

The Secretary of Iran Annual Artificial Intelligence Award Mr. Iman Karami Said That 600 People Have Participated in This Year's Competition Where Technical and Engineering Fields Should Be Introduced to Young People

# IRAN NEWS

Iran's Minister of Intelligence Esmail Khatib Has Ridiculed U.S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken, Saying He Is Moving Around the Region Like a "Peddler" Seeking a Solution Favorable to Israel

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### Efforts by Muslim, Arab States Can End Israeli War Crimes



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's foreign minister says endeavors by Muslim and Arab countries can end the ongoing Israeli war crimes against the Palestinian people in the besieged Gaza Strip. Hossein Amir-Abdollahian made the remarks in a news interview on Saturday night after he, along with Iran's president Ebrahim Raisi, attended a Joint Arab Islamic Extraordinary Summit on Israel's aggression against Gaza in the Saudi capital of Riyadh. "The meeting was held tardily. However, we believe that if the leaders of Muslim countries and the general secretaries of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Arab League make necessary efforts, we can witness the cessation of war crimes by the Zionist regime at this juncture," he said. In a final communiqué, the summit condemned "the Israeli aggression against the Gaza Strip and the war crimes," as well as the occupying regime's "barbaric, inhumane and brutal massacres" perpetrated against the Palestinian people. It also called on the UN Security Council to take "a decisive and binding decision" that ends the Gaza carnage. The meeting further urged the Hague-based International Criminal Court (ICC) to complete the investigation into war crimes and crimes against humanity being committed by Israel against the Palestinians. Originally, the 22 members of the Arab League were expected to attend Saturday's summit. However, the event was later expanded to include the OIC, a wider association of 57 mostly Muslim-majority states. Addressing the meeting, Raisi said, "Blind bombardment against Gaza must stop," adding that Muslim governments should "designate the army of the occupying and aggressor regime as a terrorist organization."



### U.S. Playing Most Important Role in Helping Israel Survive

TEHRAN (PressTV) - President Ebrahim Raisi says the United States plays the most important role in helping the Israeli regime survive and is the main party supplying the regime with weapons to kill Palestinian women and children. Raisi made the remarks while addressing reporters in Tehran early Sunday upon his return from an extraordinary joint summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Arab League in Saudi Arabia's capital city of Riyadh. The summit came as Israel continued its war of genocide in the besieged Gaza Strip despite growing calls to end the regime's atrocities. The regime waged the war on October 7 after the territory's resistance movements carried out the surprise Operation al-Aqsa Storm in response to Israel's intensified crimes against the Palestinian people. The Iranian president said during his address to the summit, he "introduced the United States as the main culprit in these crimes [that are being committed by Israel in Gaza]." Raisi stressed that the United States "plays the most important role both in [helping] survival of the Zionist regime and in arming and supporting it in its massacre of Palestinian women and children." "Noting that the Islamic Republic has solid views on the issue of Palestine, the Iranian president said, "During this trip, I tried to be the voice of the Iranian nation and those people who shout the right of Palestinians in streets." "Since the victory of the Islamic Revolution, Iran has had clear-cut views on the right of Palestinian people, while at the same time, considering the Zionist regime as a fake and usurping regime with no identity," Raisi said. He added that the Islamic Republic considers the liberation of the occupied city of al-Quds and restoration of the Palestinian nation's rights as the top priority of the Muslim world and a criteria for evaluating true positions of countries on this issue. Raisi noted that explaining Iran's viewpoints on the issue of Palestine and expounding various aspects of "Zionists' crimes against humanity as well as war crimes and genocide" in the besieged Gaza Strip were other important goals of his participation in the Riyadh summit. He then touched on 10 proposals and solutions that Iran offered in the summit to show the way out of the current crisis in Gaza, stressing that supporting Palestinian resistance is the sole way that leads to the liberation of the Holy al-Quds. "In this summit, in contrast to the two-state solution that some parties proposed on the future of Palestine, we offered a totally democratic solution based on having all Palestinians, including Muslims, Christians and Jews, vote [through a referendum] to determine their fate," Iran's president said. He noted that passage of time, even if it is 75 years, does not "give a usurping and occupying regime legitimacy and the right of ownership" over Palestinian territories. On Saturday Raisi and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman have met for the first time since the two countries mended their strained ties as part of an agreement reached in Beijing earlier this year. Raisi and bin Salman met in the Saudi capital of Riyadh as they were preparing to attend a joint summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Arab League to discuss the conflict in Palestine. Raisi and bin Salman had agreed in the meeting that Iran and Saudi Arabia should expand their bilateral and regional cooperation. The two had also agreed to have detailed discussions in the future about issues of bilateral and regional developments. In the first meeting between Dr. Raisi and HM Mohammad bin Salman, after a warm welcome by HRH, the 2 had important talks about the situation in Palestine. The Saudi crown prince stressed his intention to strengthen ties with Iran. The meeting was the most high-profile encounter between Iranian and Saudi Arabian officials since the two regional powers decided to set aside differences and resume diplomatic relations as part of an agreement mediated by China in March. Iran and Saudi Arabia then moved to reopen their respective embassies while exchanging trade delegations to deepen their economic cooperation. Raisi met with other regional leaders on the sidelines of the joint OIC-Arab League summit in Riyadh on Saturday. The president said during a meeting with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi that Iran seeks to engage in stronger ties with Egypt. "Iran sees no obstacle in expansion of relations with the friendly country of Egypt," said Raisi in the meeting where Sisi also declared that his country is determined to build "realistic relations" with Iran. In the first meeting between President Raisi and the Egyptian President, the two men had a good discussion about the situation in Palestine and assistance for Gazans as well as regional developments. President Sisi also expressed his intention to push forward relations with Iran. Raisi and his Syrian counterpart Bashar al-Assad also emphasized in a meeting on Saturday that resistance is the only way to determine the fate of Gaza and its freedom struggle against the Zionist regime.

### NIOEC Rivaling Foreigners in Venezuela Refinery Renovation



TEHRAN (Shana) - National Iranian Oil Engineering and Construction Company (NIOEC) is tasked with operating infrastructure projects in the downstream oil sector including refining, storage, transport, and distribution of crude oil and petroleum products in Iran. With more than seven decades of work in infrastructure refining, NIOEC has developed special potential in handling such projects, rendering Iran independent of foreign companies. Thanks to its expertise, NIOEC is currently operating major national refining projects as well as renovating Venezuela's El Palito refinery. NIOEC has overcome rivals in Venezuela's refining sector. Farhad Ahmadi, the CEO of NIOEC, has said that NIOEC is the only company endowed with international finance. Thanks to its certificates and experience, he said, NIOEC is rivaling many foreign companies. NIOEC's ability to operate refining and oil pipeline projects has empowered it to handle overseas projects. In May 2022, a high-ranking Iranian delegation visited Venezuela, signing agreements for the overhaul of the El Palito refinery. "In this project, many documents of various units of this refinery had been modified over years, which were all regulated. Some systems that had been modified were revamped," said Ahmadi. He said a Venezuelan delegation visited Tehran, demanding that NIOEC repair the refinery for an instantaneous glitch. "To that end, 1,900 items of equipment, not included in the overhaul and renovation contract, were supplied to the refinery. They were all necessary and were supplied by September 2022. Without these items, the refinery would be put out of service," he added. Ahmadi said it took time to supply so many items to the refinery, adding: "Over 3-4 months, representatives from the El Palito refinery visited Iranian plants and industries to get familiar with various Iranian industries. Locally manufactured equipment was introduced to them to ensure them about the capability of Iranian industry." "More than 2 million items of equipment would be provided to this refinery. Talks have been held with 1,800 Iranian companies, 1,000 of which are already involved in this project," he added.

### PMO to Attract About \$2b of Investment to Develop Maritime Economy



TEHRAN - Head of Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) has said the organization is going to attract 1.0 quadrillion rials (about \$1.968 billion) of investment in the country's ports to develop maritime economy. As reported by the portal of the Iranian Transport Ministry, Ali-Akbar Safaei, in a televised interview on Sunday, said 470 trillion rials (about \$924 million) of the mentioned figure is going to be invested by the private sector and the rest will be supplied by PMO. According to the official, private contractors have so far signed deals worth 60 trillion rials (about \$118 million) with PMO to implement development projects in the country's ports. "In order to realize the general development policies of the maritime sector, we need an integrated, coordinated and agile management at the highest level," Safaei said. While Iran is combating the U.S. unilateral sanctions on its economy, the country's ports as the major gates of exports and imports play a significant role in this battle. This role makes all-out support to ports and more development of them serious and vital. Such necessity has led the government to define projects for more development of the ports and also take some measures to encourage investment making in ports, in addition to facilitating the loading and unloading of goods, especially basic commodities, there. It is worth mentioning that Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization has defined a high number of projects to develop and improve the country's ports, as the country aims to double the capacity of its ports in the course of five years. According to the PMO, the capacity of the country's ports has increased from 180 million tons in the Iranian calendar year 1392 (ended in March 2014) to 250 million tons in 1399 (ended in March 2021).

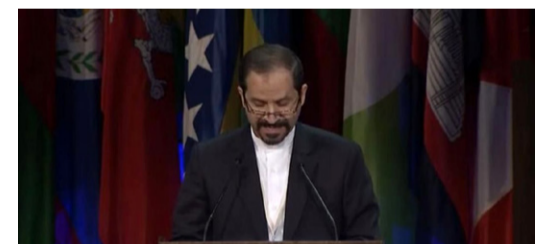
### Iran Oil Production Rises in October

TEHRAN - Iran, which has gained an exemption from OPEC cuts deal due to U.S. sanctions, increased production to 3.05 million barrels per day (bpd) in October, as pipeline issues that affected production and exports in September were resolved, according to a survey conducted by S&P Global Commodity Insights Platts. Production is now at a five-year high, increasing significantly since sanctions pressure eased after Russia-Ukraine war. OPEC+ crude oil output grew 180,000 bpd in the mentioned month, adding supply pressures to flagging market sentiment, as Iran and Iraq led the group's production higher. As reported, OPEC's 13 members pumped 27.89 million bpd, up 130,000 bpd month on month, while 10 non-OPEC allies, including Mexico, which is not subject to a quota, boosted production by 50,000 bpd to 14.82 million bpd. On October 29, the spokesman of the Iranian Oil, Gas and Petrochemical Products Exporters' Union said that Iran's oil production has increased to 3.4 million barrels per day, despite the U.S. sanctions aimed at curbing oil exports and the associated revenue to Iran's government. "The latest reports show that Iran's oil production has increased to 3.4 million barrels per day, while it was about 2.9 million barrels per day

until recently," Hamid Hosseini told IRNA. Given that previously closed oil wells have been reopened and returned to the production cycle, Iran can increase its oil production to 3.8 million bpd, he said. "If we seek to increase oil exports from 3.8 million barrels per day to 4.2 million bpd in the 7th National Development Plan, we need to invest an average of \$25,000 for each barrel of oil, but now, because these oil wells had been in production cycle previously, we have the opportunity to increase the oil production to 3.8 million barrels per day," he explained. Hosseini also said that about 40,000 bpd have been added to the country's oil production from the Sepehr and Jafir oilfields, which can help with the economic growth of the country. Iran produced 3.058 million barrels per day of crude oil in September, registering a 15,000-bpd increase compared to the previous month, according to OPEC's latest monthly report. Based on secondary sources, Iran produced 3.043 million bpd of crude oil in August. The Islamic Republic's average crude output for the third quarter of 2023 stood at 2.990 million bpd indicating a 292,000-bpd increase compared to the figure for the second quarter of the year, the report said.



### Iran Offers Program to UNESCO to Facilitate Exchange of Ideas and Knowledge



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran's Deputy Minister of Science, Research and Technology Peyman Salehi has suggested a program to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to facilitate the free exchange of ideas and knowledge. "The Islamic Republic of Iran, suggests that a program entitled, 'Science Road', be defined and initiated by UNESCO to facilitate the free exchange of ideas and knowledge and it declares its preparation to make use of all its historical and contemporary potential in this respect," Salehi said addressing the 42nd Session of the General Conference of UNESCO. Some excerpts of Salehi's statement are as follows: It is my honor to address the 42nd Session of the General Conference of UNESCO. I would also like to congratulate you, Madame President, for presiding over this General Conference and at the same time pay tribute to the previous President. Iran's strategic location, nestled between the crossroads of East and South Asia has endowed the nation with a profound legacy of knowledge exchange. This historical backdrop has transformed Iran into a cultural bridge, fostering intellectual and cultural interactions that have transcended borders and civilizations. JundiShapur, the oldest university of the world in the southwest of Iran, can be mentioned here as an example, the 1750th anniversary of whose establishment was acknowledged by UNESCO in 2017. As a candidate for the Executive Board of UNESCO for the 2023-2027 terms, I wish to reiterate that our candidacy is imbued with our steadfast commitment to fostering global cooperation and mutual understanding through education, science and culture, alongside unwavering dedication and passion. We firmly believe that introducing a rotation of members can bring fresh air into the organization, ushering in new perspectives and innovative approaches. Recent incidents, where the sanctity of the Holy Quran was violated, challenge the fostering of mutual respect and understanding among diverse communities. These distressing events underscore the presence of forces that seek to sow discord and division among us, emphasizing the need for unity and empathy in our global society.

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

# IRAN NEWS



## Exports From Mining Sector Rises 7.5%

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iran exported 35.87 million tons of minerals and mining products worth \$7.4 billion in the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-October 22), registering a 7.5 percent increase year on year. The exports from the mentioned sector in the said period also increased by 37 percent in terms of weight, IRNA reported. Iran had exported 26.03 million tons of minerals and mining products valued at \$6.9 billion in the previous year's first seven months. Steel and steel products were the top exported commodities in this sector, followed by copper and its byproducts, aluminum, and related items, as well as other downstream products. Having 81 different types of minerals, Iran is one of the top 10 mineral-rich countries across the globe. In this regard, the Iranian government has been seriously pursuing several programs to promote the mining sector as a major contributor to the country's economic growth.

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK



## Non-Oil Exports to India Stand around \$1.3b in 7 Month

TEHRAN - Iran exported non-oil commodities valued at \$1.3 billion to India during the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-October 22), the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced. According to Mohammad Rezvani-Far, India was the fifth top export destination of Iranian non-oil goods in the mentioned seven-month period. Also, exporting non-oil commodities valued at \$1.1 billion to Iran, India was Iran's fifth source of import during the first seven months of this year, the official announced. According to the data previously released by the Indian Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the value of Iran's exports to India increased nine percent in the first seven months of 2023, as compared to the same period of time in 2022. The Indian ministry put the worth of Iran's exports to India at \$393 million in January-August 2023, while the figure was \$361 million in the same time span of 2022. Petroleum products, raw materials for dye production, and various fruits were the top exported goods to India in the first seven months of 2023. India imported \$156 million of petroleum products, \$105 million of raw materials for the

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

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK



## Iran, EAEU Trade Hits \$4.2b in 7-Month Period

TEHRAN, Nov. 12 (MNA) - The volume of trade exchanges between Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) member states in the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (started March 21, 2023) reached \$4.2 billion. According to the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), Iran and the member states of the union exchanged eight million tons of products, valued at \$4.2 billion, from March 21 to October 22, 2023. In this timespan, Iran exported two million tons of goods, valued at \$922

million, to the EAEU members, IRICA added. In return, Iran imported six million tons of non-oil goods, valued at \$3.3 billion, from the EAEU countries. Russia, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Belarus were Iran's main export target markets in this period, importing \$532 million, \$235 million, \$105 million, \$40 million and \$10 million worth of products from Iran respectively. Iran imported \$3 billion worth of non-oil goods from the Russian Federation from March 21 to October 22, 2023, IRICA added.

## Hezbollah Actions Based on Wisdom, Prudence



TEHRAN (IRNA) - President Ebrahim Raisi has said that actions by Lebanon's Hezbollah Resistance Movement are based on wisdom and prudence, but the Zionist regime has no logic and only understands the language of force. "Resistance is based on deterrence and prevention of aggression by enemies. Hezbollah actions are based on wisdom and prudence, but the Zionist regime has no logic and understands no language but the language of force," Raisi told Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati. They met in the Saudi capital Riyadh on the sidelines of a joint summit by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Arab League on the Gaza war. The Iranian president rejected claims that resistance groups in the region take orders from the Islamic Republic, saying that the groups "are independent in identifying, making decisions and taking action." The Lebanese prime minister also hailed Hezbollah for its wise and prudent actions in the face of provocative behaviors of the Zionist regime. Hezbollah has shown that resistance is not for fighting only, it also makes efforts to establish peace and tranquility in the region, Mikati said. The Lebanese resistance movement has been engaged in sporadic clashes with the Israeli regime at Lebanon's southern border since the Gaza war broke out on October 7. Hezbollah has said that its actions are in support of Palestinian resistance forces who are fighting the Israeli regime in the Gaza Strip.



## Iran Has Successful, Powerful Presence in Int'l Waters

TEHRAN (MNA) - The commander of the Iranian Army Navy says that Iran's navy presence in international waters is successful and powerful. Speaking at a ceremony, Rear Admiral Shahram Irani said that the presence of the country's Navy in international waters with the help of scientific capabilities and equipment has been always powerful and successful. He added that in addition to escorting fleets, the strategic navy of the Iranian army is noticed by the international community regarding its contribution to ensuring security. Referring to the presence of the Iranian Navy in all international waters, he added that today, even the countries who claim they have established maritime safety, have asked for Iran's assistance to their fleets. He also pointed out that the Army strategic navy has a presence in humanitarian operations in addition to the military scene.

## Patients Die in Iran Due to Mass Migration of Nurses



TEHRAN (IFP) - The migration of medical staff from Iran is reaching a critical point, leading to the death of patients in hospitals that are short of nurses, an Iranian official has warned. Mohammad Sharifi, the Secretary General of the Nursing House, wrote on X social media platform on Sunday, "The shortage of nurses is so serious that patients are dying because of the shortage." "If you don't hear such things from patients or clients, it's because they are either not aware or have come to terms with the shortages. I am confident that patients are dying due to lack of nurses," he added. He said Iranian nurses, dissatisfied with their low salaries and tough working conditions, mostly choose Germany, the United States, Australia, and Canada as the new destinations to pursue their career and dreams. He put the number of annual migrant nurses at more than 3,000. Iranian officials have warned the country's healthcare system will suffer a huge blow as the medical staff is migrating to foreign countries in droves. Although no official figures have been released on the migration of medical staff in Iran, World Health Organization reports on the employment of physicians have indicated that Iran ranks high in terms of the number of migrant nurses and doctors.

## Iran Facing Scientific Apartheid



TEHRAN (IRNA) - The president of the University of Tehran says Iran is facing a scientific apartheid given that scientific journals reject many articles sent from the country. "Many Iranian professors in the fields of social and behavioral sciences have witnessed the rejection of articles that are sent to prestigious scientific journals of the world without reviewing them simply because they were sent from Iran," Mohammad Moghimi said on Sunday. He made the remarks during the Conference of the World Coalition Against Scientific Apartheid: World Peace, Justice, Security and Health. Scientific databases are at their disposal, and they are the ones who decide the criteria of what articles are registered in those databases, he said. Moghimi further made clear that Iran does not have problems in publishing articles in the fields of physics, hard sciences, and engineering, but rather, problems arise in humanities as well as social and behavioral sciences. "This approach is rooted in the existence of a scientific apartheid and the existence of discrimination and sanctions, which have specifically targeted Iran for more than forty years," he added.

## Israeli Strategies Invalidated by Al-Aqsa Storm Operation



TEHRAN (MNA) - The Al-Aqsa Storm operation that the Palestinian resistance forces launched outside Gaza in October discredited the Zionist regime's military strategies, a ranking IRGC commander said. Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps Ground Force Brigadier General Mohammad Pakpour paid a visit to the IRGC bases in Iran's southwestern border areas to evaluate the preparedness of his forces. In comments during the visit, the commander said the Al-Aqsa Storm operation that the Palestinian resistance forces carried out on October 7 discredited the Zionist regime's macroscale military strategies. He also hailed the surprise operation as the defenseless Palestinian people's uprising against Israeli cruelty, occupation, and massacre during the past 75 years. The general also made a reference to the remarks by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, saying the Leader made "accurate and wise" comments about the irreparable damages to the Israeli regime. In remarks on October 10, Ayatollah Khamenei pointed to the "irreparable defeat" of the Zionist regime in the epic that was created by the Palestinian youth, saying, "The cause of this destructive storm was the continuous brutality and ferocity of the fake usurper regime against the Palestinian nation. This regime cannot conceal its monstrous and devious face in the attack on Gaza and the massacre of Gazans through the act of lying or by playing the victim. By speaking nonsense, it cannot attribute the bravery of the Palestinian youth and their intelligent plans to non-Palestinians."

### Thousands in Honduras March in Anti-Gov't Protest

TEGUCIGALPA (Dispatches) - Thousands of people took to the streets of the Honduran capital on Saturday in anti-government protests against leftist President Xiomara Castro, angered by attempts to engineer what they say is an unconstitutional power grab. In a demonstration sponsored by opposition parties, protesters in the Central American country accused the Castro government of seeking to transform Honduras by hand-picking public officials. "We are here in defense of democracy because we do not want a dictatorship in Honduras like those in Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua, which is what the leftist government of President Xiomara Castro is leading us to," David Chavez, president of the right-wing National Party told reporters on Saturday. Roughly 10,000 people gathered in Tegucigalpa, the capital, according to a Reuters eyewitness, in a march that ended without incident. An official estimate from the Honduran authorities was not immediately provided.



### Japan-Led Navy Exercise Starts With Philippines Observing for First Time



ABOARD USS CARL VINSON (Dispatches) - Japan's navy announced the start of a joint annual military exercise, with the Philippines observing the operations for the first time as the two countries seek closer maritime cooperation. The Japan-led Annual exercise started on Friday with operations conducted by the naval forces of the United States, Australia and Canada, with the Philippines attending as an observer, Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force Vice Admiral Akira Saito told reporters. "The Philippines is a very important country for us, and we are looking to coordinate with their navy at every possible opportunity," Saito said aboard the USS Carl Vinson as it sailed in an undisclosed location in the Pacific Ocean. The exercise comes as Japan, the U.S. and the Philippines seek closer ties and deeper security cooperation to counter China, though Saito said the operations are not being conducted to target a specific country. Last week, Japan said it would provide radar systems to the Philippines to bolster its security. The two countries also announced the start of negotiations for a reciprocal military access agreement. "The more that our navies work together, the more multilateral our operations and our exercises are, the greater the security for this region. So I'm thrilled that Japan invited the Philippines to observe this year," Vice Admiral of the U.S. Seventh Fleet Karl Thomas said. Saito added that strong cooperation between like-minded countries is crucial for the stability of the Indo-Pacific region. The operations will be conducted for 10 days and will involve 30 ships and 40 aircraft, Saito said. There has been a string of clashes between the Philippines and China in recent weeks, including a collision in October, while Japanese and Chinese ships also faced off in the East China Sea last month. Separately, the Philippines' coast guard said on Saturday it would maintain its regular supply missions to troops stationed on a disputed atoll in the South China Sea even though it expects more Chinese vessels to be sent to the area.



## Arab and Muslim Leaders Demand Immediate End to Gaza War

RIYADH (Dispatches) - Saudi Arabia and other Muslim countries called for an immediate end to military operations in Gaza, rejecting Israel's justification of its actions against Palestinians as self-defense. The extraordinary joint Islamic-Arab summit in Riyadh urged the International Criminal Court to investigate "war crimes and crimes against humanity that Israel is committing" in the Palestinian territories, according to a final communique. Saudi Arabia has sought to press the United States and Israel for an end to hostilities in Gaza, and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the kingdom's de facto ruler, gathered Arab and Muslim leaders to reinforce that message. Dozens of leaders including Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan, Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, who was welcomed back into the Arab League this year, attended. Prince Mohammed affirmed the kingdom's "condemnation and categorical rejection of this barbaric war against our brothers in Palestine." "We are facing a humanitarian catastrophe that proves the failure of the Security Council and the international community to put an end to the flagrant Israeli violations of international laws," he said in an address to the summit. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said Palestinians were facing a "genocidal war" and urged the United States to end Israeli "aggression". The Middle East has been on edge since Hamas fighters rampaged into Israel on Oct. 7, killing 1,200 people. Since then, Israel has escalated its assault on Gaza, where 11,078 people had been killed as of Friday, 40% of them children, according to Palestinian officials. Fighting intensified overnight into Saturday near Gaza City's overcrowded hospitals, Palestinian officials said. A baby died in an incubator at Gaza's largest hospital after it lost power, and a patient in intensive care was killed by an Israeli shell, the Palestinian health ministry said. The war has upended traditional Middle East alliances as Riyadh has engaged more closely with Iran, pushed back against U.S. pressure to condemn Hamas, and put on hold its plans to normalise ties with Israel. Erdogan called for an international peace

conference to find a permanent solution to the conflict between Israel and Palestinians. "What we need in Gaza is not pauses for a couple of hours, rather we need a permanent ceasefire," Erdogan told the summit. Qatar's Emir said his country, where several Hamas leaders are based, was seeking to mediate the release of Israeli hostages and hoped a humanitarian truce would be reached soon. "For how long will the international community treat Israel as if it is above international laws?" he asked. President Joko Widodo of Indonesia, the country with the world's largest Muslim population, said the "Indonesia Hospital in North Gaza continues to be the target of Israeli attacks and has run out of fuel." He said a way must be found to make Israel cease fire immediately, before adding: "The OIC must use all fronts to hold Israel accountable for the humanitarian atrocities it has committed." Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan told reporters there could be no talks about the future of Gaza except "talks about an immediate ceasefire". The summit also demanded an end to the siege of Gaza, access for humanitarian aid, and a halt to the sale of arms to Israel. The kingdom had been scheduled to host two extraordinary summits, of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Arab League, on Saturday and Sunday, but opted for a joint summit because of the "extraordinary" Gaza situation, the Saudi foreign ministry said. Hamas had urged the summit to take "a historic and decisive decision and move to stop the Zionist aggression immediately." Some Arab countries, led by Algeria, called for a complete cut in diplomatic ties with Israel, two delegates told Reuters. Other Arab countries that have established diplomatic relations with Israel pushed back, stressing the need to keep channels open with Netanyahu's government, they said. At a press conference in Tel Aviv, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu urged Arab leadership to "stand up against Hamas." "It only brought two things to the Gaza Strip - poverty and blood," Netanyahu said. "Hamas is an integral part of the terror axis that Iran leads and that axis of terror and hatred endangers the whole world and the whole Arab world."

### China's Growth Forecasts Upgraded, Eurozone Recession Fears



WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has upgraded its GDP growth forecasts for China in 2023 and 2024. It now expects China's economy to grow by 5.4% this year, up from its previous forecast of 5%. However, the IMF also warns of slower growth next year, projecting that China's GDP will expand by 4.6% in 2024 - up from a 4.2% forecast in October - due to weakness in the property sector and subdued export demand. The upward revision to growth forecasts is attributed to China's approval of a 1 trillion yuan (\$137 billion) sovereign bond issue and measures to support the economy. "We have revised up growth by 0.4 percentage points in both years relative to our October projections, reflecting stronger than expected growth in the third quarter and the new policy support that was recently announced," IMF First Deputy Managing Director Gita Gopinath said. It came as China's consumer price index dropped 0.2% in October from a year earlier - and 0.1% lower than in September. The producer price index fell 2.6% year-on-year in October, 0.1 percentage points less than economists had predicted. Meanwhile, China's imports grew 3.0% in October compared with a year earlier - defying expectations and ending 11 months of decline. However, recent year-on-year contractions in exports accelerated to 6.4%, compared with a 6.2% decline in September. Eurozone recession fears are intensifying as a downturn in business activity accelerates. Demand in the services industry has weakened further according to new figures, raising concerns of a possible recession. The composite purchasing managers' index fell to 46.5 in October, marking the fifth consecutive month it has been below 50 - the level separating growth from contraction. Manufacturing activity has also taken a step back, with new orders contracting at one of the steepest rates on record. Services activity in Germany, the largest economy in Europe, began receding again in October. France and Italy also experienced shrinking services sectors. Retail sales in the 20-country currency union fell 0.3% month-on-month and by 2.9% year-on-year in September, indicating weak consumer demand and further highlighting the prospect of a recession. The Eurozone economy shrank 0.1% in the third quarter compared with the previous three months. The UK economy failed to grow in the third quarter, with a 0% change in GDP. Analysts had expected a contraction of 0.1% and say the UK has narrowly avoided the start of a recession. Meanwhile, British house prices rose for the first time in six months in October, according to mortgage lender Halifax. Real wages (those adjusted for inflation) in Japan fell for the 18th consecutive month in September, dropping by 2.4% from a year earlier, according to data from the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. Inflation in Mexico eased again in October - for the ninth month in a row - keeping it at its lowest level for more than two-and-a-half years. But the 4.26% figure for Latin America's second-largest economy is still above the central bank's target of 3%. The financial services industry is facing several future risks, including vulnerabilities to cyberattacks due to artificial intelligence and new financial products creating debt. The World Economic Forum's Centre for Financial and Monetary Systems works with the public and private sectors to design a more sustainable, resilient, trusted and accessible financial system worldwide.



## London Police Arrest Over 120 as Pro-Palestinian Rally Draws Counter-Protests

LONDON (Dispatches) - More than 300,000 pro-Palestinian demonstrators marched through central London, with police arresting over 120 people as they sought to stop far-right counter-protesters from ambushing the main rally. Skirmishes broke out between police and the far-right groups gathered to protest against the demonstration taking place on Armistice Day, the anniversary of the end of World War One, when Britain commemorates its war dead. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak condemned the violence seen at the Cenotaph war memorial and also attacked "Hamas sympathisers" who joined the bigger rally, "singing antisemitic chants and brandishing pro-Hamas signs and clothing on today's protest". Tensions had been running high before Saturday's march - the biggest in a series to show support for the Palestinians and call for a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip - after interior minister Suella Braverman called them "hate marches" led by "mobs". London's Metropolitan Police had refused ministerial requests to block the event, saying they did not have indications that there would be serious violence, straining relations with the government. Police said in a statement late on Saturday that they had arrested 126 people so far, the majority of whom were right-wing protesters who formed part of a group several hundred strong which police said included football hooligans. "The extreme violence from the right-wing protesters towards the police today was extraordinary and deeply concerning," Assistant Commissioner Matt Twist said, adding that a knife and knuckleduster were found during searches. The intense debate about protest and policing in the run-up to the march had raised community tensions, he said. While the much larger pro-Palestinian rally did not see physical violence, the senior officer said small groups had broken away from the main march, and about 150 people wearing face coverings had fired fireworks which struck officers in their faces, leading to arrests. Investigations into a small number of hate crime and support for proscribed organisation offences were also ongoing, he said. Sunak called for the police to take a tough line. "All criminality must be met with the full and swift force of the law," he said in a statement late on Saturday. "That is what I told the Met Police Commissioner on Wednesday, that is what they are accountable for and that is what I expect." Skirmishes between police and right-wing protesters continued throughout the day, with police in riot gear using batons to try to contain protesters who threw bottles. London Mayor Sadiq Khan and Scotland's first minister, Humza Yousaf, said Braverman had inflamed tensions and emboldened the far-right by accusing the police of favouring "pro-Palestinian mobs" before the event. Police said more than 300,000 had joined the pro-Palestinian rally, while organizers put the figure at 800,000. Some marchers chanted "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free", a rallying cry viewed by many Jews as anti-Semitic and a call for Israel's eradication. Others carried banners reading "Free Palestine", "Stop the Massacre" and "Stop Bombing Gaza". In the U.S., hundreds of protesters rallied near President Joe Biden's house in Wilmington, Delaware, shortly before he arrived home for the weekend. Biden's motorcade circumvented the demonstration, in which hundreds also walked down the tree-lined street to get closer to the Biden residence. Many wore the Palestinian flag and carried signs demanding a ceasefire. Hanaa A., who declined to provide her last name, said she came to Wilmington to protest the killing of innocent children and demand an immediate ceasefire. Asked about the likely contest next November between Biden and former President Donald Trump she said "We will pray and wait, but at this point, we will not elect him (Biden)." About 21,000 people took part in a pro-Palestinian rally in Brussels on Saturday, and in Paris, left-wing lawmakers were among some 16,000 protesters who marched with pro-Palestinian banners and flags to call for a ceasefire. Some French leftist politicians have welcomed President Emmanuel Macron's call this week for a ceasefire and opposition to Israel's bombing campaign.



### Poland's Nationalist Independence March Draws Thousands in Warsaw

WARSAW (Dispatches) - Thousands joined a march by nationalist groups in Poland's capital Warsaw in what organizers described as the "largest patriotic demonstration in Europe". Participants carried Poland's white-and-red flag and some burned flares and held Celtic crosses as they marched along a route leading from the city center to the National Stadium. The event, held every year as Poland celebrates its Independence Day holiday, took place less than a month after the pro-European opposition secured a majority in parliamentary elections. While many patriotic events take place across the nation of 38 million each year, the yearly Independence March has come to dominate news coverage because it has sometimes been marred by xenophobic slogans and violence. The event has, in the past drawn, far-right sympathisers from other European countries, including Hungary and Italy. Among those taking part this year was Paul Golding, the leader of Britain First, a small far-right party in the United Kingdom. Football supporters were prominent among the marchers, some holding banners with far-right slogans. Anti-abortion rights groups were also present at the event, where Christian symbols were on display. Police removed climate protesters who placed themselves along the route of the march. This year's event was attended by some 40,000 and passed off peacefully, the Warsaw mayor, Rafal Trzaskowski, said. It came as nationalist forces have seen their worldview rejected by voters. In October's election, voters turned out in huge numbers to embrace centrist, moderate conservative, and left-wing parties after eight years of rule by a nationalist conservative party that was at odds with the European Union. In recent years, the annual Independence March has attracted up to 250,000 participants. The lower turnout was the result of internal splits between leaders of the rally, as well as of a spectacular electoral defeat suffered last month by the far-right Confederation Party, which is traditionally allied with the event. The party won just 18 seats in the 460-seat Sejm, the Polish parliament. Meanwhile, Law and Justice (PiS), the governing right-wing nationalist party whose leaders joined the march in the past, won the most votes but fell short of a parliamentary majority. Many on the political right believe that the results of the election, in which the coalition of the liberal Civic Platform, conservative Third Way, and left-wing Lewica came out as winners, will lead to the gradual erosion of the country's independence. "We can expect - with a high probability - a change in EU treaties, which will affect Poland's sovereignty and Poland's independence in the international arena, and in particular within the [European Union]," Bartosz Malewski, head of the Independence March association, told reporters in October. "This slogan also expresses our position on the need to emphasise sovereignty and the threat to sovereignty." Other march participants agree. Grzegorz Cwik, from the nationalist Niklot association, told Al Jazeera he fears the "federalisation of the European Union, cuts of military spending, and dismantling of social programmes".

## Russia Renews Missile Attacks on Kyiv, Attacks Intensify in the East

KYIV (Dispatches) - Russia launched a missile attack on Ukraine's capital Kyiv and the surrounding region for the first time in more than seven weeks and pounded the east and south of the country with drones, Ukrainian officials said. Ukrainian border guards said they had retaken a village in the country's northeast adjacent to the Russian border. Officials in the east, the focus of Russia's slow 20-month-old advance, said Ukrainian forces had repelled numerous attacks by Moscow's troops and they anticipated further assaults, particularly around the devastated town of Avdiivka. Serhiy Popko, head of the Kyiv city military administration, said a Russian ballistic missile was launched toward the capital at about 8 a.m. (0600 GMT). "After a long pause of 52 days, the enemy has resumed missile attacks on Kyiv," Popko said on the Telegram messaging app. "The missile failed to reach Kyiv, air defenders shot it down as it was approaching the capital." Popko said there were no casualties or major damage. Ruslan Kravchenko, regional governor for the central Kyiv region, said five private houses and several commercial buildings in the area were damaged. He said two Russian missiles struck a field between settlements. Ukraine's air defense also shot down 19 Iranian-made "Shahed" drones out of 31 launched by the Russian forces overnight in southern and eastern regions, the air force said. Ukrainian intelligence official Andriy Yusov told national television: "This is not the first or the last

combined attack." He pointed to increasing numbers of air alerts in recent days. Online video from Kharkiv region showed border guards raising the



blue and yellow Ukrainian flag in Topoli village alongside the Russian border, without further explanation. Ukrainian forces a year ago made a lightning push to recapture large swathes of territory in the northeast and

since June are engaged in a counteroffensive in the east and south. Prosecutors in northern Sumy region said two people aboard motorcycles died when Russian forces shelled a road. In the east, military spokesperson Oleskandr Shtupun said Ukrainian troops had repelled 35 Russian assaults in and near Avdiivka, which has been under intense fire since mid-October. Shtupun told national television that 70 percent of air strikes in the east and south targeted Avdiivka. Officials in Avdiivka say they anticipate a new Russian push on the city once the ground dries up from days of heavy rain. Videos show buildings reduced to shells and officials say increasing numbers of the remaining 1,500 residents, from a pre-war population of 32,000, were preparing to evacuate. In the Black Sea port of Odesa, regional governor Oleh Kiper said the southern region was attacked with missiles and drones on Friday evening and overnight. The strikes wounded three people and damaged port infrastructure facilities, he said without offering further details. Russia has intensified bombardments of Ukraine's ports, including Odesa, and grain infrastructure since Moscow in July pulled out of a deal to allow for exports from Ukrainian ports. Russian accounts of the fighting say its forces had struck positions near Bakhmut, a town Moscow captured in May after months of heavy fighting. Reuters could not verify accounts from either side.



## James Scores 32 Points as Lakers Rally to Beat Suns

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - LeBron James shook off an early injury scare to score 32 points and key the Los Angeles Lakers' 122-119 comeback win over the Phoenix Suns in his first taste of the NBA's new in-season tournament. After a knock to his lower left leg had him hobbling briefly in the first quarter, the 38-year-old superstar settled in and produced another age-defying performance, helping the Lakers snap a three-game losing streak. He connected on 11 of 17 shots from the field, including three of four from three-point range. He added 11 rebounds and six assists. James was delighted not only with a first road win of the young season but with a victory in the Lakers' first game in the new in-season tournament -- a Cup-style competition that commissioner Adam Silver hopes will fire players' competitive instincts and give added interest to early season games with the promise of a trophy and prize money. "It feels great because it's an in-season tournament win and we'll take that," James told broadcaster ESPN after the game. "We'll take that for sure. You all heard there's 500,000 (dollars) on the line, so we're going for that. We're going for that." Kevin Durant scored 38 points to lead the Suns, who led by as many as 14 on the way to a 63-55 halftime lead. Austin Reaves' layup with 9:45 left to play gave the Lakers their first lead since the first quarter. It was part of a 14-0 Lakers run, and Los Angeles were able to make the lead stand up. While James wasn't shy about targeting the in-season tournament, Boston star Jayson Tatum was more pleased to see the Celtics end a two-game skid with a 121-107 victory over Brooklyn. Jaylen Brown scored 28 points and Tatum added 23 in a relatively comfortable victory. Stung by back-to-back defeats, the Celtics came out strong and led by as many as 17 in a first half in which they made 12 three-pointers. "Yeah, it would be nice to win (the in-season tournament), but more

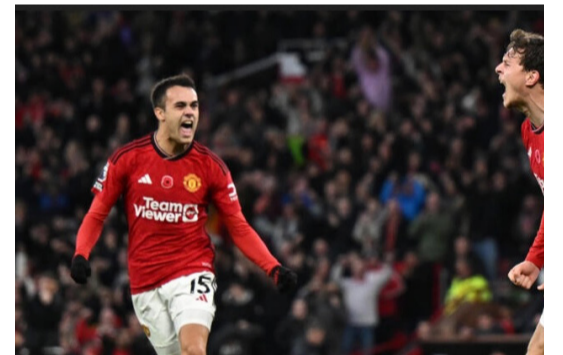
importantly it was just good to get back in the winning column. "We lost two in a row, so it was important to come back home and get a win." Eight teams will advance from group play to knockout rounds, all culminating with a title match on December 9 in Las Vegas. All the games in the tournament, except for the final, count in the regular-season standings. The Dallas Mavericks improved to 1-1 in tournament play, and 7-2 for the season, with a 144-126 victory over the Los Angeles Clippers, fueled by 44 points from Luka Doncic and 27 from Kyrie Irving. The Mavericks exploded for 47 points in the second quarter to take control on the way to a 144-126 victory over the Los Angeles Clippers. Doncic -- who now has five 40-point games against the Clippers -- was devastatingly efficient, connecting on 17-of-21 shots from the field. Kawhi Leonard led the Clippers with 26 points. James Harden scored all 14 of his points in the first quarter and the Clippers lost their fourth straight -- their third with Harden in the lineup after his trade from Philadelphia. In other games, sensational San Antonio rookie Victor Wembanyama scored 29 points with nine rebounds, four assists and four blocked shots but came up short in a duel of French big men as his Spurs fell to Rudy Gobert's Minnesota Timberwolves 117-110. Karl-Anthony Towns scored 29 points and pulled down 12 rebounds for Minnesota, who won their fifth straight. Anthony Edwards added 28 points and Gobert had 11 points and 10 rebounds. Reigning NBA Most Valuable Player Joel Embiid scored 33 points and Tyrese Maxey added 29 to lead the Philadelphia 76ers back from a 16-point deficit to a 114-106 victory over the Pistons in Detroit. Embiid added 16 rebounds for the Sixers, who shook off a slow start to win their seventh straight game -- and hand the Pistons a seventh straight defeat.

## Shevchenko, Draper Reach Maiden Finals



METZ (Dispatches) - Russia's Alexander Shevchenko will play in his first ATP Tour final after topping Pierre-Hugues Herbert of France 6-4, 6-4 in the semifinals of the Moselle Open in Metz, France. Despite 10 aces from Herbert, Shevchenko was the better server in the 77-minute match, hitting eight aces and winning 82 percent of points on first serve compared to 69 percent and three double faults from his opponent. Fourth seed Ugo Humbert of France cruised past Italy's Fabio Fognini 6-0, 6-2 in the other semifinal. Humbert converted five of his 11 break chances while Fognini didn't have any in the match. Humbert is in the hunt for his fourth ATP trophy and his first since 2021, when he won in Halle. Jack Draper defeated third-seeded German Jan-Lennard Struff 6-3, 6-4 in Sofia, Bulgaria, to become the youngest Brit since Andy Murray to reach the final of an ATP Tour event. Draper, 21, needed just 85 minutes to earn the victory and his first final. Murray was the same age when he made his first appearance in a tour title event in 2009. Both Draper and Struff powered 10 aces and hit two double faults. The difference in the match came down to service breaks, with Draper able to save seven of eight but Struff only one of four. In the final of the ATP 250 event on Saturday, Draper will meet second seed Adrian Mannarino of France. Mannarino defeated Russian Pavel Kotov 6-2, 7-6 (2) in the 86-minute semifinal and will seek his third tour title of 2023, following wins in Newport and Astana. He has a career-high 42 wins on the season.

## Man Utd Ease Pressure on Ten Hag, Spurs Stunned



LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester United eased the pressure on under-fire boss Erik ten Hag with a nervy 1-0 win against Luton, while Premier League title challengers Tottenham crashed to an agonising 2-1 defeat at Wolves. Rocked by Wednesday's devastating Champions League group stage loss in Copenhagen -- the latest embarrassment in a season of low moments -- United gave Ten Hag some much-needed breathing space thanks to Victor Lindelof's second-half winner. United had suffered five defeats in their previous 10 home games this season, their worst start to a campaign at Old Trafford since 1930-31 when they also lost five of 10 and were relegated from the top flight. They were also reeling from three losses in their last four games in all competitions as the heat was turned up on Ten Hag. Against that depressing backdrop, and with the latest 'Glazers out' protests from fans outside Old Trafford before kick-off, struggling Luton's first visit to United since 1991 was well-timed for Ten Hag and his troubled team. United made their pressure count in the 59th minute as Bruno Fernandes' corner was cleared to Marcus Rashford, whose cross fell kindly for Lindelof to lash home. That was enough to lift United to sixth place, while Wolves remain one place above the relegation zone. Wolves' stunning late show denied Tottenham the chance to return to the top of the table as a pair of stoppage-time goals sealed a dramatic win at Molineux. Brennan Johnson's first goal for Tottenham since his move from Nottingham Forest put Ange Postecoglou's side ahead in the third minute. Johnson converted Pedro Porro's cross with a clinical close-range strike. But Wolves dominated after that and earned a memorable victory thanks to the incredible finale. Pablo Sarabia finally bagged the equaliser in the first minute of stoppage time when he smashed past Guglielmo Vicario from Mathew Cunha's pass. Missing injured stars James Maddison and Micky van de Ven, Tottenham were well below their best and Mario Lemina made them pay in the 97th minute, meeting Sarabia's cross with a cool finish from 12 yards. After starting the season on a 10-game unbeaten run, it was Tottenham's second successive defeat after Monday's 4-1 loss against Chelsea when they had two players sent off. "Wolves are always going to come on strong and we ran out of legs at the end," Postecoglou said. "It is understandable, a lot of those guys haven't played. They scored a couple of good goals. It's a hard one to take." Arsenal took advantage of Tottenham's stumble as they beat Burnley 3-1 to move one point above their north London rivals into second place. Mikel Arteta's team, beaten at Newcastle last weekend, took the lead on the stroke of half-time. Bukayo Saka headed across goal for Leandro Trossard to bundle home Arsenal's 1,000th goal at the Emirates Stadium since their move from Highbury in 2006. Burnley levelled in the 54th minute when Josh Brownhill fired home via a deflection off Arsenal defender Gabriel. But William Saliba's close-range header three minutes later put Arsenal back in control and Oleksandr Zinchenko volleyed the Gunners' third in the 74th minute. Arsenal were reduced to 10 men in the 83rd minute when Fabio Vieira was shown a straight red card after catching Brownhill on the knee.

## Kane Scores Brace as Bayern Go Top

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Harry Kane scored two first-half goals as Bayern Munich beat promoted Heidenheim 4-2 on Saturday, sending the Bavarians to the top of the table. Heidenheim replied with two goals in three second-half minutes to equalize and Bayern needed late goals from Raphael Guerreiro and Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting to secure victory. Bayern finish Saturday atop the table but Bayer Leverkusen -- who have won 15 and drawn one of their 16 matches in all competitions this season -- can return to the top with a win over Union Berlin. "It was a changing match," said Thomas Mueller. "At one point we had it in our grip, then we didn't, then we did again." What was nice is that we could react, that we could switch to a higher gear. "It brought us to the top of the table and I hope that Leverkusen drop points sometime." Kane now has 17 goals in 11 league games since joining the German champions from boyhood club Tottenham in the summer. "I'm enjoying it," said Kane after the match. Kane wasted no time in getting on the scoresheet, collecting the ball with his back to goal and scoring on the turn for the opener after 14 minutes. Kane doubled up shortly before half-time, heading in unmarked from a corner. With Bayern cruising, manager Thomas Tuchel made three changes shortly after half-time and within ten minutes the visitors were level. Tim Kleindienst and Jan-Niklas Beste scored in a three-minute period, the latter after a mistake from Kim Min-Jae, bringing the score to 2-2 with 20 minutes remaining. With Bayern wobbling, former Dortmund defender Guerreiro struck his first goal for the German



before halftime, Jamie Leweling threading the ball perfectly for Brighton loanee Deniz Undav to score. Guirassy, who missed two league games with a hamstring complaint, came off the bench late and converted the penalty for the win. Dortmund have lost two and drawn one of their past three league games and sit eight points behind Bayern with just 11 matches played. Elsewhere, Augsburg held Hoffenheim to a 1-1 draw at home. Ermedin Demirovic's second-half goal cancelled out former Man United forward Wout Weghorst's early strike. Darmstadt and Mainz played out a scoreless draw. In Saturday's late game, Bochum host fellow strugglers Cologne.

## Vlhova Dominates World Cup Slalom Opener

LEVI (Dispatches) - Olympic slalom champion Petra Vlhova got her World Cup slalom campaign off to a perfect start with a dominant display in the season-opener in Levi on Saturday with US star Mikaela Shiffrin finishing fourth. The Slovak's blistering risk-taking performance gave her the best times in both runs to crush the opposition. Germany's Lena Duerr was second at 1.41sec with Austrian Katharina Liensberger 1.55sec off the pace to move up to third after the second run at the expense of Shiffrin. Shiffrin, the most successful skier in the history of the World Cup with five overall World Cup trophies and a record 88 victories, had been third after the first run but was tenth-best in the second, to finish just off the podium at 1.70sec. "I am quite surprised, but of course I am happy because both runs were perfect," said Vlhova, 28, after her 29th World Cup victory and sixth in Levi. "Honestly, I didn't expect so much of a gap between me and Lena and Katharina but I feel good. I am enjoying skiing and I feel confident too." She confirmed her good form at the start of the season, two weeks after her third place in the opening giant slalom in Soelden, Austria. "Of course, before the race I was a little bit under stress because you don't know where you are but in the end I won again here and it's amazing." Shiffrin, seemingly hampered by bruising to her left knee after a training run fall, lost time with several small mistakes on her second run. The 28-year-old American won both slaloms in Levi last season on her way to the crystal globe in the discipline. But her start to the season has been less impressive than expected, with a sixth-place in Soelden last month. Not since 2014 has a skier other than Shiffrin or Vlhova won in Levi, a city in the far north of Finland which will host a second women's slalom.

