

In a Phone Talks With Hissein Brahim Taha, the Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian Discussed the Developments in Palestine and Announced Tehran's Readiness to Host an Extraordinary Meeting of OIC Members

IRAN NEWS

Commander of the Iranian Navy Rear Admiral Shahram Irani Says the Force Plans to Hold Hybrid Drills in the Indian Ocean to Prepare for Emergencies Like Tropical Storms Or Escorting Oil Tankers

VOL. XXIX, No. 7834 TEHRAN Price 50,000 Rials

www.irannewsdaily.com

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 11, 2023 - MEHR 19, 1402



Israel to Receive Heavier Slap for Gaza Massacre

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei says Israel will receive "a heavier slap" for the regime's ongoing massacre of the Palestinian people in the besieged Gaza Strip. "The Zionists should know that with the massacre of the people of Gaza, they will receive a heavier slap," Ayatollah Khamenei told a joint graduation ceremony of the cadets of the armed forces at the Imam Ali Army Officer University in Tehran on Tuesday. The Leader emphasized that the Gaza massacre will "bring a greater calamity to the Zionists" after they suffered "an irreparable failure both in terms of military and intelligence." Israel ferociously pounded buildings in Gaza Tuesday as battles continued in southern towns which Palestinian resistance fighters overran in a blitzkrieg on Saturday. "In this Oct. 7 incident, the usurping Zionist regime suffered an irreparable defeat both in terms of military and intelligence. Everyone admitted the defeat but I emphasize irreparability. "I say that this devastating earthquake has managed to destroy some of the main structures of the usurping regime's governance, which cannot be rebuilt so easily," the Leader said. Ayatollah Khamenei hailed the Palestinian youth for single-handedly pulling off a stunning upset over the Israeli army. "We kiss the foreheads and arms of the skillful and intelligent designers and Palestinian youth, but those who say that the recent epic is the work of non-Palestinians suffer from miscalculation," he said. Ayatollah Khamenei said the Israelis are to blame themselves for the defeat, but they have opted to play the victim. "The actions of the Zionists brought this disaster on them. When cruelty and crime presses the limit, when rapacity reaches its peak, one should wait for the storm," he said. The Leader said no Muslim nation in contemporary history has ever faced as much hostile and cruel regime as Israel. Neither has any nation been under as much pressure, siege and shortage as that of the Palestinian nation. "In addition, America and England have not supported any cruel government as much as the fake regime" of Israel, he added. Ayatollah Khamenei watches a parade of cadets of the armed forces at the Imam Ali Army Officer University in Tehran on Tuesday. Ayatollah Khamenei touched on the Israelis' killing of Palestinian men, women, children and the elderly, their desecration of al-Aqsa Mosque, their attack on worshippers and vandalism

by settlers. "Does the zealous and thousands-year-old Palestinian nation have any other solution to all these atrocities and crimes than unleashing a storm?" the Leader asked, referring to "Operation al-Aqsa Storm". "The brave and selfless act of the Palestinians was a response to the crime of the usurper enemy, which had been going on for years and had increased in intensity in recent months and the current government ruling the usurping Zionist regime is to blame," the Leader said. However, now that the evil and cruel enemy has received the slap, it has started a policy of playing the victim, he said, adding "others also help it, the media of the world arrogance helps it". "This self-victimization is 100% untrue and false, since the Palestinian combatants were able to break the siege of Gaza and reach the military and civilian centers of the Zionists." Ayatollah Khamenei said, "Whatever it is, this usurping regime is not a victim. It is cruel, aggressive, ignorant, and irrelevant, but it is not oppressed, it is an oppressor and no one can make the face of an oppressed out of this devilish monster." The Leader said the Israeli regime is playing the victim card in order to double down on its oppression and justify its "attack on people's houses, attack on civilians, and its massacre and mass killing of Gazans". "This is also a wrong calculation. Let the heads and decision makers of the usurping regime and their supporters know that this will bring a bigger disaster on them. Let them know that the reaction to these atrocities will be a heavier slap in their ugly faces." The Palestinian Health Ministry said Tuesday the Israeli airstrikes have killed at least 704 people and injured more than 3,900 people since the unprecedented operation by Hamas. Ayatollah Khamenei said the Israeli atrocities will make the Palestinian youth more determined and strengthen them. "Gone is the day when certain people would come and try to eke out a position for themselves in Palestine with a forked tongue and liaison with the oppressor," he said, referring to concessionist Palestinian leaders. "Today, Palestinians are awake, young people are awake and Palestinian planners are working with full skill. Hence, this calculation of the enemy which thinks it can continue its criminal attacks by playing the victim is wrong."

Exports From Iran to India Up 9% in 7 Months y/y

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK



TEHRAN - Value of Iran's exports to India increased nine percent in the first seven months of 2023, as compared to the same period of time in 2022, according to the data released by the Indian Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The Indian ministry put the worth of Iran's exports to India at \$393 million in January-August 2023, while the figure was \$361 million in the same time span of 2022. Petroleum products, raw materials for dye production, and various fruits were the top exported goods to India in the first seven months of 2023. India imported \$156 million of petroleum products, \$105 million of raw materials for the production of dyes, and \$70 million of fruits from Iran during this period. As reported, the two countries' trade dropped 27 percent to \$1.171 billion in the first seven months of this year from \$1.604 billion in the same period of the past year. The decrease in trade between Iran and India in the first half of 2023 was caused by the drop in the country's exports to Iran. India's exports to Iran in the mentioned seven months experienced a 37 percent drop and reached \$778 million. In the January-August of last year, India exported \$1.243 billion of goods to Iran. Rice had the largest share in India's export basket to Iran in the first seven months of this year, accounting for \$539 million of the country's total exports to Iran in this period. Fruits with \$30 million and tea with \$18 million were the second and third top exported goods to Iran, respectively. Based on the data previously released by the Indian Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the value of Iran's exports to India increased by 60 percent in 2022 as compared to the preceding year. The Indian ministry put the worth of Iran's exports to India at \$653 million in 2022, while the figure was \$409 million in 2021.

As reported, petroleum products were the major goods imported by India from Iran in the said months. According to the mentioned data, the value of trade between Iran and India reached \$2.5 billion in 2022, rising 48 percent from \$1.693 billion in 2021. During January-December 2022, India's exports to Iran also increased by 44 percent to stand at \$1.847 billion, while the figure was \$1.284 billion in 2021. Rice was India's major product exported to Iran in the said period during which the country shipped \$1.098 billion worth of rice to the Islamic Republic.

Iran Says Other Parties Missed Chance to Resolve Plane Tragedy Row

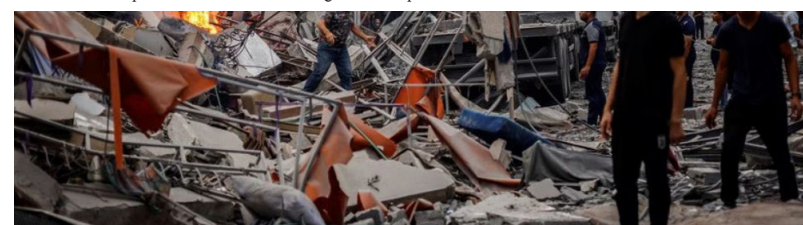
TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has blamed Ukraine, Canada, the UK, and Sweden for the failure of recent talks in the Swiss city of Geneva aimed at resolving the row over the 2020 Ukrainian plane crash tragedy, saying they "lost the political opportunity" for a settlement. In a statement released on Tuesday, Iran's Foreign Ministry said that an Iranian delegation participated in the Geneva talks on October 2 based on the principle of "good faith" and "transparency". However, it added, the Iranian team was not able to provide a thorough report of its measures due to the negotiating partners' insistence on their prejudice and accusations in the talks. The Iranian government has published a final technical report after the completion of an investigation into the plane crash, according to the ministry. It has also paid \$150,000 in compensation to many families of the victims. An Iranian court has sentenced 10 defendants to imprisonment and additional punishments for "imprudence and non-observance of rules," it noted. "The government of the Islamic Republic of Iran believes that it has in the shortest possible time undertaken all the tasks that it is required to do based on the rules and regulations of international law regarding air accidents," the statement read. "Unfortunately, the opposite side, under the provocation of a certain government, has ignored the aforesaid measures regardless of international regulations and procedures. Citing general and ambiguous matters, it has also sought to advance its political objectives, caused ... a failure [in the talks] and lost the diplomatic opportunity [provided] in the Geneva meeting." The ministry also expressed Iran's preparedness to hold "result-oriented" negotiations, conditioning the continuation of the talks to a declaration of readiness by the other parties. "While being ready to hold meaningful negotiations, Iran still stands against any sides who are using this tragic accident as an excuse to seek their own political interests and maintain pressure and hostility against the Iranian nation, and will not allow any foreign party to harm its national interests." On January 8, 2020, the Ukraine International Airlines flight PS752, en route to Kiev and transporting mostly Iranians, crashed minutes after takeoff near Tehran, killing all the 176 on board. The plane was shot down by Iran's air defenses, which mistook the aircraft for a military target amid tensions between Tehran and Washington following the US assassination of revered Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani in Iraq days earlier. Iran acknowledged days later that the mismanagement of an air defense unit's radar system by its operator was the key human error that led to the accident.



with the Gaza Strip in both directions. Total siege of Gaza 'prohibited' under int'l law: UN

Cutting Off Gaza's Water Supply War Crime

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's top rights official has denounced as a "war crime" the Israeli regime's disruption of water supply to the Gaza Strip amid the atrocious military onslaught on the besieged territory. "Access to safe drinking water is recognized as a human right. The Zionist regime's decision to cut off water supplies to the residents of Gaza is considered a war crime," Kazem Gharibabadi, Secretary of Iran's High Council for Human Rights, wrote in a post published on X, formerly known as Twitter, on Tuesday. He further said the Daesh Takfiri terrorist group also cut off water supplies to Syria's Aleppo city in 2016, after which then United Nations resident coordinator and humanitarian coordinator for Syria denounced the move as a war crime. Israeli energy minister Israel Katz said on Monday that he had instructed authorities to cut water supply to the Gaza Strip. "All the water supply pipes from Israel to the Gaza Strip have been disconnected," Israel's Channel 12 television channel quoted Katz as saying. He said electricity and fuel supplies were cut off from Gaza two days ago. The latest move comes after Israeli minister of military affairs Yoav Gallant decided to impose a "complete" siege on Gaza, saying no electricity, food, water or fuel will reach the Strip. Since Saturday, Israel has closed all crossings



with the Gaza Strip in both directions. Total siege of Gaza 'prohibited' under int'l law: UN

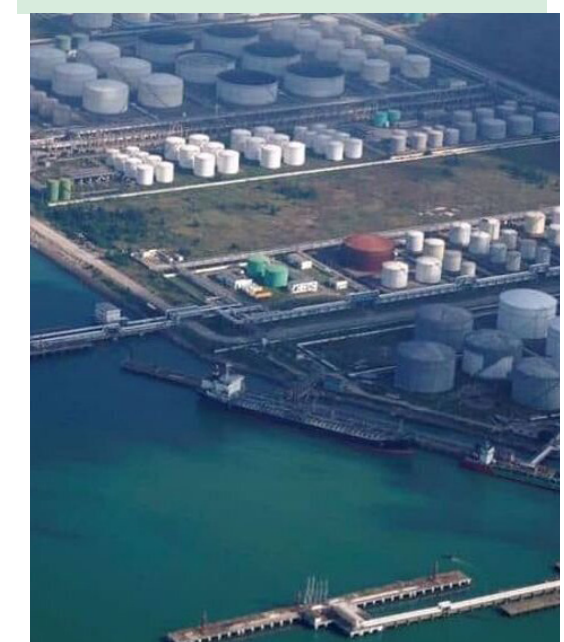
Iran, Sudan Agree to Resume Ties in Line With Mutual Interests

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iran and Sudan have agreed to restore diplomatic relations after seven years to serve the two countries' interests. "Following contacts between the two sides' senior officials in recent months, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Sudan Republic agreed to resume their diplomatic ties in line with the two countries' interests," Iran's Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Monday. It added that Tehran and Khartoum agreed to develop cordial relations "based on mutual respect for sovereignty, equality, common interests and peaceful coexistence." The two sides also agreed to expand cooperation in various fields to serve the interests of their nations and ensure regional security and stability, the statement noted. According to the statement, both sides agreed to carry out all the necessary measures to reopen the two countries' embassies in the near future and make the arrangements for the exchange of official delegations in order to discuss possible ways to boost cooperation. Tehran and Khartoum decided to restore relations after Iran and Saudi Arabia signed a China-brokered agreement in March to resume ties following a seven-year hiatus. Riyadh closed its diplomatic missions in Tehran in 2016 after they were ransacked by protesters enraged by the Saudi execution of top Shia cleric Nimr Baqir al-Nimr. The Sudanese Foreign Ministry also said in a statement that the decision to resume relations "came after a number of high-level communications between the two countries and will serve their mutual interests." In a post on his X account, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said following a meeting with his Sudanese counterpart Ali al-Sadiq Ali on the sidelines of a gathering of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) his Sudanese ministers in Baku in January, they decided to resume relations between the two countries and "this process completed



today." "The two countries' embassies will be reopened in the capitals soon," the Iranian foreign minister wrote. Amir-Abdollahian and his Sudanese counterpart met for the first time in seven years on the sidelines of the NAM meeting, and conferred on the "imminent" resumption of diplomatic relations.

China Reportedly Confident About Continuous Flow of Iranian Oil Shipments



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Chinese oil refineries are confident that flows from the Islamic Republic of Iran will continue despite the recent conflict between Hamas and Israel, betting Washington will seek to avoid a surge in global crude prices. As Bloomberg reported, China's independent refiners, known as teapots, have been enthusiastic buyers of Iranian oil of late. However, Iran's stance against the Israeli regime could put that trade under threat. There's a risk the White House takes a tougher stance on sanctions enforcement, reversing a looser approach that has allowed Iran to increase output by more than half a million barrels a day this year. For now at least, several Chinese refiners and traders involved in buying Iranian crude said they did not anticipate a crackdown or any disruptions. Even with Washington under pressure to act, the Biden administration will have an eye on inflationary pressures ahead of a presidential election next year, they said, asking not to be named as they are not authorized to speak publicly. In the past, sanctions haven't been very effective in damping China's enthusiasm for Iranian oil, with the crude often disguised as coming from other origins, most notably Malaysia. This year the surge in flows has been helped by a softer approach to sanctions enforcement. Chinese purchases of Iranian oil soared to 1.5 million barrels per day (bpd) in August, the most in a decade, data intelligence firm Kpler said. Earlier this month, a Reuters survey showed that the Islamic Republic has managed to push its oil output to 3.15 million bpd, the highest since 2018, the year Washington re-imposed sanctions on Iran. Analysts have said the higher Iranian exports appear to be the result of Iran's success in evading U.S. sanctions and Washington's discretion in enforcing them, the survey found on October 3.

LICENCE HOLDER: SOKHAN GOSTAR INSTITUTE

Switchboard: (+98) (21) 44253448
 Public Relations Tel: (+98)(21) 44253450
 Editorial Board: 44253449
 Public Relations Fax: (+98)(21) 44253395
 Advertising Department:

Tel/Fax: (+98) (21) 44253335-9/44253234
 Website: http://www.irannewsdaily.com
 E-Mail Address: info@irannewsdaily.com
 ISSN 1024-6053 P.O. Box: 15875-8551
 Address: No 13, Pajouhesh St., Golestan II St,

Golestan St. Marzadaran Blvd., Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
 Distributed by: Cities of Iran Cultural and Artistic Institute
 Managing Director: Fereydoon Taherpour Asi



Kazakhstan Determined to Have Contribution in Resolving Global Problems

By: F. Taherpour

ASTANA – Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Kazakhstan says his country is determined to have more contribution for resolving regional and global disputes and problems and for this reason the country hosts many meetings for a better future in global issues. On the eve of the 21st meeting of the secretariat of the congress of leaders of world and traditional religions, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Kazakhstan Roman Vassilenko and chairman of N. Nazarbayev Center for the Development of Interfaith and Inter-Civilization Dialogue Bulat Sarsenbayev held a press conference in Astana on Monday while the secretary of the congress Azamat Ayap was also present. At the beginning of the presser, Mr. Vassilenko briefed the media persons of the achievements of his country and many reforms done under the presidency of Qasim Jomart Tokayev and then elaborated the goals behind holding and hosting such meetings. He said one of the policies of Kazakhstan and President Tokayev is that the country is determined to be an active player in resolving global problems and fostering international cooperation and then highlighted Astana's commitment to promoting international cooperation. He then referred to recent article by President Tokayev and added that Mr. Tokayev in his article emphasized about strengthening inter-civilizational dialogue and strengthening trust while the world is struggling with geopolitical turmoil. Vassilenko then reiterated that over the past two decades, the congress played an important role in maintaining peace and stability in Kazakhstan's multicultural and multi-confessional society. He went on to say that Astana has proudly hosted Congress of Religious Leaders since 2003 and the last event in 2021 attracted participants from nearly 50 countries representing various religions and even the country had this honor to host Pope Francis. Then he pointed to President Tokayev's speech at the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly and said that the President emphasized the importance of a cultural respect in his speech and he urged nations to reaffirm their commitment to a



diplomatic solution under Charter and international law. He added that Mr. Tokayev in his speech announced Kazakhstan's readiness to become a regional hub for food. Vassilenko added that his country in 2022 attracted some \$28b of foreign investment which is a record for the country and it is because of recent reforms by President Tokayev like amending the Constitution and economic reforms have been top priority for him. Then he touched upon the achievements of the Congress and said it is aimed at resolving differences and the Congress is focused on commonalities of the religions and resolving the differences and expressed hope in the upcoming years the tensions and differences would be minimized. Meanwhile Chairman of N.

Nazarbayev Center Mr. Sarsenbayev as the host of the Congress highlighted the goals and achievements of the event and said that the number of participating religious leaders is on the rise and each meeting of Congress after exchange of views ends with issuing a declaration. He said that the Congress is held every three years and it is aimed to resolve differences through dialogue and expressed hope leaders of religions work together to resolve problems. He reiterated that the main goal of the center for holding such event is to help differences to be resolved as Mr. Vassilenko said one of the policies of the government is to contribute to resolving global problems and minimizing tensions.

North Korea Says Military Satellite Key to Countering U.S. Space Militarization



SEOUL (Dispatches) - North Korea's spy satellite program is an "indispensable" measure to counter U.S. space militarization aimed at beefing up the United States' preemptive nuclear strike capability and securing "world supremacy," state media KCNA said on Tuesday. Ri Song Jin, whom KCNA described as a researcher of the National Aerospace Technology Administration, accused the United States of seeking greater military hegemony in Asia by expanding its space force in an article titled "U.S. space force deployment aimed at preemptive aggression war".

Ri singled out a recent trip by the U.S. Space Force commander to Tokyo, and the deployment of a Space Force component in South Korea, where its members took part in joint military drills for the first time this year. Such moves were "nothing but a camouflaged curtain to cover up the scenario for preemptive attack on the anti-U.S. and independent countries," Ri said, mentioning North Korea, China and Russia. "Now that the U.S. is getting hell-bent on space militarisation with a preemptive nuclear attack as its ultimate target by massively introducing space force into the Korean peninsula and its vicinity," Ri said, "space development, including a military reconnaissance satellite, is an indispensable strategic option for guaranteeing the security interests and right to existence of the DPRK." DPRK is the initials of North Korea's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. North Korea has failed twice to place a spy satellite in orbit, both in May and August, and has vowed to try again as early as October. Last month, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un toured Russia's most modern space launch centre, where President Vladimir Putin promised to help him build satellites. In another KCNA dispatch, an international affairs commentator named Ra Jong Min denounced Canada's planned dispatch of military ships, aircraft and personnel for "Operation NEON," aimed at ensuring implementation of U.N. sanctions against North Korea. The operation is meant to identify suspected sanctions evasions at sea, including ship-to-ship transfers of fuel and other banned activities. Ra accused Canada of "jumping into fire with brushwood on its back" due to "blind belief in its American master" despite the ever-growing possibility of a military conflict on the Korean peninsula.

Hamas Threatens to Kill Captives If Israel Strikes Civilians



GAZA (Dispatches) - The Islamist militant Hamas movement threatened to execute an Israeli captive every time Israel bombs a Palestinian home without warning, as Israel called up an unprecedented 300,000 reservists and imposed a blockade on the Gaza Strip, raising fears it planned a ground assault. The violence, which has claimed more than 1,500 lives, prompted international declarations of support for Israel after a devastating weekend attack by Hamas, and appeals for an end to the fighting and protection of civilians. Israeli TV channels said the death toll from the Hamas attack had climbed to 900 Israelis, with at least 2,600 injured, and dozens taken captive. Among the Israeli dead were 260 mostly young people gunned down at a desert music festival, where some of the hostages were abducted. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed revenge in a fiery speech accusing Hamas of executing tied-up children and other atrocities. "This vile enemy wanted war and it will get war," he said.

Gaza's Health Ministry said at least 687 Palestinians had been killed and 3,726 wounded in Israeli air strikes on the blockaded enclave since Saturday. Apartment blocks, a mosque and hospitals were among the sites attacked, and the strikes destroyed some roads and houses, according to media reports and eyewitnesses. Israel also bombed the headquarters of the private Palestinian Telecommunication Co., which could affect landline telephone, internet and mobile phone services. The strikes continued into the night on Monday. The Israeli military said it hit targets in the Gaza Strip from the sea and air, including a weapons depot it said belonged to Islamic Jihad and Hamas targets along Gaza's coast line. Hamas spokesperson Abu Ubaida issued the threat on Monday to kill Israelis among the dozens held captive after the surprise attack on Saturday

morning. He said Hamas would execute an Israeli captive for every Israeli bombing of a civilian house without warning, and broadcast the execution. There was no immediate response from the Israeli military to that threat. Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen said more than 100 people had been taken captive by Hamas during the deadly cross-border incursion over the weekend. Palestinians reported receiving calls and mobile phone audio messages from Israeli security officers telling them to leave areas mainly in the northern and eastern territories of Gaza, and warning that the army would operate there. Dozens of people in Gaza City's Remal neighbourhood fled their homes. "We took ourselves, children and grandchildren and daughters-in-law and we ran away. I can say that we became refugees. We don't have safety or security. What is this life? This is not a life," resident Salah Hanounch, 73, said. In Israel's south, scene of the Hamas attack, Israel's chief military spokesperson said troops had re-established control of communities inside Israel that had been overrun, but isolated clashes continued as some gunmen remained active. Sirens warning of incoming rocket fire blared in Israeli communities near the Gaza border overnight. The announcement that 300,000 reservists had been activated in just two days added to speculation that Israel could be contemplating a ground assault of Gaza, a territory it abandoned nearly two decades ago. "We have never drafted so many reservists on such a scale," chief military spokesperson Rear-Admiral Daniel Hagari said. "We are going on the offensive." The impact was felt internationally, with governments including Italy, Thailand and Ukraine reporting that their citizens had perished. In Washington, President Joe Biden announced that at least 11 Americans had been killed and it was likely U.S. citizens were among those held hostage.



Goldin Wins Nobel Economics Prize for Work on Gender Gap

STOCKHOLM (Dispatches) - Harvard economic historian Claudia Goldin won the 2023 Nobel economics prize for her work exposing the causes of deeply rooted wage and labour market inequality between men and women, the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences said on Monday. The prestigious award, formally known as the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel, is the last of this year's crop of Nobel prizes and is worth 11 million Swedish crowns, or nearly \$1 million. "This year's Laureate in the Economic Sciences, Claudia Goldin, provided the first comprehensive account of women's earnings and labour market participation through the centuries," the prize-giving body said in a statement. "Her research reveals the causes of change, as well as the main sources of the remaining gender gap." The award for economics is the final instalment of this year's crop of Nobels that have seen prizes go to COVID-19 vaccine discoverers, atomic snapshots and "quantum dots" as well as to a Norwegian dramatist and an Iranian activist.

China Urges Philippines to End Provocations in South China Sea

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China warned the Philippines against further "provocations" at an atoll in the South China Sea, saying such acts had violated Chinese territorial sovereignty, contravened international law and disrupted regional peace and stability. The Philippines' territory is defined by a series of international treaties, and the atoll has never been part of its territory, the Chinese foreign ministry said in a strongly worded statement, referring to the atoll as Ren'ai Reef. In recent months, the Philippines has been sending supplies to its troops stationed on a World War Two-era, transport-ship-turned-military outpost on the Second Thomas Shoal, prompting the China Coast Guard to repeatedly deploy vessels to block the resupply missions. China claims sovereignty over nearly the entire South China Sea, pointing to a line on its maps that cuts into the exclusive economic zones of Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei and Indonesia. The Permanent Court of Arbitration in 2016 said the line on China's maps had no legal basis, which Beijing rejects. The atoll is known as Ayungin in the Philippines, while China calls it the Ren'ai Reef, lying 190 km (118 miles) off the Philippine island of Palawan. "The Philippines has no legal basis at all to claim sovereignty over Ren'ai Reef on the grounds of its comparative proximity to Philippine territory," the Chinese foreign ministry said in a statement. Since the grounding of the BRP Sierra Madre at the atoll in 1999 in Manila's attempt to assert its sovereignty claim, China has repeatedly called on the Philippines to tow away the vessel. "The Philippines repeatedly promised to do so as soon as possible," the Chinese ministry said. "However, 24 years have passed, and the Philippine warship is still there. China cannot accept the Philippines' acts of going back on its words again and again and violating China's territorial sovereignty," it said. The Philippines must stop "making provocations" and "creating troubles" at sea, the ministry added. China will



continue to do what is necessary to firmly safeguard its territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests, it said.

Ukrainian Forces Make Headway in East, South

KYIV (Dispatches) - Ukrainian forces are making some headway in both the eastern and southern theatres of their four-month-old counteroffensive, military officials said on Monday. Russian accounts of the fighting said Moscow's



forces had repelled Ukrainian attacks near the devastated eastern city of Bakhmut and inflicted heavy casualties in strikes on Ukrainian positions outside the city. Ukraine's counteroffensive aims to secure control of areas around Bakhmut in order to recapture the town, which was seized by Russian forces in May after months of heavy battles. In the south, Kyiv wants to advance to the Sea of Azov to sever a Russian land bridge linking areas it occupies in the south and east. Iliia Yevlash, a spokesperson for Ukraine's eastern group of forces, said troops had scored a "partial success" near Andriivka, which they captured last month along with the nearby locality of Klishchiivka. "We are repelling constant attacks near Klishchiivka and Andriivka, Yevlash told national television. "Every day we are making headway in the Bakhmut sector. We are talking about hundreds of metres at a time that we are liberating from our enemies and strengthening our positions. It is, however, too early to talk about achieving concrete goals." Ukrainian prosecutors in Donetsk region, the focal point of Russia's campaign in the east, said Russian forces had shelled areas east of the Russian-held town of Donetsk, killing one person. The coking town of Avdiivka, which has resisted Russian advances for months, was also shelled. General Oleksandr Tarnavskiy, commander of forces in the south, wrote on Telegram that Kyiv's troops were continuing offensive operations in the drive southward. "We have had partial success to the west of Verbove," he said, referring to one of a cluster of villages that Ukraine is targeting, with the larger town of Tokmak the next large target. Ukraine's counteroffensive has made slow progress in both theatres, but President Volodymyr Zelenskiy and other officials have denied suggestions by Western critics that Ukraine has failed to achieve its objectives and is hampered by strategic errors.