

The Government Spokesman Says the 13th Administration Has Given Top Priority to Using Oil Revenues for Making Investment in Different Sectors Instead of Meeting Executive Expenses

IRAN NEWS

Iran Veterinary Organization in a Statement Has Denied Exported Shrimps From Bushehr Province Being Rejected by China Because of Not Observing Hygienic Standards While the Product Is Exported 20 23 Countries

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Iran Leaves No Hostile Action Unanswered

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK



TEHRAN - The Iranian Foreign Ministry's spokesperson vowed that Iran would give an appropriate response to any hostile measure after Israeli attacks claimed the lives of two Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) servicemen in Syria. Asked about the martyrdom of two IRGC military advisers in Syria at the hands of the Zionist regime, Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Nasser Kanaani said at a press conference on Monday, "Iran responds to any violation of its interests in the region and will do so (in the future)."



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

Iran, Cuba Move to Deepen Strategic

TEHRAN - The Iranian and Cuban presidents signed a joint communiqué to broaden strategic relations between the two nations. Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and his Cuban counterpart Miguel Diaz-Canel signed the joint communiqué in Tehran on Monday to strengthen strategic relations between the two countries. They also observed a ceremony during which top officials from the two states signed seven documents and memorandums of understanding (MoUs). The agreements entail closer interaction between Tehran and Havana in various fields, such as science and technology, health care, agriculture, energy and mine industry, telecommunication, and medicine.

Iran Urges Serious Disarming of Anti-Revolutionary Outfits in Iraq



BAGHDAD (IP) - The Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in a meeting with the Prime Minister of Iraq, emphasized that the Iraqi government should seriously pursue the process of disarming the anti-revolutionary outfits. Major General Mohammad Bagheri, Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran, met and discussed with Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammad Shia' al-Sudani in Baghdad on Sunday.

Southern Gaza Facing Worst Bombardment of War So Far



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Southern Gaza is currently facing its "worst bombardment" since the beginning of Israel's brutal aggression against the Palestinian territory, says a spokesperson for the UN Children's Agency (UNICEF). "I am seeing massive child casualties," James Elder wrote in an X post on Sunday. "We have a final warning to save children; and our collective conscience."

Al-Aqsa Storm Turns Palestine Into First Issue of Islamic World



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian referred to the continuation of the Zionist regime's crimes and the open support of the U.S. regime to this crime, saying that the Al-Aqsa storm has once again raised Palestine to the top priority in the Islamic world. Amir-Abdollahian made the remarks in a meeting with Muslim Lebanese scholars here in Tehran on Sunday.

U.S. Must Bear Consequences of Supporting Israel's Crimes, Genocide in Gaza



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's foreign minister says the United States must bear the consequences of its unbridled support for the Israel regime's crimes against Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip and the occupied West Bank. Hossein Amir-Abdollahian made the comment in a joint presser with his Omani counterpart, Sayyid Badr Albusaidi, in Tehran on Sunday.

expressed hope that Egyptian officials would take steps to prevent this Israeli plot from being realized. "Bringing the Zionist regime's officials to justice at an international tribunal is a public demand [of the world] and lawsuits are being filed by some governments, including Iran, in cooperation with a number of other countries. We hope we would witness the trial of war criminals who have killed nearly 16,000 people in the last two months," Iran's top diplomat said.

IRAN NEWS



Iran, Russia to Launch Centers for Cultural Activities

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The agreement on establishing centers for cultural activity between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Russian Federation was approved by the representatives of the Iranian parliament. The Cultural Commission of the Iranian Parliament has put on its agenda the bill of the agreement on the establishment and framework of cultural centers between the Iranian and Russian governments. The agreement is aimed at maintaining cooperation between the government of Iran and Russia through cultural centers. In line with the implementation of cooperation in the fields of humanitarian, technical, cultural, and scientific, information, participating in cultural programs, and supporting Iranian expatriates to secure their rights, these centers are necessary. Iran's membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) requires developing cultural and social relations between the member states.

Iran Exports Exceed \$32b in 8 Months



TEHRAN (Tasnim) - More than 90 million tons of products, valued at over \$32 billion, were exported from Iran in the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year, registering a 27 percent growth compared to last year's corresponding period. Iran's export of products overseas from March 21 to November 22, 2023 showed a 27 percent up in weight and 1.6 percent down in value compared to the same period last year, the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) reported. In this timespan, Iran exported more than \$2 billion of liquefied natural gas (LPG) and also over \$2 billion of liquefied propane, the report added. According to IRICA, most of Iran's exports went to China, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Turkey and India respectively. Iran exported more than \$9 billion worth of products to China, over \$6 billion to Iraq, more than \$4 billion to the United Arab Emirates, over \$3 billion to Turkey and more than \$1 billion to India from March 21 to November 22, 2023. In this period, more than 67 million tons of products, valued at more than \$23 billion, were exported from the country to the aforementioned five countries, accounting for 70 percent and 73 percent of the country's total exports in weight and value respectively. In return, more than 24 million tons of products, valued at over \$42 billion, were imported into the country from March 21 to November 22, 2023, indicating a 4.32 and 12.36 percent hike in weight and value respectively.



Tehran, Astana Sign 4 MoUs to Boost Their All-Out Ties

By E. Taherpoor

TEHRAN - Iran and Kazakhstan on Sunday and during the 19th session of the Iran-Kazakhstan Joint Economic Commission signed four MoUs to enhance their relation in order to reach the \$3b bilateral trade. The 19th session of Iran-Kazakhstan Joint Commission was held at Hotel Espinas of Tehran and it was chaired by Iran's Agriculture Minister Muhammad Ali Nikbakht in the presence of Kazakhstan delegation led by Deputy Prime Minister Serik Zhumangarin. Addressing the event, Iran Agriculture Minister Nikbakht welcomed the Kazakh delegation in the meeting and said that this is the second meeting of the commission this year which indicates the strong determination of both countries to enhance and expand cooperation in all fields. He reiterated that Iran President emphasizes expansion of ties with friendly and neighboring countries especially boosting economic cooperation with the neighbors which is important for Tehran. He then added that Iran is a revolutionary country which has achieved outstanding progress in the past decades after the victory of the delegation and the country has minimized its dependence on foreigners. He reiterated that Iran has progressed in medical, industrial, agricultural and oil sectors as the country has reduced its independence on foreigners and it can share experience with Kazakhstan and cooperated with Astana in those fields. He said fishery and animal husbandry are of the fields that both countries can cooperate. Nikbakht said that Iran buys its required red meat from Brazil and it can buy it from Kazakhstan if the condition is good. He admitted that Iran produces 10.5m tons of wheat but still the country is an importer, adding that Iran imports annually some 20 million tons of corn, soybean meal and feed barley and Kazakhstan can be a supplier. He announced Iran's readiness to prepare favorable climate for cooperation with Kazakhstan in the field economy and especially trade in order to materialize the \$3b bilateral target which has been set by both states. Then Deputy Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Mr. Zhumangarin thanked hospitality of Iran and holding the meeting and noted that one of the policies of Kazakhstan is to expand ties with neighboring states and the talks between presidents of Iran and Kazakhstan have boosted the incentive for cooperation. He added that this is his second visit to Tehran

which bespeaks of his country's strong determination for boosting ties with Iran. The Kazakh official added that the delegation comprised of representatives of businesses has met and talked with their Iranian counterparts for finding ways for expanding cooperation. He once again reiterated that Iran is the important partner of Kazakhstan in the Caspian Sea. Zhumangarin noted that the trade between both countries rose by 20% in 2022 and reached \$520m but in 2023 it has declined and dropped to \$250m so far, adding that his country is ready to send seven items of goods and services to Iran. He further said that in the first half of 2023, Iranians have invested some \$177.2m in Kazakhstan and the figure for the investment of Kazakhs in Iran has been \$13.6m. He stated that both countries have started 7 joint projects that 5 of them have come on stream and only two have not been completed yet. He said Kazakhstan today will sign the roadmap for boosting bilateral trade to \$3b. He said that both countries are trying to ease banking cooperation, adding that transportation is the other important issue for both countries for enhancing trade, reiterating that expansion of transport will lead to boost in the transit of Kazakhstan's agro products via Iran. Zhumangarin also said that exploitation from ports of both countries is very important for developing transportation, adding that Kazakhstan companies are working to be involved in projects in Iran's Bandar Abbas and Amirabad in the south and north of country which will be key in transporting goods and transit of goods. He stressed that he is certain that the Tehran-Astana ties will be expanded in all fields that both nations will benefit it. Then Zhumangarin and Nikbakht signed four MoUs for boosting all-out cooperation. The first MoU was agreement on the joint commission and the second one was the roadmap between the two countries for increasing bilateral trade to \$3b. Then both countries signed MoUs on cooperation between their Standards Organizations and hygienic and health requirements for import of meat from Kazakhstan. Kairat Torebayev, the vice minister of trade and integration of Kazakhstan and Kazakh Ambassador to Tehran Askhat Orazbay as well as Mehdi Safari, Deputy Foreign Minister of Economic Diplomacy of Iran were also present in this event.

2.9m Ton of Commodities Traded on IME Last Week



TEHRAN - Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) last week witnessed trade of 2,967,894 tons of commodities with a total trading value of more than \$676m on its physical market. According to a report by the IME's International Affairs and PR, the exchange saw on its metals and minerals trading floor trade of 2,353,072 tons of commodities valued at nearly \$405m. On this floor the IME sold 1,248,560 tons of cement, 492,000 tons of iron ore, 440,527 tons of steel, 154,000 tons of sponge iron, 56,035 tons of zinc, 9,095 tons of copper, 7,600 tons of aluminum, 2,125 tons of cast iron, 200 tons of molybdenum concentrate and 100 tons of lead. Furthermore, the IME witnessed on both domestic and export rings of its oil and petrochemical trading floor 548,117 tons of commodities worth more than \$233m. Commodities traded on this floor included 190,000 tons of vacuum bottom, 161,447 tons of bitumen, 95,910 tons of polymeric products, 51,900 tons of lube cut, 28,876 tons of chemicals, 8,485 tons of sulfur, 4,649 tons of oil, 1,000 tons of slop wax, 430 tons of feedstocks and 200 tons of waterproofing materials. The IME also traded within the same week 10 tons of goods on its side market.

Foreign Students From 14 Countries Learning Farsi at Iran's University

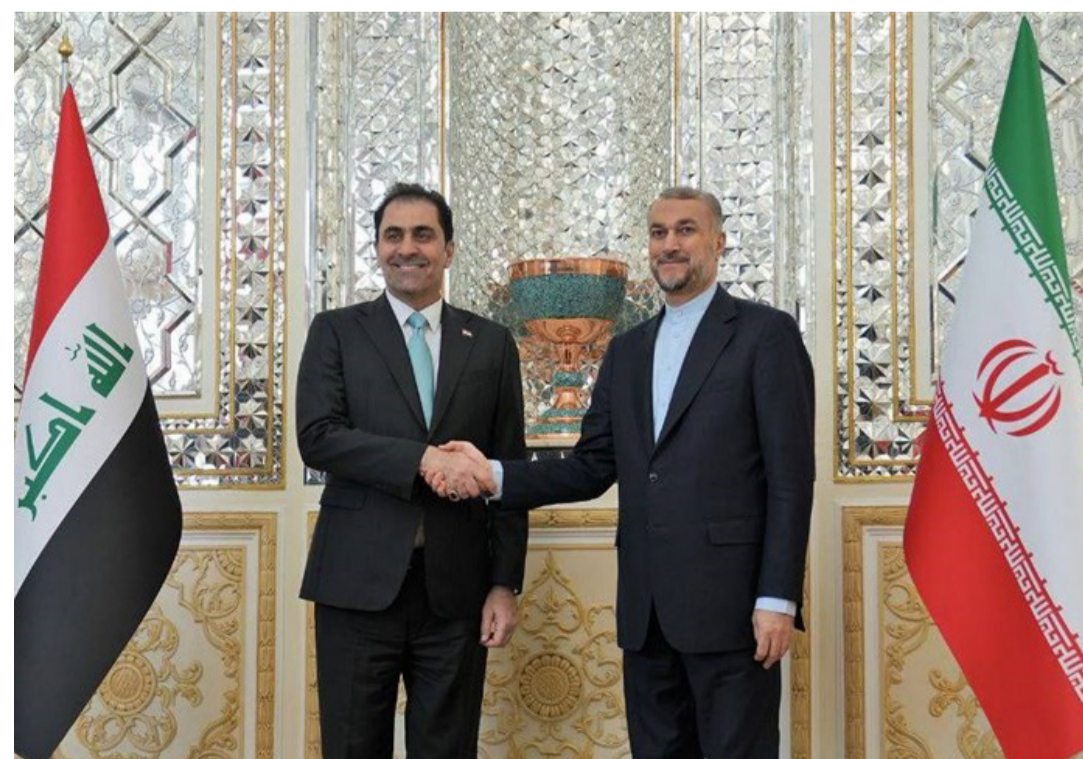


TEHRAN (IRNA) - The Center for Teaching Persian to Speakers of Other Languages Allameh Tabataba'i University (AZFA) has kicked off a new semester of teaching Farsi to 140 students from 14 countries. The Allameh Tabataba'i University held a ceremony to welcome the new students in the presence of the university's president, the head of the AZFA center, and a group of newcomers in Tehran. The students are from Azerbaijan, Russia, China, South Korea, Iraq, Oman, Palestine, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Indonesia, Nigeria, South Africa, Turkey, and Sri Lanka. President of Allameh Tabataba'i University Abdollah Mo'tamedi welcomed the new Persian students and expressed hope that the foreign students would increase their skills in order to express in the Persian language what they have in mind. Touching upon the fact when an expression is translated from one language into another, it loses many of its original characteristics; the university president argued that translation can be very different from the original text because there are linguistic aspects in the original language that cannot be seen in translation. If we are skillful in the language of the original text, we will be able to understand many of those aspects; thus, when you become familiar with the Persian language, you will obtain its underlying points and you will be able to speak better, he added.

Iranian Firms Invited to Work on Projects in Iraq

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - First Deputy Speaker of the Iraqi Parliament Mohsen Al-Mandalawi invited Iranian companies to embark on various construction projects in his country. In a meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian, held in Tehran on Sunday, Mandalawi hailed the growing relations between the two neighbors. Urging the implementation of the previous cooperation agreements between Baghdad and Tehran, the deputy speaker invited Iranian companies to get involved in the engineering and construction projects in Iraq. He pointed to Iraq's firm condemnation of the Israeli atrocities against Gaza, saying the Iraqi parliament has called for an

emergency meeting of the parliament speakers of the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union to discuss the Gaza crisis. For his part, Amirabdollahian lauded the Iraqi people, government and parliament's support for the Palestinian people, highlighted Iraq's role in the settlement of the Gaza crisis, and called for closer cooperation between Iran and Iraq to ensure regional peace and stability. At least 15,500 Palestinians have been killed in Israeli strikes in Gaza since October 7. The Zionist regime's military has widened its ground offensive in southern Gaza as Palestinian officials say more than 800 people have been killed since Saturday.



Minister Stresses Increased Agricultural Cooperation With Cuba

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Minister of Agriculture Mohammad Ali Nikbakht has urged the need for more enhanced agricultural cooperation between Iran and Cuba which he said would benefit the interests of both countries. He made the remarks in a meeting in Tehran on Sunday with his Cuban counterpart Jesús Pérez. Underlining Iran's huge achievements in the agricultural sector, the minister said that his country is ready to share these experiences with friendly nations. Nikbakht noted that Iran produces a large part of its agricultural needs, adding that shrimp and fish farming, as well as production of horticultural products, are among Iran's points of strength. The Cuban minister, for his part, referred to political and revolutionary commonalities of the two countries which he believed could pave the way for more increased cooperation, especially in the agricultural sector. He said that his country welcomes making use of Iran's agricultural experiences and supports the presence of Iranian investors in Cuba.

Hikers Evacuated as Indonesia Volcano Spews Ash Tower

PADONG (Dispatches) - A volcano in western Indonesia erupted Sunday, belching a column of ash around three kilometers into the sky and forcing the evacuation of dozens of hikers, officials said. Mount Marapi on the island of Sumatra, with a peak of 2,891 metres, is on the third-highest alert level of Indonesia's four-step system and authorities imposed an exclusion zone around its crater. There were no immediate reports of damage or casualties after the eruption at 2:54 pm local time (0754 GMT), but earlier in the afternoon officials said several dozen hikers were "unaccounted for". One of those still coming down the mountain was 19-year-old student Zhafrizah Zahrim Febrina, whose mother Rani Radelani shared a video from her daughter who is seen covered in ash and appealing for help. "She WhatsApped. She said she didn't have any strength. She was hiking since Friday," her mother told AFP. "She is coming down along with her friends."



Israel Says Ground Forces Operating Across Gaza Strip



GAZA (Dispatches) - Israeli ground forces were confronting Hamas fighters across the Gaza Strip, the Israeli military said in its clearest indication yet that a planned ground offensive in the enclave's refugee-crowded south had begun as Israeli bombing killed and wounded dozens of Palestinians. The Hamas Palestinian militant group said its fighters clashed with Israeli troops about 2 km (1 mile) from the southern city of Khan Younis. Residents, many of whom had moved there to flee earlier attacks in the Israel-Palestinian conflict, said they could hear tank fire and feared a new Israeli ground offensive was building. The Israeli military earlier ordered people to evacuate some areas in and near the city, but made no announcement of any new southern ground assault. "The IDF (Israel Defense Forces) continues to extend its ground operation against Hamas centres in all of the Gaza Strip," spokesperson Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari told reporters in Tel Aviv. "The forces are coming face-to-face with terrorists and killing them." Early on Monday, Hamas media quoted emergency services as saying an Israeli strike killed three civil emergency workers in Gaza City in the north of the coastal enclave. Attacks on shipping in the southern Red Sea on Sunday heightened fears of the conflict spreading. The U.S. Defense Department said three commercial ships were attacked by Yemen's Iran-allied Houthi movement in international Red Sea waters, and a U.S. destroyer operating in the area shot down three drones as it responded to distress calls. The Jabalia refugee camp in the north of Hamas-ruled Gaza was among the sites reported hit from the air. A Gaza health ministry spokesperson said several people were killed by an Israeli air strike. Footage obtained by Reuters showed a boy covered in grey dust, sitting weeping amid crumbled cement and rubble from collapsed buildings. "My father was martyred," he cried in a hoarse voice. A girl in a pink sweatshirt, also coated with dust, stood behind piles of rubble. Bombardments from war planes and artillery were also concentrated on Khan Younis and Rafah, another city in Gaza's south, residents said, and hospitals were struggling to cope with the flow of wounded. Israel's government spokesperson, Eylon Levy, said the military had struck more than 400 targets over the weekend "including extensive aerial attacks in the Khan Younis area" and had also killed Hamas militants and destroyed their infrastructure in Beit Lahiyah in the north. There was no immediate comment on the reports of specific attacks. The renewed warfare followed the end on Friday of a seven-day pause in the fighting between Israeli forces and Hamas militants which had allowed an exchange of 105 hostages held by Hamas, most of them Israelis, for 240 Palestinian prisoners. The latest violence took place despite calls from the United States — Israel's closest ally — for Israel to limit harm to Palestinian civilians in the new phase of its offensive, focused on the south. U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris made phone calls to both Israeli President Isaac Herzog and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas on Sunday, reiterating Israel's right to self-defense and U.S. support for a two-state solution that gives Palestinian people the right to self-determination. Harris "reiterated our concerns with steps that could escalate tensions, including extremist (Israeli) settler violence," her office said. More than 15,523 people have been killed, according to Gaza's health ministry, in nearly two months of warfare that broke out after a Hamas cross-border raid on southern Israel on Oct. 7 in which 1,200 Israelis were killed and around 240 taken hostage. Israel says Hamas continues to hold 136 hostages. Osama Hamdan, a Lebanon-based Hamas official, accused Israel of pursuing a deliberate strategy of urging Gaza civilians south in order to trap and kill them there.

Islamic State Claims Responsibility for Deadly Philippine Bombing



MANILA (Dispatches) - Islamic State militants claimed responsibility for a deadly bombing at a Catholic Mass in the Philippines on Sunday that killed at least four people and injured 50 others. The attack was carried out in a university gymnasium in Marawi, a city in the south of the country besieged by Islamist militants for five months in 2017. The Islamic State group, which wields influence in the country's south, said on Telegram its members had detonated the bomb. Earlier on Sunday, before Islamic State's claim, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr condemned "the senseless and most heinous acts perpetrated by foreign terrorists". Police and the military strengthened security in the country's south and around the capital Manila. In Rome, Pope Francis offered prayers for the victims during his Sunday address, and, in a separate written message, appealed to "Christ the prince of peace (to) grant to all the strength to turn from violence and overcome every evil with good". Law enforcement operations to bring to justice the perpetrators of the "terrorist activity" will "continue unabated", Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro told a press conference. There were "strong indications of a foreign element" in the bombing, Teodoro said, refusing to elaborate so as not to compromise ongoing investigation. Fragments of a 60-mm mortar were recovered at the scene, senior police official Emmanuel Peralta told the press conference. The blast in Marawi, capital of Lanao del Sur province, followed a series of military operations against local pro-Islamic State groups in the southern Philippines, the military chief said. One on Sunday in Lanao del Sur led to the killing of a leader of the Dawlah Islamiya-Maute group. "It is possible that what happened this morning was a retaliatory attack," Armed Forces Chief Romeo Bravero told the press conference. The Islamic State-linked Maute seized Marawi on May 2017, seeking to make it a Southeast Asian "wilayat" — or governorate — for Islamic State. In the ensuing five-month battle, Islamist fighters and Philippine forces killed more than a thousand people, including civilians. Images shared by the Lanao del Sur government on Facebook showed military officials surveying the gym at the Mindanao State University where the blast occurred, which appeared intact except for burn marks in the centre. Videos posted by DZBB radio on social media platform X, formerly Twitter, showed rescuers carrying injured people out of the gym on plastic chairs. Police offices in Mindanao and the capital region were placed on high alert and police checkpoints tightened "to prevent possible follow-up incidents", police official Peralta said. The coast guard directed its districts to intensify pre-departure inspections at ports. Mindanao State University said in a Facebook post it was "deeply saddened and appalled by the act of violence that occurred during a religious gathering". "We unequivocally condemn in the strongest possible terms this senseless and horrific act." The university said it was suspending classes until further notice.

Venezuelans Approve Referendum to Claim Sovereignty Over Region of Guyana



CARACAS (Dispatches) - Venezuelan electoral authorities on Sunday claimed that 95 percent of voters in a nonbinding referendum approved of the nation's territorial claim on a huge chunk of neighbouring oil-rich Guyana. It is "an evident and overwhelming victory for the 'Yes' in this consultative referendum," said the president of the National Electoral Council, Elvis Amoroso. About 10.5 million of Venezuela's 20.7 million eligible voters took part in the consultation, which raised fears in Guyana, and around the region, about Venezuela's ultimate intentions over the contested territory. Electoral officials kept polling stations open an additional two hours, until 8:00 pm (0000 GMT), to allow people already at the facilities to vote in the referendum, which the government hopes will strengthen its century-old claim to the oil-rich Essequibo territory governed by Guyana. "Today is a day of ratification, of national sovereignty, and the people have done it with flying colors," said Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino in an evening address on state television. In Guyana, thousands of people, some of them wearing T-shirts reading "Essequibo belongs to Guyana," formed human chains in solidarity with their government, and their president offered assurances that the country's borders were secure. The Maduro government has said it is not seeking justification to invade or annex the huge territory, as some fear in Guyana, an English-speaking former British colony. And regardless of the outcome of the vote, little will change in the short term: The people of Essequibo are not voting, and the referendum is nonbinding. But tensions have been rising since Guyana took bids in September for several offshore oil exploration blocks, and after a major new find was announced in October. Its petroleum reserves

are similar to those of Kuwait, with the highest reserves per capita in the world. Meanwhile, Maduro's government which faces a severe economic crisis released a video Sunday suggesting that some Guyanese would prefer to be under Venezuelan rule. It purportedly shows an Indigenous group of Pemón adults in Guyana lowering the nation's flag and raising a Venezuelan flag in its stead. One begins to sing the Venezuelan national anthem. Guyana's President Irfaan Ali said Sunday that his government was working to protect the country's borders and keep people safe. "I want to assure Guyanese that there is nothing to fear," Ali said in an address carried on Facebook. Venezuela has claimed the huge territory of Essequibo for decades — even though its 160,000 square kilometres (62,000 square miles) represent more than two-thirds of Guyana, and its population of 125,000 is one-fifth Guyana's total. Caracas contends that the Essequibo River to the region's east is the natural border between the two countries, as declared in 1777 under Spanish rule, and that Britain wrongly appropriated Venezuelan lands in the 19th century. Guyana, however, asserts the border was set in the British colonial era and was confirmed in 1899 by a court of arbitration. It says the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the UN's top judicial body, has validated this finding. Guyana had asked the ICJ to block the referendum. But while the court on Friday urged Caracas to take no action that might affect the disputed territory, it did not mention the measure. The referendum covers five questions, including proposals for the creation of a Venezuelan province to be called "Guyana Essequibo," giving the inhabitants Venezuelan citizenship, as well as a call to reject the ICJ's jurisdiction.

ICC Prosecutor Vows to Further Intensify Gaza Probe



THE HAGUE (Dispatches) - The chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court vowed to step up efforts to investigate alleged war crimes, as he wrapped up a visit to Israel and the Palestinian Territories. Karim Khan stressed his visit was "not investigative in nature" but said he was able to speak to victims on both sides of the conflict. More than 15,200 people have been killed in the besieged Palestinian territory of Gaza, according to Islamist group Hamas, in more than eight weeks of combat and heavy bombardment. "My office will further intensify its efforts to advance its investigations in relation to this situation," Khan said. "Credible allegations of crimes during the current conflict should be the subject of timely, independent examination and investigation." Opening its doors in 2002, the ICC is the world's only independent court set up to probe the gravest offences including genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. It opened an investigation in 2021 into Israel as well as Hamas and other armed Palestinian groups for possible war crimes in the Palestinian territories. Khan has previously said this investigation now "extends to the escalation of hostilities and violence since the attacks that took place on October 7, 2023". But ICC teams have not been able to enter Gaza or investigate in Israel, which

is not an ICC member. The war broke out when Hamas militants burst through Gaza's militarised border into Israel on October 7 and killed about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, while also taking around 240 hostages, according to Israeli authorities. Khan said he witnessed "calculated cruelty" at the sites attacked by Hamas. Those attacks "represent some of the most serious international crimes that shock the conscience of humanity, crimes which the ICC was established to address". He also emphasized that "the manner in which Israel responds to these attacks is subject to clear legal parameters that govern armed conflict". Acknowledging that conflict in densely populated areas such as Gaza was "inherently complex", international humanitarian law must still apply, Khan said. Legal experts have told AFP that both Hamas and Israel could face war crimes charges over the conflict. Five countries called in mid-November for an ICC investigation into the Israel-Hamas war, with Khan saying his team had collected a "significant volume" of evidence on "relevant incidents". Khan also called for humanitarian aid to be allowed into Gaza and not be seized by Hamas. "All actors must comply with international humanitarian law. If you do not do so, do not complain when my office is required to act," he warned.

Ukraine Says Two Killed, Seven Injured as Russia Shells Kherson



KYIV (Dispatches) - Fresh Russian shelling killed at least three people including an elderly man in a village garage and a woman beside a city bus stop, Ukrainian officials said, as President Volodymyr Zelenskyy reported "intense battles" at dozens of frontline locations. "Russian occupiers once again shelled Kherson," Zelenskyy said, referring to the southern, port city on the west bank of the Dnipro River, abandoned by Russian forces late last year but now regularly shelled from the river's eastern bank. He said the most severe of the frontline battles were in the eastern towns of Maryinka, Avdiivka and Bakhmut, but also reported heavy fighting in Kharkiv region and in the south. "Brutal" shelling rained down on "buildings, streets, our hospitals" in Kherson, he said, and offered condolences to families of those killed, noting Kherson region alone had suffered 20 shelling incidents in one day. In the east, the prosecutor general's office said a 69-year-old woman was killed on the spot and a 70-year-old woman suffered gunshot wounds in the town of Kostyantynivka. A 64-year-old man suffered a penetrating injury from shelling while in his own garden in Avdiivka, site of some of the fiercest fighting in recent weeks. In the south, shelling in the village of Sadove killed a 78-year-old man in a private garage, Kherson city's military administration said, adding, "He died on the spot from the explosive injury." In Kherson city, an image shared by Ukrainian officials on the Telegram messaging app showed a blurred image of a woman in a mauve coat in fetal position on the ground with her back to the camera, two shopping bags strewn near her head. Roman Mrochko, head of Kherson city's military administration posted a video of a multi-storey building with shattered windows, internal damage and debris on the ground. The video included brief interviews with women inside the damaged apartments as well as blurred images of the woman who was killed at the bus stop. "There was a very strong explosion," one woman said, weeping as she surveyed damage to a bedroom. "It roared. I never heard anything like this in my life."

Far-Right Parties Eye Gains in Next Year's EU Parliament Elections

ROME (Dispatches) - European far-right parties met in Italy on Sunday vowing to reshape the European Union after next year's European Parliament elections, toughening the bloc's approach on immigration and softening its climate policies to protect jobs and industry. Parties from around a dozen countries gathered in Florence, galvanised by last month's general elections in the Netherlands, which handed a surprise win to Geert Wilders' anti-immigration Freedom Party (PVV). "Our objective is for (us) to become at least the third-largest (group) in the EU parliament, after the centre-right and the socialists, and to be decisive," said Italian Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini, who hosted the meeting. The far-right Identity and Democracy (ID) group is now the sixth-largest in the EU assembly, also behind liberal, green and conservative groups, but current polling data place it in fourth position. Salvini, who has failed to include in his alliance Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni and her poll-leading Brothers of Italy party, fronted a previous unsuccessful push in 2019 for a far-right breakthrough in EU elections. Addressing the Florence rally via video link, Wilders said he hoped his success, "a political earthquake in the Netherlands and Europe," could be "the start of a wave of national election wins" for like-minded allies. Wilders hailed Salvini, leader of

the League party, as an inspiration and his "number one Italian friend." Salvini hit out against the EU decision to ban new CO2-emitting cars from 2035, and was backed by the co-leader of Alternative for Germany (AfD) Tino Chrupalla, who called for an "end to the war against cars." Jordan Bardella, president of Marine Le Pen's National Rally party, won applause speaking in Italian and saying that Europe cannot become a "5-star hostel for Africa", and linking mass immigration to violence and crime. There was less unity on other issues. Wilders condemned excessive public spending while Salvini railed against euro zone budget discipline rules, and German and Austrian far-righters broke ranks on the Russia-Ukraine and Israel-Hamas conflicts. "Ukraine cannot win this war, they should stop it," Chrupalla said, blaming EU sanctions on Russia for depressing the German economy and calling for a resumption of Russian gas imports via the Nord Stream pipeline. "In our opinion, the support we are giving in the war in Ukraine is wrong, and it is equally wrong to support Israel's war against (the Palestinians)," Harald Vilimsky of the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) said. Salvini, once a staunch admirer of Russian President Vladimir Putin, told reporters that his party had "clearly supported every intervention in defence of Ukraine, with facts, votes and money."





Tottenham Fight Back to Hold Man City in Six-Goal Triller

LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester City were stunned by a depleted Tottenham as Dejan Kulusevski's 90th minute equalizer earned Spurs a thrilling 3-3 draw at the Etihad. Tottenham manager Ange Postecoglou insisted he would not relent from his philosophy of relentless attacking football despite facing the might of City with a mounting injury crisis, and earned his reward. Spurs captain Son Heung-min scored at both ends inside the opening 10 minutes. Phil Foden put City in front before half-time, but Giovanni Lo Celso levelled 20 minutes from time. Jack Grealish restored the home side's lead once more, only for Kulusevski's header to ensure City have now dropped points in five of their last eight league games. The English and European champions drop to third in the table, three points behind leaders Arsenal. A point lifts Tottenham into fifth and snaps a run of three consecutive defeats. "We were lucky to be in it by half-time. City could have blown us away in that period," said Postecoglou. "Second half we had more belief in ourselves and the team we want to be and we clawed our way back into the game." The visitors' daring approach was met with an early reward. Son raced onto Kulusevski's ball over the top and Ederson failed to prevent the South Korean scoring his eighth goal against City. The lead only lasted three minutes as Son cancelled out his opener at the wrong end. Julian Alvarez's free-kick was flicked on by Erling

Haaland and deflected off the unfortunate Son into his own net. Spurs started for the second consecutive game without a recognized center-back and they never looked capable of restricting City going forward. Pep Guardiola's men should have had the game out of sight before half-time. Haaland missed two glaring opportunities by his standards, while Jeremy Doku and Alvarez hit the woodwork. Yet, City did produce a move of clinical precision to go in front on 31 minutes. Doku fed Alvarez inside the box and the Argentine squared for Foden to slot home. Guglielmo Vicario was forced to make a stunning save from Bernardo Silva seconds into the second period to keep Tottenham in the game. But City were then guilty of resting on their laurels and allowing Spurs' makeshift defence some respite. Lo Celso, handed a rare run in the starting line-up by an injury to James Maddison, fired in off the post for his second goal in as many games. Tottenham's determination to play out from the back looked to have cost them 10 minutes from time. Rodri robbed Yves Bissouma and played in Haaland, who crossed for Grealish to tap home. But the drama was far from over. Kulusevski timed his run perfectly to head in Brennan Johnson's cross. And City were incensed in stoppage time when referee Simon Hooper inexplicably stopped the game to award the home side a free-kick when Grealish was clean through on goal.

Scheffler Wins World Challenge



MIAMI (Dispatches) - World number one Scottie Scheffler fired a bogey-free 68 for a three-shot win in the Hero World Challenge, where 15-time major champion Tiger Woods said he'd "come a long way" in his first tournament since April. Scheffler had four birdies in his four-under par 68 on the Albany golf course in the Bahamas, his 20-under total of 268 beating Austrian Sepp Straka by three shots to give him the trophy after runner-up finishes to Viktor Hovland the last two years. Tournament host Woods, who hadn't played since ankle surgery in the wake of his third round withdrawal at the Masters, said he was "ecstatic" with how the week had gone after carding a final-round 72 for an even par total of 288. Woods shook off a double-bogey at the second hole with birdies at the third, fifth and sixth. After bogeys at eight and 11 he birdied 14 and 15 before a bogey at 16 that left him 18th in the 20-player field. "I think I've come a long way," said Woods, who said this week that he was no longer playing with pain from leg injuries suffered in a 2021 car crash but still battled chronic back pain. "From being a little bit rusty to playing four days and knocked off a lot of rust which was great, and just the physicality of actually playing and competing again -- I haven't done this in a while," he said. "I wish I would have played a little cleaner but there's always next time." Having completed 72 holes, Woods said he thought his estimate that he could play one tournament a month in 2024 "seems reasonable." "It gives me a couple of weeks to recover, a week to tune up. Maybe I can get into a rhythm. That's what the plan was going into next year and I don't see why that would change." Woods, who said all week his fitness was his main concern, said the way he drove the ball was the best aspect of his game this week. "I drove it on pretty much a string all week," he said. "So it's not like I have to go and try and find something the next few weeks or something going into next year. What I've been working on is right there." The victory in the unofficial event saw Scheffler end 2023 on a high note, nine months after he claimed his sixth US PGA Tour title at the Players Championship.

49ers Destroy Eagles, Hill Shines Again for Dolphins

MIAMI (Dispatches) - Brock Purdy threw four touchdowns and explosive receiver Deebo Samuel scored three as the San Francisco 49ers humbled the Philadelphia Eagles with an emphatic 42-19 NFL statement victory. The 49ers, who lost to the Eagles in last year's NFC Championship game, were devastating on both the ground and in the air as they dominated an Eagles side who had gone into the game with just one defeat. After a slow start, with the Eagles scoring two field goals in the first quarter, the Niners turned on the style in the second quarter. Purdy found Brandon Aiyuk with a two-yard touchdown pass and then star running back Christian McCaffrey made it 14-6 with a two-yard rush. Samuel extended the lead with a powerful 12-yard rush early in the third and after Eagles quarterback Jalen Hurts scored with a quarterback sneak, Samuel grabbed a short pass down the middle from Purdy, broke a tackle and sprinted home. In a chippy encounter, San Francisco had linebacker Fre Greenlaw ejected after a confrontation on the sideline with an Eagles security official who was also ejected. Hurts had to leave the field early in the fourth for a concussion check but returned to action after being given the all-clear. The contest was over though when Jauan Jennings caught a Purdy pass, shoved Eli Ricks out of the way and ran in for an 18-yard touchdown. After a Devonta Smith two-yard touchdown for the Eagles, Samuel completed the rout, collecting a short pass and ripping his way through the Eagles defense for a 48-yard touchdown. Purdy threw for 314 yards. Samuel put up 138 total yards and McCaffrey 133 as the 49ers moved to 9-3. The Eagles fell to 10-2. Tyreek Hill dominated again as the Miami Dolphins crushed the Washington Commanders 45-15 with the wide receiver scoring two touchdowns and putting up 157 yards. The win moves the AFC East-leading Dolphins (9-3) closer to their first division title since 2008 with much of their success built on the understanding between Hill and quarterback Tua Tagovailoa. The pair got the Dolphins on the board in the first quarter when Tagovailoa found Hill wide left and the former Kansas City star raced away into the end-zone for a 78-yard score. Hill then showed remarkable speed to lose his coverage and super agility to collect a deep pass as he completed a 60-yard score in the second quarter to put Miami 24-7 up. A one yard rush from Raheem Mostert sent Miami in at half-time with a 31-7 lead and they were able to take out several key players in the fourth quarter as they eased to victory. Tagovailoa completed 18 of 24 passes for 280 yards and the two touchdowns which gave Hill a league-leading 13 so far this season. Hill said before the season that his goal was to become the first player in NFL history to reach 2,000 receiving yards. With five games of the regular season left he has that record within reach with 1,481 receiving yards at an average of 123.4 yards per game. The Houston Texans ended the Denver Bronco's five game winning streak with a 22-17 home win. Rookie quarterback sensation C.J. Stroud found Nico Collins for a three-yard touchdown early in the fourth to open up a 22-10 lead but Bronco's quarterback Russell Wilson responded with a one yard rushing score. Denver pushed for a game-winning score in the final moments but on third-and-goal, with 16 seconds on the clock, Wilson's pass into the end-zone to Luca Krull was intercepted by Jimmie Ward. Collins had a career-high 191 yards receiving while Stroud threw for 274 yards and a touchdown. Wilson was intercepted three times in the game. The Detroit Lions have their best record through 12 games since 1962 after moving to 9-3 with a 33-28 win at New Orleans.



Arshdeep Sees India Edge Australia to Win T20 Series 4-1



BENGALURU (Dispatches) - Shreyas Iyer smashed 53 and fast bowler Arshdeep Singh kept calm in a tense final over as India edged Australia by six runs to seal the Twenty20 series 4-1. India posted 160-8 in the fifth match after Iyer propelled the total with his 37-ball knock despite losing regular wickets after the tourists elected to field first in Bengaluru. Fast bowler Mukesh Kumar (3-32), leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi (2-29) and left-arm spinner Axar Patel (1-14) stood out as the hosts, who took an unbeatable 3-1 lead in the fourth T20, restricted Australia to 154-8. But it was left-arm quick Arshdeep who defended nine in the last over when he began with two dot balls and then the wicket of skipper Matthew Wade for 22 to dim Australia's hopes. The next three balls got the batting team just three runs as India celebrated victory. "It was a good series from day one," skipper Suryakumar Yadav said. "We wanted to be fearless and enjoy ourselves when we were in the middle. So, very happy with that." It was a second-string Indian team which gave some consolation to the fans who witnessed hosts India lose the ODI World Cup final to Australia on November 19 in Ahmedabad. Ben McDermott smashed 54 off 36 deliveries but the batting wobbled after his departure and Mukesh struck twice on two deliveries to dent the chase. He took down Matthew Short, for 16, Ben Dwarshuis, on a duck, to be on a hat-trick averted by Nathan Ellis. The left-handed Wade smashed four boundaries and looked set to get the team home but a rising delivery from Arshdeep at the start of the final over made him angry as he signalled to the umpires for a no-ball. Wade protested and got out two balls later to take back his team's hopes, still dejected and waving his bat. "My job is to get us home in situations like tonight," said Wade. "It would've been nice to get the result, but we learn and I thought Ben McDermott bounced back, (Jason) Behrendorff, (Ben) Dwarshuis, (Tanveer) Sangha made an impact in tough conditions." Earlier India lost regular wickets but Iyer set up victory after he put on fighting partnerships of 42 with Jitesh Sharma, who made 24, and 46 with Axar, who hit back with 31 from 21 balls and was named man of the match. Iyer, who returned in the previous match after resting following the team's World Cup defeat, raised his fifty with a four and six before he was bowled by Nathan Ellis. Both sides will feature in the T20 World Cup in June next year.

Barca Loan Star Felix Makes Atletico Pay in Title Race

BARCELONA (Dispatches) - Joao Felix's superb dinked finish earned Barcelona a vital 1-0 win over Atletico Madrid on Sunday in the La Liga title race. The Portuguese forward, on loan at Barca from Atletico, made no secret of his pleasure to escape the Spanish capital this summer and made his parent club pay at the Olympic Stadium. Felix was criticized by some Atletico players ahead of the game and Barca coach Xavi Hernandez called on him to use those words as inspiration, which he duly did. The forward's goal allowed Barca to reclaim third place from Atletico, now trailing leaders Real Madrid and second place Girona by four points. "He made the difference for the team again, he gave everything, working hard, stealing the ball back, I am very happy for him," Xavi told reporters. "I told him to be calm, this extra motivation sometimes speeds you up and you cross the line." Xavi hailed his players' performance as a whole. "The team had personality, we played very well today -- maybe it's our best game of the season, a complete one, I would say. "It's a very positive sign of what we can and should do in every game -- this is what Barca should be." Atletico have not

won away against the champions in La Liga since 2006, a run now stretching to 18 matches, but arrived thinking this could be the time to snap that streak. Since crumbling to a defeat in the Clasico by Real Madrid at the end of October, Barcelona have struggled for form and confidence. Barcelona started well, carving out chances and Felix broke the deadlock after 28 minutes, taking a brilliant touch to ride Nahuel Molina's challenge and then dinking the ball over Atletico goalkeeper Jan Oblak. Felix celebrated with arms aloft, standing on the advertising hoardings in front of the angry visiting supporters, while Rojiblanco's coach Diego Simeone appeared disgruntled as he flashed up on the big screens. The 24-year-old forward, a club record signing at 126 million euros (\$137 million) in 2019, never settled in the capital and did not click with Simeone's management and playing style. "It was spontaneous... in the heat of the game and it was like a relief, for everything I lived through this summer," Felix told Movistar about his celebration. "Every week I'm talked about, whether for good or bad, I do my job, without looking at what they say or think."

