

Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Has Described the Fresh Green Light to Tel Aviv to Resume Attacks on Gaza as a Big Mistake Made by Washington as It Unmasked the U.S.'s True Image of Support for Human Rights

IRAN NEWS

The Zionist Regime's Relentless Onslaught Against the Gaza Strip in the Last 48 Days Has Seriously Challenged The Legal Status and Moral Credibility of International Humanitarian Law, Says Iran's Foreign Minister

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Iran Dismisses Misleading' E3 Statement on Its Missile Program



TEHRAN - Iran has dismissed a "misleading, politically motivated" statement issued by Britain, France, and Germany regarding the unveiling of the Fatah-2 missile. In a statement on Friday, Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani said claims by the European trio, also known as the E3, about the Iranian missile lack legal basis. He said all UN Security Council restrictions on Iran's missile program have been terminated as of October 18 under the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Therefore, the E3 claims against Iran's missile program are unacceptable and illegal, Kanaani said. In their statement on Thursday, the E3 condemned the unveiling of a new ballistic missile variant by Iran on November 19 and said Iran continues to develop its missile program despite repeated international calls to halt it. The three European parties to the JCPOA also accused Iran of playing a "destabilizing" role in the region and the world and announced that they would take "every diplomatic step to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons." Kanaani said the development of Iran's convenient missile capability pursues a deterrent goal in accordance with the country's defense needs. Baseless allegations, the Iranian diplomat said, would in no way influence Iran's legitimate defense activities. Kanaani advised the E3 to avoid leveling such allegations that would harm interaction between Tehran and Europe. Iranian military experts and engineers have in recent years made remarkable breakthroughs in manufacturing a broad range of indigenous equipment, making the armed forces self-sufficient. Iranian officials have repeatedly underscored that the country will not hesitate to strengthen its military capabilities, including its missile power, which are entirely meant for defense.

Iran Known as Largest Maritime Trade Power in ME Region



TEHRAN (Tasnim) - Iran, which possesses 942 equipped vessels, is the largest maritime trade power in the Middle East region, accounting for more than one-third of the ships in this region, the economic department of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) reported. In its report on the situation of the shipping fleet in the Middle East region, the CIA Economic Department said the Islamic Republic of Iran owned the largest maritime trade power in the Middle East in 2022. According to this report, Iran possessed 32 bulk carriers, 31 container ships, 83 oil tankers, 393 general cargo vessels and 403 ships of other types in 2022. Among the 12 countries in the Middle East region, Iran owned the highest number of commercial ships in 2022, followed by the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which possessed 636 vessels. The number of Iranian ships is 306 more than that of the United Arab Emirates, the report added. Moreover, the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL)'s fleet is two times larger than that of the shipping fleet of Saudi Arabia, it added. The report put the number of Saudi Arabia's vessels in 2022 at 413 and introduced this Arab country as the third-largest sea trade power in the Middle East region.

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

Iranian, Russian, Chinese Forces to Hold Joint Naval Exercise in Persian Gulf



TEHRAN - Naval forces from the Islamic Republic of Iran, Russia and China are set to stage a joint naval exercise in the Persian Gulf waters, where the three powerhouses will carry out large-scale maritime maneuvers involving various divisions of their military forces. Iranian Navy Commander Rear Admiral Shahram Irani told the state-run Islamic Republic of Iran News Network (IRINN) television news channel on Friday evening that Iranian, Chinese and Russian forces will jointly practice exercises during the 2024 Marine Security Belt naval war game. He added that delegates from Pakistan, Brazil, Oman, India, South Africa and a number of the Caspian Sea littoral states have also been invited to participate in the drills as observers. Iranian naval forces and their Chinese and Russian counterparts have held several military drills in recent years to improve the security of international maritime trade, counter piracy and maritime terrorism, exchange information in naval rescue and relief operations, and exchange operational and tactical experiences. Irani went on to say that the main phase of the country's largest maritime zone will come on stream at the port city of Jask in southeastern Iran during the Ten-Day Dawn celebrations marking the 46th anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution. The commander stated that heavy-lift vessels will be deployed in the maritime zone by the end of the current Iranian calendar year, which concludes on March 20, 2024. "Given the growth in the number of operating heavy lift vessels in the country, we are planning to establish a much larger maritime zone in Konarak" in the country's southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchestan, the Iranian Navy commander pointed out. Rear Admiral Irani also described as "positive" the reactions of the Caspian Sea littoral states to the addition of Daylaman, the newest homegrown destroyer, to the Iranian Navy's Caspian Sea fleet on Monday. The military vessel, whose hull identification number is 78, officially came into operation at a ceremony in the northern port city of Bandar Anzali. Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Hossein Baqeri, Army Commander Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi, and Navy Commander Rear Admiral Shahram Irani attended the ceremony. Weighing 1,500 tons, the destroyer has been designed and manufactured by the Defense Ministry under the aegis of the Navy. Daylaman is known as the most advanced version of the Jamaran-class vessels. Elsewhere in his remarks on Friday evening, Irani pointed to the volume of commercial transactions in the Caspian Sea, and the change in the attitude towards maritime economy and shipping in the inland body of water, hoping that Daylaman destroyer could help Iran's commercial sector. "If we (Iran) can build a destroyer, then there would certainly be no difficulty in the development of a [homegrown] commercial vessel," he underscored. Iranian military experts and technicians have in recent years made great progress in developing and manufacturing a broad range of military equipment, making the armed forces self-sufficient in this regard. Iran has also held several military units with the aim of testing its combat preparedness in face of possible threats.

Walkout, No-Shows at COP28 as Israel-Hamas War Resumes

DUBAI (Dispatches) - Iran's delegation walked out and Israel's president cancelled his speech as tensions over the Gaza war spilled over at the UN COP28 climate talks in Dubai. As deadly air strikes resumed after a week-long truce, several of the world leaders gathered to discuss climate change took the chance to lament the Israel-Hamas war that has left thousands dead. "It is impossible not to touch on the humanitarian crisis taking place in Palestinian territories close to us," Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan told the environmental meeting. "The incidents taking place in Gaza are a humanitarian crime, a war crime," added the Turkish leader, while the presidents of Colombia and Cuba both called the war "genocide." The conflict first flared after Hamas militants killed about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and kidnapped about 240, according to Israeli authorities, in an unprecedented attack on October 7. In response, Israel vowed to eliminate Hamas and unleashed an air and ground campaign in Gaza that the Hamas government says has killed around 15,000 people, also mostly civilians. On the day that violence returned to the Gaza Strip, with more than 100 dead in the territory, according to Hamas, scores of world leaders addressed COP28. But Israeli President Isaac Herzog did not appear for his scheduled speech, a day after his Palestinian counterpart Mahmoud Abbas cancelled his planned visit to COP28. Qatar's emir, originally listed as one of Friday's speakers, was missing from the final line-up. Saudi Arabia's de facto ruler Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman did not attend the meeting, despite being

scheduled to give the first speech. No reason was given for Friday's last-minute changes. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres spoke at the World Climate Action Summit on the COP28 sidelines early in the day, as news of the deadly strikes was filtering through. "As we see in this region, conflicts are causing immense suffering and intense emotion. We just heard the news that the bombs are sounding again in Gaza," he said. Iran's team abruptly quit COP28 in protest at Israel's presence, which delegation chief and Energy Minister Ali Akbar Mehrabian said was "contrary to the goals and guidelines of the conference", according to the official news agency IRNA. IRNA had said late Thursday that Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi would not attend COP28 and Mehrabian would take his place. Iraqi President Abdel Latif Rashid used his speech to "condemn the aggressive assault against Gaza". "We call upon the international community to stand firm against this assault," he said. South African President Cyril Ramaphosa said his country was "appalled at the tragedy that is underway in Gaza, the war against the innocent people." "Palestine is a war crime that must be ended." When King Abdullah II of Jordan, one of the first speakers, raised the subject of Gaza, one delegate started clapping, before quickly stopping when no one else joined in. Other leaders also criticised the war but there was no mention from President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi of Egypt, a frontline state that shares a border with Gaza. The United Arab Emirates, the oil-rich host country of COP28, is one of the few Arab states to recognise Israel after signing the Abraham Accords in 2020.

Iran Scorns U.S. "Invalid" Report on Terrorism



TEHRAN (Tasnim) - The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman roundly rejected the US State Department's annual report on terrorism, saying such a one-sided report lacks international credibility. In a statement on Saturday, Nasser Kanaani dismissed the annual country reports on terrorism released by the U.S. government, saying, "The US' annual country reports on terrorism, which are compiled with the agenda of depicting the dissenting countries as a threat, lack international credibility and acceptability and do not change the realities of the countries' genuine efforts at serious fight against terrorism." He said the international community and the world's public opinion are now in a better position to realize and judge the U.S. government's paradoxical activities in the battle against terrorism 20 years after the release of those "one-sided and biased" American reports began. "The U.S., by changing the facts and fabricating false stories, cannot bring into question the resistance movement's legitimate and internationally-recognized measures in the region in the struggle against occupation with the false tag of terrorism," Kanaani stated. It has become clear that the U.S. is the main government held accountable for creating, training, arming and guiding the Daesh (ISIL or ISIS) terrorists, he noted, adding that Washington is also the chief side complicit in the crimes against humanity and the genocide of Palestinians as it has provided full support for the Israeli regime's state-sponsored terrorism, provided the Zionists with various bombs and lethal weapons, repeatedly vetoed the UN Security Council's resolutions on ending the bombardment of Gaza, and had a role in the brutal massacre of over 15,000 civilians in Gaza. While the U.S. government has admitted that former American officials have been involved in the assassination of late Iranian commander Lt. General Qassem Soleimani, it continues to shirk responsibility for that crime and punishment for its perpetrators and plays the role of a plaintiff in a shameful manner, Kanaani stated. He also took a swipe at the US for sponsoring and sheltering terrorists, facilitating their travels, and financing them, saying Washington that has created a safe haven for the ringleaders of the terrorist Mujahedin-e-Khalq Organization (MKO) and other terrorists and saboteurs in order to advance its foreign policy plots has officially resorted to terrorism as a tool and continues hypocrisy in this regard. "The Islamic Republic of Iran condemns the U.S.' support for terrorism and will keep up efforts to disclose the U.S. government's blatant hypocrisy regarding terrorism," the spokesman concluded. In its latest country report on terrorism, the U.S. State Department accused Iran of sponsoring terrorism and facilitating a wide range of terrorist and other illicit activities around the world.

Iran, Turkey Target 1m Tons of Rail Freight Transport in 2024



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iran and Turkey have agreed to increase rail freight transportation between the two countries to one million tons in 2024, Head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways Moad Salehi said. According to Salehi, the agreement was reached between the two sides during a meeting with the Director General of the State Railways of the Republic of Turkey (TCDD) Hasan Pezlik. "In a meeting we had with the head of the Turkish Railways good understandings were reached. Among other things, we agreed to exchange 200 wagons every 24 hours from the Razi border, and with this goal, we can achieve the exchange of one million tons of rail freight between the two countries in the next year," Salehi said. In this regard, it was decided that the Turkish Railways should quickly restore the infrastructure of its rail network and fix the damage caused by the earthquake as well as the problems caused by the decrease in the water level of Lake Van, the official explained. He further stated that the agreements reached are a big step to increase transit cargo through Turkey to Europe and added: "Since Turkey is considered to be the gateway of Asia to Europe, based on the previous understandings with the countries of Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan and China, we were able to transport cargo from these countries to Europe via China-Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran-Turkey, and this is a turning point for increasing international cargo transit." Iran is one of the countries with a special status in trade and transit relations due to its strategic location and special geography, as the country is the passage of several important international corridors. Considering its geographical location, Iran can play a significant role in the transit of goods in the region and benefit a lot from its status in this due. Paying attention to upstream documents, especially the country's development plans, and the government's decision to develop transit, paying special attention to infrastructure development, reducing transit time, making it cheaper to cross Iran and making more advantages over competitors, due to the short path for customers, can lead to facilitating the development of transit so that the country can reach the desired growth in this due.

IRAN NEWS



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

Loading, Unloading of Goods in Ports Up 7%

TEHRAN - The loading and unloading of goods in the ports of Iran increased by seven percent in the first eight months of the present Iranian calendar year (March 21-November 21), as compared to the same period in the past year, the country's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) announced. As the PMO reported, 153,871,295 tons of commodities were loaded and unloaded in the ports during the eight-month period. During the said period, loading and unloading operations in the container sector reached 1,787,110 TEUs, which was three percent more than the 1,740,208 TEUs in the first eight months of the past year. Based on the data previously released by the Transport and Urban Development Ministry, the loading and unloading of goods in the ports of Iran rose 17 percent during the previous Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20), as compared to the preceding year.

Outsiders in Strait of Hormuz After Regional Discord



TEHRAN (PressTV) - The presence of extra-regional countries in the Strait of Hormuz merely aims to bring about friction among the Muslim nations of the region, says the commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy, Rear Admiral Alireza Tangsiri, who was meeting with Oman's Brigadier Hamid bin Abdullah Al Balushi, the Assistant Chief of Staff of the Sultan's Armed Forces for Operations and Planning, in the southern Iranian port city of Bandar Abbas on Friday. "The responsibility of ensuring security in the strategic Strait of Hormuz besets on the regional countries and the presence of foreigners is only aimed at sowing discord among the Muslim nations," Tangsiri said. The IRGC commander said Iran has always sought to reinforce unity among Muslim nations. "It is imperative to support all Muslim nations and we do not differentiate between Shia and Sunni Muslims." He said Tehran and Muscat enjoy deep-seated relations of cooperation. Tangsiri praised Oman's support for the eight-year war imposed by then-Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein on Iran. On Thursday, the militaries of Iran and Oman staged a day-long joint naval rescue and relief exercise in the Strait of Hormuz and the northern tip of the Indian Ocean. Tangsiri further said the young personnel of the IRGC naval forces have designed and manufactured unique vessels and made remarkable achievements in the production of missiles, drones and submarines, of which the enemies are only partially aware. The Omani military commander said his country stands with Iran in efforts to boost regional security. During the one-day drills, Iranian and Omani military forces managed to successfully implement various scenarios, showcasing their coordination. The two countries have held several joint naval drills in recent years. Iranian officials have repeatedly underscored that the Islamic Republic will not hesitate to build up its defense capabilities, emphasizing such abilities are entirely meant for the purpose of defense and will be never subject to negotiation.



TEHRAN - Foreign Minister of Iran Hossein Amir-Abdollahian cites the regional resistance leaders as pledging to confront the Israeli regime more decisively if Tel Aviv resumed its war against the Gaza Strip. The top diplomat made the remarks in a phone call with his Omani counterpart Sayyid Badr Albusaidi on Friday. "During my last week's trip to Beirut, I heard resistance leaders saying that the resistance's response would be regret-inducing and harsher than before in the event of the Israeli regime's resumption of its attacks [against Gaza]," Amir-Abdollahian said. The regime launched a war against Gaza on October 7 following an operation staged by the territory's resistance movements. The war killed more than 15,500 people across the coastal sliver until last week when an Egyptian- and Qatari-mediated truce took effect. Israel restarted the military campaign earlier on Friday, following the truce, killing at least 107

more people. Resistance movements across Gaza as well as Lebanon's Hezbollah resistance movement and Yemen's Armed Forces have been staging many rounds of operations against the occupied territories in support. Amir-Abdollahian said the Zionist regime's resuming its war crimes against the people of Gaza indicated its ignorance towards the international community's demands and the world's public opinion. "It is necessary that all Muslim countries increase their efforts aimed at stopping these crimes," he noted. The Omani official, for his part, described the recommencement of the war and its spread across the region as lamentable. The officials, meanwhile, emphasized the need for the establishment of a sustainable ceasefire in the Palestinian coastal sliver, extensive transfer of humanitarian assistance to the territory, and effective endeavor on the part of the international community toward this purpose.

Kazakhstan Deputy PM Due in Tehran



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - A delegation, led by Kazakhstan Deputy Foreign Prime Minister Galymzhan Koishybayev, is due to arrive in Tehran today (Sunday) to attend the Iran-Kazakhstan Joint Economic Commission. According to the reports, the Iran-Kazakhstan Joint Economic Commission is to be held in Tehran today and the Kazakh delegation will attend it as the delegation is led by Kazakhstan Deputy Prime Minister and is comprised of some senior economic and trade officials as well as representatives of some businesses of Kazakhstan. During the meeting, both sides are to sign some agreements and MoUs on cooperation in different fields. In recent years, the cooperation between Iran and Kazakhstan has soared especially in the economic sphere. According to recent report, the value of Iran's non-oil export to Kazakhstan increased by 12 percent during the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-October 22), as compared to the same period of time in the past year. Last months, the spokesman of the International Relations and Trade Development Committee of Iran's House of Industry, Mining and Trade Ruhollah Latifi said that Iran exported non-oil commodities worth \$104.412 million to Kazakhstan in the seven-month period of this year. He also announced that Iran imported commodities valued at \$42.882 million from Kazakhstan during the first seven months of this year, with 51 percent drop year on year. The value of Iran-Kazakhstan annual trade also rose 20 percent in the past year.

Turkey Exports \$2.5b of Non-Oil Products to Iran in 10-Month Period

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - The Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT) said that the country exported \$2.55 billion worth of non-oil products to Iran in the first 10 months of 2023 (January-October), showing a three percent hike compared to last year's corresponding period. The statistics indicate that the volume of trade exchanges between the two countries from January to October 2023 registered a 16 percent decline compared to the same period of last year. The figure had exceeded \$5.3 billion from January to October 2022. Turkey had exported \$2.49 billion worth of products to Iran from January to October 2022, the rate of which hit

\$2.55 billion in the first 10 months of 2023, showing a three percent up compared to the same period of last year. According to this report, Turkey exported \$347 million worth of products to Iran in October 2023, registering a 25 percent growth compared to the last year's corresponding period. Turkey had exported \$277 million worth of products to Iran in October 2022 and imported \$212 million worth of goods from Iran in this period. The volume of trade exchanges between Iran and Turkey in October 2023 reached \$510 million, the report added.



Tehran, Moscow, New Delhi Mulling to Create Industrial Clusters

TEHRAN (IP) - Russia is considering the possibility of creating industrial clusters in Iran and India and providing conditions for Russian investors to enter the markets of these countries, Roman Chekushov, head of the Department of International Cooperation and Foreign Trade Licensing at the Industry and Trade Ministry told TASS. "Of course, both Iran and India are the sites that we are considering for creating some kind of industrial cluster. I would not call it a Russian industrial zone, since our task is to attract Indian partners, maybe even partners from other countries, to create some kind of production chain. Therefore, if we say a Russian industrial zone, then it is not, if (we say) a cluster for Russian investors to enter there on preferential terms and use, among other things, the services of a Russian management company, then it is," he said speaking after a press conference in TASS. In turn, head of the Center for Foreign Trade under the Industry and Trade Ministry, Konstantin Kim said that one can distinguish three main points to help businesses from a practical point of view. "The first is the search for suppliers. The second is assistance with logistics. And the third point is assistance with settlements and payments in the current situation," he said. He added that last year the ministry provided support to 125 entities and over 10 months of this year - to more than 600 entities.

Iran-Russia Trade Exchanges Up by 30% Jan-Sep 2023



MOSCOW (IRNA) - The vice president of BTB Bank, which is the second largest bank in the Russian Federation and possesses a branch in Tehran, has declared that trade exchanges between the two countries increased by 30 percent in the first nine months of the current year. Olga Basha said that bilateral trade between Iran and Russia more than doubled from 2020 to 2022, reaching 4.6 billion dollars in 2022 from 2.22 billion dollars in 2020. Responding to a question on the usage of national currencies in settling trade transactions between the two nations, Basha noted that given the fact that mutual trade experienced 30 percent increase, we witness a hike in the ratio of financial exchanges by the use of Russian ruble and Iranian rial in our foreign trade. In a bid to create independent financial infrastructure, the two sides connected their national messaging systems dubbed Iran's financial messaging system (SEPAM) and the Russian equivalent of the SWIFT financial transfer system (SPFS), she argued, adding that as a result of the achievement, both Iranian and Russian companies can directly carry out their financial transactions by means of their national currencies.

Putin Signs Decree Boosting Russia's Troop Numbers by 15%

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a decree boosting troop numbers by 15 percent, in a move the army said was due to "threats" associated with the Ukraine offensive. The move comes as both Ukraine and Russia seek to gain ground and replenish their ranks in the conflict, whose front lines have barely moved in recent months. "The increase in the full-time strength of the army is due to growing threats to our country linked with the special military operation and the continuing expansion of NATO," the army said. It said the number of serving army soldiers would increase by some 170,000 people, and that this was an "adequate" response to the "aggressive activity of the NATO bloc". It added that it did not plan changes to conscription or another mobilization drive - an unpopular measure that caused an exodus of men out of Russia last year. Instead, the army has in recent months turned to recruitment drives, promising attractive financial rewards, especially in far-flung regions. But Kremlin critics say this amounts to a "hidden" mobilization, and that men have continued to be sporadically drafted into the army.



Ukraine Says Polish Trucker Protest on Border "Catastrophic"



KYIV (Dispatches) - Ukraine said that the fallout from a weeks-long protest by Polish truckers on their country's shared border was "catastrophic", as Slovak hauliers also began blockading crossings with their war-torn neighbor. Polish truckers have been blocking major crossings for cargo vehicles with Ukraine since early November, demanding the reintroduction of entry permits for their Ukrainian competitors. "Blocking traffic on the border between Poland and Ukraine: the situation is catastrophic!" Kyiv's rights ombudsman Dmytro Lubinets said in a statement. "Ukrainian drivers are in such a dire situation that they plan to go on hunger strike if the situation does not improve!" Huge queues have formed on both sides of the border, with many drivers stuck in their vehicles for days in cold temperatures and with little food. Kyiv on Friday said that some 2,100 trucks trying to enter Ukraine were blocked on the Polish side. Lubinets said he had contacted his Polish counterpart Marcin Wiacek but has not yet received a response. He also said that Kyiv has started to prepare for "the evacuation of drivers from blocked checkpoints on the territory of Poland", without giving details of what that would look like. He said Ukraine had also started preparing to supply drivers with food, water, medicine and fuel. At least two rounds of talks between Kyiv and Warsaw, as well as the EU, have failed to end the protest. "No one has agreed to anything. Please consider this as the official position," Rafal Mekler, a co-leader of the protest, said on social media. Mekler is also a politician with the far-right Konfederacja party in the Lublin region which borders Ukraine. Warsaw said this week it would conduct "stepped-up checks" on Ukrainian trucks on roads leading to the border in an effort to placate the protesting hauliers. The truckers say they have faced unfair competition since the EU permits were scrapped after Russia invaded Ukraine. Poland has taken in over a million Ukrainian refugees since the outbreak of war with Russia. But relations with Ukraine took a sour turn during Poland's parliamentary election this autumn, when the ruling party increased nationalist rhetoric and became embroiled in spat with Kyiv. As the situation on the Polish border worsened, Slovak truckers mirrored their northern neighbours and also began blockading crossings with Ukraine. Members of Slovakia's truckers union UNAS were allowing only four trucks per hour to enter Ukraine at the Vysne Nemecke checkpoint. "We will stay here until steps are taken to limit competition from Ukrainian hauliers," Rastislav Curma, deputy president of UNAS, told AFP. "We want to support our Polish colleagues," Curma added. Polish and Slovak road carriers say the scrapping of the permits led to undercutting by Ukrainian competitors, which has taken a serious toll on their earnings. The Ukrainian border agency on Friday warned of disruptions in cargo traffic at the Vysne Nemecke crossing, but assured that "traffic will not be blocked when entering Slovakia." "The movement of cars and buses will also not be restricted," it said on social media. The Slovak protest came after the new government in Bratislava earlier this month blocked a military aid package to Ukraine.

IMF to Revise Regional Outlook Over Israel-Hamas Conflict



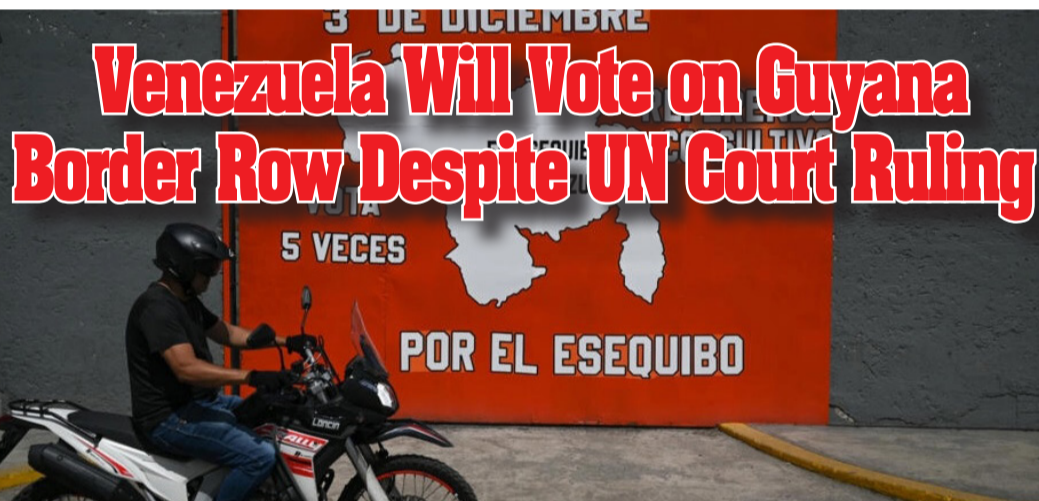
WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The IMF announced Friday that it will revise its economic outlook for the Middle East and North Africa region due to the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict. The conflict will have wide-ranging consequences for "both people and economies" in the region, although the extent of the impact remains "highly uncertain," the International Monetary Fund staff wrote in a blog post. It did not say if the revisions would be released ahead of its next outlook publication, which is due in January. "A large-scale conflict would constitute a major economic challenge for the region," they said, calling on the international community to act to prevent further escalation. In the event of a large-scale conflict, "what is certain is that forecasts for the most directly exposed economies will be downgraded and that policies to buffer economies against shocks and preserve stability will be critical," the post added. Israel resumed its deadly bombardment of the Gaza Strip on Friday after a fragile truce broke down, saying it had struck more than 200 targets in the densely inhabited Palestinian territory despite international calls for a renewed pause. The conflict between Israel and Hamas broke out on October 7, when gunmen from the militant group stormed across the border from Gaza into Israel, killing around 1,200 people, most of them civilians, and taking around 240 people hostage, according to the Israeli authorities. In response, Israel announced it would destroy Hamas and began a relentless bombardment of the Palestinian territory. More than 15,000 Palestinians, mostly civilians, have been killed across the Gaza Strip since then, according to the Hamas government's Ministry of Health, including at least 178 people on Friday alone. Among the hardest-hit sectors in the region outside of Israel and the Palestinian territories has been tourism, which the IMF said accounted for between 35 percent and almost 50 percent of goods and services exports in MENA economies in 2019. "Tourism-dependent economies like Lebanon, where hotel occupancy rates fell by 45 percentage points in October compared to a year ago, will see knock-on effects for growth," the IMF officials said. Elevated risk due to the conflict could push up borrowing costs, with knock-on effects for highly indebted economies, they warned. In the event of the conflict continuing, "fragile and conflict-affected states in the region, such as Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen, could experience a decline in critical aid flows, if the focus of donors shifts away," the IMF officials said. They added that refugee flows could also increase "significantly," which would add to "social and fiscal pressures in the countries that receive them."



Israeli Strikes Rock Gaza for Second Day After Truce Collapse

GAZA STRIP (Dispatches) - Israel carried out deadly bombardments in Gaza for a second day on Saturday after a week-long truce with Hamas collapsed despite international calls for an extension. Clouds of grey smoke from the strikes hung over Gaza, where the Hamas-run health ministry said nearly 200 people had been killed since the pause in hostilities expired early Friday. Both sides blamed each other for breaking the truce, with Israel claiming that Hamas had tried to fire a rocket before it ended and failed to produce a list of further hostages for release. "What we're doing now is striking Hamas military targets all over the Gaza Strip," Israel Defense Forces spokesman Jonathan Conricus told reporters on Saturday. As hostilities resumed, Hamas's armed wing received "the order to resume combat" and to "defend the Gaza Strip", according to a source close to the group who asked not to be named because they were not authorised to speak to the media. International leaders and humanitarian groups condemned the return to fighting. "I deeply regret that military operations have started again in Gaza," UN secretary-general Antonio Guterres said on X, formerly Twitter. Fears of a wider regional conflict grew after the Syrian defense ministry said Israeli strikes had hit Damascus on Saturday and the militant group Hezbollah said one of its members had been killed in an Israeli strike on Lebanon on Friday. The United States said it is working with regional partners to reach another ceasefire. "We're going to continue to work with Israel and Egypt and Qatar on efforts to re-implement the pause," US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin told reporters in California on Friday. During an unprecedented attack on October 7, Hamas fighters broke through Gaza's militarized border into Israel, killed about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and kidnapped around 240, according to Israeli authorities. Israel vowed to eliminate Hamas in response and unleashed an air and ground campaign that has killed more than

15,000 people, also mostly civilians, the Hamas authorities who run Gaza say. The Israeli army said on Friday that five of the hostages seized by Hamas had died, and that the Islamist group was still holding "136 hostages, including 17 women and children". Seven days of hostage-prisoner exchanges had yielded tearful reunions of Israeli families with their released relatives and jubilation in the streets of the occupied West Bank as Palestinian prisoners walked free from Israeli jails. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken told reporters in Dubai that the United States remained "intensely focused on getting everyone home, getting hostages back" and "pursuing the process that had worked for seven days" during the truce. But Israeli government spokesman Eylon Levy told reporters: "Having chosen to hold onto our women, Hamas will now take the mother of all thumpings." The Israeli military said that "ground, air and naval forces struck terror targets in the north and south of the Gaza Strip, including in Khan Yunis and Rafah." Outside the Al-Ahli hospital in Gaza City, a man in a blue sweater bellowed in grief and turned his face and hands to the sky after viewing a dead boy in a body bag. AFP TV footage showed. "What did he do wrong? God, what did we do to deserve this?" he yelled. Guterres has warned of a "humanitarian catastrophe" in Gaza, where the United Nations says 1.7 million people are displaced and short of food, water and other essentials. "The healthcare service is on its knees," Rob Holden, a World Health Organization (WHO) senior emergency officer, told journalists from Gaza as explosions were heard in the background. "It is like a horror movie." On a bed at Khan Yunis's Nasser hospital, Amal Abu Dagga wept, her beige veil covered in blood. "I don't even know what happened to my children," she said. A relative, Jamil Abu Dagga, told AFP the family had been at home when the bombs started falling.



Venezuela Will Vote on Guyana Border Row Despite UN Court Ruling

CARACAS (Dispatches) - Venezuela said it would press ahead with a weekend referendum over the fate of an oil-rich region claimed by itself and Guyana even as the UN's top court urged restraint in the worsening row. Meanwhile regional giant Brazil, with which both neighbors share a border, said it had "intensified" its military presence amid "concern" in Brasilia over the standoff. In The Hague, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ordered Venezuela to "refrain from taking any action which would modify the situation that currently prevails" in the Essequibo region, which Guyana has administered for over 100 years. The judges decided in an urgent bid by Georgetown to stop Sunday's vote, but did not mention the plebiscite in their ruling. Venezuela claimed victory, with President Nicolas Maduro saying in Caracas that Guyana and ExxonMobil, which recently found oil in Essequibo, had been dealt "a historic beating." "On Sunday we will have a referendum," he added, waving the court ruling in front of thousands of people at the close of the campaign urging Venezuelans to vote "yes" to all five questions posed in the referendum. There was no counter-campaign. Guyana's President Iraan Ali also welcomed the ruling, which he interpreted as meaning that "Venezuela is prohibited from annexing or trespassing upon Guyanese territory." He said in a statement Guyana was committed to pursuing a peaceful, legal resolution to the dispute, adding he was confident that in its final judgement in the matter, the ICJ "will conclude that the Essequibo is legally and rightfully Guyanese territory." Venezuela has for decades laid claim to Essequibo, which makes up more than two-thirds of the territory of Guyana and is home to 125,000 of its 800,000 citizens. Litigation is pending before the ICJ over where the borders should lie. Guyana, a former British and Dutch colony, insists the borders were determined by an arbitration panel in 1899. But Venezuela claims the Essequibo River to the region's east forms a natural frontier and had historically been recognized as such. The dispute has intensified since ExxonMobil discovered oil in Essequibo in 2015. Caracas called the referendum after Georgetown started auctioning off oil blocks in Essequibo in August. Sunday's referendum will ask citizens whether or not Venezuela should reject the 1899 arbitration decision as well as the ICJ's jurisdiction in the matter. They will also be asked whether or not

Venezuelan citizenship should be granted to the people - currently Guyanese - of a new "Guyana Essequiba State." Guyana has argued the referendum poses an "existential" threat to the country as it could pave the way for Venezuela to "unilaterally and illegally" seize the region. The ICJ said in its ruling there was a "serious risk of Venezuela acquiring and exercising control and administration of the territory in dispute in the present case." The Caribbean Community (Caricom) said in a statement Friday the ICJ order prohibited Venezuela from taking any measure "that would change the status quo in the territory, regardless of the outcome of the Venezuelan referendum on Sunday." It added: "Venezuela cannot by a referendum, or otherwise, violate international law and disregard the Order of the world's highest Court." Tiny Guyana has the world's biggest reserves of crude per capita, while economically ailing Venezuela, facing crippling international sanctions, sits on the largest proven reserves overall. Just last month, Guyana announced a "significant" new oil discovery in Essequibo, adding to estimated reserves of at least 10 billion barrels - more than Kuwait or the United Arab Emirates. Paul Reichler, a lawyer representing Guyana, told the court during hearings in November that Venezuela "military preparations were already underway" to enforce the referendum result. In her submission to the court, Vice President Delcy Rodriguez insisted a recent military mobilization was to prepare for the referendum. The ICJ rules on disputes between states but while its decisions are legally binding, it has no power to enforce them. Brazilian defense ministry said in a statement Friday that "defense operations have been intensified in the country's northern border region, leading to a larger military presence." Brazil's top diplomat for Latin American affairs, Gisela Maria Figueiredo, said Thursday President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva's administration was following the situation with "concern." In the United States, which has close relations with Guyana, National Security Council spokesman John Kirby appealed for a peaceful resolution to the dispute. "The 1899 arbitral award that determined the land boundary between Guyana and Venezuela should be respected unless the parties reach a new agreement or the International Court of Justice decides otherwise," he said.



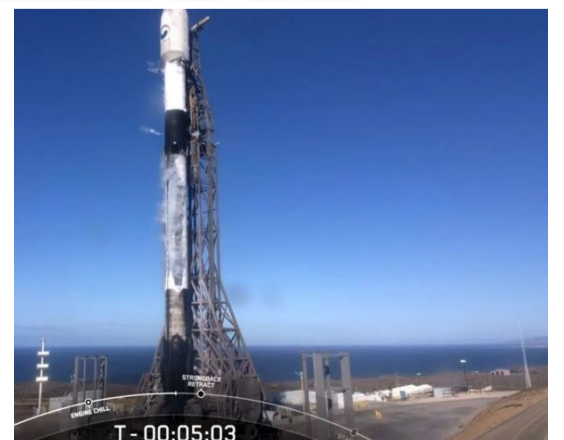
UN Security Council Puts End to Mission in Sudan

UNITED NATIONS (Dispatches) - At the request of Sudanese authorities, the UN Security Council on Friday ended the world body's political mission in the African country ravaged by more than seven months of fighting between two rival generals. Following a letter from Khartoum demanding an immediate end to the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS), the Security Council adopted a resolution terminating its mandate as of Sunday. Starting Monday, a three-month transition period would begin to allow for the departure of UNITAMS personnel and the transfer of its tasks to other UN agencies "where appropriate and to the extent feasible." The UN mission in Sudan employs 245 people, including 88 in Port Sudan, as well as others in Nairobi and Addis Ababa, UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric confirmed last month. Fourteen of the council's 15 members adopted the resolution, while Russia abstained. "Let me be clear. The United Kingdom would not have chosen to close UNITAMS at this moment," said Britain's deputy UN envoy James Karuiki, whose country drafted the text. Added US envoy Robert Wood: "We are gravely concerned that a reduced international presence in Sudan will only serve to embolden the perpetrators of atrocities with dire consequences for civilians." In the text, the council expressed "alarm at the continued violence and humanitarian situation, in particular violations of international humanitarian law and grave human rights violations and abuses" in Sudan. The Security Council decision "is the culmination of its catastrophic abdication of responsibility to the civilians of Sudan at a moment when the risk of atrocities and large-scale human rights abuses is greater than ever," Human Rights Watch UN director Louis Charbonneau said in a statement. UNITAMS was put in place in 2020 to help support a democratic transition in Sudan following the fall the previous year of veteran Islamist autocrat Omar al-Bashir, who faced pressure from both the military and mass protests. But in October 2021, the difficult path to civilian government was cut short, when army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan assumed full powers in a coup. On April 15, before a deal on resuming the transition to democracy could be signed, fighting erupted between the Sudanese army led by Burhan and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), led by General Mohamed Hamdan Daglo. A few weeks later, Burhan demanded that UNITAMS chief Volker Perthes be sacked, placing blame for the violence on his shoulders. The German diplomat, who was barred from returning to Sudan, ultimately stepped down in September, and has not been replaced.

South Korea Confirms First Spy Satellite in Orbit

SEOUL (Dispatches) - South Korea confirmed Saturday its first military spy satellite had reached orbit after a successful launch of its spy satellite, which was established with ground control. Seoul's reconnaissance satellite, carried by one of Elon Musk's SpaceX Falcon 9 rockets, intensifies a space race on the Korean peninsula after the North launched its own first military eye in the sky last week. South Korea's defence ministry said Saturday its satellite reached orbit soon after the "KOREA"-emblazoned SpaceX rocket lifted off from the Vandenberg US Space Force Base in California at 10:19 am local time (18:19 GMT) Friday. The satellite was launched 03:19 Seoul time and was successfully separated from projectile 11 minutes later and put into targeted orbital trajectory, the ministry said in a statement. "We have confirmed its communications with the ground command." Reaching orbit means that South Korea now has its first domestically built spy satellite to monitor nuclear-armed North Korea. Seoul plans to launch four additional spy satellites by the end of 2025 to bolster its reconnaissance capacity over the North. Set to orbit between 400 and 600 kilometers (250 to 370 miles) above Earth, the South's satellite is capable of detecting an object as small as 30 centimetres (11.8 inches), according to the Yonhap news agency. "Considering resolution and its capacity for Earth observation... our satellite technology ranks in the top five globally," a defence ministry official said, as quoted by Yonhap. The launch comes less than two weeks after Pyongyang successfully put its own spy satellite into orbit. "Until now, South Korea has relied heavily on US-run spy satellites" when it comes to monitoring the North, Choi Gi-il, professor of military studies at Sangji University, told AFP. While the South has "succeeded in the launch of a military communications satellite, it has taken

much longer for a reconnaissance satellite due to higher technological hurdles", he said. Following the North's successful launch of its spy satellite, Choi said, "The South Korean government needs to demonstrate it can also pull this off." The nuclear-armed North's launch drew international condemnation which the North Korean leader's powerful sister, Kim Yo Jong, called "absurd", declaring that her country would never relinquish its space programme. North Korea is barred by successive rounds of UN resolutions from tests using ballistic technology, and analysts say there is significant technological overlap between space launch capabilities and the development of ballistic missiles. On Saturday, Pyongyang threatened to "destroy" US spy satellites if Washington "tries to violate the legitimate territory" of North Korea, referring to its satellite programme. If the United States attempts to breach its space rights "by weaponizing the latest technologies illegally and unjustly", said a spokesman of the North's defence ministry in a statement carried by state-run KCNA, "the DPRK will consider taking responsive action measures for self-defence to undermine or destroy the viability of the US spy satellites." Experts have said putting a working reconnaissance satellite into orbit would improve North Korea's intelligence-gathering capabilities, particularly over South Korea, and provide crucial data in any military conflict. Since last week's launch, the North has claimed its new satellite has already provided images of major US and South Korean military sites. It has not yet disclosed any of the satellite imagery it claims to possess. The North's launch of "Malligyong-1" was Pyongyang's third attempt at putting such a satellite in orbit, after two failures in May and August. Seoul said the North received technical help from Moscow, in return for supplying weapons for use in Russia's war with Ukraine.





Celtics Hold off 76ers Despite Tatum Ejection, Magic Roll On

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Boston star Jayson Tatum was ejected in the third quarter but the Celtics clawed out a 125-119 NBA victory over short-handed Philadelphia on Friday as the Orlando Magic notched a ninth straight win. Tatum scored 21 points before he was tossed for arguing a foul call after tangling with Robert Covington with one second left in the third. Covington made the technical free throw, and two free throws awarded in the wake of Tatum's flagrant foul, to put the Sixers up 97-95 going into the final period. Philadelphia's reigning NBA Most Valuable Player Joel Embiid missed a second straight game with illness. Ailing Tyrese Maxey and injured Nicolas Batum were ruled out shortly before the game. But they pushed Boston to the finish, pulling ahead 116-115 with 2:28 remaining before Al Horford's driving basket put Boston up for good with 2:09 to go. Patrick Beverley scored 26 points, grabbed eight rebounds and handed out seven assists for Philadelphia. De'Anthony Melton scored 21 points before he fouled out with less than six minutes to go. Jaylen Brown and Horford scored 20 points apiece for Boston, who made eight of 11 three-pointers in a sizzling 44-point first quarter, but surrendered 72 points in the first half to trail by three at the break. Tatum had received a technical in the first quarter, and when he was whistled for a foul after colliding with Covington his objections were so strong that Celtics coaches moved to steer him away from the officials. He was ejected for just the second time in his career, and Celtics coach Joe Mazzulla said he didn't mind seeing that fire from his star. "I think that type of passion and caring

about it ... I'd rather see that than nothing at all," Mazzulla said. Horford said the Celtics had to lock back in after Tatum's departure. "We just had to get stops, get gritty," he said. In Orlando, German forward Franz Wagner scored 31 points and Paolo Banchero added 28 with 13 rebounds and seven assists for the Magic, who tied a franchise record with their ninth straight win, 130-125 over the Washington Wizards. Moritz Wagner added 18 points for Orlando, who seized the lead for good in the game that featured 13 lead changes on Wagner's layup with 7:06 remaining, the basket igniting a 7-0 scoring run. "Really proud," Banchero said, after the Magic matched their nine-game winning streaks of the 1994-95, 2000-01 and 2010-11 seasons. "Obviously the work's not done, but it shows just how hard we've been working, the chemistry we've been able to build so far. We just want to keep it rolling." In Dallas, the Memphis Grizzlies triumphed 108-94 against a Mavericks team missing Slovenian star Luka Doncic, who was away from the team after welcoming the birth of his daughter. Kyrie Irving couldn't fill the void, scoring just 10 points on three-of-15 shooting. Desmond Bane led the Grizzlies with 30 points. The San Antonio Spurs competed for the first time this season without star rookie Victor Wembanyama, who was sidelined with a sore hip. The Spurs still managed to push the Pelicans in New Orleans, but even with relatively quiet nights for Zion Williamson and Brandon Ingram - who scored 12 and 14 points respectively - the Pelicans pulled away late for a 121-106 victory that marked the Spurs' 14th straight defeat.

Messi Leaves Door Open to 2026 World Cup



BUENOS AIRES (Dispatches) - Lionel Messi is not ruling out another bid for World Cup glory with Argentina in 2026 despite acknowledging that time is working against him. Messi, who recently won his eighth Ballon d'Or, raised the World Cup almost a year ago after starring for Argentina in the final against France in Doha. The 36-year-old had suggested at the time that the tournament in Qatar would be his last and that he wouldn't be around for the next tournament which will be co-hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico. But having moved to Major League Soccer's Inter Miami and continued performing for the national team in qualifiers for 2026, he says the door remains open. "I'm not thinking about the World Cup and I'm not saying 100 percent that I won't be there because anything can happen. Because of my age, the most normal thing is that I won't be there. Then we'll see," said Messi in an interview with Argentina's Star+. The Argentina captain said his focus on June's Copa America which will be held in the United States. "Maybe we'll do well at the Copa America and everything will work out for us to continue. Maybe not. Realistically it's difficult," he said of the chance of a sixth consecutive appearance in the World Cup. Messi said he would be "the first to know when I can be there and when I can't. I'm also aware that I've gone to a lesser league. But it's all about the personal side of things and the way you deal with it and how you compete. "As long as I feel I'm well and can continue to contribute, I'm going to do it. Today all I'm thinking about is getting to the Copa America. After that, time will tell if I'm there or not. "I'm going to arrive at an age that, normally, doesn't allow me to play in the World Cup. I said I don't think I'm going to be there. It looked like after the World Cup I was retiring and it was the opposite. Now I want to be there more than ever," he added.

Nadal to Make Tour Return at Brisbane International

LONDON (Dispatches) - Former tennis world number one Rafa Nadal will return at the Brisbane International warm up event for the Australian Open in January, the Spaniard said. The 22-time Grand Slam champion has not played a competitive match since bowing out in the second round of this year's Australian Open when hampered by a hip flexor problem. Nadal was initially expected to miss just eight weeks but underwent surgery on a hip muscle in June. "After a year away from competition, it's time to come back," Nadal, who won the Australian Open in 2009 and 2022, said in a video posted to social media. "It will be in Brisbane, the first week of January. I'll see you there." Last month, Australian Open tournament director Craig Tiley confirmed that Nadal would be participating in the year's first Grand Slam. Nadal has said he expects to retire after the 2024 season, with a series of injuries limiting his appearances on Tour. He dropped out of the top 100 for the first time in 20 years earlier in the season and has slipped to number 633 in the world but is eligible for a protected ranking having been injured and not competing in any event for at least six months. Nadal has previously expressed a desire to play one more French Open and represent Spain at the Paris Olympics next year before retiring at the end of his 23rd season on the tour. The Brisbane tournament, which is returning after a three-year hiatus forced initially by the Covid pandemic, will run from December 31 to January 7. The Australian Open takes place at Melbourne Park from January 14-28. Nadal's last Australian Open victory came in 2022 when he beat Russia's Daniil Medvedev and became the first man in the Open era to come back from two sets down in the final to win.



Alcaraz Shines in Mexico City



MEXICO CITY (Dispatches) - An enthusiastic crowd of 20,340 fans gathered to watch Carlos Alcaraz play Tommy Paul at Mexico City's main bullring, grasping their one chance this year to see world class tennis players in their own city. Although the crowd was smaller than those which turned out to watch Roger Federer and Rafa Nadal at similar exhibitions in previous years, there was no less passion at the Monumental Plaza de Toros. "I will take a picture to never forget this," Alcaraz said after the match. "It has been a very special event, the truth is that I can only thank you for supporting tennis and me." The world number two and 13th-ranked Paul were the main attraction with Greek Maria Sakkari and former Australian Open champion Caroline Wozniacki facing off as an appetiser. "For me and my wife it is very important to have this type of events," said fan Diego Segura. "Hopefully this will continue to grow, because it is a unique opportunity to see Alcaraz (playing) live in our city." A growing market and the Mexican capital's hungry interest in sports has led others to offer unique opportunities for fans in the teeming metropolis of some nine million people. Major League Baseball (MLB) and the National Basketball Association (NBA) offer regular season games, with the latter promising to expand or even have a franchise in Mexico City. Meanwhile, the National Football League (NFL), which until last year had a game scheduled in the city, had to suspend it due to the remodelling of the Azteca Stadium for the 2026 World Cup, but continues to offer experiences for Mexican fans as it seeks to grow internationally. Motorsports has also experienced strong growth, notably with the return of Formula One to the Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez in 2015, an event for which next year tickets are already sold out. Formula E, too, has found a place in the Mexican market, with the season kicking off in the capital. Tomas Wolf, who was attending Wednesday's exhibition with his 10-year-old son and namesake, said having the opportunity to watch world class tennis players in the flesh was vital to the growth of the game in Mexico. "I want Alcaraz to win, he's an inspiration for me," said the younger Wolf, as if to prove his father's point.

Rinku, Spinners Help India Down Australia to Clinch T20 Series

RAIPUR (Dispatches) - Rinku Singh's quickfire 46 and a spin attack led by Axar Patel helped India to a series-clinching 20-run win over Australia in the fourth Twenty20 international. India posted 174-9 thanks to Rinku's 29-ball blitz, despite late strikes by the Australian fast bowlers after the tourists elected to field first in Raipur. Axar then returned figures of 3-16 with his left-arm spin as the hosts kept down Australia to 154-7 to take an unassailable 3-1 lead in the five-match series. "Other than (the) toss, everything went our way," India's Suryakumar Yadav said of the victory in his first series as captain. "Winning was the big boost, especially the way the boys showed character. Everyone expressed themselves irrespective of the situation, and that's what I told them: be fearless, play your game and we'll see what happens." Leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi struck on his first delivery as he bowled Josh Philippe, for eight, and finished with figures of 1-17. Axar struck in his first over to claim opener Travis Head's wicket, after his 16-ball 31 had given the tourists a quick start. After derailing the opposition's chase, the Indian spinner kept up his strikes and sent Ben McDermott and Aaron Hardie back to the pavilion. Tim David attempted to hit back but fast bowler Deepak Chahar took the batsman down, getting him caught in the deep on 19. Chahar claimed another victim in Matthew Short on 22 as the wheels came off the chase, before skipper Matthew Wade hit a valiant 36 not out. "We want to continue to learn about the players under the established players since the (T20) World Cup is around the corner, so depth around the squad will be key," said Wade. Earlier, the left-handed Rinku put on key partnerships including a 56-run fifth-wicket stand with Jitesh Sharma, who hit a 19-ball 35. Ben Dwarshuis took two wickets in the 19th over and fellow left-arm quick Jason Behrendorff also struck twice in the next over to deny Rinku his fifty and check India's surge. Hardie began with a maiden over and in his second over cut short Yashvi Jaiswal's brisk knock of 37 off 28 balls, after the left-hander mistimed a pull to get caught at mid-on. Leg-spinner Tanveer Sangha sent back Shreyas Iyer for eight and Dwarshuis made the hosts slip to 63-3 when he got Suryakumar caught behind for one. Ruturaj Gaikwad, who made 32 after

his unbeaten 123 in the previous match, and Rinku put on a quick 48-run stand, which was eventually broken by Sangha. Australia were without their ODI World Cup stars, including Glenn Maxwell, who hit a match-

winning 104 not out in match three, and Marcus Stoinis. Head remains the only player from the World Cup-winning team in the Australian side. The final T20 is on Sunday in Bengaluru.

