

The Foreign Ministry of Iran Lauded the High Turnout of Ecuadorians in the Recent Presidential Election as a Victory for Democracy in the South American Nation and Congratulated the President-Elect Daniel Noboa

IRAN NEWS

Iran Has Strongly Denounced the Israeli Regime's Killing of Journalists in the Gaza Strip, Saying the Murders Cannot Help Conceal the Crimes of the Zionist Regime and Its Supporters

VOL. XXIX, No. 7844 TEHRAN Price 50,000 Rials

www.irannewsdaily.com

THURSDAY OCTOBER 26, 2023 ABAN 4, 1402

2 DOMESTIC



Muslim World's United Stance Could Have Prevented Israeli Atrocities in Gaza

> SEE PAGE 2

3 INTERNATIONAL



World Leaders Seek Pause to Israel-Hamas Fighting to Allow Aid Into Gaza

> SEE PAGE 3

Iran Trade With SCO Member States Rises 10% in H1



TEHRAN - The value of Iran's non-oil trade with member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) has increased by 10 percent in the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22), according to the spokesman of the International Relations and Trade Development Committee of Iran's House of Industry, Mining and Trade. Ruhollah Latifi said the country traded about 37 million tons of non-oil goods worth \$21.736 billion with the 11 member states of SCO in the mentioned six months, IRNA reported. Iran exported 31.436 million tons of goods worth \$10.583 billion to the SCO members in this period, registering a three percent decline compared to the same period last year. Moreover, the Islamic Republic imported 5.545 million tons of goods worth \$11.15 billion from the mentioned countries in the said six months, indicating a 24-percent increase compared to last year's same time span. Among SCO members, China was Iran's top export destination in the said period followed by India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Russia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Belarus, and Mongolia. China was also the top exporter to Iran, followed by India, Russia, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Mongolia. Iran was granted long-awaited permanent membership of the SCO last year and is now completing formalities to make it official. On Wednesday, Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber left Tehran for Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, to attend the 22nd Meeting of the Council of Heads of Government of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization which will be held on Thursday, October 26. Speaking to the press prior to his departure, Mokhber said: "The members of the SCO have a lot of capacity for economic cooperation, and we hope that bilateral cooperation with the Shanghai member countries will be agreed upon and planned during this trip." The official noted that the SCO member countries have common views with the Islamic Republic of Iran about the multipolar international order, confronting American sanctions and expanding political and economic relations. "This shared vision can promise a bright future for the nations of the region," he added.

TPO Holds Meeting on Preparation for EAEU Exhibition



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) held a meeting to discuss the necessary preparations for hosting the second exclusive exhibition of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) which is due to be held in Tehran from December 4-7. The meeting was attended by officials from TPO, and the Foreign Ministry along with the representatives of the private sector and other related organizations, the TPO portal reported. Speaking in this meeting, Mohammad-Sadeq Qanadzadeh, the TPO deputy head for the promotion of international businesses said the EAEU exclusive exhibition is an opportunity for both Iran and the Eurasian countries to share and showcase all the commonalities and achievements gained through participation in the BRICS, the Shanghai Organization, and the free trade agreement between the two sides. Iran and EAEU reached a preferential trade agreement in 2018 based on which about 862 commodity items are currently subject to preferential tariffs.

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK



U.S. Definite Accomplice in Israeli Crimes Against Gaza

TEHRAN - Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei says the United States is a "definite accomplice" in the Zionist regime's crimes against the people of the Gaza Strip. He made the remarks during a meeting with members of the Lorestan Province's Martyrs Commemoration Congress on Wednesday. Ayatollah Khamenei further said the US somehow manages the crimes being committed against Palestinians in Gaza. "The presence of the heads of oppressive and villain states in the occupied territories shows their concern about the disintegration of the Zionist regime," the Leader added, referring to Western leaders' trips to the Israeli-occupied territories to reaffirm their support for the regime. "Islamic governments should not be passive in the face of criminals. Victory certainly belongs to Palestine." Ayatollah Khamenei also said that Gaza is now "the scene of innocence on the one hand and strength on the other hand." He described as "decisive" and "irreparable" the blow dealt to the usurping entity by Palestinian fighters in their October 7 raid, dubbed Operation Al-Aqsa Storm. "Yes, the people of Gaza are really oppressed, and this ruthless and bloodthirsty enemy, the usurping terrorist regime, knows no boundaries to crimes. It kills a thousand people in one bombardment," the Leader asserted. He added, "In this case, the United States is a definite accomplice of the criminals. That is, the US hands have been polluted up to the arms with the blood of the oppressed, the children, the patients, the women, etc. In fact, [the US] is somehow managing the crimes being committed in Gaza." Ayatollah Khamenei said the "injured" and "worm-out" Israeli regime is taking revenge against the people of Gaza for the decisive blow it received from Palestinian fighters. "Undoubtedly, however, all these cruelty and crimes will ultimately lead nowhere, and victory belongs to the Palestinian nation in this [battle] and the future [battles], despite all the support of the world's villains and the Americans' definite accomplice in the Zionists' crimes," he emphasized. Ayatollah Khamenei said that the leaders of the US, Britain, France and Germany pay solidarity visits to the occupied territories and provide Israel with bombs and other weapons in a bid to rescue the regime. The extent and depth of repeated Israeli crimes, he noted, shook the public conscience in America, Europe, Muslim countries and other regions of the world. "The self-proclaimed advocates of freedom and human rights in Europe have banned pro-Palestine demonstrations, but people come to the streets in defiance of these bans and shout their anger, fury, and distress of conscience," he said. "No one will be able to stop the reaction of nations against the Zionists' brutalities."

U.S. Complicit in Brutal Massacre of Palestinians in Gaza

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's United Nations says the U.S. is regime's ongoing war on the the Gaza Strip. Israel launched the the Gaza-based Palestinian al-Aqsa Storm, a surprise attack response to the Israeli regime's Palestinian people. The war has across Gaza, including more than women. Addressing the UN Iranian envoy Amir Saeid exacerbated the conflict by overtly aligning itself with the aggressor at the expense of the innocent Palestinian population. "Its (the US's) rapid provision of military and logistical support to the oppressive occupying regime, thus made the US complicit in the brutal massacre of innocent Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip," he added. Also on Tuesday, the health ministry in the Gaza Strip offered a new grim account of the regime's bloodthirsty attacks on the Palestinian territory. "The Israeli occupation expands its targeting of multiple areas in the Gaza Strip, killing about 50 martyrs during the last hour," a ministry spokesperson said in a statement. The media office in the Palestinian coastal sliver, meanwhile, said Israel had dropped more than 12,000 tons of explosives on the Gaza Strip since the beginning of the war. "The explosive force of these explosives is equivalent to the nuclear bomb dropped on Hiroshima in Japan" in 1945, the office said in a statement. "An average of 33 tons of explosives were dropped per square kilometer on the Palestinian enclave since Israel started its aggression," it added. Amid the atrocities, Iravani went on, the U.S. has been standing up to the international community's overwhelming desire to take the occupying regime to task over its atrocities. "The primary impediment to such action has been the unwavering support of the United States, which has exercised its veto power on more than 40 resolutions within the Council," he noted. "Iran continues to fully support the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. Our commitment is to stand with Palestinian aspirations until the occupation is ended," the envoy concluded.



permanent ambassador to the aiding and abetting the Israeli besieged Palestinian territory of devastating war on October 7 after resistance groups staged Operation on the occupied territories, in intensified crimes against the so far killed at least 5,791 people 2,000 children and about 1,400 Security Council on Tuesday, the Iravani said, "The US has further exacerbated the conflict by overtly aligning itself with the aggressor at the expense of the innocent Palestinian population." "Its (the US's) rapid provision of military and logistical support to the oppressive occupying regime, thus made the US complicit in the brutal massacre of innocent Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip," he added. Also on Tuesday, the health ministry in the Gaza Strip offered a new grim account of the regime's bloodthirsty attacks on the Palestinian territory. "The Israeli occupation expands its targeting of multiple areas in the Gaza Strip, killing about 50 martyrs during the last hour," a ministry spokesperson said in a statement. The media office in the Palestinian coastal sliver, meanwhile, said Israel had dropped more than 12,000 tons of explosives on the Gaza Strip since the beginning of the war. "The explosive force of these explosives is equivalent to the nuclear bomb dropped on Hiroshima in Japan" in 1945, the office said in a statement. "An average of 33 tons of explosives were dropped per square kilometer on the Palestinian enclave since Israel started its aggression," it added. Amid the atrocities, Iravani went on, the U.S. has been standing up to the international community's overwhelming desire to take the occupying regime to task over its atrocities. "The primary impediment to such action has been the unwavering support of the United States, which has exercised its veto power on more than 40 resolutions within the Council," he noted. "Iran continues to fully support the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. Our commitment is to stand with Palestinian aspirations until the occupation is ended," the envoy concluded.

Iran to Designate October 7 as 'Day of Epic by Palestinian Youth'



TEHRAN - The Iranian minister of culture and Islamic guidance has hailed the "unprecedented" operation launched by the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas against Israel on October 7, saying the day will be recorded in the Iranian calendar as "Day of Epic by Palestinian youth." Speaking on Tuesday, Mohammad Mehdi Esmaili said Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has pointed out that October 7 is the beginning of the countdown to the destruction of the occupying regime. Operation Al-Aqsa Storm was "an epic unprecedented in the historical memory of the region and the struggles of the Muslim people of Palestine. We registered the day at the General Culture Council as Day of Epic by Palestinian Youth. The procedures will be done for its approval at the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution," he added. Hamas launched Operation Al-Aqsa Storm in response to Israel's violations at the Al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied East al-Quds and growing settler violence against Palestinians. Esmaili also commended protests in Muslim countries as well as Europe and the United States in condemnation of the Israeli bloodshed in Gaza. "Yesterday, the number of child martyrs [in Gaza] surpassed 1,800. This level of cruelty, violence and murder is beyond all usual genocides," he said. "Today, in front of the eyes of billions of people, we are witnessing the bombing of the [al-Ahli Arab] Baptist Hospital that kills more than 500 children in one place."

Muslim States to Urged Fund Int'l Proceedings Against Israeli Regime



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Mohammad Dehqan, Iran's Deputy President for Legal Affairs, has urged Islamic countries to finance international proceedings against the Israeli regime. Dehqan made this remark on the sidelines of the cabinet session on Wednesday, where he revealed that the International Criminal Court (ICC) has announced it lacks the necessary budget to fund these proceedings. He also addressed Iran's ongoing dispute with South Korea over delayed payments of 6 billion euros of frozen assets held in South Korean banks. He stated that Iran is awaiting the Central Bank's final decision on this matter. In reference to the crimes committed by the Zionist regime in Gaza, Dehqan highlighted the collaborative efforts of various non-governmental organizations, both inside and outside Iran, to uphold the rights of oppressed Palestinians. He further stated that Islamic governments, along with these organizations and institutions, are prepared to provide the ICC with the necessary funds. This financial support aims to expedite the resolution of the Palestinians' longstanding complaints regarding genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

IRAN NEWS



Iran Produces 22.1m Tons of Steel in 9 Months

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - The World Steel Association (WSA) in its latest report on Tuesday said Iran produced 22.1 million tons of crude steel in the first nine months of 2023. According to the report, major steel production companies in the world produced more than 1.4 billion tons of crude steel from January to September 2023, showing a 0.1 percent decline compared to the same period last year. It said Iran's steel production volume reached 22.1 million tons from January to September 2023. The 63 major steel production companies in the world produced 149.3 million tons of crude steel in September 2023, registering a 1.5 percent decline compared to last year's corresponding period. Iran managed to produce 2.4 million tons of crude steel in September 2023, retaining its 10th rank in the world. The World Steel Association reported that China produced 795.100 million tons of crude steel in the nine-month period, clinching the first rank in the world, followed by India, Japan, the United States, and Russia respectively.

Muslim World's United Stance Could Have Prevented Israeli Atrocities in Gaza



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - President Ebrahim Raisi says a united stance by the Muslim world could have prevented the Israeli regime, which is backed by its Western allies, from perpetrating unprecedented atrocities against Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip. Raisi made the remarks in a meeting with Abdullah bin Saud al-Anazi, Saudi Arabia's new ambassador to Tehran, while receiving his credentials on Tuesday. The Iranian president drew attention to the 75-year history of oppression faced by the defenseless and innocent Palestinian people at the hands of the Israeli regime. He stressed that the absence of a united stance among Islamic nations had allowed the unlawful entity to persistently carry out killings and acts of aggression against the Palestinian population throughout the years. "During the recent unprecedented crimes by the Zionist regime and its Western supporters in Gaza, a united stance by the Islamic world could have, in a more effective way, prevented the Zionist regime's oppression and aggression as well as excessive demands by its Western supporters," Raisi said. Israel launched the war on Gaza on October 7 after Palestinian resistance groups launched Operation Al-Aqsa Storm, a

surprise attack into the occupied territories in response to the occupying regime's intensified crimes against the Palestinian people. Elsewhere in his remarks, Raisi emphasized the necessity of efforts by diplomatic apparatuses of both Iran and Saudi Arabia to take advantage of the two countries' capacities to strengthen mutual relations and secure the interests of regional nations and the Muslim world. The Iranian president also censured the presence of extra-regional countries in West Asia, saying their presence in the region not only fails to solve any problems but it is itself a cause of exacerbating the problems. Saud al-Anazi, for his part, hailed Iran-Saudi Arabia ties as "very strong" and called for strengthening mutual ties and cooperation. "The relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia are very strong as the ties and commonalities of the two nations and countries outweigh their differences," he said. The Saudi ambassador to Tehran underlined that the Islamic Republic has offered assistance to his country in many fields and issues, and expressed hope for an ever increasing improvement and expansion of relations and cooperation between the two countries.

Iran Kick-Starts Construction of Karoun Nuclear Power Plant



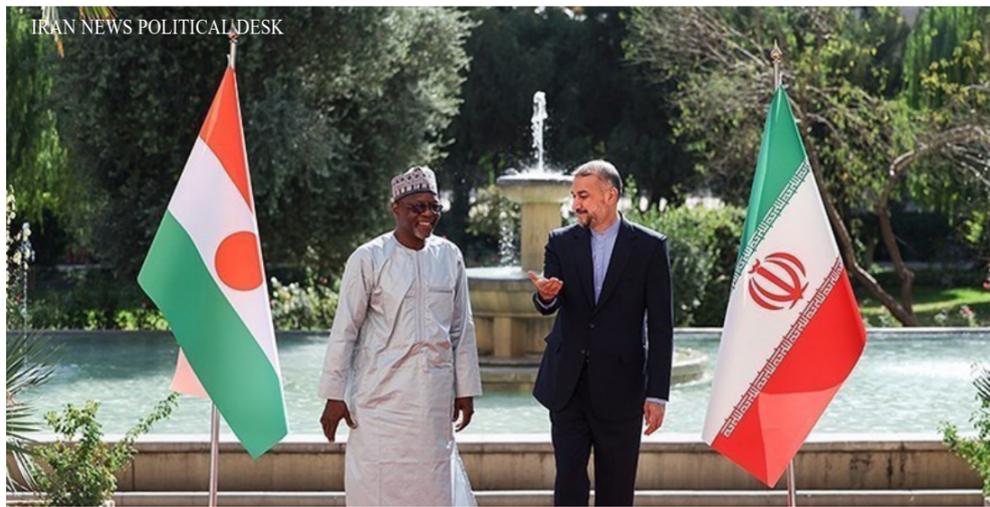
TEHRAN (IFP) - Iran has started to build the Karoun nuclear power plant in the southwestern province of Khuzestan, the head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) says. Mohammad Eslami told reporters after a cabinet meeting on Wednesday that the government has signed contracts with domestic companies to equip the power plant. He said water and electricity were supplied as requirements for the activities of the Karoun 300-megawatt nuclear power plant. He also added a 24-megawatt power facility is under construction for desalination plant. The nuclear power plant, designed by domestic experts and to be equipped with indigenous technologies, is being constructed in an area of around 50 hectares near the Karoun River.



President Felicitates Kazakhstan on Republic Day

TEHRAN (IRNA) - President Ebrahim Raisi has extended a message of congratulations to the President of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and the people of this country on the occasion of their Republic Day.

In a message to his Kazakh counterpart on Wednesday, President Raisi has congratulated the Republic Day of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the government and the people of Kazakhstan, the official website of Iran announced on Wednesday. In his congratulatory message to Tokayev, Iran's President said that the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Kazakhstan have always had friendly relations based on mutual respect.



Iran, Niger Move to Broaden Political, Economic Ties

TEHRAN - The foreign ministers of Iran and Niger at a meeting in Tehran discussed ways to promote political and economic cooperation and enhance interaction between the two countries in the scientific and technological fields. Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and his Nigerien counterpart Bakary Yaou Sangare met in Tehran on Tuesday. They discussed various topics of mutual interest in the realm of bilateral and international relations, as well as the latest developments in Niger. Amir-Abdollahian highlighted the principled position of Iran on the expansion of relations with the African countries. He also emphasized the importance of closer mutual cooperation in various areas, including political, economic, scientific, and technological fields. The Iranian foreign minister stressed as significant the exchange of high-

level delegations between the two countries aimed at advancing the interests of both parties, the Foreign Ministry's website reported. The joint commission of economic cooperation between Iran and Niger will provide a framework for practical interaction between the two states, Amir-Abdollahian stated. The foreign minister of Niger, for his part, hailed the capabilities of Iran in various economic, scientific, and technological areas. He also emphasized Niger's eagerness to foster relations with Iran in various sectors. He noted that Iran's capabilities could meet Niger's needs in the energy and industrial sectors. Sangare expressed hope for the continued growth and strengthening of relations between the two countries in the near future.

Iran to Discuss Petrochemical Exports to SCO Member States in Kyrgyzstan



TEHRAN (Shana) - Oil Minister Javad Owji said on Wednesday he will hold talks on exporting Iranian petrochemicals and other necessary products to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member states in Kyrgyzstan. Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the weekly cabinet session and prior to his departure for an SCO meeting in the Kyrgyz capital Bishkek, he added, "Exports of technical and engineering services, investment in oil, gas, and energy pipeline projects, and transit of gas of the Central Asian states via Iran will be among the topics of negotiations." On Tuesday, Owji said the meeting is aimed at devising a strategy for promoting cooperation in the energy sector. The meeting provides a good opportunity for reaching a multilateral agreement on gas transit and constructing a North-South gas corridor in the Central Asian region, Owji continued. Accompanied by a high-ranking delegation, Owji and First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber left Tehran for Bishkek on Wednesday to attend the 22nd Meeting of the Council of Heads of Government of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Member States. The Kyrgyz capital will host the SCO meeting on Thursday.

New Envoy Presents Credentials to President of Sri Lanka



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Newly-appointed Iranian ambassador to Sri Lanka Alireza Delkhosh has formally presented his credentials to the President of Sri Lanka Rani Wickremesinghe at the Presidential Secretariat, Colombo. During a meeting on Tuesday, Delkhosh and Wickremesinghe discussed issues of mutual ties. Referring to the emphasis of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi on developing relations with Sri Lanka, especially in the economic field, Delkhosh outlined the priorities of the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Colombo based on the headline of the missions assigned by Iran's President and the Foreign Minister. Wickremesinghe described Tehran-Colombo ties as important, noting that his latest meeting with President Ebrahim Raisi in New York was very constructive and called for developing and deepening ties with Iran in all fields.

Sri Lanka Approves Free Tourist Visa for Seven Countries to Boost Tourism

COLOMBO (Dispatches) - Sri Lanka's cabinet approved issuing free tourist visas to visitors from seven countries including China, India and Russia, a statement issued by the media ministry said on Tuesday, to boost tourism and help revive its crisis-hit economy. Tourists from China, India, Russia, Japan, Thailand, Indonesia, and Malaysia will be issued free visas till March 31, 2024 under a pilot programme, the statement detailing cabinet decisions said. The scheme is part of attempts by Sri Lanka to boost tourism recovery and hit a target of five million arrivals by 2026, the statement added. The country of 22 million people, famed for its beaches, ancient temples and aromatic tea, saw its tourism industry pummeled first by the COVID-19 pandemic and then by a severe financial crisis last year that saw mass scale protests and shortages of essentials such as fuel. But the tourism industry is seeing a turnaround in 2023 with Sri Lanka clocking a million arrivals by September, for the first time since 2019. The island is expecting to close the year at 1.5 million arrivals. India is the largest source of tourists with 200,310 arrivals, followed by Russia with 132,300, latest data from the Sri Lanka Development Authority showed. Sri Lanka earned \$1.3 billion from tourism in the first eight months of 2023, up from \$833 million dollars during the same period last year, according to the central bank.



Anti-Black Racism Is Rising in EU Countries, Led by Germany



VIENNA (Dispatches) - Racism towards Black people is growing in Europe, with Germany, Austria and Finland showing the highest rates of discrimination and harassment, a survey of first- and second-generation Black immigrants in 13 EU countries published on Wednesday found. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), which commissioned the survey and analyzed its findings in a report, said that in the space of six years since the previous study the proportion of respondents who had felt racially discriminated against in the past 12 months had risen by 10 percentage points to 34%. In Austria and Germany the proportion was 64% - almost twice the previous level of 33% in Germany and a significant increase from the 42% recorded in Austria six years earlier. The next worst was Finland with 54%. "It is shocking to see no improvement since our last survey," FRA Director Michael O'Flaherty said. "Instead, people of African descent face ever more discrimination just because of the colour of their skin." The proportion of respondents who reported feeling racially discriminated against over the past five years rather than 12 months rose to 45% across the 13 countries surveyed, an increase of six points from the previous study. The top three were the same, with Germany's rate the highest at 76%. The poll carried out by Ipsos for the FRA was a sweeping survey of 16,124 immigrants and descendants of immigrants across 15 countries from which several FRA reports will be produced - on other ethnic minorities and Muslims. It was conducted between October 2021 and September 2022. This report, entitled "Being Black in the EU," is the first produced from that wider survey. It focuses on 6,752 people born in sub-Saharan Africa or with at least one parent born there living in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Sweden. The proportion of respondents who said they had suffered racist harassment in the past five years was unchanged from six years earlier at 30%. The highest national rate was 54% in Germany, followed by Finland and Austria. Portugal and Sweden were the countries with the lowest rates of harassment and, along with Poland, they had the lowest racial discrimination rates, according to respondents. The FRA report included a series of recommendations for EU member states such as properly enforcing anti-discrimination legislation and considering a motivation based on racial bias as an aggravating circumstance when setting penalties for crimes.

Japan Weighs Spending of \$33b on Measures to Fight Inflation



TOKYO (Dispatches) - Japan's government is considering spending around \$33 billion for payouts to low-income households and an income tax cut in a package of measures to cushion the blow to households from rising living costs, three government officials told Reuters on Wednesday. The spending, currently estimated around 5 trillion yen (\$33.37 billion), will include a blanket, one-off income tax cut worth 30,000 yen per person and residential tax cut worth 10,000 yen respectively, which will be implemented in June 2024, a draft of the plan obtained by Reuters showed. The spending plan, to be formally decided by Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's cabinet on Nov. 2, also features payouts to low-income households, the officials said, confirming a report by the Nikkei newspaper. Details on tax cuts will be discussed by the ruling party's influential tax panel toward the year end, said the officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity as they were not authorized to speak publicly. Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Hideki Murai told reporters that he was aware of the prime minister's comment in a TV appearance late on Tuesday that he wanted to achieve wage hikes that offset price increases next year. Tax revenue has grown this year, and Murai said the prime minister wanted to find a way to return some of that to the public to support households. "The prime minister will give formal and specific instruction at a meeting tomorrow between officials of the government and the ruling bloc, which will shape up through the ruling party's tax panel debate," Murai said. Inflation, fuelled by rising costs of raw materials, has kept above the central bank's target of 2% for more than a year, weighing on consumption and clouding the outlook for an economy making a delayed recovery from COVID-19 scars. With wage rises proving too slow to offset the increase in prices, Kishida has announced a plan to ease the pain by returning to households some of the expected increase in tax revenues generated by solid economic growth. Kishida is due to discuss wage hikes, among other issues, with auto industry officials when he visits the Japan Mobility Show on Thursday, Murai said.



GAZA (Dispatches) - The United States and Russia led international calls for a pause in fighting between Israel and Hamas to allow aid into the besieged Gaza Strip, as Israel maintained its bombardment of the enclave where Palestinians are living in harrowing conditions. A total of 704 Palestinians, including 305 children, were killed on Tuesday, the health ministry in Hamas-ruled Gaza said, a toll the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said was the highest reported in a single day since the conflict began nearly three weeks ago. Reuters could not independently verify these figures. World leaders are now seeking to prevent the conflict from spreading across a region key to global energy supplies. U.S. President Joe Biden and Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman spoke by phone on Tuesday and agreed on broader diplomacy "to maintain stability across the region and prevent the conflict from expanding," the White House said. Deadly clashes have intensified between the Israeli military and Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, and resurged between Israel and Lebanon's Hezbollah armed group along the Israeli-Lebanon border. Iran, which has sought regional ascendancy for decades, backs both Hezbollah and Hamas, and has warned Israel to stop its onslaught on Gaza. Israel's military said its jets struck Syrian army infrastructure and mortar launchers on Wednesday in response to rockets launched from Iran ally Syria. The military did not provide further details. It did not accuse Syria's army of firing the two rockets, which set off air raid sirens in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. There was no immediate comment from Syria. Israeli forces on an overnight raid in the occupied West Bank came under fire by a group of Palestinians whom the military then hit with a drone, the Israeli military said on Wednesday. Palestinian officials said three people were killed. Israel's military also said it targeted a cell of Hamas divers attempting to enter Israel by sea near

Kibbutz Zikim. There was no immediate comment from Hamas on the incident. The U.S. has advised Israel to hold off on a planned ground assault as Washington tries to free more of the 200-plus hostages Hamas is still holding captive in Gaza. However, when asked was if he was urging Israel to delay its ground invasion, U.S. President Joe Biden told reporters: "The Israelis are making their own decisions." In a statement released on social media, the Palestinian health ministry said at least 5,791 Palestinians had been killed by Israeli bombardments since Oct. 7, including 2,360 children. Reuters could not independently verify these figures. Late on Tuesday eight trucks with water, food and medicine entered Gaza from Egypt. U.N. agencies said more than 20 times current deliveries were needed for the narrow coastal strip's 2.3 million people. At the United Nations, the United States and Russia put forward rival plans on humanitarian aid for Palestinian civilians. Washington has called for pauses and Russia wants a humanitarian ceasefire. A pause is generally considered less formal and shorter than a ceasefire. "The whole world is expecting from the Security Council a call for a swift and unconditional ceasefire," Russian U.N. Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia told the Security Council. Arab states firmly back a call for a humanitarian ceasefire amid widespread destruction of Gaza's buildings. "We followed with regret the inability of this council twice to adopt a resolution or even to call for a ceasefire to end this war," Egypt's Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry told the council. United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres last week called for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza. "While we remain opposed to a ceasefire, we think humanitarian pauses linked to the delivery of aid that still allow Israel to conduct military operations to defend itself are worth consideration," a senior U.S. official said.



BEIJING (Dispatches) - Chinese President Xi Jinping said on Wednesday that China is willing to cooperate with the United States as both sides manage their differences and work together to respond to global challenges, according to Chinese state media. Whether or not the United States and China could establish the "right" way of getting along would be crucial to the world, Xi said in a letter delivered at an annual dinner of New York-headquartered National Committee on United States-China Relations. Xi's call for more stable bilateral ties, which he says should be built on the principles of "mutual respect, peaceful co-existence and win-win cooperation", comes before a key visit by Foreign Minister Wang Yi to Washington later this week. The trip from Thursday through Saturday by the top Chinese diplomat will be the highest-level in-person engagement ahead of an expected meeting between U.S. President Joe Biden and Xi in San Francisco at the November Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit. Several top U.S. officials including U.S. State Secretary Antony Blinken met their Chinese counterparts in Beijing this summer. Washington's top priority has been to ensure the intense competition between the world's two biggest economies and their disagreements over a host of issues from trade to Taiwan and the South China Sea does not veer into conflict. "Chinese observers believe the visit (by Wang) will pave the way for a possible meeting between the heads of the two states but added that Washington needs to make concrete efforts to address Beijing's concerns and show its sincerity," China's state-controlled Global Times wrote in a commentary.



Lula Likely to Visit Saudi Arabia to Discuss Investments

SAO PAULO (Dispatches) - Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva said on Tuesday he is likely to travel to Saudi Arabia soon to discuss investments from the kingdom in his country as part of the "growth acceleration" plan recently launched by his administration. Lula said in a live broadcast on social media he would probably make a stop in Saudi Arabia on his way to the United Arab Emirates to attend the COP28 global climate meeting next month. The leftist leader is recovering from hip surgery he underwent late last month and has yet to be cleared by his doctors to travel. He said he was feeling fine.

Ukraine's Siberian Battalion Recruits Russians to Help Fight Moscow

KYIV (Dispatches) - At a simple shooting range outside Kyiv, a group of 20 Russian citizens clad in Ukrainian uniforms practiced firing assault rifles and machine guns. Soon, they expect to be taking aim at the Russian army. Their commander, a Ukrainian who introduced himself by the call sign Batya, said some of the recruits to Ukraine's newly-formed Siberian Battalion, the yellow and blue flag on their sleeves, were now ready for battle. A Ukrainian military officer, who asked to remain anonymous, said most of the unit's 50 members came from Russia, travelling through third countries to reach Ukraine. The officer said most are from among the indigenous peoples of Siberia and recruits said they want to fight against what they said was Russian imperialism both inside Ukraine and in their homelands. "Starting from Tsarist Russia, when they colonized us, they destroyed our culture, our language and traditions. It was Russification, pure and simple," Gennadiy, a 29-year-old with the call sign Buryat, which refers to his homeland of Buryatia on the shores of Lake Baikal in Siberia, told Reuters. Military analysts say that Buryatia, as well as some of the other Russian regions which are home to indigenous peoples, have provided a disproportionately large number of soldiers for Russia's war effort. Gennadiy said many people were forcibly mobilised by Russia, while others were tempted by

salaries that could be more than ten times the wages earned by some people in the region. Civil society group Free Buryatia Foundation has said the drive to mobilise a disproportionate number of Buryats was a political choice, as the Kremlin saw Buryatia as posing less of a risk in terms of anti-government protests. Not all of the recruits are from Siberia. Some came from other parts of Russia, but said they were driven by a desire to join a unit fighting for Ukraine against Russia, and expressed solidarity with the Siberian peoples. "I don't want to have any part in those terrible crimes that my country did within its own borders, and what is more terrifying, the massed firepower that is now killing thousands of Ukrainians. Without pity for women, children or the elderly," said a 41-year-old from Moscow region with the call sign Gandhi. Russia denies targeting civilians in its invasion of Ukraine. President Vladimir Putin has said he is prepared to use all available means to defend Russia's "territorial integrity." Gandhi said he took the name due to his fascination with the ideas of the 20th century leader, who led India's drive for independence from British colonial rule. The Siberian Battalion's own Gandhi now wants to break up what he called Russia's "prison of nations": "I think this will help the empire to collapse, the prison to be destroyed," he added.



Man Utd Claim Vital Champions League Win



PARIS (AFP) - Andre Onana's last-gasp penalty save secured a vital Champions League win for Manchester United against FC Copenhagen on Tuesday, while Jude Bellingham scored again for Real Madrid in their victory over Braga. Elsewhere, Arsenal beat Sevilla in the rain in Spain and Harry Kane was on target as Bayern Munich won a tough assignment against Galatasaray. Before kick-off at Old Trafford, United held a minute's silence in memory of Bobby Charlton after the Red Devils legend died on Saturday at the age of 86. They marked the occasion by claiming their first points in Group A as Harry Maguire's 72nd-minute header secured a 1-0 win. The result keeps alive their chances of advancing to the last 16 but they needed Onana to produce a brilliant save from Jordan Larsson's 97th-minute penalty to see the game out. The spot-kick was awarded when Scott McTominay caught Mohamed Elyounoussi as he tried to hook a ball clear in the box, but Larsson -- whose father Henrik briefly played for United in 2007 -- could not convert the chance. "It is incredible and a great night. Especially in the dying second when you concede a penalty, but a brilliant save from Andre Onana," coach Erik ten Hag told broadcaster TNT Sports. United are now back in contention to qualify but Bayern look set to run away with the group after making it three wins out of three with a 3-1 victory in Istanbul. Kingsley Coman's early opener for the German champions was cancelled out by a Mauro Icardi penalty on the half-hour mark. But Bayern pulled away in the second half, with Kane finishing in the 73rd minute to restore the visitors' lead with his 11th goal in 12 games for his new club. He then set up Jamal Musiala to wrap up the win. Bayern have now won 16 consecutive matches in the Champions League group phase and have not lost at this stage in over six years. "I don't know how many group stage matches I've done as a coach, but it's always super difficult -- so it's great to find ourselves with nine points after three matches," said Bayern coach Thomas Tuchel. Madrid, the record 14-time European

champions, also have three wins out of three in Group C after Rodrygo and Bellingham scored in a 2-1 victory over Braga in Portugal. Real coach Carlo Ancelotti was taking charge of his 200th game in the competition and he saw Rodrygo open the scoring on 16 minutes before Bellingham fired in just past the hour mark. It was the England midfielder's third goal in as many Champions League games for his new club, and his 11th in 12 matches altogether since signing from Borussia Dortmund. Alvaro Djalo pulled one back for Braga, but Real can secure qualification for the last 16 when they host the Portuguese side next. Napoli are second in the group after a 1-0 win at Union Berlin, who are still without a point. Giacomo Raspadori scored the only goal in the second half as the Italian champions won without star striker Victor Osimhen. In Group B, Arsenal bounced back from losing 2-1 to Lens in France in their last game as they beat Sevilla by the same scoreline on a sodden surface at the Sanchez Pizjuan. Gabriel Martinelli ran clear to open the scoring in first-half stoppage time and a fantastic strike by Gabriel Jesus made it two. Nemanja Gudelj pulled one back for Sevilla but last season's Europa League winners have won just twice in 13 games in this campaign. "There are not many teams to have won here in the last ten years in Europe and we've done it," Arsenal boss Mikel Arteta told TNT Sports. Lens are second, a point behind Arsenal, after coming from behind to draw 1-1 at home to PSV Eindhoven with Elye Wahi cancelling out Johan Bakayoko's opener. Last season's beaten finalists Inter Milan are joint top of Group D with seven points after defeating Red Bull Salzburg 2-1 at San Siro. Hakan Calhanoglu's second-half penalty won it for Inter after Alexis Sanchez's opener was cancelled out by young Israeli Oscar Gloukh. Real Sociedad are level with Inter thanks to a 1-0 win over Benfica in Lisbon secured by a Brais Mendez goal. Benfica are still without a point and staring at an early exit.

Rune Rallies in Basel After Horror Start



BASEL (Dispatches) - Holger Rune performed under pressure for new coach Boris Becker on Tuesday, earning a 1-6, 7-5, 6-3 win over Miomir Kecmanovic to reach the second round of the Swiss Indoors. The victory counted as revenge for the 20-year-old who lost to the Serb in his opening match as holder at the ATP event in Stockholm last week. Six-time Grand Slam champion Becker returned from a lightning trip on Tuesday to the ATP event in Vienna in time to watch his young charge's impressive turnaround in their first in-person match together. "The match was not so good in the beginning, but it ended in the best possible way," the sixth-ranked Rune said. "I was able to raise my level and find my focus. I'm super-happy with how I managed my emotions." Top seed Rune ended with 37 winners as he set up a second-round contest at the St Jakobshalle in Basel with Argentine Sebastian Baez. Becker, who flew to Vienna for a conference on the fringes of the ATP event, is looking forward to a successful collaboration with Rune. "It's an exciting (coaching) task because it's also an exciting time," the 55-year-old said. "If (Holger) can put his emotions into positive use, nothing will stand in his way." Rune is hanging onto the eighth and final position in the points race to the year-end ATP Finals next month in Turin. Basel entrants Taylor Fritz and Casper Ruud are right behind him in the standings with matches to play on Wednesday. Rune said that after crashing in the opening set against Kecmanovic, he was able to turn his game around. "I started believing in my shots, asking myself to remember what I'm capable of, trying to raise my level. I wanted to stay in the match and give myself a chance to play better. Fourth seed Hubert Hurkacz stayed in the chase for a place in Turin with his 7-6 (7/2), 6-3 defeat of Dusan Lajovic. One of the bigger servers in the game who stands provisional 11th in the points chase, produced 18 aces in a victory lasting 86 minutes. "You've got to produce the results, focus on every point," this month's champion at the Shanghai Masters said. "You've got to win matches and tournaments. I know how important these wins are for me." Dominic Stricker sent a Swiss into the second round with his 7-6 (7/2), 6-2 defeat of Lebanese qualifier Benjamin Hassan, with the home player advancing in 91 minutes and saving all three break points he faced.

Ronaldo Stunners Edge AFC Champions League Seven-Goal Thriller

RIYADH (Dispatches) - Cristiano Ronaldo rolled back the years to score two stunning goals and propel his Al Nassr side to a thrilling 4-3 victory over Al Duhail of Qatar in the AFC Champions League. Former Liverpool striker Sadio Mane and Anderson Talisca also scored for the Saudi side late Tuesday as they made it three wins from three in the group stages of the premier Asian club competition. Talisca opened the scoring in Riyadh from the edge of the box in the 25th minute after being teed up by the 38-year-old Ronaldo's clever back-heeled flick as the Portuguese talisman went through his full repertoire of tricks. Mane turned and drilled home to add a second 11 minutes after the break and Al Nassr appeared to be cruising when Ronaldo curled home a sumptuous third from outside the box to make it 3-0 five minutes later. But the Qatari side, inspired by former Barcelona and Liverpool winger Philippe Coutinho, scored twice in the next six minutes through Ismail Mohamad and Almoez Ali to leave the game on a knife-edge. With nine minutes remaining, Ronaldo appeared to have had the final say as he sprinted on to a long ball from Sultan Al Ghannam and lashed home a superb left-foot volley without breaking stride. There was still time for another twist as Michael Olunga pulled it back to 4-3 in the 85th minute to ensure a nervous final few minutes. "When you face Ronaldo, there isn't much you can do," said Al Duhail manager Christophe Galtier, who was in charge of French giants Paris Saint-Germain last season. "He scored two beautiful goals. I'm at a loss for words to describe him. What he did today is extraordinary for a 38-year-old. He's still the best player in the world." Another Riyadh-based side, Al Hilal, made light of being without their injured superstar Neymar as they thrashed India's Mumbai City 6-0 with two goals from former Fulham front man Aleksandar Mitrovic. In the East zone, defending champions Urawa Red Diamonds of Japan were upset at home 2-0 by South Korea's Pohang Steelers, who netted either side of half-time in Saitama through Jeong Jae-hee and Goh Young-jun. Urawa now face a battle to qualify for the knockout stages, having taken only four points from their three Group J games so far, level with China's Wuhan Three Towns, who beat Hanoi FC 2-1 for their first win. "Today Pohang was the better team and deserved to win. Especially in the physical aspect, we couldn't do too much," said Urawa manager Maciej Skorza.

Japan's Kawasaki Frontale made it three wins from three with a 4-2 victory away to Thailand's BG Pathum United to open a three-point gap at the top of Group I over South Korea's Ulsan Hyundai.



Jokic, Nuggets Begin Title Defense by Downing Lakers



LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Nikola Jokic had 29 points, 13 rebounds and 11 assists, Jamal Murray scored 21 points and the host Denver Nuggets beat the Los Angeles Lakers 119-107 to begin defense of their title on Tuesday night. Michael Porter Jr. had 12 points and 12 rebounds, Kentavious Caldwell-Pope chipped in 20 points and Aaron Gordon finished with 15 for the Nuggets. LeBron James scored 21 points, Taurean Prince contributed 18, Anthony Davis had 17 -- all in the first half -- Austin Reaves scored 14 and D'Angelo Russell added 11 for Los Angeles. The Lakers scored the first four points of the fourth quarter, part of a 13-0 run that began at the end of the third, to cut what was once an 18-point deficit down to three at 87-84. They had chances to get closer, but Jokic hit a 3-pointer, fed Caldwell-Pope for an 18-footer and made a jumper to give Denver an 11-point lead with 7:19 left. Los Angeles responded to make it 103-96, but Murray drained a 3-pointer, Caldwell-Pope hit another mid-range jumper and Gordon threw home a dunk to make it 110-96. Los Angeles got back within 11 but a 3-pointer from Porter and a layup by Jokic closed it out. The Nuggets came out inspired after receiving their championship rings and watching the banner being raised to the rafters. They used a 12-2 run to take a six-point lead 4:02 through the first quarter and kept building on it. Caldwell-Pope hit a 3-pointer to make it 27-16 and Reggie Jackson drained one from deep to give Denver a 14-point lead heading into the second quarter. Another Jackson 3-pointer early in the second made it 40-22, but the Lakers chipped away, scoring the last six points of the period to cut the deficit to 63-54 at halftime. Los Angeles got within five to start the second half, but the Nuggets recovered and took a 16-point lead late in the third quarter. The Lakers scored the final nine points of the quarter, and a 3-pointer from Russell made it 87-80 heading into the fourth.

South Africa Trounce Bangladesh

MUMBAI (Dispatches) - Quinton de Kock led South Africa's batting carnage with an incendiary 174 as they crushed Bangladesh by 149 runs to stay on course for a place in the semi-finals of the 50-overs World Cup on Tuesday. De Kock smashed the ongoing tournament's highest individual score and South Africa's middle order hectoring a listless Bangladesh attack to amass 382-5 after electing to bat at the Wankhede Stadium. Their fiery pace attack reduced Bangladesh to 58-5 and eventually bundled them out for 233 in 46.4 overs to register their fourth win in five matches. For Bangladesh, Mahmudullah offered resistance with a run-a-ball 111 but it was not enough to avert a heavy defeat. "Sometimes you try and rush it and things don't go your way, but I still think it was a great day for us," stand-in skipper Aiden Markram said after South Africa moved to second place, behind India, in the points table. "Form is something you can't take for granted, and we certainly won't do that as players and keep striving to put in big performances in each game." De Kock had announced he would quit one-day internationals after the World Cup in India and the opener appeared determined to make his farewell a memorable one. South Africa lost Reeza Hendricks and Rassie van der Dussen in successive overs after Markram, leading the side in the absence of the unwell Temba Bavuma, won the toss and elected to bat. De Kock combined with Markram (60) in a 131-run stand to steady the innings before he and Heinrich Klaasen tore apart the Bangladesh attack plundering 142 runs from 87 balls. Player-of-the-match De Kock duly brought up his third hundred in five matches and went on to topple India's Virat Kohli as the tournament's leading scorer. A double hundred looked on the cards too before de Kock before he was hit after a 140-ball blitz that included seven sixes and 15 fours. His exit brought no relief for Bangladesh though as Klaasen and David Miller, who made 34 not out off 15 balls, continued the mayhem hitting a combined 12 sixes between them.

Brooksby Banned for 18 Months

LONDON (Dispatches) - U.S. tennis player Jenson Brooksby has been banned for 18 months after missing three drug tests in a 12-month window, the International Tennis Integrity Agency said in a statement on Tuesday. The 22-year-old from California, who reached a career high world ranking of 33rd in 2022, will be eligible to return to competition in January 2025. The ITIA said in a statement Brooksby's suspension had been confirmed following a meeting on October 10 involving the player and witnesses including a doping control officer. Brooksby admitted missing the first and third drug tests, but had challenged the validity of the second test he was judged to have missed. However the tribunal dismissed his arguments and imposed an 18-month sanction. "Having considered the evidence, the tribunal found that Brooksby's degree of fault for the missed test was high," the ITIA said in a statement. The panel said a doping control officer who attempted to carry out the second test had taken "all reasonable steps" to locate Brooksby at the time. "The whereabouts programme is a vital tool in maintaining a clean sport and no-one wants players to fall foul of the rules in this way," ITIA chief executive Karen Moorhouse said in a



statement. "We urge all players to take the necessary steps to ensure that they are meticulous with their whereabouts filings." Brooksby indicated he planned to appeal the suspension, vowing to "keep fighting" in a post on Instagram after his punishment was announced. "I have never taken a banned substance in my life, and I was open and honest with the ITIA throughout my case," Brooksby said. "I accepted that two of my missed tests were my fault, but I continue to maintain that my June 4, 2022 missed test should be set aside."