

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian Held Talks With Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad bin Abdulrahman Al Thani About the Developments in Gaza

# IRAN NEWS

Foreign Minister in His X Account Said the Anti-Oppressive Positions of Latin American Countries Such as Venezuela, Bolivia, Cuba, Nicaragua, Brazil, Etc. to Fight Against Apartheid Israeli Regime Is Admirable

**2 DOMESTIC**



### Cutting Ties and Exporting Energy to Zionist Regime a Must

> SEE PAGE 2

**3 INTERNATIONAL**



### UN Chief Horrified by Israeli Strike on Gaza Ambulance Convoy

> SEE PAGE 3

### Palestinians Entitled to Fight Israeli Occupation



TEHRAN (Press TV) - Iran's foreign minister has urged the UK to adopt a "realistic" approach to the West Asia region's developments, reminding that the crisis in Palestine is rooted in occupation by the Israeli regime. Hossein Amir-Abdollahian made the remarks in a phone call with his British counterpart James Cleverly on Friday. "I advise that the British government adopt a realistic approach to the region's developments," he said, adding, "In whatever approach, one should know that Palestine's crisis is rooted in occupation by the Israeli regime. "From the perspective of the international law, the people of the occupied country enjoy a right to legitimate defense," the Iranian top diplomat said, noting that the Islamic Republic too recognized confrontation against occupation as "a right." Amir-Abdollahian urged immediate cessation of the Israeli regime's ongoing war against the Gaza Strip, and extensive transfer of humanitarian supplies to the Palestinian territory. On Friday, the 28th day of Israel's genocidal attacks on the coastal territory, the death toll reached at The Iranian foreign minister, meanwhile, advised attention towards the "principle of proportion" in whatever warfare, saying based on the principle, massacre of more than 9,000 Palestinians "is not acceptable by any standard." Amir-Abdollahian also said the United States' extensive support for the Israeli regime served to intensify hostilities in the region. He concluded his remarks by reminding that the region's resistance forces "do not take orders from Iran, but rather take decisions based on existing circumstances and in line with the [issues of] national and regional security." Cleverly, for his part, asked the Islamic Republic to try to prevent expansion of the extent of war in the region. He also attached importance to the Islamic Republic and his country's cooperation within the framework of existing diplomatic conventions.

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK



## Iranians Mark U.S. Embassy Takeover With Massive Nationwide Rallies

TEHRAN - Millions of Iranians have taken to the streets across the country to commemorate the anniversary of the U.S. embassy takeover, also known as Den of Espionage, which is named the National Day against the Global Arrogance. The mass rallies kicked off in the capital, Tehran, at 09:00 a.m. local time (0530 GMT) and in some 800 cities and towns across the country. Every year, demonstrators in Tehran gather outside the former headquarters of the U.S. embassy, chanting "Down with the U.S." and "Down with Israel," Washington's closest ally, to voice their indignation about the actions of what is known in Iran as "Global Arrogance." On the demonstration routes, a large number of stalls and pavilions are set up to depict the crimes and atrocities that the West, particularly the United States, has carried out against the Islamic Republic and other countries across the world. Forty-four years ago on November 4, Iranian students took over the American embassy in Tehran, also known in Iran as the "Den of Espionage," less than a year after the Islamic Revolution toppled the US-backed Pahlavi dictatorship in 1979. The occasion was then named the National Day of the Fight against Global Arrogance, which also marks National Student Day. Every year on the 13th day of the Iranian month of Aban, the Iranian nation, particularly the students, commemorate the National Day of the Fight against Global Arrogance by staging rallies across the country, calling on all Muslims and freedom-seeking nations to resist against arrogant powers and not to succumb to their bullying. The 13th of Aban has turned into a symbol of resistance and fierce fight against the West's imperialism. The day is reminiscent of the Iranian students' vigilance in dealing with the US's threats. From a global perspective, the 13th of Aban is a day on which Iranians showed that through reliance on God they can withstand any form of hegemonic power and achieve victory; a mindset that has become a role model for all freedom-seekers around the world. Addressing participants in the rallies in Tehran, Majlis Speaker Muhammad Baqer Qalibaf said that the United States has always stood up against Iran's national interests and the country's progress. Saying that the Iranians have managed to resist and thwart the US conspiracies, Ghalibaf noted that resistance definitely has a cost, but the cost of surrender is much higher than resistance. Surrendering leads to defeat, while resistance will lead to victory, he added. Dubbing the Hamas-launched Al-Aqsa Storm Operation as a practical instance of resistance, the Iranian parliament speaker said that the operation was a turning point that changed the equations of the new world order at global and regional levels. Referring to the Israeli crimes against the civilians residing in the Gaza Strip, Ghalibaf warned the Israeli regime's prime minister of facing a huge defeat. "We clearly consider the main culprit of all these crimes to be the criminal America, and all these crimes are committed with the orders and support of the United States," he further stressed. Elsewhere in his remarks, the Iranian official said that the enemy's hybrid war against Iran was foiled by the wisdom and faith of the Iranian nation. He went on to say that Iran's nuclear program is an excuse in the hands of the enemy, and the enemy's goal is to hinder Iran's progress. Qalibaf added: "Doesn't the Zionist regime have more than 100 nuclear warheads today?" Don't any countries in the region that are treated friendly and peaceful do not have nuclear warheads? We have said many times that we are not looking for nuclear weapons but they used Iran's civilian nuclear program as an excuse to not allow the progress and independence of this great nation. "Our most important priority today is solving economic problems. Solving economic problems is like fighting America," said Qalibaf.

### Azerbaijan Already Started Highway Construction Via Iran



MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexey Overchuk commented—on the sidelines of the XVI Verona Eurasian Economic Forum in Samarkand, Uzbekistan—on the activities of the trilateral working groups of Russia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan on the unblocking of regional transport communications and the delimitation of the Armenia-Azerbaijan border. "Border delimitation between Armenia and Azerbaijan is a bilateral matter. And the co-chairs are Armenian and Azerbaijani vice premiers. As for the Russian Federation's role in this process, we are always ready to provide our assistance. We are ready to assist and provide all the documents, including cartographic documents that Russia historically has. "Formally, there is a working group for the unblocking of [regional] communications. The last time we had a meeting was on June 2. The text of the important joint document on the launch of the railway construction through Meghri [city of Armenia] is pretty much ready as well. "As for the road construction itself, you know, Azerbaijan has already started the highway construction through Iran, bypassing the territory of Armenia. As far as we know, a memorandum has also been signed between the Republic of Azerbaijan and Islamic Republic of Iran on the railway construction via Iran bypassing the territory of Armenia." Overchuk told Alpha News. Also, he addressed the construction of the North-South highway being constructed in Armenia and its significance for Russia as part of the shared North-South corridor. "This is a very important infrastructural project that will reach from Iran to Georgia via Armenia. And, of course, considering the Upper Lars [motorway between Russia and Georgia], this [project] also will play an important role in our North-South corridor, we are sure about this," the Russian deputy PM noted.

### Mokhber to Attend Int'l Imports Exhibition in China



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Vice-President Mohammad Mokhber is to visit China to take part in an international imports exhibition in the host country and address the event, an Iranian official has announced. Mohammad Jamshidi, the deputy chief of staff for political affairs to the president, made the remarks on Saturday about the visit of Mokhber to China to review new markets for exports of Iranian products. Holding bilateral and multilateral talks on development of cooperation is among the plans of Mokhber in China, Jamshidi noted. The visits to Iran's pavilion in the international exhibition will be a suitable opportunity for introducing Iran's economic potentials, he underlined. Over 50 Iranian companies and 250 Iranian business persons have participated in the 6th China International Import Expo slated for November 5, 2023.

## All Options Are on the Table Against Israel

BEIRUT (Dispatches) - Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah has said that all options are on the table against Israel, urging the Zionist regime to stop its aggression against Palestinians in Gaza immediately. Speaking in a televised speech on Friday, Nasrallah repeated that Hezbollah is ready for all possibilities. The Hezbollah chief said whoever wants to prevent a regional war, must quickly stop the Israeli aggression against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. He warned that there was a realistic possibility of fighting on the Lebanese front turning into a "wide war." "You, the Americans, can stop the aggression against Gaza because it is your aggression. Whoever wants to prevent a regional war, and I am talking to the Americans, must quickly halt the aggression on Gaza," Nasrallah said. "You, the Americans, know very well that if war breaks out in the region, your fleets will be of no use, nor will fighting from the air be of any benefit, and the one who will pay the price will be... your interests, your soldiers and your fleets," he said. Addressing the US deployment of warships in the region, Nasrallah said Hezbollah is not intimidated. Nasrallah said that Hezbollah is prepared to act against US navy ships in the Mediterranean Sea. "I tell you with all sincerity, we have prepared well for your fleets, with which you are threatening us," he said. He said that the Lebanese resistance movement entered the battle against Israel on October 8, the day after Palestinian resistance movements launched its surprise attack against Israeli occupation forces. Nasrallah said the daily exchange of fire with Israeli forces along the Lebanese border might seem modest but it is very important, calling it unprecedented since 1948. Nasrallah also said Hezbollah's operations against Israel are significant and unprecedented in history. The Hezbollah chief said that 57 Hezbollah fighters have been martyred so far. Nasrallah made the remarks in his first address since the Israeli offensive on the Gaza Strip began on October 7. He blamed the United States for being



"entirely responsible" for the aggression the Israeli regime is perpetrating against Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip and called Israel merely a tool. "America is entirely responsible for the ongoing war on Gaza and its people, and Israel is simply a tool of execution," Nasrallah said, calling the conflict "decisive." "Whoever wants to prevent a regional war -- and this is addressed to the Americans -- must quickly stop the aggression on Gaza," he said. The United States "impedes a ceasefire and the end of the aggression," he observed. Nasrallah also said that Operation Al-Aqsa Storm was carried out entirely by Palestinian resistance movements. "The great Al-Aqsa Storm Operation was decided and implemented 100 percent Palestinian," he said. "Absolute secrecy is what ensured the success of the Al-Aqsa Storm operation on October 7," added the chief of the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement. "We were not bothered by Hamas's concealment of the October 7 attack plan," he stated. "Conditions in Palestine in recent years have been extremely harsh, especially with this extremist, foolish, stupid, and savage [Israeli] regime," he said. "The Operation Al-Aqsa Storm led to an earthquake in [Israel]," he said. "It has strategic and existential repercussions and will leave its effects on the present and future of [Israel]," he stated. He said that what is happening in Gaza shows Israel's foolishness and inability because what it is doing is killing children and women. The Hezbollah leader called Israel "frail" and said that for a whole month, it has been unable to record a single military achievement. Nasrallah offered "condolences and congratulations" to the families of those killed in Gaza and the occupied West Bank. "This is a seamless battle at the human, ethical and religious levels. It's the most evident, the most honest and the most noble," he stated. "Our true strength lies in our firm belief, unshaken conviction, our devotion and commitment to the cause," the Hezbollah chief said.

## Iran, Russia Warn of Spillover of Israeli War on Gaza



TEHRAN - Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov have discussed the latest developments in Gaza, expressing concern over the spillover of the Israeli war to other parts of the region. In a phone conversation, Amir-Abdollahian urged the international community to make more serious efforts to put an end to Israel's criminal acts and genocide against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. For his part, Lavrov said Russia and Iran have a common stance on the critical situation in Palestine, particularly in Gaza, which has been under Israeli attacks since October 7. The top Russian diplomat added that his country is concerned that the expansion of war would spiral the situation out of control.

# IRAN NEWS



## Defense Minister Says Iran's Power Is Unmatched

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Minister of Defense, Mohammad Reza Ashtiani says that no country in the world is able to confront the Islamic Republic of Iran. Apparently referring to Iran's long shoreline on the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, Ashtiani claimed Iran's power derives from its strategic location. Regarding efforts to attribute the October 7 attack on Israel to Iran, Ashtiani stated, "The Islamic Republic of Iran is influential in the regional and global context, and the world is aware that we possess high capabilities in various fields, making us an influential country."

## Envoy Lashes out at Zionists' Anti-Iran Allegations



TEHRAN (MNA) - Iran's Ambassador to Azerbaijan Seyyed Abbas Mousavi has reacted to the Zionist regime of Israel's meaningless remarks about Tehran. "At this stage, only the brave fighters of Hamas are enough for you. You are weaker than a spider's web. Remember if one day Iran intervenes, this time you will be buried in the Mediterranean instead of the Nile," IRNA quoted the ambassador on Saturday as saying. He went on to say, "There is no way out! Now the whole world is against you!" "The Muslim, Brave, and zealous people of Azerbaijan hate you racist invaders like the rest of the world." Mousavi's post came in response to a recent interview by the Israeli regime's ambassador to the Republic of Azerbaijan in which he claimed that Iran has a desire to destroy the Israeli regime but it prefers to use Resistance groups like Hamas to carry out the mission. "... they prefer not to do it themselves, maybe because they are afraid," said George Deek in an interview with Azerbaijani Press Agency on November 3.



## Cutting Ties and Exporting Energy to Zionist Regime a Must

TEHRAN - President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi says that merely condemning the crimes of the Zionist regime is not enough, and countries must cooperate and export energy to this child-killing and criminal regime who has killed 10,000 Palestinians, including 4,000 children, in recent days. Speaking in a press conference in Sanandaj, Raisi once again emphasized leader's remarks on urging nations to boycott Israeli products and said all Muslim countries should cooperate in bringing the Zionist regime down. In response to the question of what plans the government has regarding the implementation of the instructions of the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution regarding elections, Dr Raisi said, "The government considers itself obligated to hold great elections as a manifestation of democracy". The President stated that the Islamic Republic of Iran under the leadership of Imam Khomeini and the Supreme Leader truly believes in the participation and votes of the people, and noted, "The Islamic Republic, from the beginning under the guidance of Imam Khomeini and then the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, established all the basic institutions of the country with the votes of the people". Raisi

emphasised, "As the government, we will not have any candidates in the elections and we are only looking to create a wider and higher participation of all people and groups in the elections". In response to another question about organizing the situation of porters, the President also said, "The government is looking to organize border crossings and bazaars as well as creating free zones for trade and exchange of goods in the border provinces in order to prevent illegal trade". In response to another question about the government's use of the elite capacities of Kurdistan province and the use of local forces in this province, Raisi said, "According to the information I received from the Governor General, about 80 managers of the province are powerful Kurdistan forces. I have said it clearly in my speeches and here I also emphasize on localization". The President described Kurdistan as a province with a civilizational, cultural, historical and scientific history with numerous educated figures and clarified, "Although the focus of my provincial travel plans is economic, in this trip I had three meetings with the elite groups of the province, which were very useful".

## Afghanistan Economic Delegation Leaves for Tehran



TEHRAN (IRNA) - An economic delegation led by Acting Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs of Afghanistan Abdul Ghani Baradar left the capital Kabul for an Iran visit. The 30-member economic delegation is scheduled to visit the Iranian capital Tehran and other provinces to hold talks on economic cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the representatives of the caretaker government in Afghanistan. The Afghan delegation is expected to become familiar with certain big economic projects in Iran during their stay in the country. The deputy prime minister of Afghanistan's interim government is also scheduled to hold talks with some Iranian officials and discuss the expansion of trade and economic cooperation between Tehran and Kabul. The Afghan official would reportedly ask Iranian authorities to give the green light to public and private investment in Afghanistan.

## Iran Returns to 3rd Place in OPEC by Overtaking UAE

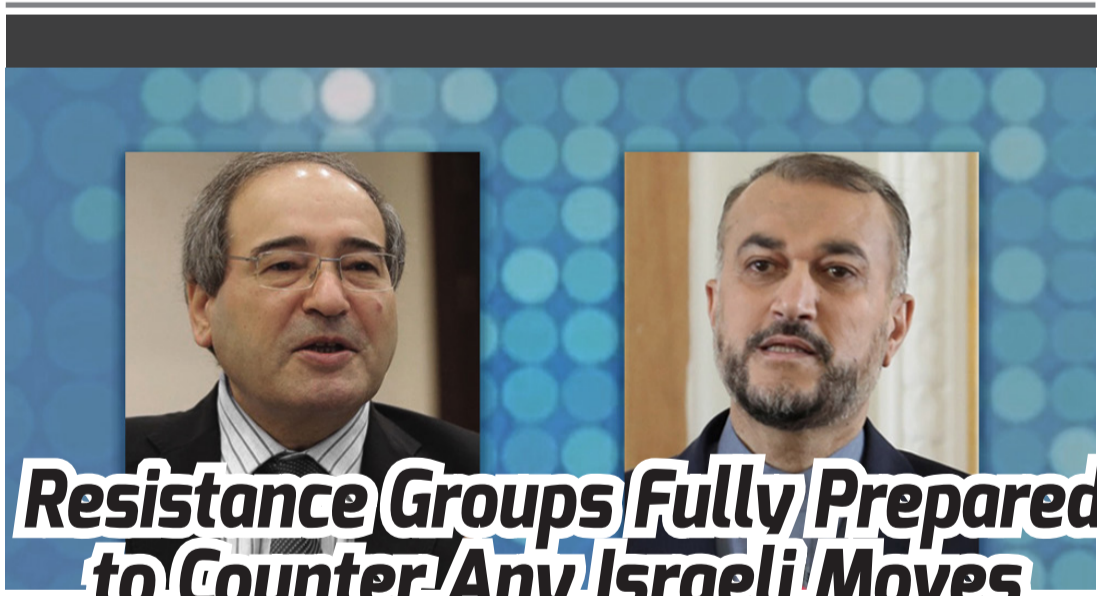


TEHRAN (Tasnim) - The U.S. Department of Energy said Iran returned to the third place in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) by overtaking the United Arab Emirates with producing 2.93 million barrels of oil per day (bpd) in the 3rd quarter of 2023. The Energy Information Administration (EIA), affiliated with the U.S. Department of Energy, put Iran's average oil output in the 3rd quarter of the current year at 2.93 million, rising by 190,000 barrels of oil per day compared to the 2nd quarter of 2023. Iran had produced 2.74 million barrels of oil per day in the second quarter of 2023 (March 21 to June 22). According to this report, following the US unilateral exit from Iran's nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), in May 2018 and re-imposition of sanctions, Iran's oil output volume significantly decreased. Iran, which was once considered the second largest producer of oil in OPEC, was relegated to 5th place after Saudi Arabia, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait. But by offsetting the impact of sanctions, and especially with the drastic measures taken in the administration of President Ebrahim Raisi, Iran's oil output was revitalized over the past two years and could overtake the United Arab Emirates to move up to the third place in OPEC.



## Iran's Exports to Iraq Up 30% in 7 Months

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - A member of the Board of Directors of the Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce said that Iran's exports to neighboring Iraq registered a 30 percent growth in 7 months, adding that achieving \$12 billion worth of exports to the Arab country is possible by the end of the current year. Regarding the latest trade situation between Iran and Iraq, Seyed Hamid Hosseini said that the country's export trend to Iraq was positive despite the existence of problems created for Iranian exporters and also the restrictions created by the Central Bank of Iraq to supply currency for purchasing products from Iran. He put the value of products exported from Iran to Iraq in the seven months of the previous Iranian calendar year (March 21 to October 2022) at \$7.2 billion, noting that Iran's export of non-oil products to neighboring Iraq increased to \$5.4 billion in the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21 to October 22, 2023). He pointed to -\$7.7 billion balance of the country's foreign trade from March 21 to October 22, 2023, and added that exporting products to Iraq should be facilitated to compensate for the trade balance deficit. According to the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), the foreign trade of the country has increased by 6.2 percent since the beginning of the current year up to the end of the Iranian month of Mehr (October 22).



## Resistance Groups Fully Prepared to Counter Any Israeli Moves

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian says Palestinian fighters and all the resistance groups in the region are quite ready to resist the Israeli enemy and counter any move against the defenseless people of Palestine. Amir-Abdollahian made the announcement in a Friday phone conversation with Syrian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Faisal Mekdad. The top Iranian diplomat said the Islamic Republic has made great diplomatic efforts and held consultations with influential countries in the region with the purpose of putting an immediate end to the war crimes and genocide committed by the child-killing

Israeli regime and dispatching humanitarian aid to the oppressed Palestinian people. Amir-Abdollahian emphasized that Israel and the United States are responsible for the continuation of the Tel Aviv regime's crimes in the killing of civilians, particularly women and children, and destroying key infrastructures in Gaza. Mekdad, for his part, reaffirmed Syria's principled and unchangeable stance on firm support for Palestine and the resistance front despite its own problems. The Syrian foreign minister urged the Muslim world to reinforce its unity to confront the apartheid Zionist regime and called on nations in the region to remain vigilant in the face of plots hatched by the US and Israel.

## Petchem Production Capacity to Hit 130 mt/y

TEHRAN (Shana) - Iran's petrochemical production capacity will soar to some 130 million tons per year (mt/y) by the end of the 7th Five-Year National Development Plan (2022-2026), said the National Petrochemical Company (NPC) managing director. Speaking in a ceremony to start the executive operations of a petrochemical project in Bijar, northwestern province of Kurdistan, Morteza Shahmirzaei added domestic petrochemical industry's installed capacity now stands at 92 mt/y while it was around 1.5 mt/y in 1979, the year of the Islamic Revolution's victory. The progress made in the country's petrochemical industry

shows the Islamic Republic's power, said the NPC CEO, adding the production capacity would hit 180 mt/y by the end of the 8th Five-Year National Development Plan (2026-2030). Pointing to sanctions imposed on different sectors, he said the enemy has attempted to prevent Iran from becoming a strong and big power but it failed due to people and officials' efforts. Shahmirzaei added 72 petrochemical complexes are now operating in Iran. According to him, petrochemical exports fetch the country \$16 billion annually and 110 petrochemical projects are underway in different parts of the country.

## At least 119 killed as magnitude 5.6 quake hits western Nepal

TEHRAN, Nov. 04 (MNA) – At least 119 people have been killed and 100 others injured after a strong earthquake hit the west of Nepal. The shallow quake struck at 11:47 pm (18:02 GMT) on Friday around the western area of Jajarkot, a hilly district about 500 kilometers (310 miles) west of the capital, Kathmandu, that is home to about 190,000 people. The US Geological Survey put the magnitude at 5.6 and said it was just 18 kilometers (11 miles) deep. The tremors were felt as far away as Kathmandu and even about 600km (375 miles) away in the Indian capital New Delhi. “The death toll has reached 119 and at least 100 have been injured,” Karnali Province police spokesman Gopal Chandra Bhattarai was quoted as saying by Al Jazeera.



## Nepal Earthquake Kills at Least 128



KATHMANDU (Dispatches) - At least 128 people were killed and dozens injured in Nepal when a strong earthquake struck the western area of Jajarkot, officials said on Saturday, as houses in the area collapsed and buildings as far as New Delhi in neighbouring India shook. The quake occurred at 11:47 p.m. (18:02 GMT) on Friday with a magnitude 6.4, Nepal's National Seismological Centre said. The German Research Centre for Geosciences measured the quake at 5.7, downgrading it from 6.2, while the U.S. Geological Survey pegged it at 5.6. The quake is the deadliest since 2015 when about 9,000 people were killed in two earthquakes in the Himalayan country. Whole towns, centuries-old temples and other historic sites were reduced to rubble then, with more than a million houses destroyed, at a cost to the economy of \$6 billion. Officials feared the death toll in Friday's quake could rise as they had not been able to establish contact in the hilly area near the epicentre, some 500 km (300 miles) west of the capital Kathmandu, where tremors were also felt. The district has a population of 190,000 with villages scattered in remote hills. “The number of injured could be in the hundreds and the deaths could go up as well,” Jajarkot district official Harish Chandra Sharma told Reuters by phone. Police spokesman Kuber Kadayat said 92 people were killed in Jajarkot and 36 in neighbouring Rukum West district, both in Karnali province. The epicentre was in the village of Ramidanda. At least 85 people were injured in Rukum West and 55 in Jajarkot, an official in the prime minister's office said, while Sharma said at least 50 people were in hospitals in Jajarkot alone. “Many houses have collapsed, many others have developed cracks. Thousands of residents spent the entire night in cold, open grounds because they were too scared to go in into the cracked houses as aftershocks struck,” Sharma said. “I have myself not been able to go in.” Search and rescue must clear roads blocked by landslides, triggered by the earthquake, to reach the affected areas, police officer Namaraj Bhattarai said. Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal flew to the area early on Saturday with a 16-member army medical team to oversee search, rescue and relief, his office said. Dahal, posting on the X social media platform, expressed deep sorrow at the loss of life and property in the quake and ordered security agencies to launch immediate rescue and relief operations. Local media footage showed crumbled facades of multi-storied brick houses, with large pieces of furniture scattered. Videos on X showed people running into the street as some buildings were evacuated. “Houses have collapsed. People rushed out of their homes. I am out in the crowd of terrified residents. We are trying to find details of damage,” police official Santosh Rokka said by phone.

## Bangladesh Garment Worker Protests Halt Production



DHAKA (Dispatches) - Levi's and H&M are among top global clothing brands to suffer production halts in Bangladesh, a garment union leader said Friday, after days of violent protests by workers demanding a near-tripling of their wages. Bangladesh's 3,500 garment factories account for around 85 percent of the South Asian country's \$55 billion annual exports, supplying many of the world's top names in fashion. But conditions are dire for many of the sector's four million workers, the vast majority of whom are women whose monthly wages start at 8,300 taka (\$75). Dozens of factories have been ransacked by striking workers, with several hundred others shuttered by their owners to avoid vandalism. Among them are “many of the country's bigger factories, who make clothing for almost all major Western brands and retailers,” Kalpona Akter, president of the Bangladesh Garments and Industrial Workers Federation (BGIWF), told AFP. “They include Gap, Walmart, H&M, Zara, Inditex, Bestseller, Levi's, Marks and Spencer, Primark and Aldi,” she added. A Primark spokesperson said the Dublin-headquartered fast-fashion retailer had not “experienced any disruptions to our supply chain.” “We remain in contact with our suppliers some of whom in turn have closed their factories temporarily while the unrest continues,” the spokesperson added. Manufacturers whose factories have been damaged in the protests are reluctant to give the names of brands they work with, fearing the loss of orders from buyers. Police said at least 300 factories had been shut down in the weeklong protests, which have so far left two workers dead and dozens more injured. Akter said her union had counted around 600 affected factories. Protests continued on Friday with thousands of garment workers mobilising on the streets of industrial neighbourhoods around the capital Dhaka. Around 3,000 workers attempted to block their colleagues from joining a factory shift after two major manufacturers – HaMeem and Sterling groups – reopened their plants. “Police fired tear gas to disperse the protesters,” a police inspector charged with monitoring the protests, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told AFP. “The two companies declared a holiday for the day and their 25,000 workers went home.” Garment workers say that a sharp increase in living costs has left them struggling to provide for their families. The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), which represents factory owners, has offered workers a 25 percent pay raise. That is significantly short of the 23,000 taka (\$209) monthly wage that the protest campaign has called for. Police said manufacturers in Gazipur, Dhaka's biggest industrial hub that saw the worst of this week's violence, had decided to reopen their plants from Saturday to make up for lost shifts. “We will deploy nearly 3,000 police and border guards to prevent any violence,” Gazipur police chief Sarwar Alam told AFP. He urged the workers to stop the violence and find a solution through dialogue. “I think the demands of workers are logical. But taking the law into their own hands won't help their cause,” Alam added.

## UN Chief Horrified by Israeli Strike on Gaza Ambulance Convoy



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - The head of the United Nations was “horrified” by a strike by Israeli forces on a convoy of ambulances in Gaza on Friday, he said in a statement, adding that the conflict “must stop.” The Palestinian Red Crescent Society has said one of its ambulances was struck “by a missile fired by the Israeli forces” just feet from the entrance to the hospital in Gaza City, in an attack it says killed 15 people and wounded more than 60 others. “I am horrified by the reported attack in Gaza on an ambulance convoy outside Al Shifa hospital. The images of bodies strewn on the street outside the hospital are harrowing,” Antonio Guterres said in the statement. An AFP journalist at the scene of Friday's attack saw multiple bodies beside the damaged ambulance outside the hospital, which is overcrowded with civilians seeking shelter from Israeli bombing as well as those wounded. Israel's military said it had launched an air strike on “an ambulance that was identified by forces as being used by a Hamas terrorist cell in close proximity to their position in the battle zone.” Insisting he did “not forget the terror attacks committed in Israel by Hamas,” the UN chief added that “for nearly one month, civilians in Gaza, including children and women, have been besieged, denied aid, killed, and bombed out of their homes.” This must stop,” he continued. The humanitarian situation in Gaza was “horrific,” he said. There is “not nearly enough” food, water and medicine, while fuel to power hospitals and water plants was running out, he warned. UN shelters in Gaza “are at nearly four times their full capacity and are being hit in bombardments,” Guterres continued. “Morgues are overflowing. Shops are empty. The sanitation situation

is abysmal. We are seeing an increase in diseases and respiratory illnesses, especially among children. An entire population is traumatized. Nowhere is safe,” he said. Guterres called again for a ceasefire, and for hostages taken by Hamas in their initial attack on October 7 to be freed. The Palestinian militant group killed more than 1,400 people in that attack, mainly civilians, Israeli officials say. Israel has retaliated by bombarding the Gaza Strip, where the Hamas-run health ministry says more than 9,200 people have died, mostly women and children. Guterres called again for all sides to respect international humanitarian law and protect civilians. “All those with influence must exert it to ensure respect for the rules of war, end the suffering and avoid a spillover of the conflict that could engulf the whole region,” he said. Meanwhile the Palestinian Red Crescent Society has condemned the targeting of a convoy of ambulances in Gaza by Israeli forces on Friday, which it says killed 15 people and wounded more than 60 others. The PRCS said in a statement early Saturday that one of its ambulances was struck “by a missile fired by the Israeli forces”, about two metres from the entrance to the Al-Shifa hospital in Gaza City. The attack resulted in the deaths of 15 civilians and wounded 60 other people, it said, mirroring figures released earlier by the Hamas-run health ministry. Another ambulance, belonging to the health ministry, was “directly targeted” by a missile around one kilometre from the hospital, causing injuries and damage, the PRCS said. Deliberately targeting medical teams constituted “a grave violation of the Geneva Conventions, a war crime”, added the organisation, part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.



## U.S. Renews Talk of Palestinian State But Prospects Bleak

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - With Israel's campaign against Hamas raging, the United States has renewed calls to work toward a Palestinian state, but few expect success now after decades of failure. President Joe Biden's administration, which has faced heated criticism in the Arab world for supporting Israel's retaliation over an October 7 Hamas attack that largely targeted civilians, has in recent days subtly changed tone by emphasizing the need to minimize harm to Palestinian civilians. Speaking Friday on his latest trip to Israel, Secretary of State Antony Blinken called for “humanitarian pauses” to let in assistance and said that longer term a two-state solution was “the best viable path – indeed, the only path.” “That's the only guarantor of a secure, Jewish, and democratic Israel; the only guarantor of Palestinians realizing their legitimate right to live in a state of their own, enjoying equal measures of security, freedom, opportunity and dignity; the only way to end a cycle of violence once and for all,” Blinken said in Tel Aviv. But a two-state solution was blessed almost exactly 30 years earlier by the Oslo Accords and has not come to fruition, with the Palestinian Authority enjoying only limited autonomy in parts of the West Bank, and the United States not leading a concerted diplomatic effort to the goal since John Kerry's efforts a decade ago. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is a veteran opponent of a Palestinian state and leads Israel's most right-wing government ever, filled with staunch backers of settlements in the West Bank. The Palestinian Authority in turn has been increasingly weakened, and has not controlled Gaza since 2007 when Islamist militants Hamas took over. But Brian Katulis, vice president of policy at the Middle East Institute, said that the Biden administration's calls for a two-state solution sent a signal: “We're not going down a dark tunnel here with no end in sight.” “As unrealistic as it sounds in the short term, it's important to keep saying those sorts of things, if only to send the message to regional actors – Israel, the Palestinians, but some of our Arab partners especially – that we're recommitting to some sort of horizon” with “at least a figment of a different type of future,” he said. The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza says more than 9,200 people been killed in relentless Israeli bombardments since then, mostly women and children. Biden and Blinken, while publicly backing Israel's right to respond to Hamas, have pressed Israel to hand over tax revenue it collects for the Palestinian Authority and to crack down on attacks by settlers against Palestinians in the West Bank. “Calling for a two-state solution doesn't mean that's the set goal and there will be a Palestinian state after this,” said one Washington-based diplomat from a US ally. “It's more that the Americans want to force the start of a conversation about what comes next,” the diplomat said. Even before the October 7 attack, the deadliest in Israel's history, support was slipping on both sides for a Palestinian state. A survey taken earlier this year by the Pew Research Center found that just 35 percent of Israelis thought their country could coexist peacefully with an independent Palestinian state, down from 50 percent 10 years ago, with polls showing a similar drop among Palestinians. Netanyahu, in a UN speech weeks before the attack, cast diplomacy for a two-state solution as the past and said the future was Israeli normalization with Arab states – a prospect that is also bleaker now.

## UN Retreat From Mali in Disarray as Violence Surges

DAKAR (Dispatches) - Before United Nations peacekeepers hurriedly abandoned their base in Kidal in northern Mali on Tuesday, they made a costly call: with insurgents stationed nearby, they destroyed sensitive equipment to avoid it falling into the wrong hands, the U.N. said. Shortly after the last U.N. convoy rolled out, the ethnic Tuareg rebels announced they had taken over the base. Photos posted on social media on Wednesday appeared to show locals loading trucks with looted goods, including tyres, cables and chairs. Mali's ruling military junta in June ordered the decade-old UN mission, known as MINUSMA, to leave as its relations soured with former international allies. MINUSMA has accelerated its departure in recent weeks as northern Mali has been engulfed in fighting between the rebels and government forces vying for control over areas it vacates. Chaos has ensued. Bloody confrontations have surrounded at least two U.N. bases, and two have also been looted, according to two sources with direct knowledge of the withdrawal. At least a dozen peacekeepers have been injured by explosive devices hit by U.N. convoys heading south, according to U.N. statements. The U.N. has acknowledged difficulties with its departure. MINUSMA said in

statements that it has been forced to destroy equipment including vehicles, ammunition and generators that its forces couldn't evacuate after the government imposed restrictions on moving them. Mission spokesperson Fatoumata Sinkoun Kaba told Reuters that millions of dollars of kit has been lost. Authorities have denied approval for air support for convoys travelling over some of the most volatile terrain in West Africa. They ordered a halt to some imports of fuel and spare parts, and in some cases jeopardised the safety of departing peacekeepers, according to the two sources with direct knowledge of the withdrawal. Mali's government did not respond to requests for comment for this story. Security analysts have warned that the Malian state could collapse altogether, further destabilising a region where insurgents with links to al Qaeda and Islamic State are gaining ground. MINUSMA had originally planned to leave Kidal in mid-November, the sources said. The equipment that was destroyed there and at two other northern bases could have been removed by U.N. trucks earlier, but Mali's junta blocked access, the U.N. said. Four aircraft have been grounded for lack of parts, the U.N. told Reuters, without specifying what kind of aircraft. Dozens of U.N. import requests have gone

unanswered, the U.N. Department of Peace Operations and the Department of Operational Support said in an internal letter to the Security Council on Oct. 14, seen by Reuters. With routes to the south under threat from Islamist militants, the mission has explored the possibility of exiting through Algeria to the north or Mauritania to the west, the letter said, both of which were proving “difficult to operationalise”. The two sources, who asked to remain anonymous to speak on a sensitive topic, said they believe Mali's junta has sought to delay the retreat to give it time to reach the bases before the U.N. leaves. Reuters was unable to confirm this but the junta has expressed concern in public pronouncements about the U.N. leaving bases before it arrives, including after the Kidal departure. Last month, it called the acceleration of MINUSMA's withdrawal a “betrayal”. The situation marks a bitter end to the U.N.'s mission in Mali, where it deployed after the north was overrun by Islamist militants and Tuareg rebels in a 2012 uprising. MINUSMA initially helped restore some calm, but violence has persisted. Thousands of civilians have died, and more than 170 peacekeepers have been killed in combat, making MINUSMA the U.N.'s deadliest mission.



## S. Korea Lining Up Banks to Help Finance \$22b Arms Sale to Poland

SEOUL (Dispatches) - After hitting statutory limits on import-export lending, South Korea is gathering local banks to help Poland buy \$22 billion worth of weapons in Seoul's largest arms sale, five people familiar with the matter told Reuters. “Five local banks are reviewing a syndicated loan as a support measure” to help Poland finance its purchase of South Korean rocket artillery systems and fighter jets, a South Korean government official said, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss ongoing planning. Two officials from a Korean defence company confirmed the syndicated loan plan. Two officials at South Korean banks said there would be loans, but did not specify the type. It is the first indication that Seoul is working to remove Poland's financing hurdles to enable the two countries to strike South Korea's biggest-ever weapons arms deal, estimated at around 30 trillion won (\$22.72 billion). The discussions are a follow-up to the comprehensive arms agreement between the two nations signed last year, under which South Korean companies including Hyundai Rotem Co. and Hanwha Aerospace Co. will supply tanks, howitzers and fighter jets. That deal was worth \$13.7 billion, South Korea's largest to date. Spokespersons at both Hyundai Rotem and Hanwha Aerospace declined to comment for this story. The South Korean government didn't immediately provide a comment when asked for one. The South Korean government official did not elaborate on the size of the potential syndicated loan. Such a loan is provided by a group of lenders to a single borrower, often to finance large deals. The defence company official said that if the syndicated loan for the next proposed sale wasn't enough, “there could be other financing measures on the way.” South Korea's defence exports totalled about \$17 billion in 2022, according to its defence ministry, up from \$7.25 billion a year before, as the war in Ukraine opened a door for Seoul's weapons exports. The 2022 arms deal with Poland established Seoul as a major player in global weapons exports, largely dominated by the U.S. and Russia. Seoul is also seeking deeper security ties in Europe, an ambition with ideal timing for Poland, which borders Ukraine, as it ramps up arms imports amid tensions with Russia.



## Djokovic Beats Rune to Reach Ninth Paris Masters Semis

PPARIS (Dispatches) - Novak Djokovic edged out Holger Rune to avenge his defeat in last year's Paris Masters final and reach the last four, while Stefanos Tsitsipas set up a meeting with Grigor Dimitrov. World number one Djokovic missed a match point in the second set but eventually claimed a 7-5, 6-7 (3/7), 6-4 win over Denmark's Rune in the quarter-finals after more than two-and-three-quarter hours on court at Bercy Arena. The Serbian star is playing in his first ATP Tour event since lifting a record 24th Grand Slam title in New York in September. Djokovic, the record six-time champion, will face either Alex de Minaur or Andrey Rublev on Saturday for a place in his ninth Paris Masters final. "It was quite a similar match to last year's final, it was anybody's game in every set," Djokovic said. "I played an awful tie-break in the second set, probably the worst one this year. But again credit to him for staying mentally tough and playing solid. We have similar games. Move well, defend well and all-round players." The 36-year-old claimed his second career victory against Rune, who is now working with Djokovic's former coach Boris Becker, after suffering two successive defeats by the world number seven. "It was strange seeing Boris in the opposing box," added Djokovic. "I wish Holger and him all the best." Djokovic snatched an opening set which was largely dominated by serve with a break in the 12th game. He saw a match point come and go on the Rune serve when leading 5-4 in the second set, before the 20-year-old went on to produce a series of brilliant points in a tie-break to force a decider. But Djokovic was clinical in the third set and a single break in the third game was enough to take him through. Djokovic has now won 16 successive matches since losing to Carlos Alcaraz in the Wimbledon

final. He has won all eight of his previous Paris Masters semi-finals. Tsitsipas powered his way into the semis with a dominant 6-3, 6-4 victory over Karen Khachanov. It was the 300th win of his career and gave the Greek, ranked sixth in the world, a semi-final match-up with Dimitrov who overcame Hubert Hurkacz 6-1, 4-6, 6-4. Tsitsipas, who also reached the last four a year ago when he lost to Djokovic, has progressed to the same stage without dropping a set and produced an impressive variety of plays to counter Khachanov's baseline power. "It's working well. I feel like I can mix up play," said Tsitsipas. "It feels good to have so much variety and so much diversity in the way you can play." Tsitsipas has already qualified for the end-of-season ATP Finals as one of the year's top eight players but defeat for Hurkacz against Dimitrov almost certainly rules the Pole out of contention. Just two of the eight places for the event in Turin later this month are still open, with Alexander Zverev and Rune in pole position to clinch them. Hurkacz remains in a good position to be first reserve. Dimitrov has no chance of reaching the ATP Finals but that did not prevent him from continuing his fine late-season form. In the last few weeks, the 32-year-old Bulgarian has reached the semi-finals in Chengdu, a quarter-final in Beijing and the semi-finals of the Masters event in Shanghai. His path to the last four of the Paris indoor event included a shock defeat of world number three Daniil Medvedev in the second round. "My body is feeling well for now, that's the most important thing," said Dimitrov. "My head is good. If I'm able to play like that on a consistent basis throughout every game, I put myself in a position to do better." Dimitrov last reached the semi-finals in Paris in 2019 when he lost to Djokovic.

## Haaland Has Time to Win Ballon d'Or



MANCHESTER (Dispatches) - Pep Guardiola said Erling Haaland was happy just to be in the running to win the Ballon d'Or after missing out to Lionel Messi for the coveted prize recognizing the world's best player. Messi won the award for a record-extending eighth time on Monday after leading Argentina to World Cup glory in Qatar last season. Haaland finished second thanks to his 52 goals as Manchester City claimed the treble of Premier League, Champions League and FA Cup. The Norwegian, 23, edged out Kylian Mbappe, who became the first man since Geoff Hurst in 1966 to score a hat-trick in a World Cup final in France's defeat on penalties to Argentina. Haaland also picked up the Gerd Muller trophy for scoring the most goals in the 2022/23 season. "I would say that I saw him so happy to be a contender, close to Messi and Mbappe and the rest of the players," said Guardiola. "Erling has all his career ahead of him, so he has to continue winning and say, 'OK, maybe next season I can be there.' This has to be his target but he was really pleased to be there and he seemed really well when he came back." City players have often missed out on personal accolades despite hoovering up trophies during Guardiola's reign. But five finished in the top 10 for the Ballon d'Or, with Kevin De Bruyne, Rodri, Julian Alvarez and Bernardo Silva joining Haaland. "It was a good night for Man City," said Guardiola. "Man City were there, present, and that's so important for us because we were never there in the past." City players and executives were able to attend the glitzy ceremony in Paris in force because the club had a rare midweek off due to their early exit from the League Cup. "We love to play every three days but it's nice to have a break and have one or two days off," said Guardiola. "It is what it is. We don't complain when we have a lot of games in a row and we don't complain when we have time off."

## Warriors Top Thunder on Controversial Buzzer-Beater

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Stephen Curry scored 30 points, including the winning layup in the final second, to lift the Golden State Warriors to a 141-139 victory over the host Oklahoma City Thunder in an NBA in-season tournament game. As Curry's ball was going through the basket, Green made contact with the rim. After a lengthy review, Green's contact was deemed "not to cause the ball to take an unnatural bounce" and the basket was counted. The game was the first for both teams in the NBA's inaugural in-season tournament. The final sequence was one of four late reviews -- all involving Green. With the Thunder leading by one with just more than two minutes remaining, Luguentz Dort was called for a foul on Green away from the ball as Curry let a 3-pointer fly. Oklahoma City challenged the call, which was reversed to an illegal screen on Green. Moments later, Green went up for a shot near the basket, and his left elbow caught the Thunder's Chet Holmgren near the eye. Holmgren remained down for a few minutes before walking off the floor. Officials ruled Green's contact to be incidental after another review. With 32.5 seconds left, Green was called for a blocking foul on Holmgren that was challenged by the Warriors. That call stood, and Holmgren made both free throws to put Oklahoma City back in front 138-137. The game was tied after Dort made 1 of 2 free throws with 16.4 seconds left, with Golden State calling time out to set up the final shot. Dario Saric added 20 points off the bench for the Warriors, who have won five consecutive games following an opening loss. Golden State got 19 points from Jonathan Kuminga, 18 from Klay Thompson, 17 from Andrew Wiggins and 15 from Green. Reserve Chris Paul contributed 13 assists. The Thunder were without Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, who sat out with a left knee sprain he sustained late in the team's Wednesday loss to the New Orleans

Pelicans. Dort led Oklahoma City with 29 points, making all six of his 3-point attempts. It was his highest-scoring game since the 2021-22 season. Holmgren added a season-high 24 points while Jalen Williams and Josh Giddey added 18 each. Giddey scored 14 points in the fourth quarter.



## Afghanistan Beat Netherlands to Keep Semifinal Hopes Alive



LUCKNOW (Dispatches) - Afghanistan kept their hopes of qualifying for the World Cup semi-finals alive after beating the Netherlands by seven wickets in a low-scoring group game. Afghanistan climbed to fifth in the standings with eight points, behind New Zealand on net run rate. The top four teams advance to the semi-finals. Afghanistan had won only one game in two previous World Cups, but the Asian side now have four wins in the tournament in India having also beaten defending champions England, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. "Of course we are 100% trying our best to make the semi-finals. If that happens that will be a big achievement for our country," Afghanistan skipper Hashmatullah Shahidi said after leading the run-chase with an unbeaten fifty. "I lost my mother three months ago, so my family is in pain. That would be a big achievement, first of all to our country and then to my family also." "Right now a lot of refugees are struggling. We are with them in this tough time, I dedicate this win to refugees who are in pain." Chasing 180 for victory, Afghanistan were 55-2 but Rahmat Shah scored a breezy 52 off 54 balls to set the platform for a comfortable chase. Shahidi then made 56 to guide Afghanistan home in the 32nd over, smashing the winning runs with his sixth boundary. Earlier, the Netherlands won the toss and opted to bat first but Mujeeb Ur Rahman struck in the first over when he trapped opener Wesley Barresi lbw to claim his 100th ODI wicket. Shahidi had praised Afghanistan's batting and bowling in the victory, but it was their fielding which restricted the Dutch to a low total as the next four batters were all run out after mix-ups. Max O'Dowd (42) looked set for a big score with nine fours but was run out by fine work in the deep from Azmatullah Omarzai, who shattered the stumps with a direct hit as the opener's dive was in vain. Captain Scott Edwards -- top scorer for the Dutch at the tournament -- was run out first ball by Afghan keeper Ikram Alikhil when he played a shot and stepped out of the crease not knowing where the ball was. "Definitely not ideal, four run outs in our top five is hard to come back from. I thought we started well and set ourselves up for a big total but gave it away," Edwards said. "(We thought) 280 would have been a good score. We've done well batting first, we've been good defending scores." Sybrand Engelbrecht was the lone middle order batter to provide resistance with a patient 58 but the Dutch were all out for 179 in the 47th over, with Alikhil involved in six dismissals and Mohammad Nabi picked up three wickets. Afghanistan next play Australia and South Africa. The Netherlands, who are eighth, play England and hosts India.

## Verstappen on Pole Ahead of Leclerc for Brazilian GP

SAO PAULO (Dispatches) - Max Verstappen and Red Bull anticipated the weather conditions perfectly to secure pole position ahead of Ferrari's Charles Leclerc for the Brazilian Grand Prix in a rain-curtailed qualifying session that ended in wild thunderstorms. The newly-crowned three-time world champion clocked a best lap in one minute and 10.727 seconds to outpace Leclerc by 0.294 seconds with Lance Stroll and Fernando Alonso taking third and fourth places to lock out the second row of the grid for Aston Martin. Lewis Hamilton was fifth for Mercedes ahead of team-mate George Russell, leaving a disappointed Lando Norris seventh for McLaren, after promising much more. Carlos Sainz qualified eighth in the second Ferrari ahead of Sergio Perez in the second Red Bull and Oscar Piastri, who did not manage to clock a time in Q3 for McLaren. It was Verstappen's 11th pole position of the season and lifted him to 31 for his career, one clear of Nico Rosberg and eighth in the all-time list of all-time. "We didn't know when it was coming and when it would hit," said Verstappen of the storm. "Of course, it is insane weather! My laps felt terrible and Charles and I discussed this and the hectic wind we had in the final laps. For the race, I think it seems very close." Leclerc said: "In my career, I have never experienced anything like this. There was no rain, but also no grip and it was difficult to drive. It was very weird. I am happy to be on P2." For Stroll, it was a result that ended a run of poor qualifying results. "The car felt good, but it was tricky and my lap was quite bad -- the weather changed so much. I missed a lot of apexes, but it was good enough for the top three. A great result for the team." The session was delayed 15 minutes to allow for cleaning of the circuit after screws and stones had caused punctures in free practice, notably for Alonso, starting his record-extending 375th Grand Prix, and Hamilton. In hot conditions, and with clouds

threatening, Piastri was first out to set a time before Stroll and then Norris took command. Verstappen struggled, complaining of his car's handling. "My car is jumping around like a kangaroo, the same problem as in Mexico," he reported. On his second Q1 run, Leclerc went top for Ferrari with Piastri going second as rain was forecast and the track improved, providing increasingly more grip, which in turn forced the top teams to take new tyres and continue lapping to avoid the cut. After a final flurry, the bottom five were Yuki Tsunoda and his Alpha Tauri team-mate Daniel Ricciardo, Valtteri Bottas of Alfa Romeo, Logan Sargeant of Williams and Zhou Guanyu in the second Alfa Romeo. Russell was fastest ahead of Verstappen and Leclerc, with only half a second separating third from 18th in a highly-competitive session during which tyre usage was critical for performance and strategy planning for the race. In falling temperatures, McLaren's Norris and Piastri impressed before Verstappen found his touch to clock 1:10.162, a three-tenths improvement on his Q1 lap and good enough to resist both Ferraris and both Mercedes' efforts. With four minutes remaining, it was fiercely close and only three-tenths separated all 15 runners before Norris went top in 1:10.021, confirming McLaren as a major contender for the Grand Prix. At the flag, it was Nico Hulkenberg of Haas, the Alpines of Esteban Ocon and Pierre Gasly, last year's pole-sitter Kevin Magnussen in the second Haas and Williams' Alex Albon who missed out on the top-10 shootout. Q3 began in near-darkness under leaden clouds, with Alonso leading the way before Verstappen clocked 1:10.727, Leclerc going second ahead of Stroll and his Aston Martin team-mate before the weather turned wild. A blast of wind upset Piastri's lap, Leclerc complained of "super weird conditions" and Alonso declared "it's night" before the session was red-flagged.

