branch of direct supply of Sepahan Oil Company's products in this union with the goal for transparency, cost-saving, eliminating the middlemen and better access of consumers access was inaugurated.

Addressing the ceremony, Mr. Nikoo Hemmat said that for alleviating the current tension for the price of engine oil in the market, the company started increasing its products and distributing carefully and this action caused the engine oil price in the market to come under control; to some extent.

He added that there are some 204 small and large producing companies for engine oil and its by-products, adding that out of the mentioned figure, four are main refineries which account for 85% of the total production. He went on to say that the remaining 15% of production is produced by 200 companies which produce their products from recycled oil, and the fake engine oils are among this category.

Nikoo Hemmat added that due to some measures taken in the country, the amount of engine oil production rose, noting that the amount of production in the first month of the year Farvardin was 8,000 tons but it was enhanced to 15,000 tons in the fifth month of the year Mordad and the figure is increasing to 16,000 tons this month and to 17,000 tons next week.

TCCIMA to Host Iran-Armenia Banking Forum

TEHRAN (MNA) - Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) will host an Iran-Armenia banking forum on Sunday (September 11).

The event will be held in collaboration with Iran-Armenia Joint Chamber of Commerce, and is aimed at presenting the latest developments in bilateral relations and opportunities for cooperation, in the continuation of the progress of negotiations on the preferential trade agreement between Iran

and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU).

Head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Alireza Peyman-Pak on Sunday hosted a meeting with Armenia's Deputy Economy Minister Narek Teryan in which the officials talked about a variety of areas for economic cooperation between the two countries.

The development of trade relations, alternative ways of transit, barter trade, the establishment of an Iranian car production line in Armenia, and the establishment of a joint production line of household and electronic appliances were among the subjects discussed at the meeting.

During the talks, Peyman-Pak expressed the readiness of Iranian contractors and companies to participate in Armenia's transportation projects and called on the Armenia side to reconsider some of the regulations regarding taxes and transit tolls.

Welcoming the presence of Iranian companies in the road construction projects of Armenia, Teryan for his part said: "From Armenia's point of view, revising the tax and toll regulations is a very important issue; Our experts conducted many studies in this regard the result of which will have a great impact on the development of trade relations between the two countries."

For the First Time in Country Due to Efforts of Kalaresan Bahar Kish Company Knowledge-Based Machine for Small Package Transportation Unveiled



Yari stated: The knowledge-based Sanjino machine of Kalaresan has been unveiled with the aim of providing a fair price list and tariff in exchange for sending cargo under different conditions. He continued: This machine calculates the bill of lading rate based on the weight and volume of the load, according to the measured distance from the origin to the destination, and offers a fixed rate to the customer, and this causes the agreed and variable rates that are charged for one load. The fixed fee imposed on the customer by bus passenger cooperatives should be dismantled. Yari said: The freight bill rate is measured by Sanjino's knowledge-based system based on the weight and volume of the cargo and the distance between the origin and the destination, and the freight forwarder receives a fixed amount for transporting the same consignments. He stated: Sanjino machine of Kalaresan machine is able to measure loads with maximum dimensions of 1 x 1 x 1 meter up to a maximum of 200 kg, which is due to the limitation of cargo boxes of passenger buses. Regarding the competitors of this company, he said: the main competitor of the cargo carrier is the cooperatives, and the main competitive advantage of the cargo carrier compared to the competitors is fair pricing, determining the price based on the volumetric weight of the shipment, and declaring the weight of the shipment, which until today is in the retail transportation fleet by the network. There was no passenger bus. The CEO of Kalaresan stated: This company plans first to install the Sanjino knowledge-based machine at Beyhaqi terminal and in the next three months at all passenger bus terminals in Tehran province, and at the next stage, this

machine will be installed at Isfahan terminals and then at all centers of the provinces will be installed in the next year. Regarding the competitive advantages of Kalaresan, Yari said: Another competitive advantage of this company is the installation of an X-ray machine in its warehouse, which controls incoming goods to prevent the transportation of prohibited goods such as drugs, weapons, alcoholic beverages, and the like. He said: This is the first time that the X-ray machine is installed in the terminal of small cargo transportation in passenger bus terminals, which prevents the transportation of prohibited and unauthorized goods. He continued: Another competitive advantage of Kalaresan is the basic insurance of all bills of lading up to one million tomans, of course, according to the customer's request, it is possible to determine insurance up to 100 million tomans for bills of lading without an expert. He said: All the warehouses located in the passenger terminals of Kalaresan have been equipped with the smart warehouse handling management system of RFID for accuracy in the shipment process. He clarified: This company has also unveiled smart cash boxes on a trial basis to speed up its internal operational process and create a new service to deliver parcels to customers outside the warehouses 24 hours a day, seven days a week. He said: Kalaresan Bahar Kish is an active company in the field of postal mail transportation through passenger bus terminals, and its activity in the field of postal mail transportation is aimed at organizing this market and sending mail safely and quickly to all cities of Iran. It started about 20 years ago at Beyhaqi passenger terminal in Tehran.

For the first time in the country, the Sanjino machine, which is a knowledge-based tool for measuring the weight and volume of small parcels, was unveiled. At the unveiling ceremony of this product, Aydin Naraghi, the CEO of Kalaresan Bahar Kish, stated that the Sanjino machine is capable of intelligently calculating the cost of sending and issuing invoices based on distance, weight and dimensions, and added: due to the growing trend of the volume of sending goods to the regions in different countries, the use of this device can increase the accuracy and organization of retail shipment in addition to speeding up the processes. He stated: Currently, this company is present in all the cities of the country that have bus terminals, and sends and receives postal items through the bus network to all parts of the country. Naraghi stated that the Kalaresan Company has provided job creation for three thousand people directly and indirectly, including operational and executive personnel, and added: This volume of job creation includes the distribution network and the collection network, including motor couriers and pickup trucks, as well as the country's bus fleet. He said: In the conditions of Corona, when the number of passengers in the country's inter-road bus fleet had decreased, the income of these companies was provided by the transportation of small cargo by couriers. Amir Hossein Yari, executive director of Kalaresan, also said: Door-to-door transportation service has also been launched by this company as a logistics service, and soon this service will be launched exclusively by the team of this company in order to reduce the cost imposed on the customer. He clarified: Currently, the supplier is developing the door-to-door service infrastructure to send the goods from the door of the home or workplace of origin to the destination.

Canada Hunts Suspects In Stabbing Spree

WELDON (Dispatches) - Canadian police hunted for two suspects in a stabbing spree that killed 10 people and wounded at least 15 others mostly in a sparsely populated indigenous community early Sunday.

The stabbings across 13 crime scenes were among the deadliest mass killings in modern Canadian history and certain to reverberate throughout the country, which is unaccustomed to bouts of mass violence more commonly seen in the United States.

"I am shocked and devastated by the horrific attacks today," Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said in a statement. "As Canadians, we mourn with everyone affected by this tragic violence, and with the people of Saskatchewan."



Kenya Supreme Court Upholds Ruto's Presidential Victory

NAIROBI (Dispatches) - Kenya's Supreme Court on Monday unanimously upheld William Ruto's presidential win in a scathing judgment that blasted opposition leader Raila Odinga's accusations of cheating.

Soon after, Odinga tweeted that he would respect the ruling even though he disagreed with it, easing fears that Kenya would see any repeat of the violence that followed disputed votes in 2007 and 2017.

Several public figures and anti-corruption campaigners - including some who had backed Odinga - welcomed the judgment, saying it bolstered the court's reputation for independence. "This decision is good for the judiciary. This election result is bad for Kenya. Two things can be true at the same time," tweeted author Nanjala Nyabola, who had not backed either candidate.



Kyiv Claims Battlefield Gains as Russian Gas Shutdown Hits Europe



KYIV (Dispatches) - Ukraine made its boldest claim yet of success on the battlefield in its week-old counter-offensive against Russian forces in the south, while European markets went into free-fall after Russia kept its main gas pipeline to Germany shut.

Following days of silence about their new offensive, Ukrainian officials posted an image online of three soldiers raising a flag over a town in Kherson province, a southern region occupied by Russia since the war's early days.

The image of the flag being fixed to a pole on a rooftop, purportedly in Vysokopyllyia in the north of Kherson, was released as President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Ukrainian forces had captured two towns in the south and one in the east. In an overnight address, he did not identify the locations.

After months of enduring punishing Russian artillery assaults in the east, Ukraine has at last begun its long-awaited counter-attack, its biggest since it repelled Russian forces from the outskirts of Kyiv in March.

Ukraine had kept most details of its new campaign under wraps, banning journalists from the frontline and offering little public commentary in order to preserve tactical surprise.

Russia has said it has pushed back assaults in Kherson, but in a rare acknowledgment of the Ukrainian counter-offensive, TASS news agency quoted a Moscow-installed official in the region as saying plans for a referendum on joining Russia had been put on hold due to the security situation.

Mark Hertling, a retired former commander of U.S. ground forces in Europe, said Kyiv's aim seemed to be to trap thousands of Russian troops on the east bank of the vast Dniro River, destroying bridges that are both supply and escape routes.

Russia had left "a force in Kherson, with a river at their back & limited supply lines", and Ukraine was hitting them with "precision weapons", Hertling tweeted.

Zelenskyy's announcement that a town had been captured in the east suggested Ukraine was taking advantage of pressure in the south to try to reverse some of the gains Russia made elsewhere in recent months.

In his evening address on Sunday, Zelenskyy tempered his announcements of success with a warning to European countries that they could face a cold winter.

Moscow blames disruption to equipment repairs and maintenance caused by Western sanctions for its halt to the flow of gas through Nord Stream 1, its main pipeline to Germany. Russia was due to reopen the pipeline on Saturday but has said it will stay shut indefinitely.

"Problems with gas supply arose because of the sanctions imposed on our country by Western states, including Germany and Britain," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Monday.

European countries and the United States say Russia is using energy as a weapon but that they are collaborating to ensure supplies.

"As a result of these efforts, European gas storage will be full by the critical winter heating season," a White House official said. "We have more work to do."

Ukrainian firefighters put out fire in a residential house after a Russian military strike, as Russia's attack in Ukraine continues, in Bakhmut, Donetsk region, Ukraine September 5, 2022. REUTERS/Alex Babenko.

Led by Germany, European countries have rolled out billions of euros in aid for consumers and businesses, which last week helped drive European gas prices back down sharply from record highs.

But the weekend news about Nord Stream's extended shutdown sent prices soaring once again on Monday, with the main European benchmark up by more than 35%, bringing fears of a bleak winter for consumers and businesses across the continent.

Chile Rejects Draft Constitution

SANTIAGO (Dispatches) - Chileans have overwhelmingly rejected a draft constitution that would have replaced the constitution adopted during Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship.

Analysts say some of the proposals it contained were too radical for most voters -- a majority of whom have made it clear they want a new constitution, just not this one.

Here are five things to know about possible factors behind the Sunday vote, in which 61.9 percent of voters rejected the draft constitution:

Much of the drafting process was combative, with even the constitutional assembly's opening session marred by protests from its own members.

Several issues had to be shelved, with negotiators unwilling to compromise, and there were numerous verbal assaults.

"More than the result of the text itself, what people had been evaluating poorly... was the way this process unfolded," political analyst Marco Moreno of the Central University of Chile told AFP.

Voters were put off by disrespectful behavior and "excesses" on the part of some assembly members, he said.

One member reportedly cast a vote from the shower, for example, while others came to work dressed as the Pokemon character Pikachu or a dinosaur.

Many of the draft's most ground-breaking proposals raised concerns that things may be changing too much, too fast.

"There was certain content... that generated resistance from broad sectors of society and increased levels of fear and uncertainty," said Marcelo Mella, a political scientist at the University of Santiago.

Catholic-majority Chile was deeply divided on draft proposals guaranteeing the right to abortion, declaring access to water and health care as human rights, and specifically recognizing Indigenous rights, which some say undermines the goal of national unity.



Iraq Powers Agree to Work Towards Snap Elections

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) - Iraq's top executive powers and major parties agreed Monday at a meeting boycotted by powerful Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr to work towards holding early elections, a week after deadly unrest, the prime minister's office said.

The president, prime minister and parliament speaker met with representatives of political parties to chart an exit from an 11-month-long political paralysis.

They "agreed to form a technical committee comprising the various political forces... to bridge differences with the aim of reaching early elections", Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhemi's office said in a statement.

Early elections have been a key demand of Sadr and his supporters who have called for the dissolution of parliament.

Sadr's rivals in the Coordination Framework want a new head of government appointed before new polls are held.

Under the constitution, parliament can only be dissolved by an absolute majority vote in the house, following a request by one-third of deputies or by the prime minister with the approval of the president.

Participants at Monday's meeting "renewed their invitation for brothers in the Sadrist movement to take part in technical and political meetings... to reach a solution," the statement said.

The dialogue was the second of its kind following an initial meeting last month, also boycotted by Sadr.

It came a week after Sadr supporters clashed with the army and Iran-backed factions after they stormed government headquarters in the capital's fortified Green Zone.

More than 30 Sadr supporters were killed and hundreds injured in nearly 24 hours of violence that ended when Sadr called on his supporters to pull out. Sadr's bloc emerged from elections last October as the biggest in the legislature, with 73 seats, but far short of a majority.

Serbian PM Visits Northern Kosovo After Unrest

MITROVICA (Dispatches) - Serbian Prime Minister Ana Brnabic travelled to northern Kosovo, marking the first trip by a senior official from Belgrade to the former breakaway province in years following a recent bout of unrest.

The visit comes just over a week after Serbia and Kosovo signed a landmark arrangement that will allow for the free movement of their citizens between the long-time rivals' territories.

The deal followed weeks of negotiations in Brussels after northern Kosovo was rocked by unrest this summer with Serb protesters blocking border crossings and firing at police over a plan by Kosovo authorities to introduce a new set of travel documents for people entering the territory with Serbian IDs.

In the ethnically divided city of Mitrovica, about a thousand local Serbs greeted Brnabic, waving Serbian flags and holding signs that read "We have only one prime minister" and "Welcome to Serbia, holy land of Kosovo".

"I sincerely hope that the temporary institutions in Pristina become genuinely committed to dialogue and finding a certain compromise needed for long-term normalisation of ties between Belgrade and Pristina," said Brnabic during a press conference, referring to Kosovo authorities.

"That is something we need -- not just for our European integration -- but for ourselves," she added.

Serbia has been a candidate to join the European Union since 2012, however, most experts doubt the country stands a chance of entering the bloc until Belgrade hammers a deal to normalise ties with Kosovo.

Brnabic's delegation travelled with a heavy security detail, while NATO troops were stationed along the main roads in the area and a helicopter circled overhead.

During her one-day Kosovo tour, the 46-year-old was set to visit educational facilities, a Serbian Orthodox monastery, and chat with local farmers.

The area has long been a flashpoint between the two communities following the bitter war in the 1990s that triggered a NATO bombing campaign paving the way for Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence from Serbia in 2008.

Serbia deeply resents Kosovo's breakaway status and has never recognised its independence.

Serbs in northern Kosovo have long refused to acknowledge Pristina's authority and have largely remained loyal to the Serbian government in Belgrade.

Another point of tension between the two countries has been over vehicle licence plates that Pristina has imposed across Kosovo, including on the Serbian minority living in the north.

On Sunday, Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic said both Germany and France have offered to send additional envoys to assist in the negotiations with Pristina.

Kosovo's ethnic Albanian majority fought Serbian forces in 1999 with support from NATO warplanes.

In 2008 it declared independence, which has been recognised by most, but not all, EU member states.

The latest unrest in Kosovo prompted NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg to say that the 3,700 NATO peacekeepers deployed in Kosovo would do what was necessary to ensure a secure environment.



Pakistan Struggles to Avert Danger as Floods Rise

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - Pakistani authorities are struggling to prevent the country's biggest lake bursting its banks and inundating nearby towns after unprecedented flooding, while the disaster management agency today raised its toll of flood deaths by another 24.

Record monsoon rains and melting glaciers in Pakistan's northern mountains have brought floods that have affected 33 million people and killed at least 1,314, including 458 children, Pakistan's National Disaster Management Agency said.

The floods have followed record-breaking summer temperatures and the government and the United Nations have both blamed climate change for the extreme weather and the devastation it has brought.

Authorities on Sunday breached Pakistan's largest freshwater lake, displacing up to 100,000 people from their homes in the hope of draining enough water to stop the lake bursting its banks and swamping more densely populated areas.

But water levels in the lake, to the west of the Indus river in the southern province of Sindh, remain dangerously high.

"The water level at Manchar lake has not come down," Jam Khan Shoro, the provincial minister for irrigation told Reuters.

He declined to say if another attempt to drain water from the lake would be made. The floods have led to a growing humanitarian crisis, with officials especially concerned about the wellbeing of pregnant women and young mothers.

Over 400,000 pregnant women in badly affected Sindh province have been displaced by the floods, with only 891 making it to relief camps, according to data from the provincial government released on Friday.

The relief effort is a huge burden for an economy already needing help from the International Monetary Fund.

The United Nations has called for US\$160 million (RM718 million) in aid to help the victims of the floods but Finance Minister Miftah Ismail said the cost of the damage was far higher than that.

"The total damage is close to US\$10 billion, perhaps more," Ismail said in an interview with CNBC.

"Clearly it is not enough. In spite of meagre resources Pakistan will have to do much of the heavy lifting." Nevertheless, help from abroad is arriving.



Norway's Future CO2 Cemetery Takes Shape



OYGARDEN (Dispatches) - On the shores of an island off Norway's North Sea coast, engineers are building a burial ground for unwanted greenhouse gas.

The future terminal is to pump tonnes of liquefied carbon dioxide captured from the top of factory chimneys across Europe into cavities deep below the seabed.

The project in the western municipality of Oygarden aims to prevent the gas from entering the atmosphere and contributing to global warming.

It "is the world's first open-access transport and storage infrastructure, allowing any emitter that has captured his CO2 emissions to deliver that CO2 for safe handling, transport and then permanent storage," project manager Sverre Overa told AFP.

As the planet struggles to meet its climate targets, some climate experts see the technique, called carbon capture and storage, or CCS, as a means to partially reduce emissions from fossil-fuel-based industries.

Norway is the biggest hydrocarbon producer in Western Europe, but it also boasts the best CO2 storage prospects on the continent, especially in its depleted North Sea oil fields.

The government has financed 80 percent of the infrastructure, putting 1.7 billion euros (\$1.7 billion) on the table as part of a wider state plan to develop the technology.

A cement factory and a waste-to-energy plant in the Oslo region are set to send their CO2 to the site. But the most original feature of the project is on the commercial side: inviting foreign firms to send their CO2 pollution to be buried out of harm's way.

Using CCS to curb carbon pollution is not a new idea, but despite generous subsidies the technology has never taken off, mainly because it is so costly.

One of the world's largest carbon capture facilities, at the Petra Nova coal-fired plant in Texas, was mothballed in 2020 because it was not economical.

There are only a couple of dozen operational CCS projects around the world, according to the industry-run Global CCS Institute.

But the failure to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in line with Paris Agreement goals and a massive influx of government subsidies have breathed new life into the technology.

Energy giants Equinor, TotalEnergies and Shell have set up a partnership -- dubbed Northern Lights -- which will be the world's first cross-border CO2 transport and storage service at its scheduled launch in 2024.

A pipeline will inject the liquefied CO2 into geological pockets 2,600 metres below the ocean floor, and the idea is that it will remain there for good.

On Monday, the Northern Lights partners announced a first cross-border commercial agreement. From 2025, it is to ensure 800,000 tonnes of CO2 are captured each year at a plant in the Netherlands owned by Norwegian fertiliser manufacturer Yara, then shipped to Oygarden and stored there.

On Tuesday, two energy firms -- Norway's oil and gas giant Equinor and Germany's Wintershall Dea -- announced a project to take carbon dioxide captured in Germany to the Norwegian offshore storage site.

If confirmed, the partnership between Equinor and Wintershall Dea could involve building a 900-kilometre (560-mile) pipeline connecting a CO2 collection facility in northern Germany with storage sites in Norway by 2032.

A similar project with Belgium is already in the works. In its first phase, the Northern Lights scheme will be able to process 1.5 million tons of CO2 per year, then later between five and six million tons.

Money Transfer Firms Replace Banks in Crisis-Hit Lebanon



BEIRUT (Dispatches) - Like many people in crisis-hit Lebanon, Elias Skaff used to wait for hours to withdraw cash at the bank but now prefers money transfer companies as trust in lenders has evaporated.

Anyone who relies on traditional banks to receive their money "will die 100 times before cashing it", said Skaff, 50, who has survived Lebanon's three-year-old economic downturn with the help of US dollar payments from a relative abroad.

Once the flagship of Lebanon's economy, the banking sector is now widely despised and avoided after banks barred depositors from accessing their savings, stopped offering loans and closed hundreds of branches and slashed thousands of jobs.

Last month, a local man was widely cheered as a folk hero after he stormed a Beirut bank with a rifle and held employees and customers hostage for hours to demand some of his \$200,000 in frozen savings to pay hospital bills for his sick father.

Increasingly, as Lebanon's deep crisis shows no sign of abating, money transfer agencies are filling the gap, also offering currency exchange, credit card and tax payment services and even setting up wedding gift registries.

Skaff said he now receives his money via a Beirut branch of Western Union's Lebanese agent OMT, which says it operates more than 1,200 branches nationwide and handles 80 percent of money transfers outside the Lebanese banking sector.

"We create services similar to those that banks provide at the request of our customers," said OMT spokesman Naji Abou Zeid.

Lebanon has been battered by its worst-ever economic crisis since the financial sector went into meltdown in 2019. The local currency has lost more than 90 percent of its value on the black market, as poverty and unemployment have soared.

Angry protesters have often targeted banks, trashing their ATM machines with rocks and spray cans.

"We can't even withdraw a penny" from the bank, said 45-year-old Alaa Sheikhan, a customer standing in line at an OMT branch.

"How are we supposed to trust them with our money?"

Elie, 36, who recently got married, said he used Whish Money, a Lebanese money transfer firm, to set up his wedding gift registry, something he said saved wedding guests time, hassle and money in fees.

"Rather than waiting for hours at the bank, which is often crowded, they can hand over the money to an agency," said the man who asked not to be fully named. "In terms of time saved and costs, it's incomparable."

Whish Money's marketing director Dina Daher said the company is winning customers by charging "zero fees" on Lebanese pound transfers.

Some companies are now even paying salaries through money transfer companies instead of banks.

"When the crisis began, we were forced to pay salaries in cash, and it was a waste of time," because accountants had to count out large bundles of banknotes, said Rachele Bou Nader, a human resources manager.

But now her firm, sporting goods retailer Mike Sport, pays its employees through Whish, allowing them to "withdraw their salary easily, in instalments, and free of charge", said Bou Nader.

Sami Nader, director of the Levant Institute for Strategic Affairs, said remittances from the Lebanese diaspora have become crucial to help families weather the crushing economic crisis.



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French Services Sector Ekes Out Growth in August

PARIS (Dispatches) - France's dominant services sector lost more steam in August, and the outlook among purchasing managers appears bleak, a survey showed.

S&P Global said its final monthly purchasing managers index for services in August fell to 51.2 points from 53.2 in July, slightly up from an initial late-August estimate of 51.0 points. Readings above 50.0 denote an expansion in activity.

"French service sector activity appears to be moving gradually towards stagnation territory, and forward-looking indicators suggest worse is to come," said S&P economist Andrew Harker in a statement.

The composite PMI index, which includes the services and manufacturing sectors, last month stood on the edge of stagnation at 50.4 points, down from 51.7 in July. New orders in the services sector dropped below the 50-point mark for the first time since early 2021, and business expectations slumped to a 21-months low.



Europe Heading for Recession as Cost of Living Crisis Deepens

LONDON (Dispatches) - The euro zone is almost certainly entering a recession, with surveys showing a deepening cost of living crisis and a gloomy outlook that is keeping consumers wary of spending.

While there was some easing of price pressures, according to the surveys, they remained high and the European Central Bank is under pressure as inflation is running at more than four times its 2% target, reaching a record 9.1% last month.

It faces the prospect of raising interest rates aggressively just as the economy enters a downturn.

A rise in borrowing costs would add to the woes of indebted consumers, yet in a Reuters poll last week almost half of the economists surveyed said they expect an unprecedented 75 basis-point rate hike from the ECB this week, while almost as many forecast a 50 bps hike.

Despite those expectations the euro dropped below 99 U.S. cents for the first time in 20 years on Monday after Russia said gas supply down its main pipeline to Europe would stay shut indefinitely.

Gas prices on the continent soared as much as 30% on Monday, stoking fears of shortages and reinforcing expectations for a recession and a bitter winter as businesses and households are battered by sky-high energy prices.

S&P Global's final composite Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), seen as a guide to economic health, fell to an 18-month low of 48.9 in August from July's 49.9, below a preliminary 49.2 estimate. Anything below 50 indicates contraction.

"The PMI surveys signal that the euro area is entering recession earlier than we previously thought, led by its largest economy Germany, and we now see the euro area 'enjoying' a longer, three quarter recession," said Peter Schaffrik at the Royal Bank of Canada.

"The revision is mainly due to developments in energy prices which, even after retreating over recent days, remain elevated and which mean that the impact on household spending will be larger than we hitherto anticipated."

That prospect of recession whacked investor morale in the currency union and it slumped in September to its lowest since May 2020, another survey showed.

Services activity in Germany, Europe's largest economy, contracted for a second month running in August as domestic demand came under pressure from soaring inflation and faltering confidence, earlier figures showed.

Its economy is on track to contract for three consecutive quarters starting from this one, a Reuters poll suggested last week.

In France, the euro zone's second-largest economy, the services sector lost more steam and only managed to eke out modest growth with purchasing managers saying the outlook was bleak.

The Italian services industry returned to modest growth but in Spain activity expanded at the slowest rate since January, with companies concerned inflation would weigh on their profits and on customers' demand.

In Britain, the economy ended August on a much weaker footing than previously thought as overall business activity contracted for the first time since February 2021 in a clear signal of recession, its PMI showed.

Japan's Record Military Spending Request Set to Boost Budget

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Japan's government ministries have made budget requests totalling \$784 billion for the next fiscal year - their second-largest total to date, driven largely by the defense ministry's request for a rise in spending to record levels.

The combined total spending requests made for next year's budget came to 110.05 trillion yen, the Finance Ministry said, not far off requests for this financial year that came in at 111.7 trillion yen.

This fiscal year's initial budget has ended up being trimmed to 107 trillion yen, still a record amount.

The budget may be inflated further as some items were requested without an amount being specified in areas such as defense and decarbonisation.

"Spending pressure appears to be strong. Large-scale spending looks set to continue for a while given investment in defense and decarbonisation," said Takuya Hoshino, senior economist at Dai-ichi Life Research Institute.

"The government has no choice but to sell more bonds for the time being, which must be repaid by sales tax hikes in future." In a rare step, the government has included measures to respond to currency moves as items for consideration, as the yen's slide to a 24-year low beyond 140 to the dollar has stoked policymakers' concerns about rising living costs.

If next year's budget does exceed this year's, it would be the 11th year in a row of record budgets.

The requests will be reviewed by the finance ministry by December, when the government compiles a draft of next fiscal year's budget.

The ministries have requested a combined 4.3 trillion yen for growth areas under Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's "new capitalism" goal targeting an ecological and digital transformation.

The defense ministry has requested a record 5.6 trillion yen to spend, planning to develop and mass produce a cruise missile and a high-velocity ballistic missile as part of the country's preparations to counter threats from China and Russia.

Money for social security and debt-servicing made up more than half of the budget requests. Japan has the industrial world's heaviest debt load at more than double the size of the economy.

OPEC + Agrees Small Oil Production Cut

LONDON (Dispatches) - OPEC and its allies led by Russia agreed a small oil production cut to bolster prices that have slid on fears of an economic slowdown.

The oil producers will reduce output by 100,000 barrels per day (bpd), amounting to only 0.1% of global demand, for October and also agreed they could meet any time to adjust production before the next scheduled meeting on Oct. 5.

The decision essentially maintains the status quo as OPEC has been observing wild fluctuations in oil prices. "OPEC+ is wary of protracted price volatility generated by weak macro sentiment, thin liquidity and renewed China lockdowns, as well as uncertainty over a potential U.S.-Iran deal and efforts to create a Russian oil price cap," said Matthew Holland at Energy Aspects.

Top OPEC producer Saudi Arabia last month flagged the possibility of output cuts to address what it sees as exaggerated oil price declines.

Benchmark Brent crude oil has dropped to about \$95 a barrel from \$120 in June on fears of an economic slowdown and recession in the West.

It was also dragged down by a potential supply boost from Iranian crude returning to the market if Tehran is able to revive its 2015 nuclear deal with global powers.

"The political angle, it seems, is a Saudi message to the U.S. about the revival of the Iranian nuclear agreement ... It is hard to interpret the decision as anything but price supportive," said Tamas Varga of oil broker PVM.

China Central Bank to Cut FX Reserve Ratio

SHANGHAI (Dispatches) - China's central bank said on Monday it will cut the amount of foreign exchange reserves that financial institutions must hold, a move seen as aimed at slowing the yuan's recent depreciation.

The People's Bank of China said it would cut the foreign exchange reserve requirement ratio (RRR) to 6% from 8% beginning Sept. 15, according to an online statement.

The PBOC said the reduction aimed to improve "financial institutions' ability to use foreign exchange capital," the statement added.

The move came after the Chinese yuan's recent

slide to two-year lows. The yuan has depreciated by 8% against the dollar in the year to date, as a result of broad dollar strength in global markets and China's worsening economic slowdown.

The reduction in reserve requirements would boost dollar liquidity. Based on end July data, when foreign exchange reserves stood at \$953.7 billion, the lower requirements would free up around \$19 billion. "It is not a huge amount compared to cross border receipts," said Frances Cheung, rate strategist at OCBC Bank.

"Still, the market is mindful of the signal the central bank sends."

Both onshore and offshore yuan briefly bounced about 200 pips following the PBOC statement and pared some of their earlier losses.

Some traders and analysts said the cut was expected and was partly a signal to the market that rapid declines in the yuan would be unwelcome.

"As recent daily yuan midpoint fixings persistently came in stronger than market expectations, the PBOC's official action to stabilise the yuan was already within market expectations," said Ken Cheung, chief Asian FX strategist at Mizuho Bank. The PBOC has been setting firmer-than-expected midpoint guidance rates over the past two weeks, with many market participants interpreting it as a sign of official efforts to rein in the yuan's weakness.

Bruce Pang, chief economist at Jones Lang Lasalle, said Monday's announcement showed that the authorities have started to adopt appropriate policy tools and macro-prudential tools to iron out excess yuan volatilities.

"It could cool down one-way depreciation bets against the yuan and alleviate the pressure of a fast yuan depreciation," Pang added.

Major investment houses have cut their yuan forecasts as its fall against the dollar accelerated since mid-August, with some expecting a breach of the 7-per-dollar milestone before next month's politically sensitive Party Congress despite authorities' efforts to slow the slide.

The PBOC last cut the FX reserve requirement ratio by 100 basis points in April, in a bid to rein in a sliding yuan and make it less expensive for banks to hold dollars.

IMF Calls for EU Fiscal Capacity, Rules to Be Linked to Risk

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - The European Union should set up a fiscal capacity to pay for EU public goods, link the pace of debt cuts to individual country risk and let independent fiscal councils play a bigger role in policy, the International Monetary Fund said.

The IMF proposal is timed to coincide with the start of discussions among EU finance ministers later this week on how to adapt the EU fiscal framework to the new reality of huge public debt and large investment needs to limit climate change.

The EU's fiscal rules are to safeguard the value of the euro by putting limits on government borrowing. They set a ceiling for government deficit at 3% of GDP and for public debt at 60% of GDP and envisage disciplinary steps if the limits are broken.

But after the COVID pandemic the debt ratios have become as diverse as 190% of GDP in Greece to 17.6% in Estonia and the existing debt reduction rules are not feasible for highly-indebted governments.

The IMF therefore proposed that each country should have a different debt reduction path. "The speed and ambition of fiscal adjustments would be linked to the degree of fiscal risks," the IMF proposal said.

The risk level would be set by a debt sustainability analysis with an agreed common methodology, developed by a new and independent European Fiscal Council, or deputy EU finance ministers grouped in the EU's Economic and Financial Committee.

"Countries with greater fiscal risks would need to converge to a zero or positive overall fiscal balance over the next three to five years," the IMF said.

"Countries with lower fiscal risks and debt below 60 percent would have more flexibility but still need to consider risks in their plans," it said.

The IMF said independent national fiscal councils should play a bigger role in policy making by endorsing macroeconomic projections, assessing fiscal risks and ensuring the consistency of expenditure ceilings and fiscal plans.

The EU should also set up a fiscal capacity for macroeconomic stabilization and to provide common public goods at the EU level, the IMF said, repeating a proposal that has in the past been rejected by EU governments.

But the situation has changed as climate change has become an existential challenge and the EU's post-pandemic recovery fund broke the taboo of joint EU borrowing.

The IMF said the public goods paid for by the new fiscal capacity could be linked to fighting climate change and the EU's energy security infrastructure.

India's August Trade Deficit Eases From Record Levels



MUMBAI (Dispatches) - India reported that its trade deficit narrowed slightly to \$28.7 billion in August from a record high of \$30 billion in the previous month. Here are the views of some analysts:

"Though the August print marks a moderation from July's record trade deficit, the deficit remains at unsustainably high levels, and is likely to raise financing concerns," Rahul Bajoria, chief India economist, said in a note.

Bajoria forecast India's current account deficit (CAD) will rise to \$115 billion (3.3% of GDP) in FY22-23.

"With the trade deficit staying at uncomfortably elevated levels, we acknowledge upside risk to our current account deficit forecasts, despite the recent fall in commodity prices."

"India's trade deficit contracted... driven by a lower oil trade deficit as oil imports contracted more than exports," Goldman Sachs economist Santanu Sengupta said. Oil imports declined by \$3.5bn to \$17.6 billion from \$21.1 billion in July.

He pegged India's CAD at 3.3% of GDP in 2022, given elevated commodity prices, weaker global growth and a relatively resilient domestic economic recovery.

"Adjusting for the successively higher trade deficit in the past few months, we expect the current account deficit to widen to around 3.7% of GDP in quarter ending Jun-22 and further to around 5% of GDP in quarter ending Sep-22," said Upasana Chachra, Morgan Stanley's chief India economist.

"Recent moderation and stabilization in commodity prices will help to gradually narrow the current account deficit in quarter ending Dec-22 to around 2.8-3% of GDP."

She expects CAD to track at around 3.2% of GDP in fiscal year 2022-23, with potential upside risks.

Iranian Films Go to Kaohsiung Festival

TEHRAN (MNA) – Two Iranian short films “Left Handed” and “Unicorn” as well as the animation “Where the Winds Die” have made their way to Kaohsiung International Film Festival in Taiwan. Directed by Nasrin Mohammadpour, the short film “Left Handed” will take part at Kaohsiung International Film Festival in Taiwan. The 15-minute film is about Maryam, a woman who has made a big decision and plans to make something and is preparing herself for that act.



Germany Agrees 65b-Euro Inflation Relief Package

BERLIN (Dispatches) - The German government on Sunday unveiled a new multi-billion euro plan to help households cope with soaring prices, and said it was eyeing windfall profits from energy companies to help fund the relief. German businesses and consumers are feeling the pain from sky-high energy prices, as Europe's biggest economy seeks to extricate itself from reliance from Russian supplies in the wake of Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. Rapid measures to prepare for the coming cold season will ensure that Germany would “get through this winter,” Chancellor Olaf Scholz said at the unveiling of the 65-billion-euro (\$65-billion) package. The latest agreement, which brings total relief to almost 100 billion euros since the start of the Ukraine war, was hammered out overnight into Sunday by Germany's three-way ruling coalition of Scholz's Social Democrats, the Greens, and the liberal FDP. Among the headline measures are one-off payments to millions of vulnerable pensioners and a plan to skim off energy firms' windfall profits. The government's latest relief package came two days after Russian energy giant Gazprom said it would not restart gas deliveries via the Nord Stream 1 pipeline on Saturday as planned after a three-day maintenance. The government had made “timely decisions” to avoid a winter crisis, Scholz said, including filling gas stores and restarting coal power plants. But preventative measures, including a drive to reduce consumption, have done little to break a sharp increase in household bills. The latest announcement follows two previous relief packages totaling 30 billion euros, which included a reduction in the tax on petrol and a popular heavily subsidized public transport ticket. But with the expiration of many of those measures at the end of August and consumer prices soaring, the government has been under pressure to provide new support. Inflation rose again to 7.9 percent in August, after falling for two straight months thanks to previous government relief measures. The take-off in energy prices is expected to push inflation in Germany to around 10 percent by the end of the year, its highest rate in decades. Scholz said however that not everyone is suffering from the high consumer prices. Some energy companies which may not be using gas to generate electricity were “simply using the fact that the high price of gas determines the price of electricity and are therefore making a lot of money,” he said. “We have therefore resolved to change the market organization in such a way that these random profits no longer occur or that they are skimmed off.”

Iran Seeks Expansion...

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Pointing to Iran's plans to construct nuclear power plants and generate 10,000 megawatts of nuclear power, Eslami said, “Given the very good capability and potential in this field, we plan to turn the country into a hub for designing and building nuclear power plants.” In recent years, Iranian scientists have made remarkable progress in the field of peaceful nuclear technology despite the tough sanctions imposed by the West. Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said in February that enemies are seeking to deprive Iranians of peaceful nuclear energy, stressing once again that the Islamic Republic has never sought nuclear weapons. Speaking on the occasion of the National Nuclear Technology Day in April, Eslami said the AEOI unveiled and inaugurated nearly 77 new achievements in the nuclear technology sector during the Persian calendar year of 1400, which started on March 21, 2021 and ended on March 20, 2022.

U.S. Plots in...

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Elsewhere in his remarks, the IRGC commander noted that sanctions have caused few difficulties for Iran, emphasizing that the country enjoys great capacities and potential and is able to overcome all of its problems by relying on its beliefs and the guidelines of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei. In Iran, he said, people support each other in various incidents due to the culture of self-sacrifice and the officials also stand by the nation.

U.S. Urged to...

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He then talked about the MoUs signed between Iran and Russia on the sidelines of the “MIMS Automobility Moscow 2022” exhibition, and said that Iranian auto parts makers and car manufacturers had an active presence in the exhibition. He highlighted: “The total value of 12 memorandums signed between Tehran and Moscow are 700 million euros per year, and some of them have even been implemented, and their financial transactions are based on ruble and rial.” The spokesperson of the government reminded that Iran and Russia are expanding cooperation in various sectors such as agriculture, industry, space, trade routes, rail, and automobiles. Pointing out that one of the requirements for the development of the automobile industry is its economization, he concluded: “when we can expand the markets of our products, and the parts manufacturers have an export opportunity, the country's products will be more economical, and it will be possible to invest in the field of research and this, in turn, will lead to progress in the country's automobile industry.”

Europe Badly Needs...

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“We are ready (to play) our role in the supply of crude and oil products and to help promote the global energy security without politicking and by avoiding any political use of energy,” the minister said. Iranian crude oil exports to Europe stopped in 2018 after the US announced sanctions on the country following a political decision in Washington to unilaterally withdraw from an international deal on Iran's nuclear program, which is technically known as the JCPOA. Oil market analysts say a success in ongoing talks between Iran and world powers to revive the JCPOA can alleviate a global energy crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic and worsened by the war in Ukraine.

Iran Not to Accept...

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Pointing to Iran's latest response to an EU-drafted text last week, Borrell said, “If the purpose is to close the deal quickly, it is not going to help it.” Marandi had written in his tweet, “Borrell is a U.S. ally and forgets that the reason for these negotiations are western violations of the JCPOA and maximum pressure sanctions targeting Iranian citizens even as Iran was in full compliance. Iran will not accept loopholes & ambiguities. The US is imposing costs on the EU.”

Tehran, Moscow...

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“Based on minutes signed officially in the (Tehran) meeting, the two sides will have three months to submit a list of qualified travel agencies,” she said while referring to the visa-free travel arrangements between the two countries. Iran and Russia have been deepening their economic ties since February, when Russia came under a raft of Western sanctions because of the war in Ukraine. The two countries have signed major deals to cooperate on joint projects in energy, banking and manufacturing sectors as they seek to minimize the impacts of foreign sanctions on their economies.

Knowledge-Based Products, the Missing Link in Boom of Auto Industry

Iran Delco's Important Role in Cleanliness of Air



IRAN DELCO is one of the largest knowledge-based manufacturers of automotive and motorcycle catalysts in Iran and the Middle East, which produces a variety of catalysts that are considered high-tech parts. This knowledge-based company, along with its research and development team, has been able to present a complete basket of products to the country's automotive industry and play a very prominent role in reducing air pollution. September 4 was the 31st anniversary of the establishment of this company and on this occasion, we had an interview with managing director Mohammad



Navid Molavizadeh, Deputy Managing Director of Knowledge-Based IRAN DELCO Company. Cars should pass standard tests at technical inspection centers even without catalysts

Meanwhile Deputy Managing Director of Knowledge-Based Iran Delco Company Mr. Navid Molavizadeh touched upon the service life of catalysts and that for the standard of each catalyst, some certain service life is defined, for example, for Euro 2 standard cars, the service life has been considered to be equivalent to 80 thousand kilometers, and the defined service life for Euro 4 is equivalent to 100,000 km and, and it is up to 160,000 km for Euro5, which are aged in the catalyst laboratory to meet the standard criteria. Molavizadeh stated: Unfortunately, most cars even without a standard catalyst can pass tests in technical examination centers and receive their own technical examination certificate, while used cars and even cars with zero kilometers without a standard catalyst emit a lot of pollution. They have a lot! In general, there are no strict laws regarding the permitted emission limits in technical examination centers; Except for cars that have engine problems.

Non-standard technical meaning

Deputy Managing Director of Iran Delco added: If we consider the city of Tehran as a statistical community, there are several technical examination centers that work properly; But if we compare the statistics of those who refer to these few centers with other centers, we realize that technical examination centers outside the city have more clients; In my opinion, there are no strict rules in the technical examination centers, but even in the few centers that are strict, we see a decrease in the number of clients, and the centers outside of Tehran have more clients. He continued: According to the statistics, a very high percentage of people who have taken their cars to the centers of Tehran and have been rejected go to get an examination from centers outside of Tehran, which shows that there are issues in the centers outside the city. I also agree with the opinion of Mr. Hadian Fer Plis; In a way, this will lead to the aggravation of air pollution. He continued: We produce all kinds of catalysts, which is considered a high-tech part; We were able to develop the country's industry from design, improve environmental standards and make the import of these parts unnecessary; According to the law, car manufacturers have to raise the standard of their cars in terms of environmental pollution in certain periods of time, and we can help them achieve their goals with the knowledge we have created in our collection. Molavizadeh stated: Despite the relatively high employment that our knowledge-based company has created, it has been able to provide a great help to our compatriots by producing these catalysts for the spare parts market. This part is a completely environmental part and is directly related to air pollution, and by installing the parts produced by our company at a much lower price than imported samples, compatriots can get technical inspection approvals.

A significant part of the needs of motorcycle manufacturers is handled by Iran Delco

Molavizadeh answered the question that Iran Delco pays a lot of attention to environmental issues, and on the other hand, a very high amount of air pollution is related to the traffic of motorcycles. Does your company also work with

companies that produce motorcycles? answered: Yes, a significant part of the needs of motorcycle manufacturers is handled by Iran Delco Company, and it is possible to enter the motorcycle industry in the environmental field as well; But unfortunately, even though motorcycles also need technical inspection approval, we see that motorcycles do not go to these centers; See, the motorcycle has a lot of pollution compared to the volume of its engine, which according to the survey we have done in the last two years, is not the only air pollution related to cars; But we must examine the cars in a fundamental way. A member of the board of directors of Iran Delco stated: One of the problems in the country is why a car with zero kilometers after 4 years is considered for technical inspection, while it is possible for a car with zero kilometers after one year or two. year, the approval of the technical examination center is needed, and reforms should be made in this field.

Self-sufficiency is a factor in reducing imports

He continued: Among other problems that can be addressed in the field of environment and air pollution is the traffic of polluting vehicles that operate on public transportation lines, buses, trucks, etc. that use diesel fuel. do Also, factories and refineries are among the other groups that cause air pollution in Tehran. In general, I must say that cars are not the only problem of air pollution in the city, but other groups also cause air pollution. It is a very good job that Iran Delco Company has done. It has done a very good cooperation with heavy vehicle manufacturers that in the last year, measures have been taken and designs have been presented that will be offered 40% lower than the global prices of the products. He said about the complexity of catalyst manufacturing, in fact, the formulation of catalyst manufacturing consists of 30 components, which include nano materials and other materials that have the latest technology in the world, and these help to maintain the quality required for the production of automobile catalysts at the global level. ; Precious metals including «platinum, palladium and rhodium» are used in the manufacture of catalysts, and if these metals are not used optimally, they will lead to an increase in price; We try to have a lower price for our products while maintaining the quality so that we can use the materials optimally. Molavizadeh about the question that the Ministry of Security is focusing on increasing car production to balance the market price, does Iran Delco have the ability to increase the production of products? He said: There are other companies that operate in line with this company to meet this need; But in relation to Iran Delco, I must say that the production capacity of this company's products is very high and currently between 30 and 35 percent of the available capacity has been used. Therefore, this preparation is completely there, but the liquidity problems from the customers have affected the activities. This industrial activist also pointed to the issue of raw materials not being imported into the country, he said: Unfortunately, the raw materials of this company were procured from the other side of the borders and arrived at the domestic customs for about 2 months, and the approval of the officials of the Samat organization to start the clearance process is undecided. In a way, it is not clear who will be responsible for confirming the registration of the order, and despite the problems of lack of raw materials in the production lines, we have also been forced to pay additional customs warehousing costs. He pointed out that one of the slogans of this company is «Thinking of a blue sky» and the reason for choosing this slogan is that Iran Delco has put all its efforts in order to culture the awareness of the catalyst and the consumption of this environmental component to create a blue sky for the future generation. and provide a green future.

Iran Delco has no competitors in the domestic market

Molavizadeh stated: This knowledge-based company can take over a car from scratch and produce it with the lowest cost, and in fact, we can say that Iran Delco claims that it has no competitors in the domestic market of Iran. The deputy CEO of Iran Delco noted: Nissan is a car with an old design and engine in the market. In 2014, this company changed this car to the Euro 4 standard, and later Euro 5, whose catalyst was our responsibility, even the 405 car. Also, around 1992, it became Euro 4.

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Pogba Back in Training for Juventus

ROME (Dispatches) - Paul Pogba is back training for his team Juventus as he recovers from his knee injury, the Serie A club confirmed to AFP.

A spokesperson for Juve told AFP that France midfielder Pogba did some of his work on the training field on yesterday and today, but did not give an indication as to when he might return to action.

Pogba chose not to have surgery on the meniscus in his right knee, which he injured while training for Juve in July, in a bid to make the World Cup with his country this winter.

Farah Returns to Winning Ways In London Half-Marathon

LONDON (Dispatches) - British distance great Mo Farah found himself top of the podium again with a third victory in the 'Big Half' -- a London half-marathon.

Farah's win, which a month ahead of the London Marathon proper, followed the four-time Olympic champion's shock defeat by club runner Ellis Cross in a 10 kilometre race in London in May.

That reverse led to a fresh debate over whether the 39-year-old Farah, who won double Olympic gold (5,000m and 10,000m) at both the 2012 and 2016 Games, should retire from competitive racing.

Kyrgios Sends Medvedev Crashing Out of US Open

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Australian maverick Nick Kyrgios sent defending champion and world number one Daniil Medvedev crashing out of the US Open in an explosive last-16 clash.

Wimbledon runner-up Kyrgios triumphed 7-6 (13/11), 3-6, 6-3, 6-2 to reach his first quarter-final in New York where he will face another Russian, Karen Khachanov.

Medvedev will lose his world top ranking after being defeated by Kyrgios for the fourth time in five meetings.

Kyrgios fired 21 aces and a total of 53 winners past his outclassed Russian opponent. "It was an amazing match, obviously Daniil as the defending champion had a lot of pressure on his shoulders, but I've been playing amazing the last couple of months," Kyrgios said after the win.

"What a place to do it — packed house in New York. I'm extremely blessed.

"Losing the Wimbledon final was a bitter pill but now I want to go all the way here.

"I'm glad I can show my talents — it's only taken me 27 years."

In a fast-paced, big-hitting first set, Kyrgios broke to lead 4-2 before Medvedev immediately repaired the damage.

A marathon tiebreak saw a 22-shot rally and Kyrgios save three set points.

The Australian clinched the opener on a fourth set point of his own after 63 minutes of tennis played at breakneck speed. A furious Medvedev added spice to the encounter by complaining to umpire Eva Asderaki-Moore about the noise from the Kyrgios player box when he was serving from their end.

At the changeover, the Russian even threatened to refuse to play on if the disruptions continued.

Kyrgios left the court for a bathroom break but when he returned, his high-energy level dropped dramatically and Medvedev swept to a 5-1 second set lead on his way to levelling the contest.



Kyrgios then made the baffling decision to come around to Medvedev's side of the net to finish a point in the second game of the third set.

His illegal manoeuvre cost him what would have been a break point.

Kyrgios told a courtside TV reporter that he thought it was a legal tactic.

"I'm going to look like an idiot," said the Australian after the match.

Meanwhile Australia's Ajla Tomljanovic followed up her victory over Serena Williams with another battling performance to beat Liudmila Samsonova and reach the quarter-finals of the US Open.

Tomljanovic — who knocked out tennis icon Williams in the third round on Friday — advanced to the last eight with a 7-6 (10/8), 6-1 victory over Samsonova.

The 29-year-old world number 46 will play either Tunisia's Ons Jabeur or Russia's Veronika Kudermetova in the quarters.

"The fact that I won, I'm still a little speechless," Tomljanovic said after her win.

Tomljanovic was set on the path to victory after a dramatic opening set which lasted 1hr 22mins. She saved seven set points in an epic near 20-minute 10th game to hold serve at 4-5 down.

She then saved another in the tie-break before clinching the set.

"I don't know that it's 20 minutes ... If I knew it was that long I would probably panic a little bit," Tomljanovic said of the marathon 10th game.

"I think it was just about staying in the moment. I just try to stay as calm as possible because inside I'm dying."

After the marathon first set, the second set was one more-sided with Tomljanovic wasting no time in wrapping up the victory.

Djokovic to Skip Serbia's Davis Cup Group Stage Ties

LONDON (Dispatches) - Novak Djokovic will miss Serbia's Davis Cup Finals group stage matches starting in Valencia next week due to personal reasons, the country's tennis federation announced.

The former world number one won Wimbledon to take his Grand Slam singles titles tally to 21 but missed the ongoing US Open as he opted not to be vaccinated against Covid-19, which meant he could not fly to New York for the year's final major.

Djokovic, 35, was expected to return to action in the men's premier team event but Serbian captain Viktor Troicki said in a statement posted on the Teniski Savez Srbije website that the player had cancelled his participation.

Reuters has reached out to Djokovic's team seeking comment.

Djokovic's official website lists the September 23-25 Laver Cup at London's O2 Arena as his next tournament, followed by an ATP 250 event in Tel Aviv and the Paris Masters in late October.

Serbia have been drawn in Group B alongside Spain, South Korea and Canada.

Two teams from each of the four groups will advance to the quarter-finals of this year's event with the knockout stages to be held in November in Malaga.

Ricciardo Would Consider Reserve Seat To Stay in F1

SYDNEY (Dispatches) - Daniel Ricciardo is determined that this season will not mark the end of his career in Formula One and said he would even consider a role as a reserve driver for next year.

The Australian split with McLaren last week and has already said that he might take a sabbatical from the series for the 2023 season if the right position did not come up.

In an interview with Australia's The Core website on Monday, the 33-year-old said he would be looking at all options to stay in Formula One. "That fire in my gut is still there. It hasn't gone away," he said.

"There are pros with having some time off ... but then obviously staying active in here is good.

"So that's why I want to hear everything. Even if it's reserve, I don't want to be too proud to say, 'I'm too good for that'. I just want to hear everything and see what makes sense."

The Australian will not need a job for the money, having been bought out of the final year of his multi-million-dollar contract at McLaren.

Some media reports have linked Ricciardo with a reserve drive behind Lewis Hamilton and George Russell at Mercedes.

Several teams have yet to confirm their lineups for next season, including Ricciardo's previous employers Renault-owned Alpine.

Another option might be Ferrari-powered Haas, who have Mick Schumacher out of contract at the end of the year.

MotoGP Signs Agreement To Race in Saudi Arabia

LONDON (Dispatches) - MotoGP has signed a memorandum of understanding to race in Saudi Arabia, the sport's commercial rights holder Dorna said.

It said a future Saudi Arabian grand prix would be held on a newly constructed, multi-purpose circuit, without specifying where.

"The addition of Saudi Arabia to the MotoGP calendar on an annual basis will see the sport expanding further into the Middle East," Dorna said in a statement.

MotoGP has raced in the region since 2004 with a floodlit night grand prix in Qatar.

James Signs New Long-Term Deal at Chelsea



LONDON (Dispatches) - Chelsea and England defender Reece James has signed a new five-year contract that will keep him at Stamford Bridge until 2027, the Premier League club announced.

The 22-year-old right-back has made 128 appearances for the Blues after coming through their academy.

"I am over the moon with my new contract and I'm thankful for the fans, the new ownership and everyone involved in the club," James told Chelsea's website.

"I cannot wait to see what the future holds, and I am sure we will have the chance of winning many trophies.

"I grew up supporting this club and I've been here since I was a six-year-old. I put pen to paper on a new deal because this is the club I want to be at. We have a bright future ahead of us."

Chelsea chairman Todd Boehly said: "We are thrilled to give Reece a new long-term contract at Chelsea. He is an outstanding player and a true Chelsea man."

United Must Improve to Compete At Very Top

MANCHESTER (Dispatches) - Manchester United manager Erik ten Hag was delighted with his team's fourth straight win, a 3-1 victory over Arsenal at Old Trafford, but said there was still plenty of work to do if they are to compete for honors.

Marcus Rashford scored twice in the second half as United, who beat Liverpool at the start of their four-game winning streak in the Premier League, punished the visitors on the break.

But while there is a renewed sense of belief around the club, the Dutchman was quick to dampen talk of United being close to competing at the very top of the table.

"I understand fans are dreaming and the standards of Manchester United have to be good, but we're at the start of a process, we're still far away," the former Ajax manager told reporters.

"We have to get doing things much better than we do, that's an investment — we have to do that way together every day, bring those high standards to Carrington (training ground). We have to get better if you want to win trophies in the end," he added.

Ten Hag was pleased, however, to see that a United team that had been so fragile last season did not panic when Bukayo Saka brought Arsenal level on the hour.

"The spirit from this team, they can deal with setbacks, it is really great and shows the mentality - we have really improved on that," he said.

"We have the right characters and now it is about cooperation, deal with setbacks but also improve — we have to stay calm, stay composed and play our game," he added.



Ceferin Certain 2030 World Cup Will Be In Spain and Portugal

PARIS (Dispatches) - UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin said that he was certain Spain and Portugal will host the 2030 World Cup.

The two countries signed an agreement in 2020 to push ahead with a joint bid to host the tournament and made it official in June.

"I am sure that the 2030 World Cup will be played in Spain and Portugal," Ceferin said via videoconference during the opening of the Football Talks international congress in Lisbon on Monday.

"This bid is a winning one and we will do everything possible to help two countries that are passionate, live and breathe football and that have a good infrastructure."

A total of 14 stadiums in 12 cities have been offered to be among the 11 Spanish venues expected to host matches if the Iberian bid is successful at the FIFA ballot in May 2024. Portugal will put up three stadiums for consideration.

Spain hosted the 1982 World Cup and launched a failed bid along with Portugal to stage the 2018 tournament, which was awarded to Russia. Portugal has never staged the World Cup but did hold the 2004 European Championship.

Argentina, Uruguay, Chile and Paraguay have announced a South American four-way bid which could have sentimental value as Uruguay hosted the inaugural World Cup in 1930.

The United Kingdom's four associations did contemplate a joint bid along with Ireland while Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece and Romania also planned a joint bid, although they were both dropped.

In 2018, Morocco announced that it would present a bid to host the tournament in 2030, with later reports adding that it could be a joint one with Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Media reports have indicated that China could also present a bid.

Qatar will host the World Cup this year followed by Canada, United States and Mexico in 2026.

