

President Ebrahim Raisi, heading a High-Ranking Political and Economic Delegation, Will Visit Russia on Thursday at the Official Invitation of His Russian Counterpart Vladimir Putin Where Both Sides Will Discuss the Latest Development in the Region and Their Ties

IRAN NEWS

According to Zargham Heidarieh, an Official From Bushehr Province, Iran's South Pars Gas Field (SPGF) Generates \$130m Per Day as the Field Has 13 Refineries and 336 Wells in the Persian Gulf, Producing More Than 705 Million Cubic Meters of Gas Daily

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Iran, Cuba Must Form Coalition to Counter U.S., West Bullying



TEHRAN – Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei says great political and economic capacities of Iran and Cuba should be used to form a coalition against bullying of the United States and its Western allies. Ayatollah Khamenei made the remarks in a Monday meeting with Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel, who is in Tehran on a historic visit. Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi was also present in the meeting. Ayatollah Khamenei pointed to remarkable potentialities of Iran and Cuba and said, "These capacities should be used to set up an alliance and a coalition among those countries that share the same position against the US and Western bullying." With its focus on economic cooperation, this coalition can take a common and effective position on important international issues such as the Palestinian issue," the Leader stated. The Leader emphasized that the Palestinian issue is not limited to the recent developments in Gaza and its bombardment as the Palestinian people have been exposed to various types of torture, sufferings and massacre over the past 75 years. However, Gaza is currently faced with such a big catastrophe that cannot be concealed, Ayatollah Khamenei said, adding that the war revealed the realities on the ground to the world public opinion. The Leader added that Iran and Cuba share a stance on many international developments, particularly the Palestinian issue. Referring to Tehran-Havana cooperation in international forums, Ayatollah Khamenei stressed the importance of further promoting mutual relations in various fields, including science. The Leader expressed hope that the two countries would implement bilateral agreements and memoranda of understanding now that the administration of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, which he described as the "administration of work and activity", is at the helm. Ayatollah Khamenei also pointed to his meeting with late Cuban leader Fidel Castro in Tehran 22 years ago, and said Cuba's revolution and Castro's personality have always been fascination to Iranian revolutionaries even before the victory of the 1979 Islamic Revolution because of the sincerity in his revolutionary positions. The Leader emphasized that "revolutionary sincerity", "revolutionary resilience" and "revolutionary solemnity" are the common main features of the Cuban revolution and the Islamic Revolution in Iran. Diaz-Canel, for his part, said Ayatollah Khamenei's positions and statements correspond to concerns and stance of the Cuban government. The Cuban president added that in his talks with Iranian authorities in Tehran, both sides focused all their efforts on ways to deepen mutual relations, especially in the economic and commercial spheres. He emphasized that Iran and Cuba can complement each other in various fields, particularly in dealing with interventionist measures and sanctions imposed by the United States and its allies. Regarding cooperation on global issues, the two countries should further develop their relations and play an influential role in leading developments such as the Palestinian issue, he said. The Cuban president denounced the ongoing developments in Gaza as "unacceptable genocide" and said international organizations have turned a blind eye to the killing of tens of thousands of civilians, most of them children and women, in the besieged Strip. He said those who were constantly complaining about the war between Ukraine and Russia and the killing of civilians are now silent vis-à-vis the massacre of tens of thousands of people in Gaza, which indicates the grave state of the world.

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK



President Says Next Year's Budget Bill "Realistic"

TEHRAN – President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi yesterday submitted the next year budget bill to Majlis. Attending the Majlis open session on Tuesday and submitting the budget bill, Raisi said that realism is one of the points focused on in the budget bill of 1403 (starting on March 20, 2024) and the budget bill is based on the 7th development plan. The president and a group of cabinet members came to the Parliament floor this morning to present the next year's budget bill. In the introduction of his speech, Raisi stated that it is a success that we are together with the lawmakers to present the 1403 budget to the parliament officially, and added that the government tried to achieve economic growth and production growth and curb inflation by implementing the law and the people thwarted the enemy's conspiracy and sedition. The President said: "Realism is one of the focus points in the 1403 budget bill, and the budget bill is based on the 7th development plan." Raisi referred to the martyrdom of more than 6 thousand children in Palestine and said: "What is happening in Gaza from child killing, genocide and crimes against humanity is a cause of regret for humanity. There are those who claim to be supporter of human rights, i.e. America and Westerners. International organizations and institutions claim to defend the rights of the oppressed, but they have lost their effectiveness in front of the domineering system and the US." "We believe that the nations have stood up today and are crying out for human rights and the administration of justice and a new order in the world," he said, adding: "God formed the nation of Moses in the killing of children by Pharaoh, and we believe that the martyrdom of Palestinian women and children will end the false government of the Zionist regime, and we will witness the Palestinian victory and the destruction of the fake regime." Honoring the memory of Hassan Modarres, a former member of the National Consultative Assembly of Iran, the President said: What we know from the pure life of Martyr Modarres is belief in God, belief in people, and the implementation of justice and speaking and expressing the truth. The president after the closed session of the members of the government delegation with the parliamentarian added: Semi-closed factories should be activated so that employment can improve and production can be updated. Raisi added: The role model of the parliament and the government is interaction and convergence, but it does not prevent a representative from raising his criticisms, because constructive criticism is necessary. Meanwhile Majlis Speaker highlighted the importance of effectively allocating resources after receiving the budget bill from the president. Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf emphasized the necessity of unity, particularly in the face of the significant challenges posed by the actions of the Zionist regime and the United States. Following a closed meeting between members of the Iranian government and the parliament, the Speaker of the Parliament stressed that the meeting was held at a crucial time, with the Islamic world confronting a major disaster. Qalibaf also underscored the need to harness the country's resources to achieve economic growth and stability, emphasizing that these resources should not impose an additional burden on the people. He further emphasized the importance of effectively allocating resources, expressing confidence that the country possesses ample resources to achieve its goals without relying on external sources.

Meeting of FMs of Caspian Sea Littoral States Kicks Off in Moscow



MOSCOW (IRNA) - The meeting of the foreign ministers of the Caspian Sea's littoral countries kicked off in Moscow on Tuesday. The 12th meeting of the foreign ministers of the Caspian Sea's littoral countries, which is chaired by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, is attended by the foreign ministers of Iran, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Turkmenistan. The meeting will discuss the most important issues related to the Caspian Sea area, such as the security of the Caspian region, expansion of economic relations, sea transportation, trade, energy, environment and related legal issues. Meeting of FMs of Caspian Sea littoral states kicks off in Moscow. Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian departed on a working visit to Russia on December 4 to participate in this event. Amir-Abdollahian said that apart from the regular issues, Palestine and the ways to stop the crimes of the Zionist regime will be discussed by the Caspian Sea littoral states in Moscow. Upon arrival he said that the focus of the meeting would be on strengthening economic and trade cooperation between the littoral countries of the Caspian Sea. Referring to the meetings with counterparts, the top diplomat also said that in the bilateral meeting with his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov, he will pursue last year's agreements between the presidents of the two countries. The meeting will discuss the most important issues related to the Caspian Sea area, such as the security of the Caspian region, expansion of economic relations, sea transportation, trade, energy, environment and related legal issues.

Iran Rejects UK Claim on Involvement in Red Sea Attacks



TEHRAN (MNA) – Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Nasser Kanaani on Tuesday rejected UK accusations that Iran was involved in a series of Yemeni attacks in the Red Sea. Kanaani dismissed the baseless accusation leveled by the British government saying that Iran had nothing to do with the Yemeni army attacks in the Red Sea. "Such allegations are made in line with certain political goals and indicate the efforts of the British authorities to turn the realities of the region upside down and it also shows that they are influenced by third parties, including the child-killing Zionist regime," the Iranian spokesman added. He further condemned the counterproductive statements and actions of some British officials, describing them as "a threat to regional and international peace and stability." He emphasized that "As we have clearly stated before, the Resistance groups in the region do not receive orders from the Islamic Republic of Iran to confront and respond to the war crimes and genocide of the child-killing Zionist regime. These groups decide and act based on their own principles and priorities and the interests of their country and people." Kanaani advised the British authorities to condemn the crimes of the occupying Zionist regime instead of making baseless accusations and spend their efforts on stopping the war crimes of this regime against the citizens, women and children of Palestine and on facilitating the delivery of humanitarian aid according to international regulations and responsibilities.

Iran Rejects Baseless Allegations by Israel, U.S., UK

NEW YORK (IRNA) - Iran has strongly rejected the "baseless" allegations by the Zionist regime, the US, and the UK against Tehran over its role in the current situation in West Asia. Amir Saïd Irvani, Iran's permanent representative to the United Nations, said in a Monday letter addressed to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and UN Security Council President José de la Gasca Lopezdominguez that Tehran categorically rejects the "baseless allegations" and "unwarranted references" made against the Islamic Republic in a letter dated 13 November 2023 from the representative of the Zionist regime addressed to the president of the Security Council. The Zionist regime sought to "justify and cover up its ongoing violations of UNSCR 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006), its genocidal aggression against the innocent people of Palestine in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, and its disruptive, vicious, and terrorist actions in the region," he wrote. "Accordingly, its endeavors to shift blame onto Iran are entirely unfounded and lack any legal basis." He further stressed that Iran considers the Israeli regime's dissemination of unfounded allegations nothing more than a desperate attempt to sidestep its accountability for its documented war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity committed in occupied Palestine. In another letter, Irvani dismissed the Zionist regime's letters dated November 30 to Lopezdominguez, saying that in those letters, the representative of the Israeli regime has once again "resorted to falsehoods and disseminating misinformation" to level unsubstantiated allegations against the Islamic Republic of Iran. "I would like to emphasize that the Islamic Republic of Iran has consistently adhered to the provisions of Security Council Resolution 2231 (2015) and remains steadfast in fulfilling its obligations under the Resolution," he noted. "It is ironic that Israel, an apartheid and occupying regime, consistently violates very basic and established norms and principles of international law, the United Nations Charter, and UN resolutions, yet accuses Iran of violating UNSC resolution 2231." In a separate letter addressed to the president of the Security Council, the Iranian envoy strongly condemned and rejected the baseless accusations leveled by the representative of the United Kingdom against Tehran during a UN Security Council open briefing held on November 29, 2023, under the agenda item "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question." "Undoubtedly, the United Kingdom has certainly played a



pivotal role in the prolonged suffering and distress endured by the Palestinian people. The ominous roots of this plight can be traced back to the Balfour Declaration, signaling the commencement of nearly a century of hardship for the Palestinians," he wrote. He maintained that the UK's "unwavering" support for Israeli atrocities and genocidal aggression against the Palestinian people and regional countries diminishes its moral authority to license judgment on the intentions and policies of others. In yet another letter addressed to Lopezdominguez, Irvani rejected the allegations made against Tehran by the permanent representative of the US to the UN dated November 28. He made clear that Iran has not been part of any acts or attacks against US military forces in the region. Iran regards these unfounded allegations as a deliberate attempt by the United States, the occupying State, to justify and decriminalize its persistent criminal acts of aggression and serious violations of international law and the United Nations Charter within the Syrian Arab Republic and the region.

Prosecution of U.S., Israel Minimum Price to Be Paid for Gaza Genocide



TEHRAN (PressTV) - The chief commander of the Iranian Army has lauded the Palestinian resistance against Israel's brutal aggression on the besieged Gaza Strip, saying the prosecution of those responsible for crimes against Palestinians is the minimum price the Israelis and Americans must pay. Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi made the remarks at a ceremony in the Iranian capital of Tehran on Monday as he praised Operation al-Aqsa Storm, the largest military operation by the Palestinian resistance groups against the occupied territories in decades. "Operation al-Aqsa Storm and the resistance of the people of Gaza against the unheard-of oppression and crimes of the illegitimate and usurping Zionist regime as well as their disgraceful and dishonorable master unmasked the so-called human rights advocates," Mousavi said. "Gaza is a city of resistance and a symbol of steadfastness," he added. "Operation al-Aqsa Storm, as Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said, is an 'irreparable defeat' since the heroic Palestinian fighters carried out an offensive [against Israel] after nearly 75 years." Stressing that more than 700 innocent Palestinian women and children have been killed by the Israeli regime in Gaza over the past 24 hours, the chief commander of the Iranian Army said the Americans have also maintained an "active presence" there and been responsible for "directing and managing" the Israeli genocide in the besieged territory. Mousavi said the US and Israel, in defiance of global condemnations, continue to commit crimes and add to their "black record," but the final victory is for Palestinians no matter how the ongoing war ends. Underlining that the Israeli regime is on the decline and on the path to destruction, the commander said, "The supporters of Zionists must ... return the occupied territories to their main owners; Of course, in doing so, putting criminals on trial is the minimum price that the criminal Americans and Zionists have to pay."

IRAN NEWS



Navy Commander in Baku for Military Cooperation

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iranian Navy Commander Rear Admiral Shahram Irani has travelled to Baku for talks on military cooperation. The Iranian commander arrived in Baku on Monday at the head of a delegation. In a phone conversation between the foreign ministers of Iran and Azerbaijan on November 18, the Azerbaijani side underscored the need for dialogue and regional mechanisms without the intervention of trans-regional countries. The Iranian foreign minister, for his part, said that the more the two countries work on regional cooperation formats, the more benefits will go to the regional partners of both nations. The two foreign ministers expressed satisfaction with the growing relations between Iran and Baku, urging the need for more joint efforts in the regional and international arenas.

Bangladesh Keen on Expanding Trade Ties with Iran



TEHRAN (Tasnim) - Bangladesh's Ambassador to Iran Manjurul Karim Khan Chowdhury said that his country is ready to expand trade and economic relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran. The envoy pointed to the friendly ties between Iran and Bangladesh

and said the two countries have longstanding historical and cultural commonalities that can help enhance the level of bilateral relations in all fields. He also referred to the unilateral US sanctions imposed against Iran, which have created many problems for economic activists, and said the private sector of Iran has successfully managed to bypass sanctions. Both the Iranian and Bangladeshi governments have always tried to neutralize US sanctions imposed against Iran in order to further expand their trade and economic relations, he said, adding that Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) play a leading role in spurring economic ties between the two countries.



Iran, Cuba Inked 25 Agreements Within Two Years

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Health Minister Bahram Einollahi said Tuesday that Iran and Cuba have signed 25 cooperation agreements in the last year and a half, expressing hopes for further expansion of ties with the Latin American country. Einollahi said very good agreements were inked between Iran and Cuba in the last two years in various fields as the two countries are witnessing the development of their bilateral relations. "These agreements are related to the ministries of welfare, health, agriculture, and communication," he said. "So far, 25 cooperation documents have been signed in the last year and a half, which is a record." He explained that 13 cooperation agreements were signed in the joint Iran-Cuba Commission early this year, 6 agreements were signed in Havana during President

Ebrahim Raisi's visit a few months ago, and 6 more agreements were signed on Monday during a meeting between the presidents and ministers of the two countries. Elsewhere in his remarks, Einollahi described the political positions of Iran and Cuba as "very close" to each other, especially in condemning the barbaric attacks of the Zionist regime on the defenseless people of Gaza. The two countries also share common positions in international organizations, he added. Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel arrived in Tehran on Monday and had a meeting with President Raisi. During his visit, the two countries signed seven memoranda of understanding on cooperation in science and technology, health, agriculture, energy and mining, communications, and medicine fields.

Iran Welcomes Armenia's Step Towards Peace and Security



YEREVAN (Dispatches) - welcomes the latest steps made by the Armenian government for peace and security, Ambassador of Iran to Armenia Mehdi Sobhani has said. "We support Armenia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, we support lasting and sustainable peace in the region," the Iranian Ambassador said at a forum entitled New Regional Reality and "The Crossroads of Peace" in the Yerevan dialogue series. He said that Armenia and Iran have the shortest common border which has always been a border of friendship and peace. Ambassador Sobhani mentioned the growing trade between the two countries, and that turnover is already reaching 1 billion dollars. "Our two countries have mutually beneficial agreements in infrastructure development and energy. We are trying to reveal untapped potential for the benefit of the relations between the two countries. Undoubtedly, the opening of transit infrastructures and connection routes will contribute not only to the development of the economic and trade relations between the two countries, but will pave the way for regional participation. We believe that connection corridors from India up to the Chabahar Port, Armenia and the Black Sea, will provide a reliable road for shipping goods to the north, to Europe. The development of this route will safeguard our countries from foreign harm. In this context, we attach importance to India's role in the development of the Chabahar Port, and we welcome the Armenian participation in this work. I believe that if the countries have more connection routes, they will acquire a more significant role in the international arena. This is the new concept of power," the Ambassador said.



Iran Has No Limits to Expand Ties With Neighbors

TEHRAN (MNA) - The Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Ali-Akbar Ahmadian says that there are no limits for the Islamic Republic of Iran to expand relations with its neighboring countries. Ahmadian made the remarks in a meeting with Mohsen Al-Mandalawi, First Deputy Speaker of the Iraqi Parliament, in Tehran on Monday evening. Announcing the readiness of the Islamic Republic of Iran to comprehensively expand relations with Iraq, especially in the field of advanced technologies, the Iranian top security official called for boosting economic and trade relations between Tehran and Baghdad. Elsewhere in his remarks, Ahmadian hailed the position of Iraq in condemning the Zionist regime's crimes. Appreciating the efforts of the Iraqi side in fighting against terrorism, he added that the implementation of the recent security deal between Tehran and Iraq can contribute to regional stability and security. Al-Mandalawi, for his part, stressed that the parliament and the government of Iraq will try to remove the commercial, financial and economic obstacles between the two countries while fully preparing to further expand relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Tehran, Muscat Discussing PTA

TEHRAN - The head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) has said Tehran and Muscat are determined to increase the volume of trade relations and have started negotiations to sign a preferential trade agreement in the near future. Making the remarks in an expert meeting on the preparation of the 20th Iran-Oman Joint Economic Committee meeting, Mehdi Zeyghami expressed hope that the holding of this meeting will be the basis for the growth and expansion of business relations between the two countries, the TPO portal reported. Referring to his recent visit to Oman along with Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Abbas Aliabadi, the official noted that such business trips will lead to the development of economic relations and the achievement of the trade goals planned by the leaders of the two countries. Aiming to expand economic ties, Iran and Oman signed four cooperation documents in various areas including energy, investment, and free zones during the official visit of Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tariq al-Said to Tehran in late May. The document on the energy sector was signed by Iran's Oil Minister Javad Oji and Omani Minister of Energy and Minerals Salim bin Nasser al-Aufi. The two countries also signed three other documents to cooperate in the economic, investment, and free zones sectors. Iranian Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Ehsan Khandouzi

and Secretary of Iran's Free Zones High Council Hojatollah Abdolmaleki signed the mentioned documents with the ministers of economy and commerce of Oman. Meanwhile, in mid-July, the former head of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) called for promoting joint investment between the private sectors of Iran and Oman in order to boost the trade exchanges between the two countries. Hossein Selahvarzi made the remarks in a meeting with Omani Ambassador to Tehran Ibrahim bin Ahmed Almuaini. During the meeting, Selahvarzi expressed the readiness of the private sectors of Iran and Oman for joint investments, as well as, using transit capacities of the two countries for re-exports if the necessary infrastructure is provided by the governments of the two countries. Referring to the 40 percent growth of trade exchanges between the two countries in the previous year, the official said: "Although this positive trend is significant, the ICCIMA is trying to increase the volume of exchanges as much as possible." Also, in early May, a Joint Iran-Oman Business Forum was held at the place of ICCIMA in a bid to boost trade exchange between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Sultanate of Oman. The forum aimed at consolidating bilateral business relations, conducting strategic partnerships to augment the volume of investments and business activity, and accessing new economic fields.

MIDRO Ready to Export Mining Technology to Eurasia



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - The Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization is ready to export mining technology to Eurasian countries. Acquiring cutting-edge mining technology and indigenizing the technology is a priority, IMIDRO chairman Mohammad-Reza Movassaghinia, said. He made the remarks on the sidelines of a visit to the second exclusive exhibition of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) in Tehran. "In this line, we will be able to take great steps to export technical and engineering services through attaining modern technologies and exporting the technologies to the Persian Gulf countries." The second EAEU exclusive exhibition is going to wrap up on December 7. Iran and EAEU reached a preferential trade agreement in 2018 based on which about 862 commodity items are currently subject to preferential tariffs. The agreement came into effect on October 27, 2019.

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK



13th Int'l Smart Grid Conference Kicks Off in Tehran

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - The 13th edition of the International Smart Grid Conference with a focus on "Cyber Security" was inaugurated at the Niroo Research Institute (NRI) in Tehran on Tuesday. This conference will be held for two days with the aim of examining the world's most modern updates and achievements in the field of the power networks. Making efforts to smart power networks is one of the main topics of the conference. A technological event in the electricity industry will be held on the sidelines of the conference. The development of the technological ecosystems of the electricity industry has been cited as one of the main objectives of the conference.

Niger's Junta Ends Security Agreements With EU

NIAMEY (Dispatches) - Niger's junta on Monday scrapped two key military agreements that the West African nation signed with the European Union to help fight the violence in Africa's Sahel region as the country's army leaders and a senior Russian defence official discussed military cooperation. Before the coup that deposed the country's president, Mohamed Bazoum, Niger had been the West and Europe's last major security partner in the Sahel, the vast region south of the Sahara Desert that Islamic extremist groups have turned into the global terror hot spot. In a memo, Niger's foreign affairs ministry said the government has decided to "withdraw the privileges and immunities granted" under the EU Military Partnership Mission in Niger that was launched in February and consequently "has no legal obligation" related to that partnership.



Britain Announces Stricter Visa Measures to Reduce Net Migration



LONDON (Dispatches) - Britain announced plans to slash the number of migrants arriving by legal routes, raising the minimum salary they must earn in a skilled job by a third, amid pressure on Prime Minister Rishi Sunak to tackle record net migration figures. High levels of legal migration have dominated Britain's political landscape for more than a decade and were a key factor in the 2016 vote to leave the European Union. Sunak has promised to gain more control after lawmakers in his Conservative Party criticised his record ahead of an election expected next year, with the opposition Labour Party far ahead in opinion polls. But businesses and trade unions both attacked the measures as counterproductive and challenging for the private sector and state-run health service, both dogged by labour shortages. Figures last month showed annual net migration to the United Kingdom hit a record of 745,000 in 2022 and has stayed at high levels since, with many migrants now coming from places like India, Nigeria and China instead of the EU. Home Secretary (interior minister) James Cleverly said the new measures could reduce that number by 300,000. "Immigration is too high. Today we're taking radical action to bring it down," said Sunak, who is also trying to deport migrants who arrive illegally to Rwanda. Cleverly said the government would raise the minimum salary threshold for foreign skilled workers to 38,700 pounds (\$48,900), from its current level of 26,200 pounds, though health and social workers would be exempt. Other measures included stopping foreign health workers bringing in family members on their visas, increasing a surcharge migrants have to pay to use the health service by 66%, and raising the minimum income for family visas. The measures could spark new disputes with business owners who have struggled to hire workers in recent years given Britain's persistently tight labour market and the end of free movement from the EU since Britain's 2020 exit from the bloc. In October, the government's independent migration adviser recommended abolishing the so-called shortage occupations list, one of the main routes for businesses to hire migrant workers in sectors where there are severe staff shortages. Cleverly said the government would end the current system that lets employers pay migrants only 80% of the going rate to do jobs where there is a worker shortage, and that the list of shortage occupations would be reviewed. "We will stop immigration undercutting the salary of British workers," Cleverly told lawmakers. "We will create a new immigration salary list with a reduced number of occupations." However, some studies have shown foreign workers have little or no impact on overall wage or employment levels, and Britain's acute shortage of candidates to fill vacancies remains a problem for many company bosses.

World May Pass 1.5C Global Warming Threshold in 7 Years



LONDON (Dispatches) - The world may cross the crucial 1.5C global warming threshold in seven years as fossil fuel CO2 emissions continue to rise, scientists warned Tuesday, urging countries at the COP28 talks to "act now" on coal, oil and gas pollution. Battle lines are being drawn over the future of fossil fuels at the UN climate summit in Dubai, with big polluters trying to see off calls for an agreement to phase out the carbon-intensive energy responsible for most of human-caused greenhouse gas. Fossil fuel CO2 pollution rose 1.1 percent last year, according to an international consortium of climate scientists in their annual Global Carbon Project assessment, with surging emissions in China and India - now the world's first and third biggest emitters. They estimated that there is a 50 percent chance warming will exceed the Paris deal's goal of 1.5 degrees Celsius over multiple years by around 2030, although they noted uncertainties around warming from non-CO2 greenhouse gases. "It is getting more and more urgent," lead author Pierre Friedlingstein, of Exeter University's Global Systems Institute, told reporters. "The time between now and 1.5 degrees is shrinking massively, so to keep a chance to stay below 1.5C, or very close to 1.5C, we need to act now." The landmark 2015 Paris Agreement saw countries commit to limiting temperature rise to well below 2C above the pre-industrial era and preferably 1.5C. The more ambitious 1.5C goal has since taken on greater urgency as evidence emerges that warming beyond this could trigger dangerous and irreversible tipping points. To keep to that limit, the UN's IPCC climate science panel has said CO2 emissions need to be halved this decade. That is becoming a more challenging task as emissions continue to rise, the Global Carbon Project found. Glen Peters, a senior researcher at the CICERO Center for International Climate Research, said carbon dioxide emissions are now six percent higher than when countries signed the Paris deal. "Things are going in the wrong direction," he said. That is despite a promising surge in renewable energy, a key issue at the Dubai climate talks where more than 100 countries have signed a call to triple renewable capacity this decade. "Solar wind, electric vehicles, batteries, they're all growing rapidly, which is great. But that is only half the story," he said. "The other half is reducing fossil fuel emissions. And we're simply not doing enough." The research found fossil fuels accounted for 36.8 billion tonnes of a total of 40.9 billion tonnes of CO2 estimated to be emitted this year. Several major polluters have clocked falling CO2 emissions this year - including a three percent decrease in the United States and a 7.4 percent drop across the European Union. But China, which accounts for almost a third of global emissions, is expected to see a four percent rise in fossil fuel CO2 this year, the research found, with increases in coal, oil and gas as the country continues to rebound from its Covid-19 lockdowns. Meanwhile, a rise in CO2 emissions of more than eight percent in India means the country has now overtaken the EU as the third-biggest fossil fuel emitter, scientists said. In both India and China increasing demand for power is outstripping a significant rollout of renewables, said Peters. Emissions from aviation rose by 28 percent this year as it rebounded from pandemic-era lows. The research was published in the journal Earth System Science Data. The Earth has already warmed some 1.2C, unleashing ferocious heatwaves, wildfires, floods and storms. Temperatures this year have surged to the highest in recorded history and the UN's World Meteorological Organization has said 2023 was already around 1.4C above the pre-industrial baseline by October. Going above 1.5C for a single year would not breach the Paris deal, however, which is measured over decades.



Hamas Fighters Battle Israeli Troops in Southern Gaza

GAZA STRIP (Dispatches) - Israeli troops battled Hamas militants in the southern Gaza Strip on Tuesday after expanding their offensive deeper into the besieged territory, with warnings that an "even more hellish scenario" was unfolding for trapped civilians. Israel had initially focused its offensive on the north of the territory, but the army is now also dropping leaflets on parts of the south, telling Palestinian civilians there to flee to other areas. Israeli tanks, armored personnel carriers and bulldozers were seen on Monday near the southern Gaza city of Khan Yunis, which is packed with civilians who fled their homes further north in the territory earlier in the war, witnesses told AFP. The army said Monday it was taking "aggressive" action against "Hamas and other terrorist organizations" in Khan Yunis, warning that the main road in the north and east of the city "constitutes a battlefield". Hamas claimed via Telegram its militants had targeted two personnel carriers and a tank near Khan Yunis. Rocket salvos were again fired from Gaza towards Israeli territory. As the war spreads, international aid organizations have warned that civilians in the densely populated territory are running out of places to flee to. "Nowhere is safe in Gaza and there is nowhere left to go," said Lynn Hastings, UN humanitarian coordinator for the Palestinian territories. "If possible, an even more hellish scenario is about to unfold, one in which humanitarian operations may not be able to respond," Hastings said in a statement. Israel declared war on Hamas after the militant group's October 7 attacks that killed 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and which saw around 240 hostages taken, according to Israeli authorities. In retaliation for the worst attack in its history, Israel has vowed to eradicate Hamas and secure the release of all the hostages held in Gaza. The Hamas-run health ministry in Gaza says the war has killed nearly

15,900 people in the territory, around 70 percent of them women and children. In the city of Rafah near the Egyptian border, resident Abu Jahar al-Hajj said an air strike near his home felt "like an earthquake". "Pieces of concrete started falling on us," he said. In Deir al-Balah further to the north, Walaa Abu Libda found shelter at a hospital, but said her four-year-old daughter remained trapped under rubble. "I don't know if she is dead or alive," said Libda, one of an estimated 1.8 million people displaced in Gaza - roughly three-quarters of the population, according to UN figures. The Israeli army on Tuesday denied telling the World Health Organization to empty an aid warehouse in southern Gaza within 24 hours before ground operations in the area render it unusable. On Monday, WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus wrote on X that his organisation had received a notification from the military "that we should remove our supplies from our medical warehouse in southern Gaza within 24 hours". Key ally the United States has cautioned Israel to do more to avert civilian casualties as operations shift to the south. Speaking on condition of anonymity, senior Israeli military officials admitted that around two civilians have been killed for every dead Hamas fighter in the Gaza Strip. To that end, the officials said, the army is using high-tech mapping software to track population movements inside the Gaza Strip and issue evacuation orders. The system incorporates mobile phone and other signals, aerial surveillance and word from local sources, as well as AI, to maintain a constantly updating map showing population concentrations across the territory. But the UN humanitarian office OCHA has questioned the usefulness of such a tool in an area where access to telecommunications and electricity is sporadic.



White House Warns Putin Could Win If Ukraine Aid Dries Up

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The White House issued a dire warning Monday that U.S. aid for Ukraine will run out by the end of the year, adding that Russian President Vladimir Putin could win the war if Congress fails to agree fresh funding. President Joe Biden's budget director, Shalanda Young, said in a blunt letter to Republican House Speaker Mike Johnson that if military assistance dries up it would "kneecap" Kyiv's fight against the Russian invasion. Democrat Biden asked Congress in October for a huge \$106 billion national security package including military assistance for Ukraine and for Israel's war against Hamas, but the funding has been mired in divisions on Capitol Hill. "There is no magical pot of funding available to meet this moment. We are out of money - and nearly out of time," wrote Young. "Cutting off the flow of U.S. weapons and equipment will kneecap Ukraine on the battlefield, not only putting at risk the gains Ukraine has made, but increasing the likelihood of Russian military victories." National Security Advisory Jake Sullivan went further, suggesting that voting against aid for Ukraine was effectively voting to make it easier for Russia to succeed. "Congress has to decide whether to continue to support the fight for freedom in Ukraine... or whether Congress will ignore the lessons we've learned from history and let Putin prevail," Sullivan told reporters at the White House. Ukraine has been desperately pushing for more western aid as Russian forces step up attacks in the winter after Kyiv's counteroffensive failed over the summer. But Congress has been paralyzed for months by Republican infighting, with hard-right lawmakers particularly opposing any further assistance for Kyiv as the war drags into its third year. Speaker Johnson, who took office in October after his predecessor was ousted in a right-wing coup, gave the White House letter a cool response. "The Biden administration has failed to substantively address any of my conference's

legitimate concerns about the lack of a clear strategy in Ukraine," Johnson said on X, formerly Twitter, on Monday. Johnson also repeated the Republicans' insistence on tying any Ukraine aid to changes in US policy on the southern border with Mexico, as the number of migrant arrivals surges. Casting Putin and Hamas as twin forces trying to "annihilate" neighboring democracies, Biden has sought to tie \$61 billion for Ukraine with \$14 billion for Israel in the aid package he demanded in October, along with funding for the border. Democratic US Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said the "judgment of history will be harsh indeed" if Congress failed to act. He added that the issue was not genuine but that Republicans had "injected partisan and extreme immigration measures into the debate." "You can bet Vladimir Putin is watching. Hamas is watching. Iran, President Xi, North Korea -- all our adversaries, they are watching closely." Ukraine's frontline has largely remained static for the last year despite a massive push by Ukrainian forces this summer with Western military hardware. The United States has already allocated \$111 billion for Ukraine since Russia invaded in February 2022, including \$67 billion for military procurement, Young said. European countries are also facing challenges in securing funding for Ukraine as fatigue with the war sets in. Fears are growing in Washington that Putin may be content to sit out the situation until next year's US presidential election, a probable replay of 2020's contest between Biden and Donald Trump. Polls show a growing number of voters saying the United States is doing too much to help Kyiv. "I think my expectation is that Putin won't make peace or a meaningful peace before he sees the result of our election," a senior State Department official told reporters last week. The official would not say why but Moscow is widely seen as favoring a return by Trump, who has praised the Russian leader and questioned U.S. aid for Ukraine.



Nigerian Army Drone Strike Error Kills Civilians

KANO (Dispatches) - An army drone strike accidentally hit a village in northwestern Nigeria killing dozens of civilians celebrating a Muslim festival, local authorities, the military and residents said. Nigeria's armed forces often rely on air strikes in their battle against so-called bandit militias in the northwest and northeast of the country where jihadists have been waging a 14-year conflict. The army did not provide details or a death toll for the strike late Sunday in Tudun Biri village, Kaduna State, but residents said dozens were killed and wounded. Local officials also reported fatalities. "Muslim faithful observing Maulud were mistakenly killed and many others injured following a military drone attack targeting terrorists and bandits," Kaduna State governor Uba Sani said, ordering an investigation. "We buried 85 people that were killed in the bomb attack," said resident Idris Dahiru, whose relatives were among the dead. He said more than 60 injured people were being treated in hospital. "I was inside the house when the first bomb was dropped... We rushed to the scene to help those affected and then a second bomb was dropped," he added. "My aunt, my brother's wife and her six children, wives of my four brothers were among the dead. My elder brother's family are all dead, except his infant child who survived." Dozens of wounded were taken to a teaching hospital in the state capital Kaduna, local state security commissioner Samuel Arunwan said following a meeting with army officials and community leaders. He said the attack left "several citizens dead and others injured" but did not provide a toll. According to the army, it was a routine mission against militants that "inadvertently affected members of the community," he said. Resident Husseini Ibrahim told AFP late on Monday: "I lost 13 members of my immediate family among the 85 that were killed." They included my children and those of my brothers, seven boys and six girls. We buried the victims today. "Many of the victims were women and children, resident Hassan Ma'aruf told AFP by telephone, sharing images he said showed the bodies.

Guyana Vigilant as Venezuela Vows to Reclaim Disputed Region

CARACAS (Dispatches) - Venezuela vowed Monday to "reclaim" what it considers its right to a disputed oil-rich region bordering Guyana, which said it would remain "vigilant" although it did not expect an imminent invasion. President Nicolas Maduro said he had popular backing for laying claim to the region known as Essequibo following an overwhelming "yes" vote in a controversial referendum. The outcome, he said, was a "powerful, vital boost," to Venezuela's claim to a region which Guyana has administered for over a century and makes up more than two-thirds of its territory. "Now we are going to reclaim the historic rights of Venezuela in the Essequiba Guiana (as it is called in Venezuela), now we are going to do justice," Maduro said at a press conference in Caracas with members of the National Electoral Council (CNE). Guyana, for its part, said it would remain "vigilant." "We have to always remain vigilant. Of course, our monitoring must be always at a high level. President Maduro, while we don't believe he will order an invasion... can do something that can be very unpredictable," Foreign Minister Hugh Todd told AFP. Caracas said more than half of eligible Venezuelan voters had taken part in the referendum that yielded an overwhelming "yes" outcome, with more than 95 percent in favor. Venezuela has for decades laid claim to Essequibo, which is home to 125,000 of Guyana's 800,000 citizens. Litigation is pending before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague over where the borders should lie. Guyana, a former British

and Dutch colony, insists the frontiers were determined by an arbitration panel in 1899. But Venezuela - which does not recognize the ICJ's jurisdiction in the matter - claims the Essequibo River to the region's east forms a natural border and had historically been recognized as such. The dispute has intensified since ExxonMobil discovered oil in Essequibo in 2015. Caracas called Sunday's referendum after Georgetown started auctioning off oil blocks in Essequibo in August. Voters were asked to respond to five questions in the referendum, including whether Venezuela should reject the 1899 arbitration decision as well as the ICJ's jurisdiction. They were also asked whether Venezuelan citizenship should be granted to the people - currently Guyanese - of a new "Guyana Essequiba State." There was a massive campaign for Venezuelans to vote "yes," but none against the measure which Guyana says posed an "existential" threat to itself. More than 10.4 million out of 20.7 million eligible voters cast their ballots, CNE president Elvis Amoroso said Monday, seeking to lay to rest initial doubts about the turnout. The initial tally had been met with suspicion by opposition politicians and analysts, who said it appeared voters' responses to each of five questions on the referendum may have been counted as separate ballots cast. The figure of 10.4 million announced Monday by Amoroso is the highest turnout ever in a Venezuelan election. The referendum raised fears in Guyana, and further afield, about Venezuela's intentions for the contested territory.



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Premier League Announces Record \$8.45b Domestic TV Deal

LONDON (Dispatches) - The Premier League announced on Monday it had agreed a record £6.7 billion (\$8.45 billion) domestic television rights deal for a four-year period starting from the 2025/26 season. The current deal is reported to be worth around £5 billion over a three-year cycle and covers 200 matches per season. The English top flight hailed the agreements shared between different broadcasters as the "largest sports media rights deals ever concluded in the UK". Sky Sports and TNT Sports have retained their rights to show live matches, with Amazon, currently showing 20 matches per season, not part of the next cycle. Sky will screen a minimum of 215 live matches per season while TNT will broadcast 52. BBC Sport will continue to broadcast highlights via its Match of the Day programme. A Saturday afternoon blackout, designed to protect attendances in the lower leagues, will remain but for the first time all matches outside of those scheduled for 3:00 pm on Saturday will be screened live. The Premier League boasted of a four percent increase in live rights value compared with the previous process but the broadcasters will be paying significantly less per game because they will be showing more matches each season. "The outcome of this process underlines the strength of the Premier League," said the Premier League's chief executive, Richard Masters. "It is testament

to our clubs, players and managers who continue to deliver the world's most competitive football in full stadiums, and to supporters, who create an unrivalled atmosphere every week." He added: "As longstanding and valued partners, Sky Sports and TNT Sports are renowned for consistently delivering world-class coverage and programming. "We have enjoyed record audiences and attendances in recent seasons, and we know that their continued innovation will drive more people to watch and follow the Premier League." The Premier League said the new deal would provide financial certainty for clubs throughout professional football until at least 2029. It is the first Premier League tender process since 2018 as the current deal was rolled over in 2021 for an extra three years due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. The deal will maintain the huge financial advantage Premier League clubs enjoy over their European competitors thanks to far more lucrative domestic and international TV rights deals. International rights for the English top flight overtook the value of domestic rights for the first time last year and are estimated to bring in £5.3 billion between 2022 and 2025. The Premier League accounted for 11 out of the top 20 clubs in this year's Deloitte Football Money League, with champions Manchester City in top spot.

Unbeaten Al Hilal Finish Atop Asian Champions League Group



RIYADH (Dispatches) - Four-time winners Al Hilal ended their Asian Champions League group campaign unbeaten thanks to a 2-1 home victory against Iran's Nassaji Mazandaran on Monday. The Saudi side, runners-up last year, had already qualified for the last 16 as Group D winners, allowing manager Jorge Jesus the luxury of starting in-form striker Aleksandar Mitrovic and attacking midfielder Sergej Milinkovic-Savic on the bench. Ruben Neves, another summer signing, was not part of the squad, with Brazil superstar Neymar out for the majority of the season after rupturing the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) and meniscus in his left knee on international duty in October. However, Al Hilal needed only four minutes to take the lead against Nassaji Mazandaran at the Prince Faisal bin Fahd Stadium, when winger Michael finished Mohammed Al Breik's low cross at the back post. Al Hilal, who replaced Morocco goalkeeper Yassine Bounou at half-time, doubled their advantage on 54 minutes courtesy of a clever half volley from reigning Asian Player of the Year Salem Al Dawsari. Mitrovic and Milinkovic-Savic were introduced on the hour mark, although it was not enough to prevent Nassaji Mazandaran from pulling a goal back 13 minutes from time. Mahmoud Ghaed Rahmati halved the deficit with a thunderous volley following a clearance from Al Hilal defender Kalidou Koulibaly. In the group's other match, Uzbekistan's Navbahor booked their place in the last 16 with a 2-1 victory against Mumbai City in Pune. While Navbahor progress by finishing second, Mumbai ended their campaign with six defeats from six matches. In Group B, Uzbek side Nasaf Qarshi qualified for the knockouts by drawing 2-2 against Qatar's Al Sadd in a match that featured a goal for each team in injury-time. UAE club Sharjah, meanwhile, dropped to third and thus exit the tournament after they let slip the lead to lose 2-1 to Jordan's Al Faisaly in Amman. Elsewhere, Iraq's Air Force Club condemned Uzbekistan's AGMK to a sixth successive Group C defeat with a 3-2 victory in Erbil. Both teams went into the match without any chance of advancing to the knockout rounds.

Bellingham Wins the Golden Boy Award

MADRID (Dispatches) - There is no doubt that Jude Bellingham is already at the top of the ladder, the one that only football fans grant to footballers with their admiration, something that the Englishman has achieved four months after arriving at Real Madrid. His presence in Turin to collect the Golden Boy award is proof of that. He has become a reference point and the importance he has assumed is clear to see. It is safe to say that the award for the best U21 in the world doesn't fully describe his achievements. Bellingham came first in the Golden Boy voting with 485 votes, taking the top spot with 97 percent of the votes cast by the journalists nominated for the award. Only five journalists did not vote for him in first place. MARCA is part of the jury that awards the prize. The votes of our newspaper went to Jude Bellingham, Xavi Simons, Musiala, Lamine Yamal and the Portuguese Antonio Silva. On this occasion, the podium was completed by Alejandro Balde and Musiala. The midfielder arrived at the OGR hall in Turin 10 minutes before the start of the gala organized by the Tuttosport newspaper. His presence brought everything that was happening to a standstill. The best player in the 2023/24 La Liga EA Sports appeared, as rock stars do, surrounded by up to eight members of security, as many club employees and his parents. He exudes charm, but he does so because of his football and that intangible that he transmits and that captivates everyone, something that was evident from the very moment he landed in the Italian city. Massimo Franchi, creator of the Golden Boy, took to the stage to present the Golden Boy award to Jude Bellingham, who did not hide his joy. "Thank you very much for the Golden Boy. I'm very happy, very happy to be able to take this award," said the Englishman. "I've been very lucky to be able to play with some great players. It's great to hear the world's great reactions to me. To be the best player in the world you don't just have to play well and score goals, you have to help the team as well. Thank you very much. I don't think I'm the best. It's an honor to be talked about for the Ballon d'Or. I'm in the best team in the world. We play to win every game. It's a pleasure to play for Real Madrid. The pressure is strong both in the national team and in the team, all the players I play with are top players and I have a very big list of idols. A big influence for me was Wayne Rooney." The former Borussia Dortmund man won two replicas of the trophy: the usual one and the one awarded by the newspaper's website readers, which received three million votes. "I'm very lucky to play football. If not, I would be studying at university now. I thank my family for instilling this sport in me since I was a child. Without football, I wouldn't be the same person," he concluded.



Lakers Keep Rockets Winless on Road With 107-97 Victory



LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Anthony Davis had 27 points and 14 rebounds, and the Los Angeles Lakers beat Houston 107-97 on Saturday night, keeping the Rockets winless on the road. Austin Reaves added 18 points off the bench and LeBron James had 16 points and seven assists. Fred VanVleet scored 22 points and Alperen Sengun had 21 points and 13 rebounds for the Rockets, who dropped their third in a row overall while falling to 0-8 away from home. Houston coach Ime Udoka was ejected with 8:35 remaining in the game after picking up his second technical for jawing with James, who also got a tech. "We had some conversation and they didn't like what they heard," Udoka said, referring to the referees. The Lakers dominated the paint, 54-34, and their bench outscored Houston's reserves 33-24. Sengun scored 12 points in the third, when the Rockets outscored the Lakers 28-20 and trailed 86-72 going into the fourth. After allowing Houston to shoot 60% from the floor in the first quarter, when Davis missed his first six shots, the Lakers took over in the second. Reaves scored 15 points — his career high in a quarter — and keyed a 29-4 run, with Davis adding eight points, that put the Lakers ahead 58-40. VanVleet scored six in a row to leave Houston trailing 60-44 at the break. "That's probably one of the best quarters that we had this year, especially in the first half. We just haven't been a first-half team," James said. "It came with defending, getting out, sharing the ball, moving the ball and A.R. was special in the second." Rui Hachimura was available for the Lakers, but didn't play a week after having nose surgery. "Physically he's fine except for his nose," coach Darvin Ham said. James pulled off a slick 360-degree reverse layup at the end of the second. "It was a crazy shot," Davis said. "At this point in his career he's done everything that he literally just goes out and tries stuff and sees what works." Teammate Christian Wood got a tech for coming onto the floor as the Lakers bench erupted along with the crowd. "We'll take that one," James said of the tech. "Just trying to make plays and I felt like that was the best way to kind of finish that one." As James fell to the floor, he lost track of the ball. "The fans let me know that I made it and then my teammates, by them running on the floor or whatever they did down there, allowed me to see it on the Jumbotron because it stopped the play because of the technical."

Djokovic Finishes at No. 1 in the ATP Rankings for Eighth Time

LONDON (Dispatches) - Novak Djokovic earned the year-end No. 1 spot in the ATP rankings for the eighth time on Monday, adding to a record he already held. Djokovic won three of the four Grand Slam tournaments — the Australian Open in January, French Open in June and U.S. Open in September — to raise his career total to a men's record 24 and was the runner-up at the other, Wimbledon. He went 56-7 this season while leading the tour with seven titles, including at the ATP Finals last month. The 36-year-old from Serbia regained the top ranking from Carlos Alcaraz, who edged him in a five-set final at the All England Club in July. Alcaraz finished 2023 at No. 2 after the two men swapped No. 1 back-and-forth repeatedly this year. Iga Swiatek claimed the WTA's year-end No. 1 ranking for the second consecutive year by winning the WTA Finals last month. Swiatek, who won her fourth career major championship at the French Open, overtook Aryna Sabalenka, the Australian Open champion and runner-up to Coco Gauff at the U.S. Open. Gauff finished at No. 3, followed by Elena Rybakina at No. 4 and Jessica Pegula at No. 5.

Djokovic eclipsed his own mark for the oldest player to top the ATP at the end of a season; he was 34 in 2021. His eight year-end No. 1s put him two ahead of previous record-holder Pete Sampras, who did it six times. Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal each finished at No. 1 five times, as did Jimmy Connors. Daniil Medvedev closed 2023 at No. 3, followed by Jannik Sinner at a career-best No. 4, Andrey Rublev at No. 5, Stefanos Tsitsipas at No. 6, Alexander Zverev at No. 7, Holger Rune at No. 8, Hubert Hurkacz at No. 9 and Taylor Fritz at No. 10. Alcaraz and Rune are both 20, marking the first time two men that young both ended a season in the top 10 since 2000, when Marat Safin, 20, was No. 2, and Lleyton Hewitt, 19, was No. 7. There are three 19-year-olds in the top 100: No. 36 Arthur Fils, No. 71 Luca Van Assche and No. 97 Alex Michelson, an American who jumped up 504 spots after ending last year at No. 601. The United States is the country with the most men in the top 20, four: Fritz, No. 13 Tommy Paul, No. 16 Frances Tiafoe and No. 17 Ben Shelton.

