

Iran's Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi Has Blamed the Zionist Regime of Israel for Supporting the Terrorists That Perpetrated the Deadly Attack on a Police Station in Rask, Southeast of Iran

Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan Mumtaz Zahra Baloch Has Censured a Recent Terrorist Attack on an Iranian Police Station, Emphasizing Her Country's Solidarity With the Iranians During the Time of the "Unspeakable Tragedy"

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UN Denounces Terrorist Attack on Police Headquarters in Iran



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - The United Nations has denounced in the strongest terms a vicious terrorist assault on Rask County's police headquarters in the southeastern Iranian province of Sistan and Baluchestan, emphasizing that all perpetrators must be brought to justice. "The United Nations strongly condemns the attack today on a police headquarters in Sistan and Baluchestan province, the Islamic Republic of Iran, for which the group "Jaish al-Adl" had claimed responsibility, reportedly resulting in at least 11 casualties," Stephane Dujarric, a spokesman for the UN secretary-general, said in a statement on Friday. He stressed the need to bring to justice the perpetrators of the attack. Dujarric added that "the UN expresses deep condolences to the bereaved families and the people and the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran. It wishes a speedy recovery of the injured." Alireza Marhamati, deputy governor of Sistan and Baluchestan Province in security and political affairs, said several terrorists staged the attack at around 2:00 a.m. local time on Friday (2230 GMT Thursday) against the headquarters of Rask Police. He said that 11 police forces, including officers and conscripts, were killed in the attack. Some of the injured are in critical condition, Marhamati added. The Pakistan-based so-called Jaish-ul-Adl terror group claimed responsibility for the assault. Majid Mirahmadi, deputy interior minister for security and police affairs, said the terrorists attacked the police post from several directions and later ambushed reinforcements deployed to the location. He said two of the terrorists were killed and one of them was injured and arrested in hours-long clashes, while the rest escaped. Six police forces were injured during the exchange of fire, he said. Earlier, Iran's ambassador and permanent representative to the United Nations, Amir Saeid Iravani, had called on UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres and also rotating President of the Security Council José de la Gasca to condemn the terrorist attack in Sistan and Baluchestan Province.



Mass Funerals of Unidentified Martyrs Held in Iran

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - People across Iran attended the funeral processions for 280 unidentified martyrs on Sunday morning, whose bones have been recently unearthed three decades after the end of the Iraqi imposed war on Iran. Iranian mourners in 30 provinces across the country attended the funeral of the soldiers on the martyrdom anniversary of Hazrat Zahra (SA), daughter of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). A total of 110 martyrs are laid to rest in capital Tehran and the funeral of 170 other bodies are held in the other provinces. According to the missing in action (MIA) search committee of Iran's Armed Forces General Staff, the bodies have been found in Iran's western and southwestern regions which used to be war zones during the Iraqi imposed war in the 1980s. The martyrs are buried in different places, including universities, seminaries, premises of state organizations and a number of public parks. People of different social strata have attended the funeral processions, signifying the Iranian people's love for the martyrs. Iraq, under former dictator Saddam Hussein, invaded Iran on September 22, 1980, imposing a bitter eight-year war on its eastern neighbor. Meanwhile addressing the ceremony in Tehran reaffirming Iran's unwavering support for Palestine, the commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps said the U.S. and the Zionist regime are practically putting more nails in their own coffins by wreaking havoc on the Gaza Strip. Major General Hossein Salami said the Zionist regime and the US are putting more nails on their own coffins as they wreak more destruction on Gaza. He also warned the Israeli regime that turning the hospitals in Gaza into the battlefields is no attainment, but a crime. Lauding the Palestinian people for their resistance and reaffirming Iran's unflagging support for the Palestinian resistance, the commander said the US and Israel will be the ultimate losers in the war on Gaza. Highlighting the growing hatred of the US across the region, Major General Salami said the American officials do not dare to visit the Muslim countries. The US is repeating the mistakes of the past 45 years and wrongly believes that it can gain victories through occupation, the IRGC chief stated. "The US, Israel and their allies are repeating the past bitter experiences," he added, pointing to Washington's defeats in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Yemen. The Americans are packing their bags to leave the region, he stated. In remarks in late October, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei held the US accountable for aiding and abetting the Zionist regime in the atrocities against Gaza, saying the US is managing the crimes and has the blood of Palestinian children and women on its hands.

Tehran Ready to Expand Cooperation with Moscow in Gas Sector



TEHRAN (Tasnim) - The chief executive of the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) said the country is ready to enhance cooperation with friendly countries including Russia in the exchange of technology and equipment manufactured in the gas industry. In an annual meeting of the Russian Gas Society, held through videoconference, Majid Chegeni said, "It is a great honor for me to speak at this prestigious forum as the deputy minister of oil and CEO of the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC). The session is taking place at a time when the energy sector is entering a new era due to regional and global circumstances caused by some processes and unilateral inclinations of some countries. Although such conditions pose some challenges, it does not mean that we are faced with unpleasant situations. On the contrary, we can make the right decisions under current circumstances through strengthening structures and cooperative mechanisms and creating new, creative and profitable opportunities in different areas and overcome the emerging threats and challenges," Chegeni underlined. Mehr news agency reported. The consumption of fossil fuels and the process of investment and production of fossil fuels at projects have recently been challenged in the international conferences, he said, warning that some countries' extremism will not help realize the environmental objectives. He went on to say that the model of cooperation between Iran and Russia in the gas technology sector can optimally develop in prioritized areas, human resources training, technological exchanges, establishment of joint labs for gas technology development, joint research and development (R&D) centers, promotion of scientific and technological diplomacy, and strong presence in international gas science, technology and innovation events. By concentrating more on the implementation of the scope of cooperation, it is hoped that the way will be paved for the harmonious and synergistic prosperity of the gas industry, Chegeni added.

U.S. Aircraft Carrier Eisenhower Exits Strait of Hormuz, Persian Gulf



TEHRAN (PressTV) - The commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy says a major US aircraft carrier has left the strategic Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz. Rear Admiral Alireza Tangsiri said on Friday the IRGC naval forces were closely monitoring the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower aircraft carrier, which has been deployed to the region under the pretext of preventing a potential escalation. "This flotilla was in the Persian Gulf for less than 20 days and has been under the IRGC naval forces' intelligence oversight." The deployment of the US warship only serves propaganda purposes under the current circumstances, the commander stated, and it did not result in any "operational" outcome for the United States. Tangsiri said Eisenhower gave the required responses to all the questions and intelligence requested by the IRGC Navy's air traffic control center in the Strait of Hormuz. It has been a fragile maritime situation in the region lately. Many believe the current circumstances are a direct result of the conflict in Palestine where the Israeli regime has been busy with its savagery against the people of the besieged Gaza Strip since early October. The United States dispatched two of its major aircraft carriers to the region right afterward. Washington said at the time the warships had been sent to prevent a regional spread of hostilities and to protect Israel and allies against threats from other countries. That comes as US navy forces have been unable to fend off attacks by Yemeni resistance forces on Israeli-linked ships that pass the Arab country's ports in the Red Sea.

Supporting Israel Costs Biden His Presidency



TEHRAN (IP) - The Iranian ambassador to the United Nations warned that US President Joe Biden risked further hindering the United States' global image and influence along with his election campaign if he could not bring an end to Israel's ongoing war in the Gaza Strip. In an exclusive interview with the American magazine, Newsweek, Permanent Representative of Iran to the United Nations, Amir Saeid Iravani emphasized that the prolongation of the Gaza war has increased the cost of supporting the Israeli regime in the United States; so, the US should limit the support to stop being a victim of Israeli officials' ambitions. Washington offered support to Benjamin Netanyahu's government within hours of the incursion that saw 1,400 Israelis killed on October 7. But as Netanyahu's forces continue to pursue a relentless air-raid campaign on Gaza, one of which resulted in the death of three hostages, Biden now faces widespread global pressure to push Israel into a ceasefire. Iran's envoy to the UN warned Biden's failure to end the conflict would hinder his 2024 election campaign and fuel more hostility against US targets in the Middle East. He said: "Israel has increasingly become a burden for America in terms of material, political, and, notably, moral and reputational costs on the global stage. Iran's unwavering stance advocating for an immediate and enduring ceasefire signifies a cessation of bombings and the tragic massacre of civilians in Gaza. The war between the resistance and Israel will persist until the occupation ends; however, it should remain confined to the battleground and not encroach upon civilians. Iravani added that Netanyahu finds his political future tied to the continuation of the war on Gaza, while President Biden perceives his reelection prospects entwined with bringing an end to the hostilities. This conflict of interests becomes increasingly unmanageable as the war persists, posing a significant challenge.

Iran, China, Saudi Arabia Urge Swift Action to Stop Israel's War Machine in Gaza

TEHRAN - Iran, China and Saudi Arabia have jointly demanded urgent action to end Israel's atrocities in the besieged Gaza Strip, and provide sustainable relief to the Palestinians. China's Deputy Foreign Minister Deng Li hosted Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Ali Bagheri Kani of Iran and Saudi Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Waleed bin Abdulkarim El-Kherejji in Beijing on Friday for the first time within the framework of the joint committee of the three countries. In a statement, the trio expressed opposition to the forced displacement of the Palestinians, and underscored that any future arrangement about Palestine must embody the will of its people and support their right to establish their state and self-determination. The diplomats also voiced concern about the current critical circumstances in Gaza. The three officials agreed on the next meeting to be held in Saudi Arabia in June. Also in the meeting, the diplomats discussed the progress in relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran, including the reopening of the respective embassies in Riyadh and Tehran. The Iranian and Saudi diplomats expressed appreciation for China's influential part in the rapprochement between Tehran and Riyadh and reaffirmed their full commitment to implementing the Beijing Agreement. Meanwhile diplomats from Iran and

Saudi Arabia weighed plans to strengthen relations between the two countries. Baqeri and his Saudi counterpart El Kherejji held a meeting on the sidelines of the first meeting of the Iran-China-Saudi Arabia Joint Committee in Beijing on Friday. They reviewed the bilateral ties and the trend of cooperation between Tehran and Riyadh over the past nine months, highlighting the need to continue high-level consultations on the issues of mutual interest and to enhance interaction. The two diplomats also emphasized the necessity of an immediate end to the Zionist regime's attacks on Gaza and urgent delivery of aid supplies to oppressed Palestinian people. After intensive negotiations hosted by China, Iran and Saudi Arabia clinched a deal on March 10 to restore diplomatic relations and reopen embassies and missions after seven years of estrangement. The two regional heavyweights have underscored the need to respect each other's national sovereignty and refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of one another. In June, Iranian Navy Commander Rear Admiral Shahram Irani unveiled plans for the formation of a new naval coalition in the northern parts of the Indian Ocean by a number of regional countries, including Iran and Saudi Arabia. Later, in August, defense ministry officials of the two states reached an agreement on exchanging military attachés.



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

IRAN NEWS



IRISL Becomes 16th Top Container Company in World

TEHRAN (MNA) – In the latest ranking of the world's top container companies, the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL) was ranked 16th. The Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC) was ranked first in the world above Maersk Shipping Company. The MSC stood in first place, owning 795 vessels with a capacity of 5,554,321 TEU, followed by Maersk Shipping Company possessing 679 vessels with a capacity of 4,131,334 TEU. The CMA CGM Company, owning 621 vessels with a capacity of 3,555,812 TEU stood in the third place. Possessing 30 vessels with the ownership option, the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL) was ranked 16th among the top container companies in the world.

Majlis Speaker Calls for PUIIC Meeting on Gaza



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Majlis Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf has called for an extraordinary meeting of the Permanent Committee on Palestine at the Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States (PUIIC) to discuss ways to stop Israel's genocidal war on the Gaza Strip. Qalibaf made the remarks during a phone conversation with Ibrahim Boughali, the speaker of the People's National Assembly, the Lower house of Algeria's parliament, and the head of the PUIIC, which is composed of parliaments of the member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Iran's Parliament "is fully prepared to hold an extraordinary meeting of the Permanent Committee on Palestine at the level of the parliament speakers of Muslim nations to discuss practical ways to support the oppressed people of Palestine," Qalibaf said. According to Qalibaf's remarks, "The meeting was supposed to be held earlier, but it was postponed due to some reasons." Referring to Washington's unwavering support for Tel Aviv and the US vetoing of a UN Security Council resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, the Iranian parliament speaker stressed that Muslim nations must "demand a practical action from countries" to prevent Israel's atrocities. For his part, Boughali appreciated Iran's support for the Palestinian cause and welcomed the proposal to hold an extraordinary meeting of the Permanent Committee on Palestine in Tehran, calling for more serious cooperation among the Muslim Nations to stop Israel's brutal aggression on Gaza. "The US behavior was predictable", he said, noting that Washington has "always defended the Israeli crimes". However, he noted that the American people "seriously oppose this [Israel's] inhumane behavior, condemn it, and call for an end to the genocide" in Gaza. Elsewhere in his remarks, Boughali slammed some Arab regimes that have normalized ties with Tel Aviv despite being aware of its crimes, noting that the move aimed to undermine the Palestinian cause. He, however, noted that the Palestinian resistance and the steadfastness of the people in Gaza have managed to revive the support for Palestine. "We now see that even European countries and many Latin American countries condemn the inhumane behavior of the Israeli regime," Boughali said. The UAE, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco signed US-brokered normalization agreements with Israel in 2020, drawing condemnations from Palestinians who slammed the deals as "a stab in the back of the Palestinian cause and the Palestinian people."

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

Iran, Japan to Cooperate on Renovating Old Historical Structures

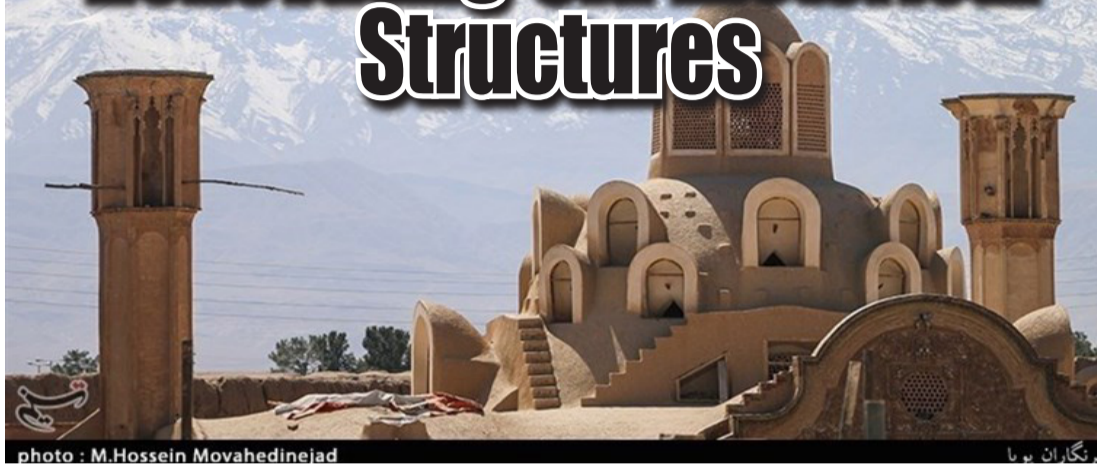


photo : M.Hossein Movahedinejad

TEHRAN – The secretary of Iran's National Habitat Committee (NHC) announced the cooperation between Iran and Japan in the field of recreating urban areas in the historical monuments of the country. Arman Khorsand pointed to the initiation of cooperation between Tehran and Tokyo for implementing a joint-venture project for reviving the worn-out and old historical urban structures. In the UN-Habitat Committee, Iran has started cooperation in different areas, he said, adding that Behtab project is a part of the joint-venture project launched between Iran and Japan. When an earthquake happens, the strength of the building depends on the type of structure used but retrofitting medical equipment is also taken into consideration at hospitals and healthcare treatment centers, the adviser to Iran's minister of roads and urban development emphasized. In this regard, the project of retrofitting medical and healthcare treatment centers was carried out at six hospitals in the country, Khorsand said,

noting that Ayatollah Tabarsi Hospital in Sari, Mazandaran province, was one of these hospitals which is being retrofitted and will be finished by the first quarter of the next Iranian calendar year (to start March 21, 2024). The Japanese government enjoys high technical know-how and expertise in the field of retrofitting premises, and Iran can take advantage of the fruitful experience of the East Asian country for the renovation of valuable historical monuments and urban structures, the adviser noted. Elsewhere in his remarks, Khorsand pointed to the recreation of urban areas and renovation of the dilapidated urban structures and added that an independent delegation from Japan will soon travel to Iran to implement the joint-venture projects, especially in the valuable historical monuments and old city structures. With the coordination made in this regard, the two countries will share their experiences in the field of recreation of urban areas, he added.

Iran, China to Jointly Produce Electric Vehicles



TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Iran's deputy minister of industry, mine and trade for transportation affairs said six Iranian automakers will produce electric cars with China jointly within the framework of the 25-Year Strategic Partnership Plan. Manouchehr Manteqi said six Iranian auto manufacturing companies including the country's two largest automakers SAIPA Automotive Group and Iran Khodro Industrial Group (IKCO) have inked a contract with Chinese firms for joint production of electric vehicles. China is currently considered the leading country in the field of producing electric vehicles in the world, he said, adding that various countries are interested in cooperating with China for electrifying their cars and concluding technological contracts with this Asian country. The Iranian Ministry of Industry has compiled a comprehensive program for the competitiveness of the electric cars industry, he said adding that using electric cars accurately and taking advantage of its advantages in reducing fuel consumption and improving the situation of air pollution have been taken into consideration in the first stage. Elsewhere in his remarks, Manteqi pointed to the after-sales services of electric cars and added that a customer who uses this product should be fully supported and effective steps have been taken in this regard to gain the satisfaction of customers. The deputy minister of industry also pointed out that charging stations will be set up in both inner- and inter-cities areas, with the former being developed in cooperation with the municipalities while the inter-city charging stations will be developed by automakers observing requirements of the national standards. Manteqi also pointed to the construction of electric cars by knowledge-based companies and noted that there are several competent knowledge-based companies in the country which have been instructed to manufacture parts and equipment for the production of electric cars.

Iran-Russia Trade Up 18% in 8 Months

TEHRAN – The value of trade between Iran and Russia rose 18 percent during the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-November 21), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced. Mohammad Rezvani-Far said that 3.748 million tons of products worth \$1.756 billion were traded between the two neighbors in the mentioned eight-month period. The weight of eight-month bilateral trade also rose 43 percent year on year, the official added. He put the value of Iran's export to Russia at \$616.326 million in the first eight months of the present year, which was 32 percent higher than the figure of the same period of time in the past year. The IRICA head also announced that Iran imported commodities valued at \$1.14 billion from Russia in the eight-month period, with 12 percent growth, year on year. In line with the two countries' determination to increase the level of trade exchanges, during a video conference meeting between the deputy transport ministers of Iran and Russia on November 28, the two sides discussed ways of

increasing annual transit through Iran to 10 million tons. In this virtual meeting, the two sides discussed transportation cooperation between the two countries in all areas including rail, road, and sea. Speaking in this meeting, Iranian Deputy Transport Minister Shahryar Afandizadeh referred to the high potential for port cooperation between the two countries, especially in the Caspian Sea, and noted that there is a good capacity in Iran's northern ports for receiving goods sent from Russia and sending them to desired destinations using combined transportation methods. The officials also discussed the Rasht-Astara railway project and the representative of the Iranian contractor of the project, namely the Construction and Development of Transportation Infrastructures Company, presented a report on the project's physical progress. Iran and Russia have been taking serious steps to boost their mutual trade over the past few years. In late January, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi said that the Islamic Republic and Russia have reached an agreement to boost the trade between the two countries up to \$10 billion.

ICCIMA President Renews Call for Launching Islamic Common Market



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - President of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Hossein Selahvarzi has once again underlined the urgency of launching an Islamic common market. Selahvarzi, who was addressing the 39th Meeting of the General Assembly of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture (ICCIA) in Doha, Qatar, on Saturday, stressed the need for launching an Islamic common market which he said would lead to the removal of the restrictions and reduction of tariffs to help increase exchanges among OIC member countries. Selahvarzi's call for the formation of an Islamic common market comes as he had put forward the same proposal earlier in July when the previous edition of the meeting was held in Baku, Azerbaijan. Noting that making use of a preferential trade system is one of the main tools of the common market, he said that this system was on the agenda of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation and its protocol was signed by 16 member states including Iran and came into force in 2002. He, however, noted that the protocol has not been executed so far which is partly due to the low trade and low investment among OIC member states. Selahvarzi also stressed the need for more involvement of the private sectors in trade exchanges among the member countries.

Iran Reserves Right to Respond in Kind to U.S., UK Claims Against IRGC

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran says it reserves the right to take an action to respond in kind to the "unacceptable" approach taken by the United States and Britain after they announced a raft of new sanctions targeting the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) and representatives of the Palestinian resistance groups in Tehran. Britain on Thursday said it had adopted fresh sanctions against head of the IRGC's Quds Force Brigadier General Esmail Qa'ani, five IRGC forces, Khaled Qadoumi, representative of Hamas in Iran; Nasser Abu Sharif, representative of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad in Iran and the Palestinian branch of the Quds Force. British Foreign Secretary David Cameron said the travel bans and asset freezes were coordinated with Washington. The US, which had already put sanctions on the seven individuals targeted by London, blacklisted one more person, Majid Zarei, whom it claimed supported the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas and Lebanon's Hezbollah resistance movement. Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani condemned the new sanctions in the strongest terms. He said leveling "absurd and worthless" accusations against the anti-terror IRGC Quds Force and its brave commanders has so far failed to bring any change in the regional equations in favor of the two countries and will only lead to more disgrace for the warmongers. Iran's "official and legal" Armed Forces, including the IRGC Quds Force, will always remain the "nightmare of terrorist groups and their supporting regimes," he said. The Iranian official expressed confidence that such desperate efforts which contravene international regulations would never disrupt the resolve of the Iranian Armed Forces to defend the country and fight terrorism and global arrogance. Kanaani said the hostile move by Washington and London was yet another step in completing the spiteful attitude toward the Iranian nation and the Islamic Revolution, which has been pursued over many decades in various forms.



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK



Portugal's Socialist Party Picks New Leader

LISBON (Dispatches) - Portugal's ruling Socialist Party picked former infrastructure minister Pedro Nuno Santos as its leader on Saturday, ahead of a snap election called after his predecessor Antonio Costa resigned as prime minister and party head amid a corruption investigation. Santos was declared leader of the party after winning 62 percent of the vote, according to near-final results. Costa, in power since 2015, suddenly quit on November 7 while embroiled in a probe into his administration's handling of energy-related contracts. He had been reelected in January 2022, with the Socialists also capturing an absolute majority in parliament -- a rare feat among Europe's left-wing parties. President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa has called an early election for March 10. Santos, a 46-year-old economist from the party's left wing, had himself resigned from the Costa government in December 2022 during an earlier scandal involving a 500,000-euro (\$534,000) severance package paid to an executive at state-owned national airline TAP.



Trump Repeats Poisoning the Blood Anti-Immigrant Remark



DURHAM (Dispatches) - Donald Trump, the Republican presidential frontrunner, said on Saturday that undocumented immigrants were "poisoning the blood of our country," repeating language that has previously drawn criticism as xenophobic and echoing of Nazi rhetoric. Trump made the comments during a campaign event in New Hampshire where he railed against the record number of migrants attempting to cross the U.S. border illegally. Trump has promised to crack down on illegal immigration and restrict legal immigration if elected to a second four-year term in office. "They're poisoning the blood of our country," Trump told a rally in the city of Durham attended by several thousand supporters, adding that immigrants were coming to the U.S. from Asia and Africa in addition to South America. "All over the world they are pouring into our country." Trump used the same "poisoning the blood" language during an interview with The National Pulse, a right-leaning website, that was published in late September. It prompted a rebuke from the Anti-Defamation League, whose leader, Jonathan Greenblatt, called the language "racist, xenophobic and despicable." Jason Stanley, a Yale professor and author of a book on fascism, said Trump's repeated use of that language was dangerous. He said Trump's words echoed the rhetoric of Nazi leader Adolf Hitler, who warned against German blood being poisoned by Jews in his political treatise "Mein Kampf": "He is now employing this vocabulary in repetition in rallies. Repeating dangerous speech increases its normalization and the practices it recommends," Stanley said. "This is very concerning talk for the safety of immigrants in the U.S." In October Trump campaign spokesperson Steven Cheung had dismissed criticism of the former president's language as "nonsensical," arguing that similar language was prevalent in books, news articles and on TV. When asked for comment on Saturday, Cheung did not directly address Trump's remarks and instead referred to the controversies over how U.S. colleges are handling campus protests since Hamas' Oct. 7 attack on Israel, saying media and academia had given "safe haven for dangerous anti-Semitic and pro-Hamas rhetoric that is both dangerous and alarming." The "poisoning the blood of our country" language was not in Trump's prepared remarks distributed to media prior to Saturday's event, and it was not clear whether his use of that rhetoric was planned or adopted on the fly. Trump is the leading candidate for the Republican Party's 2024 presidential nomination and has made border security a major theme of his campaign. He is vowing to restore the headline policies from his 2017-2021 presidency, and implement new ones that clamp down further on immigration.



Kuwait's Emir Sheikh Nawaf Dies, Sheikh Meshal Named as Successor

KUWAIT (Dispatches) - Kuwait's Emir Sheikh Nawaf al-Ahmad al-Sabah died on Saturday aged 86, according to the royal court, just over three years after assuming power in the U.S.-allied Persian Gulf oil producer. The cause of his death was not immediately disclosed. The Emir was admitted to hospital late last month due to what the state news agency described at the time as an emergency health problem. Crown Prince Sheikh Meshal al-Ahmad al-Sabah, 83, who has been Kuwait's de facto ruler since 2021, when the frail Emir handed over most of his duties, was named as Sheikh Nawaf's successor. Kuwait announced 40 days of mourning and a three-day closure of official departments. World leaders paid tribute to Sheikh Nawaf and offered their condolences to his successor, the Al Sabah family and the people of Kuwait. U.S. President Joe Biden described Sheikh Nawaf as a "valued partner and true friend of the United States," and pledged to "continue to strengthen the longstanding ties" between the countries. Sheikh Nawaf became Emir in September 2020 following the death of his brother, Sheikh Sabah, who had ruled for more than a decade and shaped the state's foreign policy for more than 50 years. Sheikh Nawaf was seen by diplomats as a consensus builder even though his reign was marked by an intense standoff between the government and elected parliament, which had hindered key structural reforms in the oil rich Persian Gulf state. In recent months, consensus returned between the government and the parliament. Kuwait, holder of the world's

seventh-largest oil reserves, borders Saudi Arabia and Iraq, and lies across the Persian Gulf from Iran. It was invaded and occupied by Iraq in 1990, sparking the first Persian Gulf war several months later in 1991 when the United States and other nations defeated Iraq and liberated Kuwait. Since he took over in 2020, Sheikh Nawaf maintained a foreign policy that balanced ties with those neighbors, whilst domestically eight governments were formed under his rule. Under Kuwait's constitution, the crown prince automatically becomes Emir but assumes power only after taking an oath in parliament. The new Emir has up to a year to name an heir. Analysts and diplomats say that Sheikh Nawaf and his crown prince Sheikh Meshal both appeared to align Kuwait more closely with regional powerhouse Saudi Arabia. The new Emir's choice of crown prince and premier - who would be tasked with managing the government's often stormy relationship with parliament - will be watched closely as a younger generation of Kuwait's ruling family jostles for position. Such factional struggles within the Al Sabah family have often played out in parliament as contenders for succession build their own political capital and domestic base. Before handing over most of his constitutional duties to his designated heir, Sheikh Nawaf tried to secure a detente on the domestic political scene, including by issuing an amnesty pardoning dissidents that had long been sought by opposition figures.

Madagascar President Starts New Term Amid Opposition Boycott



ANTANANARIVO (Dispatches) - President Andry Rajoelina took the oath in a packed stadium on Saturday to start a new term as Madagascar's leader, rebuffing an opposition boycott and international concerns over the island's future. In front of six African presidents in the crowd of 50,000, the 49-year-old party organiser-turned-politician vowed to act with "integrity" to lift the country of 29 million out of its poverty. "Madagascar is today under construction. The transformation is underway, rising on the horizon," he said before watching a military parade. But the absence of two former presidents, Marc Ravalomanana and Hery Rajaonarimampianina, who attended Rajoelina's last inauguration in 2018, highlighted early tensions facing the new administration. They are part of an opposition coalition that held near-daily protests for weeks before the November 16 vote to denounce what they called a "constitutional coup d'etat" by the president to stay in office. Demonstrations were banned in the capital, Antananarivo, for five days ahead of Saturday's ceremony. Most opposition candidates boycotted the election and the coalition has insisted it will not recognise the result. Rajoelina secured victory without needing a second-round vote, though only 46 percent of eligible voters cast ballots. Rajoelina, who became president a first time without an election in 2009 after Ravalomanana was ousted in a military mutiny, has quickly faced international pressure. After the election, ambassadors from the European Union, United States and other major donor countries expressed concern at "tensions and incidents" that marked the campaign. The US State Department said that "domestic and international election observers, noted irregularities in the electoral process." Western nations said in a joint statement that Rajoelina must "take steps to restore confidence conducive to dialogue" and carry out legal and electoral reforms ahead of future votes. The economy is in crisis and Rajoelina has said he will devote his new term to boosting the livelihoods in what is one of the world's poorest countries, despite its natural wealth. The resource-rich island country is the world's biggest producer of vanilla but a price fall amid sluggish world demand has hit the industry and Madagascar's balance of payments. About 75 percent of the population live below the poverty level. The president has visited poor parts of the capital in recent days handing out solar lamps in areas that have no electricity. His party has condemned the opposition as "irresponsible" though Rajoelina has said he will work with "constructive" elements. Some opposition activists have faced criminal charges for taking part in the demonstrations before the election that were often broken up with tear gas. Ahead of the inauguration, Rima Randriamasinoro, secretary general of the TIM opposition party, was jailed for two years for taking part in a banned demonstration.



Israel Strikes Gaza as Pressure Grows to Free More Hostages

GAZA STRIP (Dispatches) - Israel carried out fresh strikes on Gaza Sunday as its leaders came under growing pressure to secure the release of hostages still held in the Hamas-run territory more than two months after the October 7 attacks. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu faced protests on Saturday by relatives of hostages who called for an urgent deal to secure their freedom after the army admitted mistakenly killing three captives in Gaza. The trio were among an estimated 250 people taken hostage during Hamas' October 7 raids into Israel, which also killed about 1,140 people, according to the Israeli authorities' latest figures. According to Hamas, Israel's retaliatory offensive in Gaza has killed 18,800 people, mostly women and children. At a protest in Tel Aviv on Saturday, relatives of hostages gathered to plead with the government for a deal. "Take us into consideration and come up with a plan now (for negotiation)," said Noam Perry, daughter of hostage Haim Perry, at the protest. More than 100 of the Israelis and foreigners seized by Hamas and other militants on October 7 were released in exchange for 240 Palestinian prisoners during a week-long truce last month, mediated by Qatar. Netanyahu doubled down on his war effort on Saturday, telling reporters of the three hostages' deaths: "It broke my heart. It broke the whole nation's heart." "With all the deep sorrow, I want to clarify: the military pressure is necessary both for the return of the kidnapped and for achieving victory over our enemies," he added. On Sunday, according to the Hamas-run health ministry in Gaza, at least 12 people were killed in Israeli strikes on the central city of Deir al-Balah. Witnesses also reported Israeli air and artillery strikes on the southern municipality of Bani Suhaila east of Khan Yunis, the Gaza Strip's second city. On Saturday, Netanyahu appeared to address Qatari efforts towards a new truce. "We have serious criticisms of Qatar, about which I suppose you will hear in due course, but right now we are trying to complete the recovery of our hostages," he said. In a statement, Qatar reaffirmed on Saturday its "ongoing diplomatic efforts to

renew the humanitarian pause". But Hamas said on Telegram it was "against any negotiations for the exchange of prisoners until the aggression against our people ceases completely". US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said late Saturday he was travelling to Israel, Bahrain and Qatar to highlight Washington's "commitments to strengthening regional security and stability". News platform Axios said Israeli spy chief David Barnea met Friday in an unspecified European location with Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, who helped negotiate the earlier truce. Israel's bombardment of Gaza has left much of the territory in ruins, with the UN estimating 1.9 million Gazans have been displaced by the war. The UN said this week that hunger and desperation were driving people to seize humanitarian aid being delivered to Gaza, warning of a "breakdown of civil order". International aid organisations have struggled to get supplies to desperate Gazans. "I would not be surprised if people start dying of hunger, or a combination of hunger, disease, weak immunity," said Philippe Lazzarini, the head of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees. The agency reported a "prolonged communications blackout" across Gaza that started on Thursday night and has continued over the past 48 hours. US President Joe Biden, whose administration provides billions of dollars in military aid to Israel, has voiced growing concern over civilian deaths. UK Foreign Minister David Cameron and his German counterpart Annalena Baerbock wrote in The Sunday Times that the "need is urgent" for a "sustainable ceasefire" in Gaza. In the face of mounting international pressure, Israel announced a "temporary measure" to allow aid deliveries directly to Gaza through the Kerem Shalom border crossing. Fierce fighting raged in Gaza on Saturday, with the Israeli army saying it had raided two schools which it said were Hamas hiding places in the northern Gaza City. The Israeli army said Sunday two more soldiers had been killed in Gaza, bringing the total to 121 since ground operations began in late October.



Philippines Wants to Start New Energy Exploration Projects in South China Sea

MANILA (Dispatches) - Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr said his country is working to resolve "exploration issues" in the South China Sea so it could start new energy exploration projects in the resource-rich waterway to meet his nation's energy needs. Marcos, in an interview with Japanese media on Saturday, said tensions in the South China Sea have "increased rather than diminished" in recent months, warning that a "more assertive China" posed a "real challenge" to its Asian neighbours. The Philippines and China have resumed discussions about jointly exploring oil and gas resources in the South China Sea, where the two nations have sparred for decades over sovereign rights to develop natural resources in the strategic waterway. But "very little progress" has been made with regard to the talks, Marcos said, according to a press release from his office as he attends a Tokyo summit of Japan and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). "We are still at a deadlock right now," Marcos said as he emphasised his country's right to exploit energy reserves in the West Philippine Sea at a time the Philippines wants to reduce its reliance on fossil fuel and coal and transition to liquefied natural gas. Manila refers to the portion of the South China Sea that is within its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) as the West Philippine Sea. Efforts to find a legally viable way to cooperate on energy exploration have stalled repeatedly, with previous administration abandoning talks in June last year citing constitutional constraints and issues of sovereignty. A week ago, Manila and Beijing traded accusations over a collision of their vessels near a disputed shoal in the South China Sea as tensions over claims in the vital waterway escalate. In addition to the Philippines, ASEAN members Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei claim parts of the South China Sea disputed by China, which claims almost all of the sea, a conduit for more than \$3 trillion of annual ship-borne commerce. The Permanent Court of Arbitration in 2016 said China's claims had no legal basis, a ruling the United States supports but Beijing rejects. "I'm afraid we'll have to be able to say that tensions have increased rather than diminished for the past months of the past years," Marcos said as he underlined the need to resolve issues peacefully. The challenge that China posed required "new solutions", said Marcos, who has vowed to defend his country's rights in the South China Sea after the collision, which Manila has described as a "serious escalation".

Italy, UK Leaders Unite on Migration, Agree Tunisia Deal

ROME (Dispatches) - British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak hailed Italian premier Giorgia Meloni's approach to tackling illegal migration Saturday, in a visit to Rome where they agreed to co-fund a project to help migrants return home from Tunisia. The two leaders held formal talks at Meloni's office and the British Conservative leader also delivered a speech at a gathering of her far-right Brothers of Italy party. Both leaders have vowed to stop migrant boat landings on their country's shores and in his speech, Sunak hailed the willingness of them both to "break from consensus". They have also both faced strong criticism for their policies, from Sunak's plans to send asylum seekers to Rwanda, to Meloni's moves to limit the activities of charity rescue ships in the Mediterranean. At their meeting, Sunak and Meloni agreed to fund a project to help repatriations of migrants in Tunisia, the departure country for many migrants trying to reach Europe. They "committed to co-fund a project to promote and assist the voluntary return of migrants from Tunisia to their countries of origin", Downing Street said. Meloni's office said this would be in line with existing UN projects, without giving further details. Sunak and Meloni have formed a good relationship since they both took office in October 2022, and on Saturday he hailed her "conviction and determination".

He compared her to former British premier Margaret Thatcher -- and said they needed some of the Iron Lady's "radicalism" to tackle mass migration. "If we do not tackle this problem, the numbers will only grow. It will overwhelm our countries and our capacity to help those who actually need our help the most," he said. They both agreed in their meeting to step up efforts to combat people smugglers, but Sunak said deterring people was also key. "Making that deterrent credible will mean doing things differently, breaking from consensus. And both Giorgia and I are prepared to do that," he said. He cited a deal with Albania agreed one year ago, under which Albanians arriving in the UK on small boats across the Channel can be sent back immediately. Since then, the number of Albanians arriving in the UK had fallen by 90 percent, Sunak said. Last month, Meloni also agreed a deal with Albania to build two centres in that country to house asylum seekers picked up at sea by the Italian coastguard. That agreement has sparked criticism in both countries and Albania's Constitutional Court has temporarily blocked its ratification by lawmakers. Sunak and Meloni also met Saturday with Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama -- who himself addressed the Atriju conference, saying he was "confident" the deal with Italy would go ahead.



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Luton Game Abandoned After Player's Cardiac Arrest

LONDON (Dispatches) - Luton captain Tom Lockyer suffered a cardiac arrest that forced the abandonment of his team's Premier League match at Bournemouth as Manchester City threw away a 2-0 lead against Crystal Palace. Luton's game on the south coast was halted midway through the second half with the score at 1-1 after defender Lockyer collapsed on the pitch. The Wales international was removed from the field of play on a stretcher surrounded by a medical team to a standing ovation from the crowd. The Premier League confirmed the match had been abandoned. "Our medical staff have confirmed that the Hatters captain suffered a cardiac arrest on the pitch, but was responsive by the time he was taken off on the stretcher," Luton said in a statement. "He received further treatment inside the stadium, for which we once again thank the medical teams from both sides. Tom was transferred to hospital, where we can reassure supporters that he is stable and currently undergoing further tests with his family at his bedside." The 29-year-old had heart surgery in June after collapsing during Luton's Championship play-off final win against Coventry. He returned to action for the start of the new season and had made 15 appearances so far in all competitions before Saturday's match. Wales posted on X, formerly known as Twitter: "Our thoughts are with Tom Lockyer." The incident in Bournemouth overshadowed a dramatic game at the Etihad, where champions City were cruising towards a win before conceding two late goals. Palace have been something of a bogey team for City boss Pep Guardiola since he arrived in England in 2016 - they are one of only three teams to have won at the Etihad more than once, along with Manchester United and Chelsea. The

champions, without injured top-scorer Erling Haaland, enjoyed nearly three-quarters of the possession in the first half but had only Jack Grealish's goal to show for their dominance. City extended their lead when Rico Lewis thumped the ball into the bottom left corner in the 54th minute. City seemed destined to move to within one point of Premier League leaders Liverpool before the late drama. But Palace scored against the run of play to give themselves hope in the 76th minute when Jeffrey Schlupp shrugged off the attentions of the City defence and crossed for Jean-Philippe Mateta to poke home. The home fans faced a nervous last quarter of an hour and watched in horror when referee Paul Tierney pointed to the spot after Phil Foden fouled Mateta. Michael Olise made no mistake, slotting home in the 95th minute and boos rang around the Etihad at the final whistle. City, who now head to the Club World Cup in Saudi Arabia, have won just one of their past six Premier League games and risk falling off the pace. "It's really unfortunate but we've got to look at ourselves and look at our individual decisions and then look at us as a group," Lewis told the BBC. "We can't blame anyone else. We can only blame ourselves for it." Chelsea beat bottom club Sheffield United 2-0 to register just their third home league win of the season. Cole Palmer smashed Raheem Sterling's low cross into the net in the 54th minute and he turned provider just after the hour mark for Nicolas Jackson. Newcastle claimed all three points at their St James' Park stronghold after two consecutive league defeats. Teenager Lewis Miley found the bottom corner in the 57th minute, Miguel Almiron made it 2-0 and Dan Burn scrambled home late in the game to put the result beyond doubt.



Flury Gets first World Cup Downhill Victory of Her Career

VAL-D'ISERE (Dispatches) - Swiss racer Jasmine Flury achieved the first World Cup downhill victory of her career as the other stars of the discipline finished outside the leading places in Val d'Isere. Flury, 30, created a surprise by winning the world championships title in the discipline in February but had never won at World Cup level. On Saturday, she was 0.22sec faster than her second-placed compatriot Joana Haehlen, with Austria's Cornelia Huetter third, 0.24sec behind the winner. Flury said she was relieved to have finally broken her World Cup duck. "I tried to put that pressure aside and concentrate on my skiing and today I finally succeeded in getting past that," she said. "It's great and I'm so happy for the team and it's even better with Joana's second place." The dominant women's downhill racer of recent years, Sofia Goggia, finished fourth, the first time since March 2022 that the Italian had finished outside the top three in a World Cup downhill race. Among other leading contenders, Slovenia's Ilka Stuhec was fifth, Italian Federica Brignone finished eighth and Lara Gut-Behrami of Switzerland was back in 11th. The race was briefly halted when Stefanie Fleckenstein of Canada fell and suffered what appeared to be a serious knee injury.

Spurs halt slide in Wembanyama-James Clash

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - French sensation Victor Wembanyama came out on top in his first tussle with NBA superstar LeBron James as the San Antonio Spurs snapped their 18-game losing streak with a 129-115 victory over the Los Angeles Lakers. Two days after falling to the Lakers in a game that James sat out, the Spurs halted the longest losing streak in franchise history. Devin Vassell scored a career-high 36 points for San Antonio and seven Spurs players - including Wembanyama - scored in double figures. Wembanyama, whose arrival in the league has been compared to that of James 20 years ago, scored 13 points and grabbed 15 rebounds with five assists, two blocked shots and two steals. It was the 19-year-old rookie's fifth game this season with multiple blocks and multiple steals. James, the four-time NBA champion who will turn 39 this month, scored 23 points with seven rebounds and 14 assists. But without Anthony Davis, D'Angelo Russell and Cam Reddish the Lakers trailed from start to finish. James impressed with an early steal and dunk, but the Spurs led by as many as 25 in the first half and for once were able to make the lead stand up. Los Angeles cut the deficit to four points shortly before halftime with a run that included James's high-arching three-pointer over the towering Wembanyama. But the Spurs kept the pressure on after the break, outscoring the Lakers 29-25 in the third period to take a 98-87 lead into the final quarter. The Lakers pulled their starters midway through the fourth and the young Spurs team were able to celebrate their first victory since a November 2 triumph over Phoenix. "This is what I'm addicted to, winning, this is what I love," said Wembanyama, who credited Vassell's 12-of-19 shooting with keeping the Lakers at bay. James said the multiple injury absences were just too much for the Lakers to overcome. "You give credit where it's due," he added. "San Antonio played great tonight, they shot the ball extremely well. They attacked us and we're just limited with bodies." James said his first clash with Wembanyama only reinforced his previous assessment that the highly touted rookie is a "special talent." There was no respite for the Detroit Pistons, who suffered a franchise-record 22nd straight defeat with a 124-92 loss to the 76ers in Philadelphia.



Paris Claims Home Downhill Triumph at Val Gardena

VAL GARDENA (Dispatches) - Dominik Paris claimed a home victory at the Val Gardena World Cup downhill, his first ever win at the famous Saslong piste in the Italian Dolomites. Former world champion in the super-G, Paris sped to the finish line in one minute, 59.84 seconds, 0.44sec ahead of Aleksander Aamodt Kilde. Paris, 34, was the only racer to clock a time under two minutes on the 3.5km course as the speed specialist won his first race since March last year. He also became the first Italian man to win the downhill at Val Gardena since Kristian Ghedina in 2001. "It's a lot. I always seem to make mistakes on this track," said Paris. "Today I tried to ski really smooth and keep pushing and going, but not too much, and it was a really, really good run from me. It's a really great feeling." The 22nd World Cup win of his career pushed Paris to within 36 points of joint leaders Kilde and Bryce Bennett in the downhill standings. American Bennett is on 160 points alongside Kilde after taking third place, 0.60sec off the pace. It was Bennett's second podium finish in Val Gardena after winning the opening downhill race of the season on Friday. Reigning World Cup champion Marco Odermatt stays top of the overall standings on 256 points after finishing seventh on Saturday. Odermatt was just 0.03sec ahead of his closest challenger for the Crystal Globe Marco Schwarz, the Austrian 22 points behind his Swiss rival. The men's season continues in Italy on Sunday and Monday with giant slaloms at Alta Badia, while Paris eyes the downhill and super-G events at Bormio just before Christmas. Paris has won at least one race at Bormio in four of the last five seasons and all his World Cup victories have come in those two disciplines.

Lions Rout Broncos to Edge Closer to NFL Playoff Berth

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Detroit quarterback Jared Goff threw for five touchdowns in a 42-17 victory over the Denver Broncos that saw the Lions edge closer to a first NFL playoff berth since 2016. Goff's five TD passes - three of them to rookie Sam LaPorta - matched his career high, and the Lions could be in the post-season by the end of this week's games depending on how they play out, most simply if the Philadelphia Eagles beat the Seattle Seahawks on Monday. The victory was a welcome return to form for Goff and the Lions, who had lost two of their last three. Goff connected with LaPorta, rookie running back Jahmyr Gibbs and Amon-Ra St. Brown for touchdowns in the second quarter to put the Lions up 21-0 at halftime. After putting up just 75 offensive yards in the first half, Denver got on the board with Russell Wilson's three-yard TD pass to Lil'Jordan Humphrey in the third. Goff answered with a 75-yard drive capped by a scoring pass to LaPorta and the Broncos had to settle for a field goal after an apparent touchdown was called back because of an offside penalty. Wilson, who gave up a fumble on his first possession, connected on 18 of 32 passes for 223 yards with one touchdown and a rushing touchdown. Goff completed 24 of 34 passes for 278 yards and Gibbs added a rushing touchdown to go with his TD catch as the Lions improved to 10-4. Elsewhere, fightback victories for the Cincinnati Bengals and Indianapolis Colts boosted both clubs in their quest for playoff berths. Evan McPherson kicked a 29-yard field goal in overtime to give the Bengals a 27-24 triumph over Minnesota while Gardner Minshew threw three touchdown passes to lift the Colts over Pittsburgh 30-13. Jake Browning, who was released three times by the Vikings before landing with Cincinnati in 2021, completed 29 of 42 passes for 324 yards, including two touchdown tosses to Tee Higgins, as the Bengals rallied from 17-3 down entering the fourth quarter and improved to 8-6 on the season. The Vikings fell to 7-7, sixth in the chase for seven NFC playoff spots, despite Nick Mullens throwing for 303 yards with two touchdown passes to Jordan Addison and Ty Chandler rushing 23 times for 132 yards. Mullens connected

with Addison on a 37-yard touchdown pass on the third quarter's opening drive and Greg Joseph added a 39-yard field goal to give the Vikings a 17-3 advantage. Minnesota's defensive unit had not allowed a touchdown in more than 166 minutes, the longest span in the NFL this season, until Browning connected with Higgins on a 13-yard touchdown pass on the first play of the

fourth quarter. Joe Mixon's 1-yard touchdown run lifted the Bengals level at 17-17 with 7:46 remaining. Mullens then guided the Vikings on a 75-yard scoring march capped by a 1-yard touchdown pass to Addison with 3:48 to play. Addison's touchdown reception was his ninth of the season, the most by any NFL rookie this year.

