

TEDPIX, the Main Index of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), One of the Four Iranian Stock Exchanges,, Gained 1,638 Points (0.08 percent) to 2,026,086 on Monday, Which Is the Third Day of the Iranian Calendar Week

IRAN NEWS

Iran Has Reportedly Become a Member of the Board of Directors at the Association of Halal Certifiers (AHAC) During the Fifth AHAC General Assembly Which Was Held in Istanbul, Turkey, Last Week

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TUESDAY NOVEMBER 28, 2023 AZAR 7, 1402

2 DOMESTIC



Iran, Iraq to Boost Coop in Communication, Information Fields

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3 INTERNATIONAL

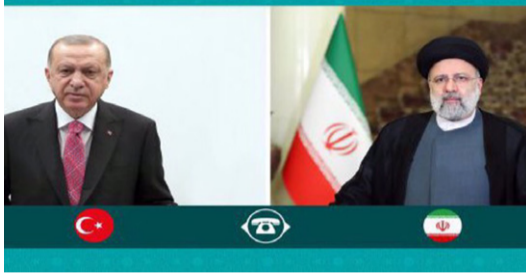
Biden Hopes for Extension of Israel-Hamas Truce as More Hostages Released

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U.S. Accomplice in Israel's Crimes

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK



TEHRAN - President Ebrahim Raisi says as an accomplice in the Israeli regime's crimes against the people of the Gaza Strip, the United States has no right to be part of any decision-making process for Palestinians in the besieged territory. The Iranian president made the remark in a Sunday phone call with his Turkish counterpart, Recep Tayyip Erdogan. During the conversation, Raisi stressed that the U.S. is "the killer of the people of Gaza" and any intervention by Americans in determining the future course of developments in the Palestinian territory "would mean continuation of this country's crimes against Palestinians." Noting that Americans are accomplice in "the Zionist regime's horrendous crimes and massacre of the oppressed people of Gaza," Iran's president said the U.S. has no credit in the public opinion of nations. U.S. plans \$320-mn transfer of precision bombs to Israel amid regime's genocide in Gaza. "Americans have no right to intervene in any decision-making [process] for the people of Gaza and any step they take in this regard is doomed to fail," Raisi said. He added, "The people of Gaza must [have the right to] make decisions about the future of Gaza through Hamas as the legitimate and legal government of this territory, which has been elected through people's votes." The Hamas resistance movement was elected by the people of Gaza to form the government through a popular vote in 2006, which was held a year after the Israeli regime was forced to withdraw from the territory. Following the regime's recent devastating war on Gaza, some American officials have suggested that after the war, the territory should not be ruled by the movement. Elsewhere in his remarks, the Iranian president touched on the country's ties with Turkey, calling those relations "friendly, historical, and based on good neighborliness as well as religious values and common interests of the two nations." Raisi also described further expansion of the two countries' cooperation and relations in various political, economic, and cultural fields as important, saying relations between Tehran and Ankara could serve as a "model of interaction" among Muslim countries. For his part, Erdogan described bilateral relations as "favorable and constructive," calling for their promotion to a "premium and exceptional" level. The Turkish head of state also indicated Ankara's readiness to hold a meeting of the two countries' Supreme Economic Cooperation Council.

Iran Stresses on Sustainable Security as New Destroyer Joins Naval Fleet

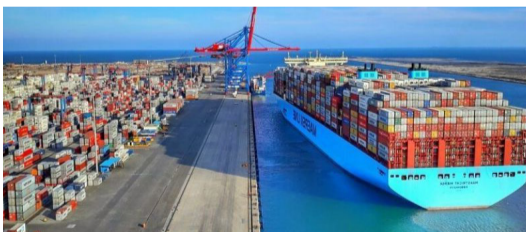
TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's highest-ranking military commander says deterrent power and sustainable security hinge on readiness and preparedness of the Iranian Armed Forces as the country's new destroyer joined the naval fleet. Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Baqeri made the announcement as he attended the ceremony of the joining of a new domestically-designed and manufactured destroyer, dubbed Deylaman, to the country's northern naval fleet to strengthen security in the Caspian Sea. The ceremony was held in the northern Iranian port city of Bandar Anzali on Monday. He said the Iranian Navy play a leading role in increasing the country's sustainable deterrent power in the face of the enemies. Baqeri added that the Dillman destroyer sends a message of peace and friendship to all the neighbors of the Islamic Republic, in particular the Caspian Sea countries. He noted that, "The Caspian Sea is a sea of peace and friendship, and that Iran enjoys amicable all-out military relations with all the Caspian Sea littoral states, so the Navy has once again stressed on the message of friendship by building this destroyer, which is a great masterpiece in the history of the Navy." Chief Commander of the Army Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi, Navy Commander Rear Admiral Shahram Irani and a number of top military officials were also present in the ceremony. Deylaman is the fifth Mowj class destroyer in Jamaran class which is equipped with various types of domestically-manufactured defense systems and equipment. It has the capability to navigate for a long time, search, discover, identify, monitor and confront and, if necessary, repel any air, surface and subsurface threats. Deylaman is also capable of carrying helicopters on its deck. Elsewhere in his address, Baqeri hailed high capabilities of Iran's Navy, saying the manufacturing of Deylaman destroyer under Western sanctions is a matter of hope and honor. He added that the Iranian Armed Forces have been under sanctions imposed by the United States and its arrogant allies over the past 45 years. He emphasized that the most severe sanctions have been imposed on Iran in recent years, however, the manufacturing of such a destroyer by Iranian scientists and artisans raised hope of the country's development and progress. The general noted that Iran would enjoy more sustainable security in its northern parts and enhanced cooperation with the armies in the region following the joining of the destroyer. In addition to state-of-the-art equipment, Baqeri said faithful, smart and committed workforce play a leading role in defending the country. Iran's Navy has in recent years achieved self-sufficiency in manufacturing surface and sub-surface vessels. It has also increased its presence in international waters to protect naval routes and provide security for merchant vessels and tankers.

India Ready to Expand Ties With Iran Within SCO and BRICS



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran and India have held their eighteenth round of political consultations in Tehran, where senior diplomats from both sides called for closer cooperation within the framework of regional alliances. During the four-hour meeting on Sunday, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Ali Bagheri Kani welcomed India's call for the Global South to work towards a more inclusive world order. The Indian delegation, led by Foreign Secretary Vinay Mohan Kwatra, and Iranian officials led by Baqeri, exchanged views on a host of political, economic, consular, regional, and international developments. Baqeri stressed the need for appropriate mechanisms to be put in place to ensure cooperation between Iran and India is both "strategic and sustainable." Kwatra, for his part, said Iran held a significant position in India's foreign policy, and expressed his country's political will to further develop bilateral relations with the Islamic Republic. He also mentioned India's interest in cooperating with Iran within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and BRICS group of emerging economies.

Iran Foreign Trade Hits \$75.5b in 8 Months



TEHRAN - Iran has exchanged as much as \$75.5 billion worth of goods with different world countries over the eight calendar months to November 21, IRNA quoted the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) as saying. Mohammad Rezvanifar said on Sunday that Iran has imported some 25 million metric tons (mt) worth some \$42 billion of goods in the eight-month period, exporting some 90 million mt valued at \$32 billion. He noted that the exports of oil, electricity and techno-engineering services have been excluded from Iran's foreign trade figures. The official added that if the exports of oil, electricity and techno-engineering services were taken into account, Iran's trade balance would be positive by at least \$10 billion in the timespan. Meanwhile according to Ehsan Khandouzi, the Iranian regime's Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance, Iran had \$20 billion in oil, petroleum products, and gas exports in the first eight months of this year (from March 21 to October 23), and the country's trade balance was net positive \$10 billion. On Friday, November 24, Khandouzi, while explaining the foreign trade situation of Iran, said that the country's non-oil exports were about \$32 billion, and imports were \$42 billion in the first eight months of the current year. However, considering the total of oil and non-oil exports, the country's trade balance was positive \$10 billion. Therefore, the net income of Iran's exports from oil, including crude oil, petroleum products, and gas, during the mentioned period was only \$20 billion. Last month, the Iranian Customs Authority reported that the foreign trade balance for the first seven months of the current Iranian year has reached a negative eight billion dollars. According to the official report, during the seven-month period ending on October 22, Iran's non-oil exports amounted to 28.3 billion dollars, while imports reached 36 billion dollars. The substantial trade deficit has raised alarms among economic experts and policymakers. Meanwhile, the trade balance deficit in the initial seven months of this year has more than doubled compared to the same period in the previous year, highlighting the severity of the situation. Donya-e-Eqtasad newspaper has issued a warning that if the trend continues, it could force a currency devaluation in Iran. The newspaper also predicts that Iran's exchange rate balance will remain negative in the remaining months of the year.

U.S. Entire Cause of War on Gaza

TEHRAN - Foreign Ministry Spokesman said if the U.S. government did not support the Israeli regime in the war on Gaza, such a war would not happen. Nasser Kanaani told reporters on Monday that the US could stop 48 days of Israeli war crimes against the people of Gaza, but Washington's political and military support for the Israeli regime in the UN Security Council prevented the end of the war in the short term. Speaking at his weekly presser, Kanaani said that the only way the US could support the Gazan people was to stop its all-out support for the Israeli regime. He said that the American plans have so far solved no problem for the Palestinian people due to the fact that the plans all ignore the realities of the Palestinian issues. "During the recent war, the US and Zionist regime could not achieve what they planned in the military field, which indicates that the Zionist regime has a tendency to adventure, which is dangerous and the international community must prevent it," he recalled. He warned the U.S. was seeking what it failed to reach in Gaza and decided to realize it through a political approach in the UNSC. Kanaani also considered the presence of the U.S. Navy fleet in the region as a sign of its support for the Zionist Regime. He further said about the presence of the U.S. naval fleet in the region under the pretext that the region is unsafe for Israeli ships: "In relation to regional issues, the American government has never played a role for establishing security and has contributed to instability." He then explained that Tehran considers the presence of the American military fleet in the region, along with the continuation of the support of the American government to create an atmosphere of support for the Zionist Regime. Kanaani further reiterated: "The Islamic Republic of Iran has always been committed to establish security and stability in the region and has played an effective and sustainable role in this regard." In connection with the claims of the American authorities, Kanaani stressed that it is a projective policy focused on political goals and aimed at deviating public opinion from Palestine and the support of the American government to the crimes of the Zionist Regime against the Palestinian nation, and the public opinion will not be deceived by this media stream. Elsewhere, he also pointed to the actions of the Yemeni resistance in the region and said: "We have no role in what is happening in the region by the resistance groups and the natural reaction of the people." "It is illegal for the U.S. to support Israel's crimes against the Palestinian nation and is a natural reaction to the illegal presence of America in the territory of some countries in the



region, including Syria. Therefore, America must accept the responsibility of its illegal presence in the region and supporting Israel, and the reactions are made against these actions of the American government." Kanaani also said that today is the last day of the humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza and Iran expects that the crimes of the Zionist regime will not be repeated and ceasefire will continue. The demand of the international community is clear that the Israeli aggression must end. Negotiations and efforts are underway with Qatar to make the temporary ceasefire permanent. The Spokesman urged a truce in Gaza to enter into a sustainable process and pursues this very important issue in the dialogue with the countries of the region including Qatar and warned that aggression against Gaza should not be repeated. Answering a question about the possibility of a truce extension in Gaza, saying: "Today is the fourth day of the ceasefire agreement and the last day of the temporary humanitarian ceasefire agreement." "We expect that the crimes of the Palestinian Authority against the people of Gaza will be stopped forever and the ceasefire will enter into a sustainable process," he added. Kanaani further stated: "The nations of the world have a similar demand; they demand the end of this war of aggression with demonstrations. The demand of the international community is clear, this aggression must end and not be repeated. We are following this matter seriously in the dialogue with the countries of the region." He further warned: "The Zionist Regime does not observe any red lines and violating human rights and international law." "During the recent visit of the foreign minister to Doha, we discussed this extensively. The efforts that are being made, the temporary ceasefire should take a permanent form and the cruel aggression against Gaza should not be repeated. The Zionist Regime does not observe any red lines in crossing red lines and violating human rights and international law," noted Kanaani.

Iran Wants to Improve Bilateral Ties With Pakistan



PESHAWAR (Dispatches) - Iranian Consul General in Peshawar Ali Banafsheh Khah said his country is keen to further strengthen economic and trade relations with Pakistan. During a meeting with president of Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Fuad Ishaq held at chamber house, Banafsheh Khah said that Iran and Pakistan are tied in strong traditional, commercial and cultural relations. He was of the view that prospects are brighter to enhance the bilateral cooperation and trade relation. The diplomat said Iran wanted to enhance the bilateral trade volume to \$5 billion which currently stands at \$2 billion and efforts are being afoot in this regard. He furthermore maintained there is huge potential to enhance Iran-Pakistan bilateral trade. Ali Banafsheh emphasised establishment of business-to-business contacts, exchange of trade delegations and active participation of Pakistan/ Khyber Pakhtunkhwa businessmen in trade exhibitions in Tehran. The Iranian diplomat said his country's supreme leader and president was keen to further improve and strengthen ties with Pakistan. The Iranian diplomat visited the business community of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in a trade exhibition in Peshawar which is going to be held in February next year. Earlier, during the meeting both sides have agreed to start a series of online meetings to bring the Pakistan-Iran business community closer to each other and bring duties/ tariffs structure equal between Pakistan and Iran. On the occasion, Fuad Ishaq emphasised the need to trade in local currency and sign free trade agreements with Iran, Afghanistan and China. Fuad Ishaq while talking about the memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed between the SCCI and the Mashhad Chamber emphasised the need to implement it. The chamber president said that the online meetings should be started immediately between SCCI and Mashhad Chamber.

IRAN NEWS



No New Respiratory Virus Found in Iran

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Health Minister Bahram Einollahi has dismissed reports that a new virus causing respiratory disease might have entered Iran. Addressing concerns about the spread of a new respiratory illness in China, Einollahi said that the World Health Organization (WHO) has not confirmed any outbreak of a new virus, and that Iran has not been affected. "For about two months now, we have witnessed the spread of a type of cold among our fellow Iranians, the origin of which is the influenza virus," the minister said. He emphasized that currently only five percent of flu-related hospitalizations around the country are linked to the coronavirus. Einollahi advised the public to rest if they catch a cold and avoid participating in gatherings. Additionally, if they need to go outside, they should wear masks and observe social distancing guidelines, he cautioned.

Iran, India Resolute on Improvement of Ties in Various Sectors



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran and India have expressed their firm determination to improve relations in various fields. In a meeting with Indian Foreign Secretary Shri Vinay Kwatra in Tehran on Sunday, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said the two countries' senior officials are determined to enhance ties. Kwatra, for his part, said the Indian government is firmly determined to expand relations with Iran and hopes that the two countries' joint efforts would increase the volume of economic relations in various sectors, including agriculture, fishery, and traditional medicine. The Indian diplomat hailed Iran's leading role in West Asia and said New Delhi is committed to the dispatch of humanitarian aid to the Palestinian people. In a phone conversation in August, President Ebrahim Raisi of Iran and Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi discussed the ways to enhance bilateral relations, mutual cooperation and the realization of the full potential of Chabahar Port.



Iran, Iraq to Boost Coop in Communication, Information Fields

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Minister of Information and Communications Technology said that cooperation in the fields of communications, information technology, space, and mail is expanding with Iraq. Issa Zarepour said on Monday: "The Islamic Republic of Iran has made great progress in the fields of information technology and the space field, and these capabilities are of interest to Iraq." He added: "The historical record and the level of good relations between Tehran and Baghdad also require that we have more communication with the Iraqi authorities and present whatever progress has been made in various areas of the Islamic Republic and the infrastructures that have been created to the friendly and brotherly country of Iraq." Minister of Information and Communications Technology of Iran also stated that the Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to transfer its knowledge and experiences in various fields to Iraq, and stated that Iraq also definitely has the appropriate capabilities and capacities in the field of communications, which will be used by us. According to him, special work was done during Arbacen this year, and the result of the delegation that went from Iran to Iraq led to the signing of memorandums of understanding between Tehran and Baghdad, which significantly increased the quality of communication between the two countries. Zarepour stated that the visit to Iraq was made at the invitation of his Iraqi counterpart

and expressed hope that the results of the visits of the officials of the two countries would benefit the honorable people of Iran and Iraq. Iran's Minister of Information and Communications Technology arrived in Baghdad on Sunday night for an official visit to Iraq and consultation with the country's authorities. Upon arrival at Baghdad International Airport, Zarepour was officially received by Iraqi Deputy Minister of Communications Baraq Abdul Karim and Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Iraq, Mohammad Kazem Al-Sadegh. Meeting with the Iraqi Minister of Communications and holding a meeting of the joint committees of the country's telecommunications and postal companies, meeting with the Iraqi Minister of Trade, and meeting with the members of the Media and Communications Organization are among the plans of Zarepour's trip to this country. The Minister of Communications and Information Technology and his delegation attended the martyrdom site of Qassem Soleimani, the martyred commander of the Quds Force, and Abu Mahdi Al-Muhandis, the deputy of the Iraqi Popular Mobilization Organization, on the way to Baghdad airport, who were martyred in the morning of Friday, January 3, 2018, in a terrorist operation by US army drones and paid tribute to their dignity by reciting Fatiha in memory of these martyrs.

Tehran, Baghdad Have Potential to Boost Annual Trade to \$20b



TEHRAN (Tasnim) - An official at the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPOI) said Iran and Iraq have the potential and capacities to enhance mutual trade to \$20 billion. Iran's Special Trade Envoy to Iraq Farzad Piltan made the comments in an interview with Mehr news agency, adding that the Arab country is not interested in launching a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Iran due to the difference between imports and exports. He noted that about \$4.5 billion worth of products were exported from Iran to Iraq in the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21 to September 22, 2023), while about \$150 million worth of products were imported into Iran from Iraq in this period. Piltan pointed to the number of Iran's commercial attachés in Iraq and said that steps have been taken to dispatch three new commercial envoys to Iraq to bolster the trade relations. In line with developing the scope of its activities and expanding the level of services to the traders of the two countries, the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran is considering setting up a branch office of the organization in Iraq, the official added. He reiterated that the two countries have high potential in all fields to boost their annual trade to \$20 billion.



1m Israelis Fled Occupied Territories after October 7

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - The extent of the Zionist regime's defeat in its military onslaught on Gaza was so great that a total of one million Israelis are estimated to have fled the occupied territories since October 7, a deputy commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps said. Addressing a conference on the Al-Aqsa Storm operation, held in Tehran on Monday, Rear Admiral Ali Fadavi said the operation has had remarkable "strategic achievements" for the resistance forces. He said while the Zionist regime had created an image that the occupied territories are the safest place for Jews, around one million Israelis are estimated to have left those regions since October 7. Since all of the Israelis residing in the occupied territories have dual nationality, they came to the conclusion that they had better depart for safer destinations after the Al-Aqsa Storm operation, he added. The general said another strategic defeat the Zionist regime has suffered is that its image was damaged across the world, as 92 percent of the world population held demonstrations against Israel.

Transit of Goods Via Iran Up 28.2%

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - An official at the Iranian Ministry of Roads and Urban Development said the transit of products via Iranian territory registered a 28.2 percent growth in the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21 to November 22, 2023). Deputy Minister of Roads and Urban Development for Transportation Affairs Shahriar Afandizadeh pointed to the achievements of the "Iran-Road" Initiative in the growth of transit in the country and said over nine million tons of products were transited from the country in the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year, showing a 28.2 percent hike compared to the same period last year. He went on to say that more than one million tons of products were transited from the country from October 21 to November 22, 2023, registering a 6.84 percent growth compared to last

year's corresponding period. More than two million tons of oil products were transited from the country between March 21 to November 22, showing a 48.7 percent hike compared to last year's corresponding period, he underlined. In this period, more than 6 million tons of non-oil products were transited from the country, registering a 20.8 percent growth compared to the same period last year, the deputy roads minister added. Earlier, he said that his ministry has started preparation of a comprehensive plan for the development of the country's transportation industry. Iran's comprehensive transportation plan is a document based on which all of the country's short-, medium-, and long-term plans for the development of transportation infrastructure should be organized in all sub-sectors, Afandizadeh explained.



Tehran, Quito Discuss Strengthening Bilateral Ties



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Issa Kameli, Assistant to the Foreign Minister and Director-General for Americas, has met with Ecuador's deputy foreign ministers to discuss strengthening mutual ties, particularly in trade and economic fields. Kameli represented the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran at the swearing-in ceremony of Ecuador's new president, Daniel Noboa. The discussions between the two sides covered the latest developments in bilateral relations. Given Ecuador's non-permanent membership in the Security Council, they also discussed the ongoing Gaza crisis and the importance of ending the violence against the residents of Gaza. According to Iran's Foreign Ministry website, Kameli expressed Tehran's readiness to help realize and expand capacities for cooperation, especially in trade and economic fields. The Ecuadorian officials thanked Kameli for his participation in the ceremony and welcomed the idea of continuing dialogue between the two sides. They also expressed interest in strengthening relations and cooperation in bilateral and international fields and underscored Ecuador's readiness to exchange experience with Iran in mutually needed areas. Daniel Noboa, aged 35, was sworn in as Ecuador's new president during a ceremony at Quito's Legislative Palace. He will serve for 18 months to complete the term of office left unfinished by Guillermo Lasso, who called for snap elections to avoid impeachment.

Luxon Sworn In as New PM of New Zealand

WELLINGTON (Dispatches) - Former airline boss Christopher Luxon formally took office as New Zealand's prime minister Monday, vowing to tame inflation and bring down interest rates. Luxon took over six weeks after his conservative National Party won national elections, ending a six-year Labour Party reign ushered in by Jacinda Ardern. Luxon, 53, once chief executive of Air New Zealand, was sworn in as head of a new coalition government by New Zealand's governor-general in a ceremony in the capital Wellington. "It is an honor and an awesome responsibility," Luxon told reporters. "The number one job is to fix the economy. We have to reduce the cost of living and get inflation under control so we can lower interest rates and make food more affordable." Luxon said his new government would also focus in its first few months on restoring law and order and improving public services. "We need to go to work," he said. The former Labour government had struggled to control the rising cost of living, a global issue blamed in part on pandemic-related supply issues and Russia's invasion of Ukraine.



Sierra Leone President Says Calm Restored



FREETOWN (Dispatches) - Sierra Leone President Julius Maada Bio said most of the leaders of an attack on a military barracks in the capital Freetown earlier on Sunday had been arrested, adding that security operations and an investigation were ongoing. "We will ensure that those responsible are held accountable," Bio said on national television. "As your commander-in-chief, I want to assure everybody who is resident in Sierra Leone that we have overcome this challenge," he said, and calm had been restored. Earlier, the government said security forces had repelled "renegade soldiers" who attempted to break into a military armoury in Freetown during the early hours of Sunday. A nationwide curfew was imposed. Gunfire was heard across the city as the assailants attacked a prison and a police station. It was not immediately clear if there were any casualties in the barracks attack or during the gunfire in Freetown on Sunday. The country's former president Ernest Bai Koroma, said in a statement that a military guard assigned to his residence in the capital was shot point blank, while another was "whisked away to an unknown location." Koroma did not say who shot the guard. He condemned the killing and the attack on the barracks. "I am deeply concerned that once again our beloved nation could be subject to such insecurity," he said. The West African country's civil aviation authority urged airlines to reschedule flights after the curfew was declared, while a soldier on its frontier with neighbouring Guinea told Reuters they had been instructed to shut the border. A Reuters journalist, who earlier witnessed an armed group of men commandeering a police vehicle near the Wilberforce barracks, said streets were mostly empty on Sunday as residents hunkered down. "We'll clean this society. We know what we are up to. We are not after any ordinary civilians who should go about their normal business," one of the masked men, who was dressed in military fatigues, said before driving away. Sierra Leone has been tense since Bio was re-elected in June, a result rejected by the main opposition candidate and questioned by international partners including the United States and the European Union. In August 2022, at least 21 civilians and six police officers were killed in anti-government protests in Sierra Leone, which is still recovering from a 1991-2002 civil war in which more than 50,000 were killed. Bio said the protests were an attempt to overthrow the government. In his address to the nation on Sunday night, Bio called on Sierra Leone's political and traditional leaders, and civil society to work to preserve peace. "Let us not succumb to fear or division," he said. Information minister Chernor Bah said earlier on Sunday that security forces were making progress in apprehending those involved in the attack, but gave no further details. A video on social media showed three men, two in fatigues and one in civilian clothes, with their arms tied behind their backs sitting in a military truck surrounded by soldiers. Reuters has not authenticated the video. Bah said that major detention centres including the Pademba Road prisons were attacked and inmates released by the unidentified assailants. It was not immediately clear how many prisoners had broken out of the facility, which a U.S. State Department report said was designed for 324 inmates but held more than 2,000 in 2019. Videos posted on social media, which were not authenticated by Reuters, showed several people fleeing from the area of the prison, while gunshots could be heard in the background. "The security forces were forced to make a tactical retreat. The prisons were thus overrun," said Bah, who had earlier declared a nationwide curfew and called for people to stay indoors. The Economic Community of West African States condemned what it called an attempt by certain individuals to "acquire arms and disturb constitutional order" in Sierra Leone. The U.S. embassy in Freetown said such actions were not justified. There have been eight military coups in West and Central Africa since 2020.

Zelenskiy Praises Ukrainians for Battles With Russia and the Weather



KYIV (Dispatches) - President Volodymyr Zelenskiy thanked Ukraine's military for fighting Russian attacks and its rescue services for tackling the consequences of extreme winter weather that he said had deprived about 400 settlements in 10 regions of power. In his nightly video address, Zelenskiy said relentless, intense battles were ongoing in the eastern regions of Donetsk and Kharkiv, while "extremely challenging weather" was affecting areas from Kyiv region in the north to Odesa in the south. In Russian-controlled territory, Oleg Kryuchkov, a senior Moscow-installed official, said nearly half a million people were without power in Crimea, the peninsula Russia annexed in 2014. The Russian-installed heads of Crimea, of the Black Sea port of Sevastopol, and of the part of Kherson region under Moscow's control, declared days off for Monday amid reports of high winds, flooded homes and snowbound roads, and damaged buildings. Ukraine's border service said Moldova had temporarily suspended vehicle access to its territory from two crossing points in Odesa region. Moldovan authorities also asked local schools to consider closing due to snowfall and high winds. Odesa Mayor Henadii Trukhanov urged residents of his Black Sea port to stay at home. Local authorities warned that water supplies were being interrupted by power cuts that stopped pumps from working and urged people to preserve supplies. Power grid operator Ukrenergo shared a photograph of a transmission tower in Odesa region whose leg had snapped in two due to high winds, adding, "We are doing everything possible to overcome the consequences of the bad weather as soon as possible and restore light to every home."



Biden Hopes for Extension of Israel-Hamas Truce as More Hostages Released

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - U.S. President Joe Biden said he hoped the temporary truce between Israel and Hamas can go on as long as hostages are being released, after the militant group freed 17 more people, including a 4-year-old Israeli-American girl. Hamas said it wanted to extend the pause in fighting, which will enter its fourth day and final agreed day on Monday, if serious efforts were made to increase the number of Palestinian detainees released by Israel. Thirty-nine teenage Palestinian prisoners were released by Israel on Sunday, taking the total since the truce began to 117. Hamas said it had handed over 13 Israelis, three Thais and one with Russian citizenship, and the International Committee of the Red Cross confirmed it had successfully transferred them from Gaza on Sunday. Biden said the 4-year-old hostage, Abigail Edan, had witnessed her parents being killed by Hamas fighters during their Oct. 7 rampage into Israel and had been held since then. "What she endured is unthinkable," Biden said at a news conference in the U.S. Abigail was on her way to the hospital for checks, Israel's Channel 13 said. Her grandfather, Carmel Edan, told Reuters he "simply could not believe" she had been returned, thanking Biden "for all the help he's offered us." The four-day truce agreed last week is the first halt in fighting in the seven weeks since Hamas killed 1,200 people and took about 240 hostages back into Gaza. In response to that attack, Israel has bombarded the enclave and mounted a ground offensive in the north. Some 14,800 Palestinians have been killed, Gaza health authorities say, and

hundreds of thousands displaced. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Sunday he spoke to Biden about the hostage release, adding he would welcome extending the temporary truce if it meant that on every additional day 10 captives would be freed. However, Netanyahu said he also told Biden that, at the end of the truce, "we will return with full force to achieve our goals: The elimination of Hamas, ensuring that Gaza does not return to what it was; and of course the release of all our hostages." Palestinians gave the freed prisoners a jubilant reception in Ramallah, according to Palestinian news agency Wafa. Omar Abdullah Al Hajj, 17, one of the detainees released Sunday, said he'd been kept in the dark about what was happening in the outside world. "I can't believe I'm free now but my joy is incomplete because we still have our brothers who remain in prison, and then there is all the news about Gaza that I am having to learn about now," he told Reuters. The latest three Thai hostages released were in good health, Thailand's prime minister said. Efforts to free the remaining 15 Thais held would continue, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said. Sunday's hostage release follows the liberation of 13 Israelis and four foreigners on Saturday. Hamas released 24 hostages on Friday, the first day of the truce. A Palestinian source has said up to 100 hostages could ultimately go free. Qatar, Egypt and the United States are pressing for the truce to be extended but it is not clear whether that will happen. Clashes and recriminations have threatened to torpedo the existing deal.



North Korea Vows More Satellite Launches, Beefs Up Military on Border

SEOUL (Dispatches) - North Korea warned on Monday it would continue to exercise its sovereign rights, including through satellite launches, while its troops were reported to be restoring some demolished guard posts on the border with South Korea. North Korea's foreign ministry said the launch of a reconnaissance satellite last week was prompted by the need to monitor the United States and its allies, state media KCNA reported. "It is a legal and just way to exercise its right to defend itself and thoroughly respond to and precisely monitor the serious military action by the U.S. and its followers," the KCNA report said. Nuclear-armed North Korea launched the satellite on Tuesday, saying it successfully entered orbit and was transmitting photographs, but South Korean defense officials and analysts said its capabilities have not been independently verified. The launch prompted South Korea to suspend a key clause in a 2018 inter-Korean military agreement and resume aerial surveillance near the border. North Korea in turn declared it was no longer bound by the agreement and would deploy weapons on the border with the South. Citing South Korean military officials, Yonhap news reported that North Korea soldiers had been observed bringing back heavy weapons into the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) border and setting up guard posts that the two countries

demolished in the wake of the de-escalation agreement. South Korea estimates the North had about 160 guard posts along the DMZ and the South had 60. Each side demolished 11 of them after the military deal signed in 2018. A South Korean defense ministry spokesperson declined to confirm the report. Yonhap reported heavily armed North Korean soldiers had been spotted restoring damaged guard posts in several locations since Friday, citing photographs from cameras in the DMZ. The United States had called an unscheduled meeting of the U.N. Security Council on Monday to discuss the North's satellite launch. On Nov. 22, nine members of the Security Council joined the United States in a statement condemning the North's satellite launch for using ballistic missile technology, calling it a violation of multiple Security Council resolutions. North Korea's foreign ministry said the statement only showed how dysfunctional the Security Council had become, with some member states blindly following the United States in issuing meaningless statements. Two of the veto-wielding permanent members, China and Russia, have refused to join in any new Security Council sanctions against Pyongyang despite its continued testing of increasingly powerful ballistic missiles. They did not join in the most recent statement last week.



China's Industrial Profits Extend Gains as Outlook Improves

BEIJING (Dispatches) - Profits at China's industrial firms extended gains for a third month in October, adding to signs of a stabilizing economy following a run of mostly upbeat data suggesting Beijing's support measures have helped bolster a tentative comeback. The 2.7% year-on-year rise came on the back of an 11.9% gain in September and a surprise 17.2% increase in August, and follows stronger-than-expected industrial and consumption activity over October. For the first 10 months of 2023, profits slid 7.8% from a year earlier, narrowing from a 9% decline in the first nine months, data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) showed on Monday. The world's second-largest economy has struggled to mount a strong post-COVID recovery as distress in the housing market, local government debt risks, slow global growth and geopolitical tensions dented momentum. A flurry of policy support measures has had only modest effect, raising pressure on authorities to roll out more stimulus. "Three consecutive months of positive profit growth suggest that the worst times, when profitability was squeezed by high input costs, overcapacity and soft demand, are over," said Xu Tianchen, senior economist at the Economist Intelligence Unit. "However, the volatility of profits is a sign enterprises remain highly sensitive to input costs," he added. "The sharp slowdown of year-on-year profit growth was partly driven by a rebound in energy prices." LONGI Green Energy Technology Co (601012.SS), a major domestic solar energy manufacturer, saw its third quarter net profit plummet 44.1% to 2.5 billion yuan (\$346.7 million), hit by macroeconomic headwinds and a supply glut. China's industrial output grew 4.6% in October, compared with the same period a year earlier, although analysts say a full-blown recovery remains some time away, even if the economy did grow faster-than-expected in the third quarter. "Transforming the economic growth mode is more important than pursuing a high growth rate," China's central bank governor said in a speech this month, suggesting an urgent need for longer-term structural reforms as investment-led growth loses steam. State-owned firms posted a 9.9% decline in earnings in the first 10 months, foreign firms recorded a 10.2% slide and private-sector companies saw profits down 1.9%, according to a breakdown of the NBS data.

Industrial profits data covers firms with annual revenues of at least 20 million yuan (\$2.74 million) from their main operations.

Argentina's Milei Invites Brazil's Lula to Inauguration, Travels to U.S.

SAO PAULO (Dispatches) - Argentine President-elect Javier Milei invited Brazil's leader Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva to his Dec. 10 inauguration and praised their countries' ties, again softening his tone with a figure he had harshly criticized before. Milei said in a letter to Lula, which he reposted on social media X, that he wishes to keep sharing "complementary areas" with the neighboring country so both can achieve "growth and prosperity," citing their trade and global footprints. The letter marks yet another shift from the radical libertarian, who during his campaign dubbed Lula an "angry communist" and suggested he would balk at doing business with Brazil, Argentina's top trade partner. Last week Milei, who travels to the United States on Sunday, had already softened his tone with China's communist leadership, thanking President Xi Jinping for a letter congratulating him. China is Argentina's second-largest trade partner. "I hope that our mutual time as presidents will be a stage for fruitful work and the construction of ties that consolidate the role Argentina and Brazil can and must fulfill in the concert of nations," Milei told Lula. The letter was delivered by his top foreign policy adviser, Diana Mondino, to Brazil's Foreign Relations Minister Mauro Vieira at a meeting in Brasilia. The new Argentine leader is closer politically and personally to former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro

and has invited him to his inauguration. Lula defeated Bolsonaro in elections last year. "My main message is that we are brotherly countries and will continue to be," Mondino told reporters after her meeting with Vieira, where they also discussed the current stage of Mercosur-EU negotiations for a trade deal. Vieira said he would brief Lula on Milei's invitation. "I have no doubts that our relationship, which is very important, will remain that way ... Mondino showed us Argentina wants to continue having a high-level dialogue with Brazil." Milei meanwhile was set to travel to the U.S. on Sunday, a spokesperson told Reuters, noting he would attend a religious ceremony in New York and have meetings in Washington. According to the spokesperson, Milei will meet officials from the White House, the U.S. Treasury and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to explain his economic plan, which includes dollarizing Argentina and closing the central bank. "He is not looking for financing," said the spokesperson, adding Milei's sister Karina, the U.S. ambassador to Argentina and three close aides were traveling with him. Facing a severe economic crisis, Argentina is tied up by a \$44 billion loan program from the IMF that has veered off track. Milei spoke with IMF director Kristalina Georgieva last week.



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Luxon Sworn In as New PM of New Zealand



WELLINGTON (Dispatches) - Former airline boss Christopher Luxon formally took office as New Zealand's prime minister Monday, vowing to tame inflation and bring down interest rates. Luxon took over six weeks after his conservative National Party won national elections, ending a six-year Labour Party reign ushered in by Jacinda Ardern. Luxon, 53, once chief executive of Air New Zealand, was sworn in as head of a new coalition government by New Zealand's governor-general in a ceremony in the capital Wellington. "It is an honor and an awesome responsibility," Luxon told reporters. "The number one job is to

fix the economy. We have to reduce the cost of living and get inflation under control so we can lower interest rates and make food more affordable." Luxon said his new government would also focus in its first few months on restoring law and order and improving public services. "We need to go to work," he said. The former Labour government had struggled to control the rising cost of living, a global issue blamed in part on pandemic-related supply issues and Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The previous prime minister, Labour Party leader Chris Hipkins, took over from Ardern in January.

Superb Shiffrin Wins Killington World Cup Slalom



KILLINGTON (Dispatches) - Mikaela Shiffrin picked up her second victory of the World Cup season with a dominant performance in the women's slalom in Killington. The 28-year-old American, five-time winner of the overall World Cup rankings, beat off the challenge of her Slovakian rival Petra Vlhova and Switzerland's Wendy Holdener to claim her record-extending 90th win. Last season, Shiffrin broke Ingemar Stenmark's record for wins on the world circuit (86), and appears to be heading inexorably for the century mark. In front of her home crowd, and one day after finishing third in the giant, Shiffrin led after the first run. She was quickest again on the second, holding off Vlhova by 0.33sec. It follows her victory in a slalom in Levi, Finland a fortnight ago. "This track is incredible. The crowd helps me here, they're so noisy, I can even hear them shouting at every split time," Shiffrin, who has now won six of the seven World Cup slaloms at Killington since 2016, told NBC. "Every time I pass one, I hear them get louder, and I'm like, 'Oh man, I don't know if I'm ahead or behind, but either way, I've got to push.' It's amazing to ski with that kind of energy." Shiffrin's season got off to a rocky start when she bruised a bone in her left knee in a training crash in October, missing significant training time. Fourth in the opening slalom won by Vlhova in Levi, Shiffrin bounced back the next day to claim victory, taking full advantage when Olympic champion Vlhova, the first-run leader, straddled a gate on the second run. Sunday offered another Shiffrin-Vlhova duel. The American, leading after the first run, was put to the test by her Slovak rival's storming second run, but responded magnificently to seize the win. The two were in a class by themselves, Holdener claiming third more than a second behind Vlhova. "Today I earned it in a way," said Shiffrin. "After the victory in Finland I didn't dare to hope that this would happen here because Petra was skiing so fast and she's so consistent." Vlhova settled for a fifth runner-up slalom finish in Killington. "At the end, second place again here," she said. "The second run, I needed to push if I wanted to be on the top."

Verstappen Completes Majestic Season With Record-Breaking Triumph

ABU DHABI (Dispatches) - Max Verstappen completed a majestic and record-breaking season in familiar style on Sunday when he cruised to a record-increasing 19th win of the year for Red Bull at an action-packed Abu Dhabi Grand Prix. The three-time world champion came home 17.993 seconds ahead of Ferrari's Charles Leclerc whose bold drive was not enough for the Italian team to claim the runners-up place in the constructors' championship. That went, finally, to Mercedes by just three points as although Sergio Perez came home second behind Verstappen on the road he was relegated to fourth with a five-second penalty, for a mid-race clash with McLaren's Lando Norris, which promoted George Russell to third. Norris was fifth ahead of his McLaren team-mate Oscar Piastri, Aston Martin's Fernando Alonso, Yuki Tsunoda of Alpha Tauri and seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton in the second Mercedes. Verstappen ended the season as the only driver to complete every lap of the season, more than 1000 laps led, and also broke Jim Clark's 1963 record for the highest percentage of laps led in a season. "An incredible season," said Verstappen, who also paid tribute to retirement-bound Alpha Tauri boss Franz Tost who nurtured his early F1 career. "I felt quite emotional on the in-lap as it's the last time in this car that has given me such a lot. Russell said: 'It was really tense at the end as the tyres were dropping off, but it's a massive relief to bring the car home P3. It means a huge amount to so many people back at the factory.' Leclerc, who slowed to allow Perez to pass him in the closing laps, said: 'He had a penalty and we had to help him finish in front of George with the five seconds... but, unfortunately, it wasn't enough... It's a shame we finished third.' The race began in hot conditions, with an air temperature of 27 degrees Celsius and the track cooling rapidly as the sun went down and the floodlights blazed on the Yas Marina Circuit. The top 12 cars started on medium compound tyres. The Dutchman led from pole and fended off three early challenges from Leclerc to open up a one second lead before Drag Reduction System (DRS) was enabled on lap three when Perez swept inside Hamilton for ninth and Norris passed Piastri for third, having already passed Russell. As the leaders all pitted for hards, Yuki Tsunoda took over on lap 18, giving Alpha Tauri and Tost a memorable moment, only the second time a Japanese driver had led a Formula One race. He stayed there as Verstappen weaved his way back to the front, finally taking control again on lap 23 when Tsunoda pitted, returning in 12th behind Hamilton, who survived an early bump into the rear of Pierre Gasly's Alpine with front wing damage. By lap 30,

it was a familiar story. Verstappen led Leclerc by 6.5 seconds with Russell 2.1 behind in third and Norris fourth. Hamilton was eighth and Sainz 14th. As the second stops began, Norris pitted again on lap 34, taking fresh hards. He re-joined 10th. Mercedes responded, bringing Russell in - and he came out in P9 while Hamilton battled Alonso for ninth and Sainz, on an aggressive strategy, rose to eighth. As it stood, it was advantage Ferrari again while, at the front, Verstappen came in again on lap 44, retaining his lead to emerge with a 15-lap cruise to the flag before Hamilton passed Sainz for ninth with 10 laps to go. It was advantage Mercedes again, but when Russell was passed by Perez, for third, the 'silver arrows' hopes hung on the five-second penalty the Mexican was given for an earlier clash with Norris as the flag came out for Verstappen.



Bucks Roar Back to Beat Blazers



LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - The Milwaukee Bucks erased a 26-point deficit to beat Portland 108-102 on Sunday as Phoenix and Orlando stretched their NBA winning streaks to seven games. Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 33 points and grabbed 16 rebounds for the Bucks. Teammate Damian Lillard added 31 in his first game against his former team and Milwaukee authored the biggest comeback victory of the season so far. Lillard, who played 11 seasons in Portland until he was traded to Milwaukee in September, admitted it was "a weird feeling" to take the court against former teammates. "But once we started playing I kind of got over it quick," added Lillard, who added five rebounds and four assists. "I'm just happy we were able to get the win." Portland, fueled by 22 points from Jerami Grant and 18 from Malcolm Brogdon, led 68-52 at halftime and pushed their advantage to 26 points early in the third period. Lillard's three-pointer tied it at 97-97 with less than three minutes remaining. It was tied at 102-102 when Antetokounmpo tipped in the go-ahead basket with 18.5 seconds left to play. A big block from Antetokounmpo on Brogdon and four free-throws from Lillard sealed it. "We've been in that situation a few times this season, where our character was tested, our togetherness was tested," Lillard said. "We showed true again." Phoenix guard Devin Booker starred in New York, drilling a go-ahead three-pointer with 1.7 seconds remaining as the Suns kept their streak going with a 116-113 victory over the Knicks. Booker scored 28 points and handed out 11 assists for the Suns, who were without superstar Kevin Durant for a second straight game because of a sore right foot. Jalen Brunson scored 35 points with six rebounds and eight assists for the Knicks, but his three-point attempt as time expired rimmed out. In Orlando, Franz Wagner and Cole Anthony scored 30 points apiece to fuel the Magic's 130-117 victory over the Charlotte Hornets. Paolo Banchero added 23 points and eight assists for the Magic, who out-scored the Hornets 74-60 in the paint and parlayed 18 Charlotte turnovers into 28 points. Up 61-57 at halftime, the Magic didn't trail in the second half. Anthony scored 17 points in the fourth quarter to help Orlando extend their lead to as many as 16. Miles Bridges led Charlotte with 23 points and 10 rebounds, but the Hornets ultimately had no answer for a Magic team on its longest winning streak since a nine-win run in the 2010-11 season. In Boston, Jayson Tatum scored 34 points, Jaylen Brown added 21 to propel the Celtics to a 113-103 victory over the Atlanta Hawks. The Celtics were without injured Kristaps Porzingis and Jrue Holiday, but after a lackluster loss to the Magic on Friday the short-handed hosts hustled for the victory. Boston pulled down a season-high 58 rebounds, including 18 on the offensive glass. The NBA champion Denver Nuggets bounced back from a disappointing loss to Houston with a 132-120 victory over rookie sensation Victor Wembanyama and the San Antonio Spurs. Nikola Jokic scored 39 points with 11 rebounds and nine assists. And he had plenty of support. Michael Porter Jr. scored 25 points and Reggie Jackson contributed 20 as five Denver players scored in double figures. Wembanyama paced the Spurs with 22 points and 11 rebounds, but San Antonio slumped to a 12th straight defeat. The Brooklyn Nets used 25 three-pointers - the most by any team so far this season - to overcome a sluggish start and beat the Chicago Bulls 118-109.

Eagles Rally to Beat Bills in Overtime

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Quarterback Jalen Hurts ran in an overtime touchdown to give the Philadelphia Eagles a 37-34 NFL win over the Buffalo Bills Sunday and move them to 10-1 on the season. For the fifth straight game the Eagles - who lost the Super Bowl to Kansas City last season - trailed at the break but rallied to win. The defeat was a bitter blow for the Bills, who after leading 17-7 at the half stayed ahead until the final seconds but fell to 6-6 and face a real fight to make the playoffs. The Eagles fight-back began early in the fourth with DeVonta Smith scoring on a 15-yard pass from Hurts. Olamide Zaccheaus did magnificently to catch a 29-yard pass from Hurts despite double coverage in the end zone. The Bills responded with quarterback Josh Allen zipping a seven yard pass to Gabe Davis in the end zone, making it 31-28 with less than two minutes remaining in regulation. The Eagles made hard work of their attempt to get at least within field goal range, suffering two five-yard penalties for false starts, both after early moves from center Jason Kelce. Field goal kicker Jake Elliott was left with a 59-yard attempt in heavy rain and made the kick to force overtime. Allen missed a great opportunity to win the game when Davis got open in the end zone but the Bills quarterback mis-read his movement and his incomplete pass left Tyler Bass to convert a 40-yard field goal. Hurts then led his team down the field on a nine play, 75-yard drive which he completed in superb style, spotting a gap and rushing for the walk-off touchdown. The Chiefs had to rally from an early 14-point deficit for their 31-17 win against the Raiders in Las Vegas, which took them to 8-3. Isiah Pacheco ran for a one yard touchdown and then Patrick Mahomes connected with Justin Watson on a three yard pass as Kansas City went in level at half-time. Another Pacheco touchdown put the Chiefs in front and although the Raiders managed a field goal in response, Kansas City's 10 points in the fourth quarter ensured the victory. The Denver Broncos won their fifth straight game, defeating the Cleveland Browns 29-12. Broncos quarterback Russell Wilson threw for one touchdown and ran in another as Sean Payton's team continued the impressive turnaround in their season after losing five of their first six games.

