

Foreign Ministry Spokesman Nasser Kanaani Strongly Condemned the terrorist Attack on a Pakistani Army Base in the City of Dera Ismail Khan Which Killed at Least 23 People and Wounded Dozens

IRAN NEWS

Minister of Tourism Said the Government Has Decided to Open the Country's Doors to the World and This Is a Courageous Decision and Unilateral Cancellation of Visas Is One of Important Decisions of It

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Enemies Failed to Hinder Iran's Nuclear Progress Through Sanctions



TEHRAN - The enemies have failed to hinder the progress of Iran's peaceful nuclear energy program through illegal sanctions, says the head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI). Mohammad Eslami made the remarks on Wednesday during a ceremony at Mobarakeh Steel Company in Isfahan Province, where two home-grown technologies were unveiled. He said that the AEOI's "self-confidence" led it to take the path of progress and render problems such as sanctions and terror ineffective. "The AEOI has a strategic task to build power for the country. Of course, the enemies tried to prevent Iran's progress through sanctions, but they failed," he added. Eslami also said the AEOI plans to generate 20,000 kilowatts of nuclear power by 2041. The Islamic Republic, he emphasized, pursues a completely peaceful nuclear goal based on international regulations and the principles of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Eslami further said that his agency has managed to produce precise tools that are being used in 150 steel companies and industries, noting that the country has become capable of exporting these tools. Over the past years, Iran has recorded many nuclear achievements in defiance of US sanctions as well as hurdles created by the West. Iran has been closely cooperating with the IAEA as a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The Islamic Republic showed to the world the peaceful nature of its nuclear program by signing the 2015 nuclear agreement, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), with world powers.

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK



Israel's Treatment of Palestinian Captives Reminiscent of Daesh

TEHRAN - Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian says the way the Israeli regime treated a group of Palestinians it arrested earlier this week in Gaza is reminiscent of the terrorist acts carried out by the Daesh group in Iraq and Syria in recent years. "The inhumane conduct of the Zionist regime vis-à-vis Palestinian citizens held captive in the Gaza Strip is an example of the Daesh-like nature of this regime," said Amir-Abdollahian during a high-profile United Nations meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, on Tuesday. The comments come days after videos released on the internet showed dozens of Palestinians being stripped and abused by Israeli soldiers in a camp in northern Gaza. The detained Palestinians, among them journalists, were forced to kneel on the ground while being searched and questioned by the Israeli guards. Israeli regime authorities first denied the authenticity of the video but later admitted they had wrongly arrested many of those people on suspicion of being members of the Palestinian resistance group Hamas. Amir-Abdollahian said during the UN meeting in Geneva, which was attended by top diplomats from the West Asia region, that there was no doubt that the Israeli actions in Gaza in the past two months were blatant examples of war crimes and genocide. He warned that the conflict would spread to other parts of the region if there is no immediate action to halt "the savage attacks by the apartheid regime of Israel" towards the people in Gaza. Nearly 18,500 people have been killed in Gaza as a result of the Israeli attacks that started on October 7, the day on which Hamas launched a major operation into the occupied territories near Gaza, killing some 1,200 Israeli settlers and military forces.

U.S. Enables Israel's Genocide by Opposing Gaza Truce



TEHRAN (PresTV) - Iran's permanent representative to the United Nations says the United States' opposition to a humanitarian ceasefire in the Gaza Strip enables Israel to continue the genocide of civilians in the blockaded Palestinian territory. Amir Saeid Iravani made the remarks after the 193-member UN General Assembly overwhelmingly voted in favor of a resolution calling for an immediate humanitarian truce in Gaza. A thumping 153 member states backed the document, with only 10, including the US, voting against, and 23 abstaining. An almost identically-worded resolution proposed at the UN Security Council on Friday was vetoed by the US, a staunch ally of Israel. Referring to the United States, Iravani said the permanent member of the Security Council is "misusing its unequal authority of veto power" and has decided to "stand with the Israeli criminal regime, and materially enable this regime in its ongoing massacre against civilians in Gaza" in clear disregard for the united will of the international community. "The United States is blatantly opposing a ceasefire, which means prescribing war, violence and eventually more death for children and women in Gaza," he added. Iravani also noted that Tehran had voted for the resolution given the urgency of the situation and the strong need to address the dire humanitarian conditions in Palestine. The occupying regime, said the Iranian envoy, has deliberately pursued and perpetrated actions that entail war crimes in defiance of global objections.

Saudi Arabia Says Shares View With Iran on Gaza Crisis



TEHRAN (Tasnim) - The foreign minister of Saudi Arabia said the kingdom's stance on the crisis in Gaza is identical with that of Iran, calling for constant collective efforts to end the Israeli onslaught against Palestinians. Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and his Saudi counterpart Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud held a meeting on the sidelines of the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) in Geneva on Wednesday. The two senior diplomats discussed a range of bilateral, regional and international issues in the meeting, particularly ways to end the Zionist regime's strikes on Gaza. Bin Farhan said Saudi Arabia shares views with Iran on the need to support the Palestinian nation, establish an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, and deliver humanitarian aid to the besieged enclave. Lauding the growing relations between Riyadh and Tehran that are "on the right track", the Saudi minister said his country welcomes the expansion of political and economic cooperation with Iran. He also hailed the cooperation agreements between the two nations as a strong point, calling for the implementation of the deals. For his part, Amir-Abdollahian appreciated Saudi Arabia for hosting a recent extraordinary meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) about the Gaza crisis. Describing Iran and Saudi Arabia as two major and influential countries in the region and lauding the enhancement of their political and economic relations, the Iranian foreign minister said, "Iran is prepared to strengthen relations between the two countries in various fields."

Iran's Export Focuses on Knowledge Based Companies



TEHRAN (IP) - Stating that Iran will become a knowledge-based export country, the head of Trade Development Organization said: changing the direction of the country's trade by holding the 6th exhibition of Iran's export capabilities "Iran Expo" is the goal of the government. Mehdi Zeighami stated that the fifth exhibition of Iran's export capabilities was a big step in the direction of developing the country's supply of non-oil products and expanding trade relations with the world. He stated that the focus of this year's exhibition includes Africa, East Asia, South and Latin America and the feedback so far has been very impressive. Stating that three thousand businessmen entered Iran for the first time in the previous exhibition, he clarified: despite the lack of Tehran to accept a large number of applicants, we hope that more than four thousand businessmen will be present in the sixth edition of Iran's export capabilities exhibition. Saying that there is a good capacity in the mining, petrochemical and handicraft sectors for supply to foreign businessmen, "Zeighami noted: Many foreign officials were interested in participating in the exhibition and we were able to host 40 high-ranking delegations and 6 Let us be the minister that these numbers will be increased in the exhibition in May next year. Emphasizing that the export destinations have diversified with the holding of business events, the Deputy Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade noted: We are looking for an increase in export destinations that can provide Iran with a greater share of the markets and remove pricing restrictions. Emphasizing that Iran will become a knowledge-based export country, he said: the foundations of knowledge-based exports are being built and the result will be visible in the coming years.

Nobel Peace Committee Deviates From Proclaimed Objectives

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The Islamic Republic's Embassy in Oslo, Norway, has condemned the Nobel Peace Committee's political actions against Iran, stressing that the Committee has deviated from its "proclaimed objectives." In a statement on Tuesday, the embassy censured the Nobel Peace Committee for its "biased political show" against the Islamic Republic during the 2023 Nobel Peace Prize award ceremony on December 10. Such a political show was an indication of misuse of valuable concepts of peace and human rights for political aims and for putting pressure on other countries, said the statement. Below is the full text of the Embassy's statement released on the X, formerly known as Twitter, on December 11: Unfortunately, on Sunday, December 10, the biased political show of the Nobel Peace Committee against Iran was held in Oslo. This show demonstrates the instrumental use of valuable concepts like peace and human rights for political purposes and to impose pressure on other countries. The action of this committee in the past in awarding peace prizes to criminals such as Menachem Begin, Yitzhak Rabin, and Shimon Peres, who were responsible for killing several thousands of the oppressed and innocent Palestinians, proves the political nature of this committee. It is not far from the expectation that one day we will see the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to another criminal like Netanyahu. This ceremony was held at a time when the world has been witnessing the massacre of more than 17,000 Palestinians in Gaza by the Israeli regime with the deadly silence of so-called human rights defenders or their passive position against heinous crimes of the Israeli regime or recognition of the so-called right of defense of a child-killing regime. This situation explicitly demonstrates their hypocrisy based on double standards approach regarding human rights and peace. Meanwhile, inviting the leader of the Komala terrorist group to this ceremony shows the malign intention of the sponsors and supporters of this ceremony. Inviting the leader of a terrorist group whose hands are stained with the blood of thousands of people cannot be justified by any logic. This shows a serious contradiction between the actions and decisions of the

Nobel Peace Committee with the claimed goals for the peace. The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran strongly condemns the political action of the Nobel Peace Committee against Iran and expresses its deep regret for the deviation of this committee from its proclaimed objectives and the misuse of the concepts of human rights and peace as a tool for political purposes. The world has enough challenges and, instead of aggravating the critical conditions of the world resulting from irrational actions, indeed, honest intentions and fair approaches should be taken toward peace and stability.



IRAN NEWS



Iran to Scale Up Production of Home-Made Training Jet

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran is planning to mass produce the Yasin training jet in an attempt to enhance the efficiency of pilot training programs within the Armed Forces. Defense Minister Brigadier General Mohammad-Reza Ashtiani has said: "With full support from the Defense Ministry, this training plane will soon enter the field of training pilots in the country and will undergo mass production," Ashtiani said on Tuesday during a visit to the flight test stages of the Yasin jet. The minister pointed out that those pilots who train with Yasin will develop the skills and capability to fly next-generation fighter jets. This will address concerns within the Iranian Armed Forces about an urgent need for pilot trainees to master various classes of advanced fighter jets, he noted. Ashtiani said that the addition of Yasin to Iran's Armed Forces will help significantly reduce the duration of pilot training programs and improve the quality of the overall training cycle.

Tehran to Send Rulings Against MKO Members to Respective Countries



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran's vice-president for legal affairs says the rulings coming out of the high-profile trial of the anti-Iran terror group Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO) will be sent to the judiciaries of the respective countries. The trial of the ringleaders and members of the MKO kicked off in Tehran on Tuesday. According to the criminal court, some 104 members of the terrorist group and a legal entity (the MKO) are sued in the trial for committing inhumane crimes. Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a weekly cabinet session on Wednesday, Mohammad Dehghan explained that the parts of the decrees concerning members of the MKO that can be enforced through the legal and judicial courts of other countries will be sent to them for implementation. "There is good cooperation in this regard between the judiciary and the executive branches," he said of the trial, noting that the investigations about the crimes committed by the MKO members are ongoing. He lamented the lack of attention to handling the case during previous administrations but promised that the Raisi administration would pursue the case seriously.

Iran Non-Oil Exports to Ghana Reach \$116.3m

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iran exported non-oil commodities valued at \$116.3 million to Ghana during the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-October 22), the spokesman of Trade Development Committee of Iran's House of Industry, Mining and Trade announced. Rubollah Latifi also announced that the Islamic Republic imported products valued at \$5.9 million from Ghana in the seven-month period. Among the African trade partners of Iran in the first seven months of this year, Ghana was the first export destination of the Iranian products, and the third source of import to the country, he added. As the official has announced, Iran exported 1.205 million tons of non-oil commodities valued at \$434 million to Africa during the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year. Latifi said that the country's seven-month export to Africa fell 53 percent in value, and 33 percent in weight, year on year. The official also announced that Iran imported 38,122 tons of goods valued at \$47.434 million from Africa in the first seven months of the present year, with 21 percent drop in worth and 42 percent fall in weight, as compared to the same period of time in the past

year. Over the past 40 years, the Islamic Republic of Iran has never given up on its principled policy towards Africa due to political and cultural commonalities, despite the sanctions, pressure and disruptions of the West, and has always maintained itself alongside the people and countries of Africa. As reported, during the Iranian calendar years 1384 and 1385 (March 2005-March 2007), the relations between Iran and the African continent increased in terms of trade, but since 1386, the economic relations between Iran and Africa have decreased due to the economic crisis and cruel sanctions against Iran. Surveys show that in the past years, due to the lack of restoration of economic relations with Africa, the amount of trade with the countries of this continent has remained at the level of \$1.2 billion, but according to Mohammed-Sadeq Qanadzadeh, the director general of the Africa Department of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), facilitating the trade route with Africa is happening now and it is expected that the trade figure with this continent will reach \$10 billion in the next three years.

UN Envoy Lauds Iran's Role as World's Biggest Refugee-Hosting Nation



TEHRAN (IRNA) - The UN Resident Coordinator for the Islamic Republic of Iran has appreciated Iran's role as the biggest refugee-hosting nation in the world. Stefan Priesner said that there is a huge humanitarian program supporting the long-term hosting of Afghan refugees in Iran which the UN very much appreciates. "We have a long-standing presence in this country, since 1950, with Iran being one of the founding members of the UN," Priesner added while addressing the 5th International Conference on The Future of Peace and Human Rights in West Asia here in Tehran. The meeting was held by the Foundation of Dialogue and Solidarity of the United Nations which is a non-governmental organization based in Iran, dedicated to advancing regional and international peace, fostering tolerance, promoting dialogue, and advocating for the protection of Human Rights. "In 1950, the first UN office, the Information Centre (UNIC) was established here. Since then, there has been a long history of cooperation, with currently 18 UN entities in Iran supporting the development of the country. We are focused very much on development, as well as the humanitarian priorities of the country," he noted.

Private, Public Sectors Must Reach Common Understanding

TEHRAN (IP) - Iran's parliament speaker said: "To solve the country's problems, one cannot be blamed, but it is necessary to interact and understand each other." Speaking at the transportation and economic development conference in Tehran on the occasion of transportation day, Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, added: "Our elites must think of a solution because many issues and problems are national and cannot be ignored." Qalibaf emphasized: "There is no work that cannot be done, but there is no will or enough and right to do that work." He pointed out that several billion dollars of capital leave the country every year and said: "We must reach 8% growth and reduce inflation." He emphasized that the total cost of transportation in Iran is more than twice that of neighboring countries, adding: "We waste 3.5 million barrels of oil per day, which is more than 100 billion dollars a year. While we face sanctions, this amount will greatly contribute to economic growth." He clarified: "National and personal interest should be tied together, we should not waste the country's finance and human resources." Referring to the necessity of a detailed and operational plan, he added: "People can also help in solving our problems. Today, transportation is an independent issue, not dependent, and transportation creates great opportunities for the country."

TPO Attracts \$1.4b of Investments in Iran's Ports

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Deputy Head of Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) Jalil Eslami said his organization has managed to attract 700 trillion rials (about \$1.4 billion) of foreign and domestic investment in the country's ports. According to Eslami, 200 trillion rials (about \$400 million) of the mentioned figure is going to be invested by the country's private sector and the rest is supplied by foreign investors. Underlining the government's serious determination for the development of the country's maritime economy, the official said: "In this regard, a conference dubbed maritime-oriented development is going to be held by the PMO on the occasion of National Transportation Day on December 19." Referring to the 13th government's measures to increase the loading and unloading capacity of the country's ports, he stated: "The realization of the general policies of

maritime-oriented development requires the synergy of all executive, government and maritime bodies." While Iran is combating the U.S. unilateral sanctions on its economy, the country's ports as the major gates of exports and imports play a significant role in this battle. This role makes all-out support to ports and more development of them serious and vital. Such necessity has led the government to define projects for more development of the ports and also take some measures to encourage investment making in ports, in addition to facilitating the loading and unloading of goods, especially basic commodities, there. It is worth mentioning that Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization has defined a high number of projects to develop and improve the country's ports, as the country aims to double the capacity of its ports in a course of five years.

TPPH Able to Manufacture Over 800,000 Power Plant Parts

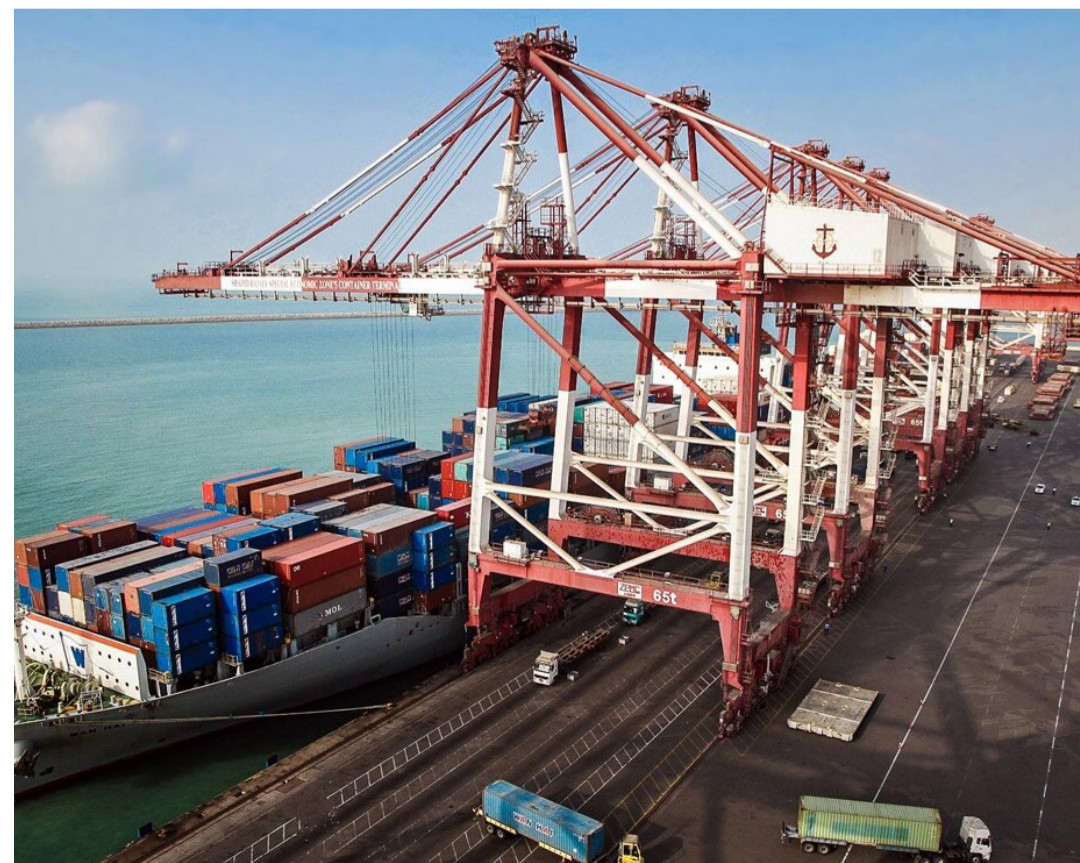


TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iran's Thermal Power Plant Holding (TPPH) has managed to achieve the knowledge for the domestic production of more than 800,000 power plant parts and equipment over the last five years, an official with the company said. "Over the past five years, more than 800,000 strategic parts have been manufactured in the thermal power industry of the country, which is the result of the training of expert employees, and we hope that this movement will continue," Naser Eskandari said. In the past, the power plant industry was highly dependent on foreign sources, but currently, 91 percent of power plant parts in the country are produced by domestic manufacturers, and this success is the result of the courage, timely decisions, and experience of experts in this field. According to the official, all of the country's power plants were 99 percent on the grid during the current year's summer peak consumption period, while the figure is at most 95 percent worldwide. Back in November, the managing director of Iran Power Plant Repairs Company (IPRC) said his company managed to achieve the knowledge for the domestic production of more than 6,300 power plant parts and equipment in the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-November 21). According to Masoud Moradi, the production of the mentioned parts saved the country over €2.6 million. "Today, specialized repairs in the power plant industry using the modern science and knowledge of equipment manufacturing is the most important necessity to completely solve the concerns of this industry," Moradi said.

Iran, EAEU to Sign FTA on December 25



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy Mehdi Safari has said that a long-awaited free trade agreement (FTA) is to be signed between Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) in Saint Petersburg, Russia, on December 25. Safari made the remarks on Tuesday while Mirhadhi Seyyedi, a senior advisor at the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPO), had said late in October that an FTA between Iran and the five-member club was expected to be signed by the end of 2023. Mohammad Sadeq Ghannadzadeh, another senior TPO official, said a month later that the FTA will then need to be ratified in the parliaments of all the parties which he believed will last until March 2024 for the agreement to come into effect. Underlining the significance of trade with EAEU, the official said that there is a potential for a \$30 billion trade with the bloc. He, however, said that reaching such a target would require preparing the necessary infrastructure and transit facilities.



UK Defense Ministry Fined for Afghan Data Breach

LONDON (Dispatches) - The UK defense ministry has been fined £350,000 (\$440,000) for disclosing personal information of 265 Afghans seeking to flee the Taliban, a data watchdog announced on Wednesday. "This deeply regrettable data breach let down those to whom our country owes so much," said UK data commissioner John Edwards. The error saw the email addresses of hundreds of people, including Afghan interpreters potentially eligible for relocation to Britain, openly included in the "to" field, rather than blind copied. It first came to light in September 2021, soon after the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, and the chaotic efforts to evacuate vulnerable people from the country. Ben Wallace, who was defence minister at the time, apologised and disclosed that one official had been suspended. Britain's Afghanistan evacuation plan has been widely criticised, with the government accused by MPs of "systemic failures of leadership, planning and preparation". Hundreds of Afghans eligible for relocation were left behind, many with their lives potentially at risk after details of staff and job applicants were left at the abandoned British embassy in Kabul.



Argentina Devalues Currency, Unveils "Shock" Measures to Avoid Hyperinflation



BUENOS AIRES (Dispatches) - Argentina devalued its currency by more than 50 percent Tuesday in a set of "shock" measures aimed at reviving a crumbling economy and tackling triple-digit inflation. The government of President Javier Milei, a libertarian who swept from obscurity to the top office vowing to chainsaw spending, also announced cuts to generous state subsidies and a halt to all new public construction projects. In a pre-recorded video message, Economy Minister Luis Caputo took pains to explain to Argentines the causes of their decades of recurrent economic crises, debt, inflation and fiscal deficits. Annual inflation is currently at 140 percent and poverty levels at 40 percent in Latin America's third-biggest economy. The government coffers are also empty, and Milei has repeatedly said: "There is no money." Caputo said the country had an "addiction" to spending to more than it earns, and had posted a fiscal deficit for 113 of the past 123 years. "If we continue as we are, we are inevitably heading towards hyperinflation," said Caputo, adding that for the first time the government would tackle the problem "at its roots." This is "precisely so that we do not have to suffer these consequences anymore, so that we do not have to suffer more inflation, so that we do not have to suffer more poverty," said Caputo. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) -- to which Argentina owes \$44 billion -- welcomed the measures. "These bold initial actions aim to significantly improve public finances in a manner that protects the most vulnerable in society and strengthen the foreign exchange regime," the IMF said in a statement. Caputo announced the exchange rate would slide to 800 pesos to the dollar, from about 391 in recent days, a devaluation of a little over 50 percent. The Argentine government has for years strictly controlled the exchange rate of the peso to the dollar, which analysts have derided as an expensive fiction. There was no immediate mention of lifting the controls which have birthed a multitude of dollar exchanges and a thriving black-market where the dollar has sold for up to three times the official rate at times. "The devaluation was much, much more than I think most people had expected," said Nicolas Saldias, a senior analyst with the Economist Intelligence Unit, adding this would have "significant impacts on inflation."



UN Demands Ceasefire in Gaza as Israel, U.S. Show Increasing Divisions

UNITED NATIONS (Dispatches) - Israel faced growing diplomatic isolation in its war against Hamas as the United Nations demanded an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza and U.S. President Joe Biden told the longtime ally its "indiscriminate" bombing of civilians was hurting international support. After dire warnings from U.N. officials about a deepening humanitarian crisis in Gaza, the 193-member U.N. General Assembly on Tuesday passed a resolution calling for a ceasefire with three-quarters of member states voting in favour. "The price of defeating Hamas cannot be the continuous suffering of all Palestinian civilians," the leaders of Canada, Australia and New Zealand said separately in a joint statement calling for a ceasefire. The Palestinian Authority welcomed the resolution and urged countries to pressure Israel to comply. A Hamas official in exile, Izzat El-Reshqi, in a statement on Telegram echoed that reaction, saying Israel should "stop its aggression, genocide, and ethnic cleansing against our people." The U.S. and Israel, which argue a ceasefire only benefits Hamas, voted against the measure along with eight other countries. Before the U.N. vote, Israel's U.N. Ambassador Gilad Erdan said: "A ceasefire means one thing and one thing only - ensuring the survival of Hamas, ensuring the survival of genocidal terrorists committed to the annihilation of Israel and Jews." Before the resolution, Biden said Israel now has support from "most of the world" including the U.S. and European Union for its fight against the Palestinian militant group Hamas. "But they're starting to lose that support by indiscriminate bombing that takes place," he told a campaign donor event in Washington. In the most public sign of division between the leaders so far, Biden also said that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu needed to change his headline government and that ultimately Israel "can't say no" to an independent Palestinian state - something that Israeli hardliners oppose. White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan will travel to Israel this week and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin will visit the Middle East next week. Biden said Sullivan will emphasize the U.S. commitment to Israel as well as the need to protect civilian lives in Gaza. Israel's assault on Gaza to root out Hamas has killed at least 18,205 Palestinians including many children and wounded nearly 50,000 since Oct. 7, according to the Gaza health ministry. The conflict has also led to starvation, displaced 85% of the population from their homes and caused

diseases to spread, according to the U.N. and Gaza health ministry. Israel launched its onslaught after a cross-border raid by Hamas fighters who killed 1,200 people and took 240 hostages in southern Israel on Oct. 7. Israel on Tuesday declared 19 of 134 people still in captivity in Gaza dead in absentia after the bodies of two hostages were recovered. The U.N. resolution is not binding but carries political weight, reflecting a global view on the war. The United States vetoed a similar call in the 15-member Security Council last week but does not have a veto in the General Assembly. Tuesday's resolution got 153 votes in favour, 10 against and 23 abstentions. In an indication of weakening support for Israel, the resolution passed by a wider margin than a similar U.N. measure in October, which got 121 votes in favour, 14 against and 44 abstentions. After pummeling north Gaza, Israel has expanded its attack to the south since a temporary truce collapsed on Dec. 1. Israeli tank shelling on Tuesday was focused on the centre of Khan Younis, southern Gaza's main city, residents said. After nightfall, Israeli air strikes on Khan Younis killed 11 Palestinians, including two children, health officials said. In the south Gaza town of Rafah, which borders Egypt and where the Israeli army this month told civilians they would be safe, Gazans said the shelling was some of the heaviest in days. Health officials said 22 people including children were killed there. Israel's military said that over the past day it hit several posts that were used to fire rockets at its territory, raided a Hamas compound where it found some 250 rockets among other weapons and struck a weapons production factory. An elderly Palestinian, Tawfik Abu Breika, said his residential block in Khan Younis was hit without warning by an Israeli air strike that brought down several buildings and caused casualties. "The world's conscience is dead, no humanity or any kind of morals," Breika told Reuters as neighbours sifted through rubble. "This is the third month that we are facing death and destruction." The Wall Street Journal and ABC reported that the Israeli military began pumping seawater into Hamas' tunnel network, where the militant group is believed to be hiding fighters and munitions and basing hit-and-run street attacks on Israeli troops. Biden said he had heard unconfirmed reports there were no hostages in the tunnels. Some hostages freed during a ceasefire reported they had been held in tunnels. The Israeli military said it was looking into the reports.

Sunak Sees Off Revolt to Win Vote on Rwanda Migrant Plan



LONDON (Dispatches) - British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak avoided defeat in parliament on an emergency bill to revive his plan to send asylum seekers to Rwanda, seeing off a revolt by dozens of his lawmakers that laid bare his party's deep divisions. Sunak, who has pinned his reputation on the strategy, in the end comfortably won the first vote on the legislation in the House of Commons after a day of last ditch negotiations and fears that some of his Conservative lawmakers would help defeat the bill because it was not tough enough. "The British people should decide who gets to come to this country - not criminal gangs or foreign courts," Sunak said on X after the result. "That's what this bill delivers." Last month, the UK Supreme Court ruled Sunak's policy of deporting to Rwanda those arriving illegally in small boats on England's southern coast would breach British and international human rights laws and agreements. In response, Sunak agreed a new treaty with the East African nation and brought forward emergency legislation designed to override legal obstacles that would stop deportations. In power for 13 years and trailing the opposition Labour Party by around 20 points with an election expected next year, Sunak's Conservatives have fractured along multiple lines and lost much of their discipline ahead of the first parliamentary vote on that bill. Moderate Conservatives say they will not support the draft law if it means Britain breaching its human rights obligations, and right-wing politicians say it does not go far enough to stop migrants from making legal challenges to prevent their deportation. All 350 Conservative lawmakers had been ordered by those in charge of party management to back it, but almost 40 were not recorded as having voted. The bill passed by 313 votes to 269. "We have decided collectively that we cannot support the bill tonight because of its many omissions," Mark Francois, speaking on behalf of some right-wing Conservative lawmakers, said ahead of the vote. That group said they would abstain rather than support Sunak, and Francois warned of further rebellions at later stages of the parliamentary process unless the bill was changed to ensure European judges could not block deportation flights as they did in June last year. "Let's pick this up again in January. We will table amendments and we will take it from there," Francois said. In a sign of the tensions around the vote, Britain's climate change minister Graham Stuart was called back from the COP28 summit in Dubai to vote in parliament, despite critical negotiations still going on. He left parliament minutes after the vote clutched a bag and was expected to return to Dubai. Earlier, Sunak was forced to indicate to would-be rebels during a breakfast meeting in Downing Street that he would listen to proposed changes in an attempt to encourage them to back down from a revolt that would have killed the bill.



Proposed COP28 Climate Deal Calls for Transitioning Away From Fossil Fuels

DUBAI (Dispatches) - The COP28 Presidency released a proposed text of a final climate deal on Wednesday that would, for the first time, push nations to transition away from fossil fuels to avert the worst effects of climate change. The draft is meant to reflect the consensus view of nearly 200 countries gathered at the conference in Dubai, where scores of governments have insisted on strong language to signal an eventual end to the fossil fuel era - over protests from members of the oil producer group OPEC and its allies. "It is the first time that the world unites around such a clear text on the need to transition away from fossil fuels. It has been the elephant in the room. At last we address it head on," said Norway's Minister for Climate and the Environment, Espen Barth Eide. Country representatives have been called to what the COP28 Presidency hopes is a final meeting on Wednesday morning, where they could pass the deal and end two weeks of tough negotiations that have run a day into overtime. Deals struck at U.N. climate summits must be passed by consensus, at which point individual countries are responsible for delivering on the agreements through national policies and investments. The proposed deal would specifically call for "transitioning away from fossil fuels in energy systems, in a just, orderly and equitable manner ... so as to achieve net zero by 2050 in keeping with the science." It also calls for a tripling of renewable energy capacity globally by 2030, speeding up efforts to reduce coal, and accelerating technologies such as carbon capture and storage that can clean up hard-to-decarbonize industries. If adopted, it would mark the first time in three decades of COP climate summits that nations have agreed on a concerted move away from oil, gas and coal, which account for 80% of global energy. Scientists say fossil fuels are by far the largest source of the

greenhouse gas emissions driving climate change. "The latest Global Stocktake text sends a strong signal that world leaders recognize that a sharp turn away from fossil fuels ... is essential to meet our climate goals," said Rachel Cleatus, policy director at the Union of Concerned Scientists. She noted, however, that the proposal does not commit rich countries to offer more financing to help developing countries transition away from fossil fuels. "The finance and equity provisions... are seriously insufficient and must be improved in the time ahead in order to ensure low- and middle-income countries can transition to clean energy and close the energy poverty gap," she said. It was not immediately clear whether the proposed deal would win enough support to be adopted. Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Secretary General Haitham Al Ghaiss said in a letter dated Dec. 6 to OPEC members and allies at COP28 that the world should target emissions rather than fossil fuels themselves, rallying them to oppose any deal targeting oil. OPEC countries together control nearly 80% of the world's proven oil reserves along with about a third of global oil production, and their governments rely heavily on the revenues. Oil producers have argued that fossil fuels can be cleansed of their climate impact by using technology that can capture and store carbon dioxide emissions. Carbon capture, however, is expensive and has yet to be proven at scale. Negotiators and observers in the COP28 talks told Reuters that although Saudi Arabia has been the strongest opponent of anti-fossil fuel language in the text, other OPEC and OPEC+ members, including Iran, Iraq and Russia, have also resisted. For daily comprehensive coverage on COP28 in your inbox, sign up for the Reuters Sustainable Switch newsletter here



Developing Asia to End 2023 on Brighter Note as China's Economy Recovers

MANILA (Dispatches) - Developing Asia will likely end the year on a brighter note, the Asian Development Bank said on Wednesday, with growth in the region expected to be stronger than previously thought due mainly to a recovery in China's economy. The ADB raised its 2023 growth forecast for developing Asia to 4.9% from 4.7% projected in September, but kept its growth outlook for the region at 4.8% next year. The ADB also revised upwards its growth projection for China to 5.2% from 4.9% previously, but maintained its growth forecast for the world's second-largest economy at 4.5% next year. China's economy grew at a faster-than-expected clip of 4.9% in the third quarter, while consumption and industrial activity in September also surprised on the upside, supported by a flurry of policy measures that bolstered a tentative recovery. The ADB said robust domestic demand, stronger remittances, recovering tourism were underpinning economic activity in the region, which consists of 46 economies in the Asia-Pacific and excludes Japan, Australia and New Zealand. Outlook for the sub-regions was mixed, with East Asia seen growing faster at 4.7% this year versus the ADB's 4.4% forecast in September, while Southeast Asia was projected to grow at 4.3%, slower than the previous forecast of 4.6%. South Asia was likewise expected to post stronger growth of 5.7% this year from 5.4% previously, with India's economy seen expanding at a faster clip of 6.7% this year. Inflation in developing Asia was forecast to ease to 3.5% this year, down slightly from ADB's earlier expectation, before rising slightly to 3.6% in 2024.

U.S. Intelligence Assesses Ukraine War Has Cost Russia 315,000 Casualties

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - A declassified U.S. intelligence report assessed that the Ukraine war has cost Russia 315,000 dead and injured troops, or nearly 90% of the personnel it had when the conflict began, a source familiar with the intelligence said on Tuesday. The report also assessed that Moscow's losses in personnel and armored vehicles to Ukraine's military have set back Russia's military modernization by 18 years, the source said. The Russian embassy referred a request for comment to the Russian defense ministry in Moscow. The ministry did not respond to requests for comment. Russian officials have said Western estimates of Russian death tolls in the war are vastly exaggerated and almost always underestimate Ukrainian losses, which Russian officials say are vast. The source spoke as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy made a last-ditch plea for more military aid to U.S. lawmakers on Capitol Hill, where he faced a skeptical reception from key Republicans. At a news conference later in the day, U.S. President Joe Biden reaffirmed continued support to Zelenskyy, and warned lawmakers they risked handing a victory to Russia. The source said the recently declassified U.S. intelligence report assessed that Russia began its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 with 360,000 personnel. Since then, the report found, 315,000 Russian troops, or about 87% of the total with which it started the war, have been killed or injured, the source said. Those losses are the reason Russia has loosened recruitment standards for deployment in Ukraine, the source added. "The scale of losses has forced Russia to take extraordinary measures to sustain its ability to fight. Russia declared a partial mobilization of 300,000 personnel in late 2022, and has relaxed standards to allow recruitment of convicts and older civilians," the assessment said, according to the source. The Russian army began

the war with 3,100 tanks, lost 2,200 of them and has had to "backfill" that force with T62 tanks produced in the 1970s, leaving it only 1,300 tanks on the battlefield, the source quoted the report as saying. Kyiv treats its losses as a state secret and officials say disclosing the figure could harm its war effort. A New York Times report in August cited U.S. officials as putting the Ukrainian death toll at close to 70,000. Writing in the Ukrainian journal Tyzhden, historian Yaroslav Tynchenko and volunteer Herman Shapovalenko last month said Shapovalenko's Book of Memory project had confirmed 24,500 Ukrainian combat and non-combat deaths using open sources. The real figure was likely higher, they said.





Bayern Eliminate Man United; Real Madrid Continue Winning Streak

MANCHESTER (Dispatches) - Manchester United's slim chance of a Champions League last-16 spot ended with a 1-0 defeat by group winners Bayern Munich at Old Trafford on Tuesday, piling more misery on Erik ten Hag's beleaguered team in an already rocky season. The three-time European champions needed to beat Bayern in their group stage finale on Tuesday and hope Copenhagen's game against visiting Galatasaray ended in a draw. Neither happened as Kingsley Coman slotted home from close range in the 70th minute for Bayern, who were unbeaten in Group A to finish with 16 points and had the jubilant away fans singing "Football's Coming Home" in the dying seconds. "We didn't make it, we have to accept and learn from it," Dutchman Ten Hag told TNT Sports. "We made mistakes. Today the performance was very good. We didn't deserve to lose but we lost the game." "In the end, it's not good enough." United have just four points, with their fourth-place finish meaning not even a Europa League playoff berth as consolation, and boos rang out as the final whistle sounded. Copenhagen won 1-0 in Denmark to finish with eight points and reach the Champions League knockout round, while Galatasaray took the Europa League playoff spot in third with five points. United won one of their six group games, with their hopes of advancing hanging by a thread after they twice gave up a two-goal lead in a 3-3 draw at Galatasaray on Nov. 29. Bayern, who beat United 4-3 in their previous meeting in Munich, had already secured top spot in the group. Coman scored with ease when he drifted into space in United's penalty area and no United defender picked him up, leaving Harry Kane to find the Frenchman with a flicked pass that the Bayern winger fired past goalkeeper Andre Onana. "It was nice," Kane told TNT. "I felt like we controlled the game and had the better chances. We were calm and we knew in the quick transitions we could hurt

them. "It is always tough when you are top and through already but we had a good motivation. It was nice to get the win today. We have enough ability to go far in this competition. That is the ambition, to go and win the Champions League." United's 15 goals conceded were the most by any English team in this year's group stage. It was the club's sixth time of going out at the group stage and first since 2020-21 plus only the second time they have finished bottom in their group after the 2005-06 campaign. Ten Hag's struggling team have 12 defeats in 24 games in all competitions this season, losing 3-0 to lowly Bournemouth on Saturday to sit sixth in the Premier League. Asked if he would look back on the team's Champions League campaign with regret Ten Hag said: "Not with regret. We didn't make it, but we have to accept it. We have to learn from it." "We played some good football in the Champions League. We have to take some good performance into the Premier League." Meanwhile Real Madrid's Dani Ceballos scored an 89th-minute winner to secure a 3-2 victory at Union Berlin in their final Champions League Group C match on Tuesday, to make it six wins from six matches as the Germans ended their European run in last place. The hosts had started well and Real goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga needed to pull off a spectacular one-handed save after just 55 seconds to deny Kevin Behrens from close range. The Spaniards responded with a glancing header from Joselu that bounced off the crossbar in the 16th while he also fired wide in the 43rd before Luka Modric had a 45th-minute penalty saved by Frederik Rønnow. Instead it was hosts who scored in a dramatic finale to the first half, with Kevin Volland pouncing on a David Alaba miskick to slot home in stoppage time. Union needed to win to have any chance of qualifying for the Europa League but they came under increased pressure.

Puma to End Kit Deal With Israeli National Football Team



BERLIN (Dispatches) - German sportswear maker Puma said Tuesday it would end a sponsorship deal with the Israeli national football team in a decision made before the beginning of the war in Gaza. Following a strategy review carried out at the end of 2022, Puma would stop outfitting the Israeli team from next year, the company said. "While two newly signed national teams — including a new statement team — will be announced later this year and in 2024, the contracts of some federations such as Serbia and Israel will expire in 2024," a spokeswoman said in a statement. "These decisions were taken in 2022 in line with the regular timelines for the design (and) development of the team jerseys," the spokeswoman said. The deal with Israel, which was signed in 2018, prompted calls to boycott the sportswear brand. Campaigners accused Puma of endorsing illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank through its deal with the Israeli FA, which includes teams from the occupied Palestinian territory. The outbreak in October of the war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza, has strengthened longstanding calls to boycott products which support Israel.

Italy and Juve icon Chiellini Calls Time on Playing Career

MILAN (Dispatches) - Giorgio Chiellini brought the curtain down on a trophy-packed career on Tuesday after the Italy icon announced his retirement from football. Former Italy and Juventus defender Chiellini revealed he would be hanging up his boots at the age of 39 in a short post on social media accompanied by a video showing the highlights of his 23 years in the professional game. "You have been the most beautiful and intense journey of my life. You have been my everything," Chiellini wrote. "With you I have travelled a unique and unforgettable path. But now it is time to start new chapters, face new challenges and write further important and exciting pages of life." Chiellini ended his career at Los Angeles FC in the Major Soccer League — his final match Saturday's MLS Cup final defeat to Columbus Crew — but he is best known for his exploits with Juventus and his country. After joining Juve in 2005, Chiellini eventually became a cornerstone of the so-called "BBC" defence alongside Andrea Barzagli and Leonardo Bonucci. That defensive trio were key to propelling Juve back to domestic dominance after years in the doldrums following the "Calciopoli" match-fixing scandal which exploded in the run-up to the 2006 World Cup. Chiellini won nine consecutive Serie A titles between 2012 and 2020 and reached two Champions League finals with the Turin giants, who honoured him on social media with the message "Warrior, captain, champion. Thanks for everything big Giorgio!" Juve also posted a video depicting helicopters lifting a giant Juve jersey, emblazoned with "Chiellini" and his squad number three, from the pitch at the club's Allianz Stadium. Chiellini became a national hero after captaining Italy to triumph at Euro 2020, where under Roberto Mancini the Azzurri roared back from apparent footballing oblivion following their failure to qualify for the 2018 World Cup. A series of gutsy defensive displays in the latter stages of the continent-wide tournament culminated with a thrilling penalty shoot-out win over England in the final at Wembley. The photo of him dragging back a scampering Bukayo Saka became one of the iconic images from the Euro for the Italians, who saw in Chiellini the continuation of a long tradition of rugged defenders who do whatever it takes to win. However, Chiellini quit international football last year after 117 international caps and his country failing to reach a second straight World Cup.



Kyrgios Does Not Want to Play Anymore



SYDNEY (Dispatches) - Nick Kyrgios says that "I don't want to play anymore" but will give his tennis career another one or two years, days after pulling out of his home Australian Open. The talented but temperamental 28-year-old had knee surgery in January and then aborted plans to return at Wimbledon after tearing a ligament in his wrist. The 2022 Wimbledon finalist has spoken previously of his struggles with his mental health and has now told the On Purpose with Jay Shetty podcast about his fitness problems. "If it was up to me, I don't really want to play anymore, to be honest," Kyrgios said. "But I have to at least (keep playing). I've got so much more to give, but for me, I don't want to play anymore. I'm exhausted, I'm tired. I have had three surgeries now. "I always wanted to be able to have a family and not be in pain. "When I get up, I can't walk without pain." Kyrgios, who reached a career-high 13 in the world in 2016, said he was "heartbroken" last week when he withdrew from January's Australian Open. His long injury absence has sparked renewed speculation about his tennis future. "I only want to play for about another one to two years and be at the top and go out (on) my own terms," Kyrgios told the podcast, which was released this week. "I would hate to have another surgery or anything like that. So I think I've still got the ability to have a good one to two years."

Celtics Sink Cavs, Improve to 11-0 at Home

BOSTON (Dispatches) - The Boston Celtics went 26-for-26 from the free-throw line and improved their home record to 11-0 this season by beating the visiting Cleveland Cavaliers 120-113. Jayson Tatum and Jaylen Brown each scored a team-high 25 points for the Celtics, and Kristaps Porzingis finished with 21. Tatum and Porzingis each had a game-high 10 rebounds. Derrick White made 5 of 8 3-point attempts and added 17 points. The game was tied 106-106 with 6:05 to play, but Boston scored the next nine points, and the Cavaliers were never closer than seven the rest of the way. The Celtics have won 18 consecutive regular-season home games dating back to March. Cleveland received a game-high 29 points from Donovan Mitchell, and 26 from Darius Garland. Caris LeVert returned to Cleveland's lineup after missing the past four games with a knee injury and tossed in 11 points in 23 minutes, but the Cavaliers were without forward Evan Mobley (knee) for the third straight game. Mobley is averaging 16.0 points and 10.5 rebounds per game this season. He is shooting 57.3 percent from the field. An 11-0 run gave Cleveland an 18-4 advantage with 7:34 remaining in the first quarter. A Mitchell 3-pointer extended the lead to 25-10 with 5:15 left in the first, and the Cavaliers led 31-21 after 12 minutes. The Celtics tied the game at 52-52 on two Brown free throws with 3:52 left in the first half before taking their first lead on a Brown layup with 1:39 remaining. A Garland 3-pointer capped the first-half scoring and handed the Cavaliers a 60-59 halftime lead. The Celtics had a 17-2 advantage in makes at the free-throw line in the first half. A 13-2 run gave Cleveland a 74-68 edge with 7:30 left in the third quarter, but Boston regained the lead when a Jrue Holiday trey capped a 9-0 spurt that put the Celtics in front 83-82 with 3:53 left in the quarter. Boston had a 94-92 lead entering the fourth. The Cavaliers lost despite making 19 of their 45 3-point attempts (42.2 percent).

