

Head of the Relief and Rescue Organization of the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) Says That Four Mountain Climbers Have Been Killed and Seven More Remain Missing Amid the Recent Snowy Weather in Areas in North and Northwest of the Country

# IRAN NEWS

In a Letter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Iranian Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Has Expressed Deep Concern About Reported Plans by the British Museum to Transfer the Ancient Cyrus Cylinder to the Library of the Zionist Regime

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## Official Accuses Europe of Exploiting IAEA Reports on Iran



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran's nuclear chief says European powers consistently take advantage of the International Atomic Energy Agency's reports about Iran's nuclear activities without acknowledging their own failure to honor a 2015 international nuclear deal with the country, known as the JCPOA. "The noise that European countries, especially the three European countries, make every three months is [by taking advantage of] the reports related to the JCPOA document," Mohammad Eslami, head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), told reporters on the sidelines of a cabinet session on Wednesday, while making a reference Britain, Germany and France as parties to the JCPOA. He lamented the fact that the IAEA is not tasked with reporting on the non-compliance of the other JCPOA parties while Iran itself is required to report all its nuclear activities. Back in 2015, Iran agreed to limit certain aspects of its nuclear program in exchange for the termination of the "crippling sanctions" targeting its economy. The agreement - the JCPOA - was struck by Iran and six world powers that also includes US, Russia, China. However, the US scrapped the deal in 2018 and restored the anti-Iran sanctions despite Tehran's full compliance with the JCPOA. "We accepted those restrictions and conditions so that you terminate the sanctions, but when you do not terminate the sanctions, we respond in accordance with the JCPOA and the Safeguards Agreement," he said, referring to Iran's reduction of its nuclear commitments under the provisions of the deal. "We are a member of the Safeguards Agreement. We cooperate with the agency according to the safeguards, and the agency monitors our activities according to the safeguards by installing cameras and sending inspectors." Eslami further said Iran has never violated the Safeguards Agreement and will not do so.

## Erbil Concrete Fortress Laden With Spy Gear Demolished in IRGC Attack



TEHRAN (Tasnim) - A retaliatory missile strike that the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps carried out against a target affiliated with Israel's Mossad in Erbil on Tuesday razed a concrete fortress whose cellar was filled with spying equipment, the IRGC Aerospace Force commander said. In remarks on Tuesday, Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh described the missile attacks against the Daesh (ISIL or ISIS) terrorist group and the Mossad center in Syria and Iraq as Iran's natural response to a series of recent crimes, including the Israeli assassination of two IRGC forces in Syria and the tragic January 3 terrorist attack in Kerman. He said the missile attacks on Syria's Idlib killed a large number of Takfiri terrorists and Daesh elements. Pointing to the strike on Erbil, the commander said the IRGC had detected a location in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, which was a building with the façade of a villa, but the rubble after the attack revealed that it was a sturdy concrete fortress used for spying activities and commanding the special terrorist operations. It was only one of the locations employed by the enemy, the general added, noting that the fortress demolished in Erbil was the fourth hostile base that the resistance forces have detonated in the past 100 days. The missile strike in the wee hours of Tuesday destroyed the concrete fortress in Erbil, ruined advanced equipment laid in its two underground stories, and killed the elements that should have been killed, he stated.



TEHRAN - Iran's defense minister says the country's Armed Forces know no bounds in safeguarding the national interests and protecting the nation after the country carried out missile operations against the bases of anti-Iran terrorists and facilities run by the Israeli Mossad spy agency in Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdistan region and Syria. Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Ashtiani made the remarks on the sidelines of a cabinet session in the capital Tehran on Wednesday. "We see no limitations in defending our national interests and the people, and will certainly do this authoritatively. No matter where threats against the Islamic Republic come from, we will react and the response will surely be proportionate, decisive and strong," he emphasized. Ashtiani added, "We condemn terrorism anywhere in the world. We will definitely respond to any action meant to violate the [Iranian] nation's rights, as well as any act of terror targeting people. We have already demonstrated this forcefully, and see no limits in this regard." The Iranian defense minister went on to say that the Islamic Republic respects the sovereignty, interests, rights and regulations as well as the territorial integrity of other countries, especially neighbors. It, however, won't allow anyone to cause mischief on its borders and will deal with any such move, Ashtiani emphasized. In a statement issued on Tuesday, the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) said the force "successfully" launched missile attacks on an espionage center of the Israeli regime's Mossad spy agency in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region and a gathering place of commanders and main elements linked to anti-Iran terrorist activities, especially the Daesh Takfiri terrorist group, in Syria's northwestern province of Idlib. The statement said a total of 24 ballistic missiles were fired during the operation, all of which precisely hit and destroyed the designated targets. The IRGC said the force fired four Kheibar Shekan (fortress buster) missiles from Iran's southwestern province of Khuzestan to Idlib, adding that four missiles were launched from the west, and seven more from the northwest of the country to the Mossad spy headquarters in Erbil in Iraq's Kurdistan Region. Elsewhere in his remarks on Wednesday, Ashtiani noted that the Iranian Armed Forces are in possession of various types of indigenously developed and manufactured missiles, describing third-generation long-range Kheibar Shekan missile as a sophisticated armament that is brought into play whenever necessary. "We are a missile power in the world," he said. He stated that Iranian experts have made major strides in the development and production of different kinds of missiles, either cruise or ballistic, as well as military equipment. Ashtiani also stated that Iranian and Russian military officials are in close contact with each other, and that his Russian counterpart Sergei Shoigu has reaffirmed his country's respect for Iran's security, sovereignty and territorial integrity. "We have a strategic relationship with Russia. I think they are also serious about it, and have pledged to comply with the matter," the Iranian defense minister said.

## Iran Warns Biden Not to Tie His Destiny to Netanyahu's Fate

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has warned U.S. President Joe Biden not to "tie his destiny" to that of Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who is leading the regime's genocidal war on the Gaza Strip while enjoying Washington's all-out support. Speaking to the American business news channel CNBC on Tuesday, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian described the US backing for the occupying entity as "the root of insecurity" in West Asia. "The U.S. should not, Mr. [Joe] Biden should not, tie their destiny to the fate of Netanyahu," he said during the interview on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in the Swiss town of Davos. "The full-scale cooperation of Biden and the White House with thugs like Netanyahu in Israel is the root of insecurity in the region." Israel waged its genocidal aggression against Gaza on October 7 following a historic operation by the Palestinian Hamas resistance group against the usurping entity in retaliation for its intensified atrocities against the Palestinian people. However, more than 100 days into the offensive, the Tel Aviv regime has failed to achieve its objectives in Gaza despite killing at least 24,285 Palestinians,



mostly women and children, and injuring 61,154 others. Amir-Abdollahian said Iran wants the U.S. to "stop the war in Gaza," stressing that security in the Red Sea is important to the Islamic Republic. "The people of Yemen and other countries in the region who defend the Palestinian people are acting according to their own experience and through their own interests, and they are not receiving any orders or instructions from us," he added. Highlighting the importance of maritime security for Iran as an oil exporter, the top diplomat said, "If there is insecurity near our vicinity, it will not be in our favor." "We believe that any action to destabilize the region is rooted in Israel and its genocide in Gaza," he emphasized. In the early hours of Tuesday, Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) launched missile strikes on an Israeli spy base in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region and a gathering of anti-Iran terrorist groups, especially Daesh, in northwestern Syria. Amir-Abdollahian said the attacks were "in line with combating terrorism and legitimate self-defense." "We have no reservations when it comes to securing our national interest with any other country," he added.

## Iran Defends Anti-Terror Operations Against Takfiri, Israel-Linked Targets



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's UN envoy has defended the country's recent anti-terror operations targeting the facilities belonging to Takfiri terrorists in Syria and Israel-linked anti-Iranian terror groups in Iraq. Amir Saeed Irvani, Iran's permanent representative to the United Nations, made the remarks in a letter addressed to the world body's Security Council on Tuesday. The diplomat said the operations had been conducted in line with the Islamic Republic's "inherent right of self-defense under international law and the Charter of the United Nations." "The operations were necessary and proportionate, precisely targeting bases of terrorist groups and fully respecting Iran's international obligations, especially international humanitarian law," he added. "Iran reiterates its inherent rights, as recognized by international law, to safeguard its sovereignty, national security, and its citizens against any threats or attacks." The letter, meanwhile, underscored Iran's "unwavering commitment" to fully respecting the national sovereignty, independence, unity, and territorial integrity of Iraq and Syria. A day earlier, Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) had fired barrages of ballistic missiles against facilities belonging to the Daesh and Hayat Tahrir al-Sham Takfiri terrorist groups in Syria. Daesh had claimed responsibility for two explosions that killed nearly 100 people and wounded scores of others at a memorial for Iran's top anti-terror commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani in the southeastern Iranian city of Kerman on January 3. In a simultaneous operation on Monday, the IRGC had struck an intelligence unit used by anti-Iranian terrorist groups associated with the Israeli regime in Erbil, the capital of the northern Iraqi Kurdistan Region. Separately on Tuesday, the Iranian Foreign Ministry said the IRGC strikes were part of "just punishment" against violators of Iran's security after the deadly terrorist attacks in Kerman. "The Islamic Republic has always supported peace, stability, and security in the region and respected other countries' sovereignty. Nonetheless, Tehran will not hesitate to exercise its legitimate and legal right to deter all sources of threats against its national security, defend its citizens, and punish the criminals," said ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani.

## U.S., NATO Do Not Want Afghanistan Stability



ISLAMABAD (IP) - The Iranian President's representative and ambassador to Afghanistan said that the U.S. and NATO do not want the country's stability. Hassan Kazemi Qomi stated that the United States and NATO, as yesterday's occupiers, do not want Afghanistan to achieve stability and establish rational relations with neighboring countries. Qomi further claimed that despite the absence of a military presence, these invaders are still plotting within Afghanistan. He argued that their efforts to strengthen Takfiri and terrorist groups like ISIS are part of their ongoing conspiracy. The representative warned that such actions would not only affect the security of Afghanistan's borders but also lead to consequences such as increased migration to neighboring countries. Highlighting the critical economic situation in Afghanistan, Qomi emphasized that this provides opportunities for terrorism and foreign interference. He stated that the people of Afghanistan are tired of occupation and do not accept foreign interference anymore. In response, Tehran aims to assist the Afghan people by engaging with Afghan leaders to improve economic, political, and security conditions. Qomi also mentioned Iran's cooperation with Pakistan in supporting stability and security in Afghanistan. He expressed satisfaction with the convergence between Iran and Pakistan on Afghan matters, emphasizing their collective movement towards encouraging Kabul through constructive cooperation. The diplomat stressed that regional initiatives are crucial for ensuring border security. According to Qomi, stability and security in the region are closely tied to those of Afghanistan. By assisting Afghan rulers in improving security through regional efforts, foreign presence can be prevented from reemerging in the country. Qomi concluded by accusing countries under the guise of ISIS Khorasan of seeking to establish a base in Afghanistan once again, highlighting how regional cooperation can counteract these intentions.

# IRAN NEWS



## Iran Voices Readiness to Help Advance Yemen's Peace Talks

TEHRAN (IP) - Foreign Minister's Senior Adviser, on Tuesday, in a video call with the United Nations Secretary General's representative for Yemen affairs, emphasized Iran's readiness to help advance Yemen's peace talks. In the video call with Hans Grundberg, Special Envoy for Yemen of the UN Secretary-General for Yemen affairs, with Ali Asghar Khajai, the senior adviser of the Iranian foreign minister on special political affairs, discussed the latest developments in the Yemen peace process. In these negotiations, both sides expressed hope that the progress achieved in the Yemen peace case will reach the final results. In this consultation, Khajai also called for an end to the war crimes and genocide of the Zionist regime in Gaza and emphasized that all regional and international issues are affected by the Palestinian issue. The senior advisor to Iran's foreign minister on special political affairs added that countries that want the Islamic Republic of Iran to exercise self-restraint are supplying weapons to the Zionist regime and managing the war, and this has caused this regime to continue its crimes. Khajai also welcomed the progress achieved in the process of peace negotiations in Yemen and announced the readiness of the Islamic Republic of Iran to help the progress of this process. 219

## Iran Police Ready to Form Joint Scientific Team With China



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran's police chief Brigadier General Ahmad Reza Radan says that the country is ready to form a joint scientific team with China to boost its cooperation with the East Asian country. Radan made the remarks in a meeting with officials from the Chinese Ministry of Public Security on Tuesday in Beijing. He said in the meeting that Iran hopes that by forming a joint scientific and specialized team, Iran and China will pursue the bilateral issues, and of course, there are many potentials in Iran that can be scientifically transferred from Iran to the Technology Research Center of Chinese Ministry of Public Security. Iran's police chief described Iran's relations with China firm and said that China is Iran's priority for mutual cooperation. Radan expressed hope that Tehran-Beijing scientific ties will become durable and stable. Chinese officials expressed hope in the meeting that China and Iran will see an expansion in cooperation on police issues. They said that China's police seeks to benefit from the valuable experiences of the Iranian police in the field of technology. According to Chinese media, Chinese State Councilor and Minister of Public Security Wang Xiaohong also met with Iranian Police Chief Ahmad Reza Radan on Tuesday in Beijing. Wang expressed the hope that the two sides would work together to implement an important agreement reached between leaders of the two countries last year. He also expressed hope that Iran and China would maintain regular strategic communication to strengthen practical cooperation in areas such as counter-terrorism, combating transnational crime and law enforcement capacity building. Radan, for his part, announced Iran's willingness to engage in steady exchanges and cooperation with China in the field of law enforcement.

## Iran-EAEU Trade to Increase to \$20b After Implementing FTA

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - An official at the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPOI) said the value of trade exchanges between Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)'s member states will rise to \$20 billion with the implementation of the Free trade Agreement (FTA) signed by the two sides. The adviser to the head of the TPOI for international affairs pointed to the FTA between Iran and EAEU inked on December 25, 2023, and noted that this agreement will be put into operation after being approved by the parliaments of Iran and member states of the union. It is expected that it will take from one year to one and a half years to be officially implemented, Mir Hadi Seyyedi stated. A golden opportunity has been provided for domestic producers and exporters to ready themselves for having an active presence in the Eurasian market, he said, adding that exporters should first identify the market for their productions according to the EAEU standards to be successful in doing trade with these countries. Elsewhere in his remarks, Seyyedi pointed to the role of the government in promoting trade with the EAEU member states and called on the government officials to strengthen the trade infrastructures in terms of

transportation and customs rules, etc. to facilitate the trade relations between Iran and Eurasia. Turning to the problems facing the money transfer between businesspeople, he added that monetary pacts have been inked in rial and ruble and also a Letter of Credit (L/C) has been launched between Iranian and Russian banks which can help promote the financial transactions. It is for about six years that intensive talks have been ongoing between Iran and the EAEU member states over the implementation of the FTA, he continued. Before launching the Free Trade Agreement, the trade exchange value between Iran and EAEU member states within the framework of the Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) stood at \$2.5 billion, the rate of which is expected to increase to \$20 billion with the implementation of FTA, Seyyedi added. The free trade agreement between the EAEU and Iran was signed during the EAEU Summit in St. Petersburg on December 25, 2023. In 2018, Iran and the EAEU inked a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA), which came into effect on October 27, 2019. The two sides later began negotiations to upgrade the PTA to an FTA after the success of the former.

## Iran Slams U.S. Plots for Post-War Gaza



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian has slammed U.S. plots for the post-war Gaza Strip, saying only Palestinians can decide their future. No one has the right to impose anything on the Palestinian people, Amir-Abdollahian said during a meeting with Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in the Swiss city of Davos on Tuesday. He hastened to add that only Palestinians can decide how to manage the affairs of Gaza and the occupied West Bank. He also stressed that Lebanon plays an important role in regional issues. Lebanon's stability and security affect the stability and security of the entire region, Amir-Abdollahian maintained, pledging Iran's unwavering support for the Arab country's stability and security. The chief Iranian diplomat also praised the Lebanese government, nation and resistance movement for supporting the Palestinian people in Gaza. "Regrettably, under the U.S. support for the Zionist regime, the war against Gaza lingers on and we witness the continuation of the killing of Palestinian citizens, women and children, and the genocide of Palestinians by the Zionist regime." Elsewhere in his remarks, Amir-Abdollahian underlined that the Islamic Republic places a premium on the development of relations and joint cooperation with Lebanon in various bilateral, regional and international fields. Mikati, for his part, underscored the necessity of putting an end to the Israeli regime's war on Gaza, describing the situation in Palestine and the region as "worrying." The two sides also discussed the latest developments in Palestine, Lebanon and the situation in the Red Sea, stressing the continuation of joint consultations in order to put an end to the crimes of the Israeli regime against the Palestinians, opening humanitarian aid corridors to Gaza and helping to establish peace and stability in the region.

## Oil, Gas Production Will Continue for Next 100 Years

TEHRAN (Shana) - Oil and gas production in Iran, thanks to its current reserves, will continue for the next 90-100 years, said the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) managing director. Addressing the Session to Introduce Opportunities and Framework for Investment in Drilling Rig Service Provision within Guaranteed Purchase Contracts, Mohsen Khojastehmehr added Iran's crude oil and natural gas on aggregate is equal to 340 billion barrels of oil. The country's unconventional resources have yet to be added to the figure, noted the CEO of NIOC, adding, "We are conducting initial studies to add shale oil and gas reserves and clathrate (gas) hydrates to Iran's oil and gas reservoirs." Iran is a rich country in terms of underground resources and it is necessary to have long-term goals for utilizing them, he underlined. Drilling is the central core of the NIOC's activity, said Khojastehmehr, adding nothing will be left of the upstream sector if

drilling is detached. Development and overhaul operations in the upstream sector are in need of drilling, he pointed out. The drilling sector is the most resilient part of oil industry, stated the NIOC chief, continuing oil and gas production would face challenges if the industry lacked drilling. More than 50 percent of capital required for the development of an oil or gas field is related to the drilling sector, the deputy oil minister added. Both light and heavy drilling rigs are needed, emphasized the NIOC head, saying 10-year contracts will be signed with private companies to meet the industry's needs. The contracts will be signed in foreign currencies and advance payments will be made for purchasing or renting drilling rigs, said Khojastehmehr, adding the measures are aimed at facilitating the contracts' terms and conditions. Big contracts on oil and gas production will be signed in the near future, pledged the official, adding drilling rigs are required to achieve the goal.

## U.S. Claim About Fighting Terrorism Is Big Lie



MOSCOW (IRNA) - Iranian ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali has described U.S. claims about its anti-terrorism battle as a "big lie". Jalali said at a conference in Moscow, Russia, on Tuesday that it was the American officials who created terrorism and terrorist groups in the West Asia region. In his remarks, the ambassador pointed to the U.S. crimes in Yemen, Libya, Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq under the pretext of fighting terrorism, saying that Washington is the root cause of instability and rising aggression and terrorism in the region because of its interference in other countries. Jalali said the White House and the Zionist regime of Israel are main perpetrators of state terrorism as the US assassinated Iran's General Qassem Soleimani in Iraq four years ago while the Israeli regime continues to commit crimes in Gaza. The United States occupied Afghanistan for about two decades under the pretext of fighting terrorism without succeeding to root out terrorist groups, the ambassador said. At the Moscow conference, the participants exchanged views about ways to counter terrorism and to expand cooperation between Iran, Russia and Arab states to solve regional questions. The conference gave a special attention to the role played by General Soleimani in the fight against terrorism in the region.



## Power Plants With 2,000MW Capacity to Go Operational Next

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - The managing director of Iran's Power Generation, Distribution, and Transmission Company (known as Tavanir) has said 2,000 megawatts (MW) of power plants built by the country's major industries are going to go operational by the end of the next Iranian calendar year (late March 2025). Mostafa Rajabi Mashhadi said the industrial sector has so far built power plants with a total capacity of 850 MW across the country to meet their electricity needs during the summer's peak consumption period. According to the new Tavanir head, the government has set a goal to also increase the capacity of the country's thermal power plants by 10,000 MW by the end of the current government incumbency (August 2025) of which so far 8,500 MW has been realized. The official noted that the country's electricity consumption increases by four to five megawatts each year that is one percent annually, and to meet this increasing demand every year the capacity of the country's power plants should increase by 5,000 MW. In July 2021, the Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Energy Ministry for constructing power plants for big industries. Later in November of that year, Energy Minister Ali-Akbar Mehrabian announced that the construction of 10,000 MW capacity power plants was started by various industrial sectors, saying: "Four major industries have started their work in the field of power plant construction. Based on the contract concluded with these industries, the said industries will not be provided with electricity from the national grid if they cannot deliver the power plants based on the specified schedule."



SHANA PHOTO  
Hamidreza Norouzi

# South Korea Imposes Sanctions Linked to N. Korea Weapon Development

SEOUL (Dispatches) - South Korea has sanctioned two individuals, three entities and 11 ships linked to North Korea’s nuclear and missile programs, its foreign ministry said on Wednesday. The sanctions announcement comes days after North Korea fired a new intermediate range, solid-fuel hypersonic missile, which South Korea and the United States strongly condemned as a serious violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions. Pyongyang has also announced a break with decades of cross-border policy, dismantling some government entities handling inter-Korean ties and declaring the South a separate, enemy state. The newly blacklisted targets have chiefly been involved in illegal energy smuggling at sea, the ministry said. Faced with a drawn-out gridlock at the United Nations, Seoul has turned to slapping sanctions on Pyongyang independently or together with Washington and Tokyo, seeking to squeeze its funding sources.



# China Calls for Global Cooperation, Says Open for Business



DAVOS (Dispatches) - Chinese Premier Li Qiang said the Chinese economy was open for business and highlighted its potential for foreign investment, saying the world needed to pull down barriers to competition and trade to tackle global challenges. As China grapples with a sluggish post-pandemic recovery and a real estate slump, overseas executives have grown concerned about its long-term growth prospects for the first time in the four decades since Beijing opened it up to foreign investment. In a meeting with Li, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen stressed Chinese leaders also needed take action on the trade imbalance between Europe and China, she said in an interview. Li said in a keynote speech to business leaders at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos that the Chinese economy had rebounded and moved upwards, and was estimated to have grown around 5.2% in 2023, above the official target of around 5%. He said China’s economy was making steady progress, could handle ups and downs in its performance, and would continue to provide global impetus, adding that its overall trend of long-term growth would not change. Li, who leads a large government delegation at this week’s WEF, is the most senior Chinese official to rub shoulders with global business and political elites at the Swiss ski resort since President Xi Jinping in 2017. China’s premier said healthy competition was key to enhancing cooperation and innovation, adding that the world needed to remove barriers to competition and cooperate on environmental strategies and international scientific exchange. Li also highlighted the importance of keeping global supply chains “stable and smooth”. In his speech in Davos, Li highlighted a growing North-South divide, which he said was becoming more acute, and stressed the need for cooperation on development. Li said China, with a rapidly urbanizing population of 1.4 billion people, would play an important role in boosting aggregate global demand. He also said China remained “firmly committed” to opening up its economy and would create “favourable conditions” to share its opportunities. “Choosing investment in the Chinese market is not a risk, but an opportunity,” Li added. His past overtures declaring China open for business have been met with scepticism in some boardrooms in light of a broader anti-espionage law, raids on consultancies and due diligence firms and exit bans, trade bodies say. “We will take active steps to address reasonable concerns of the global business community,” Li said. He later met business and finance leaders including JP Morgan CEO Jamie Dimon, Bank of America CEO Brian Moynihan, Standard Chartered CEO Bill Winters and Blackstone CEO Steve Schwarzman during a lunch.

# Another Trump Presidency Will Not Be Easy for Canada



OTTAWA (Dispatches) - If Republican frontrunner Donald Trump wins the U.S. presidential election in November, it will be “a step back” that makes life tough for Canada, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said on Tuesday. Trudeau, whose center-left Liberals came to power in November 2015, had rocky relations with Trump during his first four-year White House term. In 2018, Trump accused Trudeau of being weak and dishonest. “It wasn’t easy the first time and if there is a second time, it won’t be easy either,” Trudeau said in French during a discussion hosted by the Montreal chamber of commerce. He added: “But we can’t imagine a day when it will ever be easy with the Americans. The main responsibility for any prime minister is to represent and defend Canada’s interests ... we’ve been able to do this very well these past few years.” Canada sends 75% of its goods and services exports to the United States and is particularly vulnerable to any U.S. shift toward protectionism. When Trump came to power he vowed to renegotiate the free trade treaty that bound the United States, Canada and Mexico. Ottawa spent almost two years locked in talks to produce a trilateral pact that largely protected Canadian interests. About two-thirds of Canadians surveyed this month said U.S. democracy cannot survive another four years of Trump in power, and about half said the United States is on the way to becoming an authoritarian state, a poll released on Monday said. A Trump win would be “a step back” and a victory for “a populism that reflects a lot of anguish and fury ... without necessarily providing solutions”, Trudeau said. The Liberals have made fighting climate change a priority and Trudeau said Trump showed little interest in the environment during “the lost four years” of his first term. “There are clearly issues where I do not agree at all with Mr. Trump,” Trudeau said, citing the climate question. The next Canadian election has to be held by September 2025 and the Liberals are trailing their right-of-center Conservative rivals. Trudeau repeated criticism that the party had taken its inspiration from the Trump movement.

# Medicine for Hostages, Civilians Bound for Gaza



GAZA STRIP (Dispatches) - Deliveries of medicine for Israeli hostages and Palestinian civilians were expected to start arriving in Gaza on Wednesday under a deal mediated by Qatar and France, after a night of deadly bombardments in the territory’s south. Militants took around 250 hostages during the bloody October 7 attacks that touched off the war, and around 132 are still in Gaza, including at least 27 believed to have been killed. The fate of those remaining in captivity has gripped Israeli society, while a broader humanitarian crisis in the besieged territory marked by the threat of famine and disease has fuelled international calls for a ceasefire. In a statement to the official Qatar News Agency (QNA), Doha on Tuesday announced a deal “between Israel and (Hamas), where medicine along with other humanitarian aid is to be delivered to civilians in Gaza... in exchange for delivering medication needed for Israeli captives in Gaza”. Qatari foreign ministry spokesman Majid Al-Ansari told QNA the medicine and aid would leave Doha on Wednesday for the Egyptian city of El-Arish before being transported to the Gaza Strip. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s office confirmed the deal. Forty-five hostages are expected to receive medication under the agreement, according to the French presidency. After the drugs arrive at a hospital in the southern Gaza border town of Rafah on Wednesday, it said, they will be received by the International Committee of the Red Cross, divided into batches and immediately transferred to the hostages. Hamas released dozens of hostages in exchange for Palestinian prisoners held by Israel during a November

ceasefire mediated by Qatar, which hosts the group’s political office. US National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said Tuesday he was “hopeful” that Qatar-brokered talks could lead to another such deal “soon”. The war in Gaza began with Hamas’s unprecedented October attack that resulted in about 1,140 deaths in Israel, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on official Israeli figures. At least 24,285 Palestinians, about 70 percent of them women and children, have been killed in Gaza in Israeli bombardments and ground operations since, according to the territory’s health ministry. The ministry reported early Wednesday that another 81 people were killed in overnight strikes, including in the main southern city of Khan Yunis. The United Nations says the war has displaced roughly 85 percent of Gaza’s 2.4 million people, many of whom have been forced to crowd into shelters and struggle to get food, water, fuel and medical care. Just before midnight on Tuesday, witnesses reported strikes on the Nasser hospital in Khan Yunis, sparking panic among the hundreds of displaced people seeking shelter there. Earlier in the day, residents of the city sifted through the rubble from strikes as trucks and carts stacked high with displaced families’ possessions rolled down the street. In Tel Aviv, anti-war protesters scuffled with police on Tuesday night, as some held up signs reading “End the siege” and “Stop the genocide”. The Israeli public has kept up intense pressure on Netanyahu’s government to secure the return of the hostages, with officials repeatedly insisting military pressure is necessary to bring about any kind of deal.



# Europe Slow to Join U.S.-Led Red Sea Mission Against Huthis

PARIS (Dispatches) - European countries have promised only low key military support to counter Huthi forces attacks on Red Sea shipping, as they balance geopolitical and domestic concerns with economic fears. U.S. and British forces have bombed the Yemeni rebels since Friday in response to mounting Huthi missile attacks on vessels in the vital shipping lanes since the Hamas’ October 7 attack on Israel. But many EU capitals have been leery of committing their forces, although the bloc’s foreign ministers will discuss the crisis in Brussels on January 22. Arab and Israeli representatives have been invited, although none have so far confirmed their attendance. The Huthis originally said they were attacking Israeli-linked vessels. But since Friday they have added British and American interests to their “legitimate targets”. The growing risks for Red Sea shipping were underscored Tuesday when a Greek freighter was hit by a missile off the Yemeni coast. Disruption of oil “is not for the moment apparently creating consequences on energy prices and inflation” in the EU, economy commissioner Paolo Gentiloni said Monday. He added that the fallout could hit “in the coming weeks.” Diplomatic sources said the EU hopes to complement the U.S.-led “Prosperity Guardian” operation, which has backing from Germany and the Netherlands. There “seems to be a large degree of consensus on the need to act quickly and pragmatically,” one EU diplomat told AFP, suggesting that a France-led mission in the Gulf and Straits of Ormuz could be expanded. France and other nations have had vessels in the Persian Gulf since 2019 guarding against pirate attacks. The European

Union’s diplomatic service has proposed the mission should consist of three frigates, and officials hope to finalize the plan by the next foreign ministers’ meeting in February. Defense ministers from France and Italy said Tuesday they would support “a European mission that could also be joined by non-EU member countries who share the priority of free navigation”. Spain has refused any role in a Red Sea mission, keeping out of the conflict for domestic political reasons. Meanwhile Italy’s frigate Virgilio Fasan was joined in the Red Sea this month by a second, the Federico Martinengo, according to Italian media reports. But French and Italian warships in the region have not taken part in the U.S.-led mission. “We cannot join in sudden acts of war without authorisation from parliament, even if they aim at protecting international sea traffic,” Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani said Friday. A French frigate, the Languedoc, has twice shot down Huthi drones since November 9 in “self-defence” but cannot join strikes on Yemen because of its rules of engagement, France’s Indian Ocean commander Rear Admiral Emmanuel Slaars said recently. Paris wants tight national control over its forces, but “we parcel out our efforts smartly across the geography and share information” with allies, Slaars added. France is avoiding “publicly following the US in a systematic way,” said Pierre Razoux, academic chief of the Mediterranean Foundation for Strategic Studies (FMES). He added that Paris is communicating its “wish to avoid sparking an escalation with Iran,” which backs the Huthis as part of its anti-Israel “axis of resistance”.



# El Salvador’s Bukele Looks Set to Cruise to Controversial Presidential Reelection

SAN SALVADOR (Dispatches) - El Salvador’s Nayib Bukele holds a large lead ahead of his bid next month to win reelection as president, a poll showed on Tuesday, as one Latin America’s most popular leaders rides a wave of support for his headline security policies. The poll gives Bukele a 71% lead over his nearest rivals from El Salvador’s once-dominant political parties, who both poll below 3% in the survey by Francisco Gavidia University. The 42-year-old Bitcoin enthusiast and former mayor of the capital stepped down temporarily as president last November to seek a second five-year term. He was legally allowed to mount a reelection campaign only after Supreme Court judges declared that Bukele’s human right to run outweighed the constitution’s ban on serving consecutive terms as president. Lawmakers from Bukele’s New Ideas Party, which dominates the current Congress, appointed the judges who ruled that he could run. About a fifth of those surveyed told the pollster they would either abstain in the Feb. 4 vote, or leave their ballot blank. According to the poll, the party’s already strong grip on the legislature could grow stronger, projected to win 57 out of 60 seats under the current make-up of the chamber. Dating back to March 2022, Bukele invoked emergency powers as part of an unprecedented anti-gang push that has seen police arrest more than 75,000 suspected gang members. The powers suspend rights to due process, including mounting a legal defense, which critics argue amount to a creeping authoritarianism in the Central American nation of almost 7 million. The dragnet has led to a sharp reduction in the murder rate, which for years was one of the world’s highest, as well as Bukele’s sky-high approval rating. Bukele’s government has been accused of brokering a pact with the country’s two top criminal gangs, Mara Salvatrucha and Barrio 18, in order to reduce the homicide rate and boost his party’s prospects. He has repeatedly denied the accusations. The poll interviewed about 1,900 Salvadorans from Jan. 3-8 and featured a nearly 3% margin of error.

# Russia Calls Ukraine Peace Meetings Pointless

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia said that it was increasingly apparent to the world that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky’s plan to resolve the nearly two-year war had no hope of succeeding and dismissed meetings devoted to it as “pointless and harmful”. The fourth in a series of meetings bringing together officials from several dozen countries - but not Russia - was held this week in Davos. A commentary on the Russian Foreign Ministry’s website said the meeting had exposed differences between participants and produced no increase in support for the proposals. “There is a growing understanding that no overall, fair and sustainable peace can be achieved by focusing on the ultimatum of the ‘Zelensky formula,’” the commentary said. “All such meetings ... including the Davos gathering and those to follow it, are pointless and harmful for settling the Ukrainian crisis.” Russia is pointedly not invited to the meetings centred on Zelensky’s peace plan, which calls for withdrawal of all Russian troops from Ukraine, recognition of its 1991 post-Soviet borders and a mechanism to bring Moscow to account. Zelensky has ruled out talks with Moscow while Russian

troops remain in the country. Speaking at the World Economic Forum in Davos on Thursday, he urged the West to tighten sanctions pressure on Moscow and to step up support for Kyiv. Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Tuesday that Ukraine’s stoehood could suffer an “irreparable blow” if the pattern of the war continued, and that Russia would never be forced to abandon the gains it had made in its military campaign. Ukraine has sought through the meetings and other diplomatic moves to garner greater support from the “global south,” with many countries having stayed on the sidelines in the conflict. Zelensky’s Chief of Staff, Andriy Yermak, said there were participants at the Davos meeting from 18 Asian countries, 12 African countries and six South American countries. The Swiss government agreed after the latest gathering on Zelensky’s peace plan to host a global peace summit on Ukraine at Zelensky’s request. Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov dismissed the Davos talks as “simply talking for the sake of talking,” saying there could be no moves towards a settlement without Russia’s participation.





### Sinner Marches Into Australian Open Third Round

MELBOURNE (Dispatches) - Jannik Sinner continued his hot streak of form to race into the third round of the Australian Open for the third successive year with a 6-2 6-2 demolition of Dutch qualifier Jesper de Jong. The 22-year-old Italian fourth seed, favoured by some as a potential champion at Melbourne Park after a stellar finish to last season, completely dominated the world number 161 under the closed roof on Margaret Court Arena. Sinner, who banged down seven aces and 26 winners, faced not a single break point over the entire contest while winning an impressive 45 per cent of his return points. There were sympathetic cheers from the crowd when De Jong finally got on the scoreboard in the final set but Sinner was soon serving out to love to book a meeting with Daniel Elahi Galan or Sebastian Baez. Meanwhile Carlos Alcaraz and Iga Swiatek powered into the second round of the Australian Open as Germany's Alexander Zverev put aside legal worries at home to progress. World number two Alcaraz was electric under the lights on Rod Laver Arena, demolishing French veteran Richard Gasquet 7-6 (7/5), 6-1, 6-2 in his first competitive match of the year. The Spaniard, gunning to unseat 10-time champion Novak Djokovic from the world number one spot, was tested in a tight first set but then moved through the gears, showcasing his full range of shot-making. Alcaraz, who will next face Italy's Lorenzo Sonego, said it was good to be back

in Melbourne, where he has not been beyond the third round in his previous two visits. He missed last year's tournament through injury. "In the first set I struggled a little with his game," he said. "He was playing great but I played better and better and at the end I reached quite a good level." The 20-year-old, clad in a sleeveless yellow T-shirt, admitted he sometimes tries to play "impossible shots", including volleys and dropshots, to please his fans. Meanwhile Ons Jabeur suffered a stunning 6-0 6-2 loss to Russian teenager Mirra Andreeva in the Australian Open second round as the sixth seed's bid to become the first Arab and African woman to win a Grand Slam title lay in tatters. Jabeur began the match with a big ace down the middle but quickly found herself on the back foot as her 16-year-old opponent capitalised on some uncharacteristic errors to cruise through the opening set in 20 minutes conceding eight points. In her fourth Grand Slam main draw appearance since making her debut at last year's French Open, Andreeva showed maturity beyond her years as Jabeur desperately sought answers from her coaching team after the early jolt. Jabeur — dubbed by fans as Tunisia's "Minister of Happiness" — swapped her trademark smile for a more determined look and the 29-year-old held early in the next set but there was no stopping Andreeva, who raised her level again and pulled away.

### West Ham Dumped Out of FA Cup



LONDON (Dispatches) - West Ham were dumped out of the FA Cup by Championship side Bristol City 1-0 as Newport County set up a dream fourth-round tie against Manchester United. Tommy Conway scored the only goal at Ashton Gate after less than three minutes to ensure the Hammers' 44-year wait to lift the FA Cup will go on. Conway, who also scored to secure a replay when the sides met at the London Stadium, pounced on a short back pass from Konstantinos Mavropanos to round Lukasz Fabianski and slot into an unguarded net. "I've been coming here since I was seven and to get the winner is unbelievable," said Conway. "It's the best (crowd) I've seen it in a while and to send them home happy is unbelievable." David Moyes' men missed the threat of the injured Jarrod Bowen and Lucas Paqueta and Mohammed Kudus, who is away representing Ghana at the Africa Cup of Nations. The visitors had to play almost the entire second half a man down after Said Benrahma was sent off for kicking out at Joe Williams in retaliation to a late challenge on him. Tomas Soucek came closest to forcing the game to extra time when the Czech's volley forced Max O'Leary into a flying save. Bristol City will next face Blackpool or Nottingham Forest in round four. League Two Newport ended the run of non-league Eastleigh with a 3-1 win to earn the right to host the Red Devils on January 28. Brentford boss Thomas Frank got exactly what he did not want as his side were forced to extra time before losing 3-2 to Wolves. Frank questioned the need for replays as both sides saw their two-week winter break shortened by the extra game. Twice the Bees went in front through former Wolves defender Nathan Collins and Neal Maupay. But Nelson Semedo and teenager Nathan Fraser hit back for Wolves and Mathew Cunha's penalty won the game in extra time. Wolves will now face local rivals West Brom in the last 32. Luton edged out League One Bolton to progress 2-1 despite falling behind to Dion Charles' early strike. Tahith Chong quickly levelled for the Premier League side before Chiedozie Ogbene grabbed the winner. Birmingham also came from behind to beat Hull 2-1 thanks to Koji Miyoshi's 94th-minute winner.

### Roma Idol De Rossi Succeeds Sacked Mourinho

ROME (Dispatches) - Daniele De Rossi began a new adventure at Roma on Tuesday as the World Cup winner took over at his boyhood club following the sudden sacking of Jose Mourinho. The former Italy midfielder, who spent almost the entirety of his playing career at Roma, signed a deal "until 30 June 2024" with the Serie A club hours after Mourinho was dismissed. "I know no other way but dedication, daily sacrifices, and giving everything I have in order to face the challenges that await us from now until the end of the season," said De Rossi in a statement. "The excitement of being able to sit on our bench is indescribable. Everyone knows what Roma means to me." A series of disappointing results which have the capital club way off the pace in the Italian top flight this term did for Mourinho, who left Roma's Trigoria training ground on Tuesday afternoon. Mourinho was met by a scrum of reporters and a handful of fans as he was driven out of the gates, saying "thank you for these two years" to supporters who chanted his name. De Rossi is an idol for Roma fans as a local boy done good who played in some of the club's best teams of the last two decades, alongside fellow icon Francesco Totti. The 40-year-old, who grew up in a rough and ready beachside suburb of Rome, played for Roma for nearly two decades, winning over fans who saw in his passionate style of play one of their own on the pitch. He won two Italian Cups and the 2007 Italian Super Cup, before finishing his career at Boca Juniors in early 2020 after less than a season in Argentina. It is a huge job for someone with little pedigree as a coach however, his only job at SPAL lasting just four months last season. He was sacked in February last year in a season which finished with SPAL being relegated to the third-tier Serie C. Mourinho, who has been linked with a job in Saudi Arabia, left Roma after an emotional two-and-a-half years in which he won Europa Conference League in 2022, ending a 14-year trophy drought. His contract was due to expire in June and although he had repeatedly stated that he wanted to stay on, talks about an extension to his deal never materialised. Rumors of his departure grew more persistent after Roma were knocked out of the Italian Cup by local rivals Lazio and Sunday's dismal 3-1 defeat at AC Milan which left them ninth in Serie A, five points adrift of the Champions League positions. The 60-year-old Portuguese was a shock appointment in 2021, Roma's announcement of his arrival as the replacement to Paulo Fonseca coming almost completely out of the blue. He immediately became a huge fan favourite, with his image popping up on walls around Rome as supporters dreamed of success under one of football's greatest ever coaches. And in his first season he guided Roma to the inaugural Conference League, a triumph which brought Mourinho to tears on the pitch and made him an almost God-like figure to one of Europe's most passionate and success-starved fan bases. He then came to within a penalty shootout of winning back-to-back European finals, Roma falling at the last hurdle against Sevilla in last season's Europa League. That was a defeat which both enraged Mourinho and supporters, who attacked referee Anthony Taylor with chairs at Budapest's Ferenc Liszt

airport in anger at what they considered bad decisions which cost their team the trophy. However the magic between Mourinho and the fans began to wear off this term, with poor results and performances partly due to a raft of injuries and summer transfers which haven't worked out.



### Namibia Shock Tunisia for First Ever Africa Cup of Nations Victory



ABIDJAN (Dispatches) - Namibia produced the biggest shock so far in an Africa Cup of Nations full of upsets in the Ivory Coast by snatching a 1-0 triumph over former champions Tunisia on Tuesday. It was a historic first victory in the flagship African tournament for the Brave Warriors, who defeated and drew with another top team, Cameroon, in qualifiers for the 2024 edition. Deon Hotto headed the only goal of the opening match in Group E with two minutes of regular time remaining to raise the number of surprise results to six from 10 matches after only four days. Before Namibia made a mockery of the world rankings in the northern city of Korhogo, five other former title-holders failed to win their opening matches. The rush of unexpected results began on Sunday when Equatorial Guinea held Nigeria, then Egypt needed an added-time penalty from Mohamed Salah to snatch a draw against Mozambique. Cape Verde scored in added time to defeat Ghana, the third most successful country in the African showpiece with four titles. On Monday, 10-man Guinea held five-time champions Cameroon before Angola recovered from a poor first-half showing to draw 1-1 with Algeria, who have conquered Africa twice. Tunisia are currently ranked third of 54 African football nations, behind only 2022 World Cup semi-finalists Morocco and Cup of Nations defending champions Senegal. They are also 87 places above Namibia in the world rankings, making them hot favourites to get their group campaign off to a winning start. While Tunisia qualified comfortably for the Ivory Coast, Namibia had to overcome a number of off-field obstacles before securing a place. Sub-standard stadiums in the largely desert southern Africa country meant playing home qualifiers against Burundi and Cameroon in Soweto on the outskirts of Johannesburg.

### Embiid Scores 41 as Sixers Outdueled Jokic, Nuggets

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Joel Embiid conjured a second straight 40-point performance to outduel Nikola Jokic as the Philadelphia 76ers downed the NBA-champion Denver Nuggets 126-121. A heavyweight showdown pitting reigning NBA Most Valuable Player Embiid against Denver's two-time MVP Jokic did not disappoint as the two teams went toe-to-toe from the outset. Embiid, who scored 41 points on his return from injury in the Sixers' win over Houston on Monday, was once again in superb form, finishing with 41 points, seven rebounds and 10 assists. The 29-year-old was imperious down the stretch, scoring 11 points in the fourth quarter as the Sixers transformed a six-point deficit into victory. "I'm just letting the game come to me, but the credit goes to my teammates -- they put me in the best position to succeed and they trust me, that's the key," Embiid said after a game watched by a sellout 19,775 crowd at Philadelphia's Wells Fargo Center. "I would not be doing what I'm doing without the trust they have in me," Embiid added. Embiid embraced Jokic following the final buzzer, with the two men sharing a friendly exchange after a hard-fought game. "I just told him he's the best player in the league," Embiid said. "He won a championship, and that's the best team in the league and he's a finals MVP. I just told him to keep going." The game had been finely poised at 111-111 with just over seven minutes remaining. Embiid re-entered the fray just after Jokic checked back in from the bench, and it was the Cameroon-born power forward who ultimately seized control of the contest. A sublime running reverse layup from Embiid put the Sixers 115-113 ahead, before a jump shot increased the Philadelphia cushion to four points with 5min 30sec remaining. A free throw and a 27-foot three-pointer left the Sixers 121-113 ahead, and Embiid then added a jump shot to extend Philadelphia's advantage to 10 points at 123-113 to effectively seal victory. Embiid received scoring support from Tyrese Maxey with 25 points -- including four three-pointers -- while Tobias Harris pitched in with 24 points. Kelly Oubre Jr added 11 points. Jokic led the Denver scoring with 25 points, 19 rebounds and three assists. Michael Porter Jr finished with 20 points and Jamal Murray added 17. Philadelphia improved to 26-13 to remain in third place in the Eastern Conference standings, trailing first placed Boston (31-9) with Milwaukee second in the table on 28-12. Denver remain third in the Western Conference on 28-14, behind Minnesota (28-11) and Oklahoma City (27-12).

