



Thursday, 22 October 2026

IMF sees 1.3% contraction in Middle East, North Africa and Pakistan in 2026

The IMF today forecast a sharp drop in economic output in the Middle East, North Africa and Pakistan this year due to the US-Israeli-led war against Iran, followed by a rebound to 6.6% growth in 2027, while warning that further energy production disruptions could worsen the outlook. The IMF said the region's output was expected to contract by 1.3% because of the war's impact on energy production, shipping, tourism, trade and confidence. (www.reuters.com 22/10/26)

EU should open markets, avoid trade war while protecting industries: Merz

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said the European Union (EU) needs to protect its industries against unfair competition while keeping its markets open and avoiding a trade war. Speaking at the Berlin Global Dialogue, Merz pointed to the EU's trade deficit with China but meanwhile acknowledged China's competitiveness. (www.xinhuanet.com 21/10/26)

UK budget deficit widens more than forecast

The UK budget deficit widened more than estimated in Sept. the Office for National Statistics has said. Public sector net borrowing increased to £24.5bn from £22.8bn in the previous year. This was £1.9bn above the Office for Budget Responsibility forecast as spending growth outpaced the increase in receipts. (www.rttnews.com 21/10/26)

Most BOJ watchers expect next interest rate hike in December

More than 80% of Bank of Japan watchers anticipate the central bank's next interest rate increase will come in Dec. according to Bloomberg. None expect a hike when the bank concludes its next meeting on Oct. 30. Some 83% of economists forecast the bank will raise borrowing costs from the current level of 1.25%. (www.bloomberg.com 21/10/26)

Turkey capacity utilization rises; business morale weakest since December 2024

Turkey's manufacturing capacity utilization increased further in Oct. while factory confidence turned negative and weakened to the lowest level in nearly two years, figures from the central bank showed on Wednesday. The capacity utilization rate rose to 74.5% in Oct. from 74.2% in Sept. The growth in October was mainly driven by higher utilization of consumer goods, which climbed to 72.3% from 71.4%. (www.rttnews.com 21/10/26)

BOK signals more tightening on strong growth after holding rate

The Bank of Korea said it expects growth this year and next to be "considerably higher" than previous projections, signaling more tightening to come after holding its benchmark interest rate in the wake of rare back-to-back increases. The central bank left its seven-day repurchase rate at 3% on Thursday in a unanimous decision, an outcome predicted by all 24 economists. (www.bloomberg.com 22/10/26)

New Zealand inflation slows ahead of year-end fuel spike

New Zealand's annual inflation slowed more than expected in Q3 as fuel prices retreated, offering a brief respite to the government little more than two weeks from an election. The CPI climbed 3.7% from a year earlier, down from 4.1% in Q2 and less than economists' forecast of 3.8%. (www.bloomberg.com 22/10/26)

Philippines surprises with jumbo hike as inflation surges

The Philippine central bank raised the key rate for a fourth consecutive meeting to rein in resurgent inflation and support a weak peso that's sunk to a record low. The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas on Thursday increased the target reverse repurchase rate by a half-point to 5.50% as expected by only one of 25 economists. (www.bloomberg.com 22/10/26)

EXCHANGE RATES OF SELECTED CURRENCIES

CURRENCIES	BUYING		SELLING	
+USD/GBP	1.3387	(1.3371)	1.3388	(1.3372)
+USD/EUR	1.1218	(1.1228)	1.1219	(1.1229)
*GHS/USD	11.6492	(11.6000)	11.6608	(11.6116)
*GHS/GBP	15.5947	(15.5104)	15.6115	(15.5270)
*GHS/EUR	13.0686	(13.0252)	13.0815	(13.0370)

+SOURCE: BOG INTERNAL TRANSACTION RATES: 22/10/26 (Rates for 21/09/26 in brackets)

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BI holds following downgrade for Indonesian equities market

Indonesia's central bank has held rates for the fourth consecutive time, following a downgrade of its equities market last week and amid ongoing rupiah weakness. The board of Bank Indonesia (BI) decided to leave its benchmark interest rate at 5.75% on October 21. (www.centralbanking.com 21/10/26)

Dutch consumers slightly more pessimistic in October

Dutch consumer confidence remained slightly more negative in Oct, data from the Central Bureau of Statistics shows. The consumer confidence index dropped to -34 in Oct. from -33 in Sept. Moreover, it remained well below the average of -12. The decline in Oct. was due to the slightly more negative assessment of the economy. (www.rttnews.com 22/10/26)

Iceland jobless rate falls to 5.7% in September

Iceland's unemployment rate decreased in Sept to the lowest level in three months, Statistics Iceland has said. The seasonally jobless rate for people aged 16 to 74 years fell to 5.7% from 6.8% in Aug. The unemployment rate was 3.6% in the same month a year ago. (www.rttnews.com 21/10/26)

Croatia jobless rate remains stable at 3.4%

Croatia's unemployment rate held steady in Sept. after rising slightly in the previous month, figures from the Croatian Bureau of Statistics showed on Wednesday [21/10]. The registered jobless rate stood at 3.4% in Sept. the same as in the previous month. In the corresponding month last year, the rate was 4.1%. (www.rttnews.com 21/10/26)

Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan to boost bilateral trade to \$10bn

Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan strive to increase bilateral trade turnover to \$10bn, Kazakhstan's Finance Minister Madi Takiyev has said. Bilateral trade between the two countries rose 29% year on year to \$3.7bn in the first 9 months of 2026, while the full-year figure for 2025 stood at \$4.7bn. (www.xinhuanet.com 21/10/26)

Oil jumps \$2 on escalating Middle East tension

Oil prices rallied over \$2 a barrel today after more Houthi attacks in Saudi Arabia stoked concerns over a broader escalation of conflict and further disruptions to crude supplies from the world's key exporting region. Brent crude futures climbed \$2.82, or 2.59%, to \$111.64 a barrel at 0626 GMT. (www.reuters.com 22/10/26)

Gold ticks higher amid uncertain U.S.-Iran deal, upcoming Fed interest rate decision

Gold prices have inched higher on Wednesday [21/10] as Middle East war concerns continue to linger amid conflicting reports about a possible US-Iran peace deal while market participants assessed indications the US Fed might hold interest rates steady at its upcoming Oct 27-28 meeting. (www.rttnews.com 21/10/26)

South Africa revives fuel levy cuts as stronger finances create room for relief

South Africa reintroduces temporary fuel levy cuts for 2 months starting in Nov. Finance Minister Enoch Godongwana said, in a R10bn (\$609m) effort to ease cost-of-living pressures. He said the levy would be reduced by 3 rand a litre on diesel and R1.50 rand on petrol from Nov. 4 to Dec. 1. (www.reuters.com 21/10/26)

Nigeria says private capital to drive next growth phase, petrol subsidy gone

Nigeria will increasingly turn to private investors at home and abroad to finance its next phase of growth rather than relying on state borrowing, Finance Minister Taiwo Oyedele said on Wednesday, while ruling out any return to petrol subsidies. (www.reuters.com 21/10/26)

Ghana: Revenue, inflation and 2027 Budget in focus as IMF opens Ghana PCI review

Ghana's fiscal performance, revenue mobilisation and preparations for the 2027 Budget are expected to dominate discussions as an International Monetary Fund mission begins formal engagements with the government today. discussions will examine economic performance during the first nine months of the year and the policies needed to sustain recent gains. (www.myjoyonline.com 22/10/26)

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