

The Iranian Navy's 94th Flotilla of Warships, Led by Alborz frigate, Has Entered the Territorial Waters After a Long Mission in the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea

IRAN NEWS

Iran's Chargé d'Affaires in London Rejected Accusations by a British Tabloid That the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Is Running Espionage Operations on British Soil and Likened it to Hollywood Adventurism

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Gaza Situation a Tragedy of Muslim World, All Humanity



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei says the ongoing catastrophic incidents in the Gaza Strip are a tragedy of the Muslim world and the entire humanity. "The tragedy of Gaza is the tragedy of the Muslim world and rather all humanity, ... and it shows that the current world order is invalid and cannot endure and is doomed to perish," Ayatollah Khamenei said on Thursday during a meeting with a group of state officials and diplomatic representatives of Muslim countries in Tehran. Ayatollah Khamenei said the US, Britain and many European countries as well as their stooges are complicit in the Zionist regime's criminal acts against the Palestinian people. The Leader emphasized that Israel's bombings of hospitals in Gaza and the killing of nearly 30,000 people in the Strip have brought disgrace upon the Western civilization and culture. The US money, weapons and political assistance are behind all these crimes against the Palestinian people, the Leader said. As admitted by the Zionists themselves, Ayatollah Khamenei added, they could not have continued the war on Gaza for a single day in the absence of US weapons. "Therefore, the Americans are also complicit and responsible for the ongoing tragic incidents" in the Gaza Strip, the Leader emphasized. The Leader stated that the Gaza crisis will end if the western powers stop their support for the Israeli regime, emphasizing that the Palestinian fighters are able to manage the situation on their own and this is why they have not suffered a major blow so far. The Leader once again reiterated that all countries are duty-bound to cut off political, propaganda, and weapons aid to Israel and stop sending consumer goods to the regime, saying, "Nations have an obligation to exert pressure on the governments to fulfill this big duty."

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK



Iran Celebrates 45th Anniversary of Islamic Revolution

TEHRAN - Millions of Iranians in the country and worldwide poured into the streets across the country to celebrate the 45th anniversary of the 1979 Islamic Revolution spearheaded by the late charismatic leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. On Sunday, people took part in mass rallies in the capital Tehran and other cities and towns to renew their allegiance to the Islamic establishment. The rallies took place simultaneously in 1,400 cities and over 35,000 villages from all over Iran. They chanted slogans in support of the Islamic Republic and waved the Iranian national flags. The event was covered by more than 7,300 Iranian and foreign media personnel. Meanwhile, the ground-to-ground missile Qiyam (Uprising) was put on display along the route to Azadi Square. Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi addressed the crowd at Tehran's Azadi Square. On the eve of the event, fireworks displays were performed in Tehran and other cities at 9:00 p.m. overnight, as people chanted Allahu Akbar (God is the Greatest) in an expression of solidarity with the Islamic Revolution. On this day, forty-five years ago, the US-backed Pahlavi regime was overthrown in a popular uprising that also ended the meddling of foreign hegemonic powers in Iran's internal affairs. Addressing a massive rally in the capital, Tehran, President Raisi reaffirmed Iran's unwavering support for the Palestinian people, saying Palestine remains the number one issue of the Muslim world as the founder of the Islamic Republic Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini said famously. He said Western powers tried very hard to dissuade Iran from supporting Palestine but failed miserably. "The Westerners tried hard to make Iran stop defending Palestine and the ideals of the Islamic Revolution, whether through war or economic blockade and sanctions, and repeatedly sent messages saying 'stop defending Palestine,'" he said. The president hastened to add that forty-five years after the victory of the revolution, it is now proven that "the Islamic Republic and our visionary Imam" were right in saying that Palestine is the first issue of the Islamic world and that al-Quds must be freed. He also advised people who want to know the West, the US and the Zionist regime to look at their ongoing crimes against humanity, war crimes and child-killings in Gaza. Also in his remarks, Raisi noted that Iran ranks first in science production in the region and 15th in the world. Iran has been able to achieve self-sufficiency in many areas, something that benefits the country and the entire region, he added. "Iran made achievements in different sectors in light of self-belief and believing in people and God," the president said. "Thanks to the Islamic Revolution and the efforts of the young people of our country, today we are among the frontrunners in the medical, biotechnology and nanotechnology fields." Meanwhile, the Iranian chief executive said that the Islamic Revolution is racing forward following the periods of establishment, stabilization and development, and that it recognizes no obstacle in its path forward. "The enemy launched military, economic, media and psychological wars, and more recently, a hybrid war in order to stop the Iranian nation, but the people emerged victorious in all arenas and disappointed the enemy," he noted. The movement of the Iranian nation is based on the Islamic Revolution's discourse, which carries a message of liberation and independence for nations and a message of resistance and resilience against enemies, he added. Additionally, President Raisi said that through the Islamic Revolution, the Iranian nation replaced humiliation with dignity and transmitted the message of independence. "Today, the most independent country in the world is the Islamic Republic of Iran. A country that is neither dependent on the East nor the West, makes its own decisions, and acts on its own," he asserted.

FM Says UN Needs Fundamental Reform



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iran's foreign minister says unilateralism is the root cause of many crises around the world, and it is fundamentally essential to promote multilateralism and carry out structural reforms at the United Nations and its Security Council. Hossein Amir-Abdollahian made the announcement in a video message released on Friday, on the occasion of the 45th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution. "I would like to emphasize that the focus of certain parties on unilateralism is associated with many crises, and uncertainties in providing political and international solutions." Amir-Abdollahian said unilateralism also has to do with the "expansion of the scope of war and insecurity in various regions of the world." Today, the Iranian minister stated, global developments, not least Israel's savage hostilities in Gaza, have clearly shown that the United Nations, especially the Security Council, is not functioning effectively. Elsewhere in his message, Amir-Abdollahian said a centerpiece to Iran's foreign policy agenda is constructive international interaction and strong cooperation with the neighbors. The top Iranian diplomat congratulated all Iranians around the globe on the anniversary of the Islamic Revolution. He said Iran's grand achievements in various fields over the past 45 years are directly associated with the expansion and development of the frontiers of knowledge, science, industry, medicine, engineering and presence in space, among other fields. Iran is now considered among the top five and main countries in the world in certain fields of science and technology, the minister said.

ZN Vostok Has Invested Over \$500m in Iran Oil Projects



TEHRAN (Shana) - Russia's ZN Vostok (ZNV) has invested more than \$500 million in Iran's oil projects, said the company's managing director. Speaking via videoconference during the inauguration ceremony of Iranian oil and gas projects in southwestern province of Khuzestan on Tuesday, Ismagilov Azamat Faritovich added, "Out of the figure, \$170 million have been invested in the Cheshmeh Khosh oil field development project." According to him, the daily production of Cheshmeh Khosh field has risen to over 62,000 barrels from 48,000 barrels. ZN Vostok is currently using three drilling rigs there, said the CEO, adding the Russian company will add another for drilling six wells. According to the contract, he continued, ZNV drills 20 wells and installs 22 downhole pumps in Cheshmeh Khosh oil field. Cheshmeh Khosh oil field is located in the south of Ilam Province and northwest of Khuzestan Province.

Nasrallah Says Resistance Will Emerge Victorious

BEIRUT (Dispatches) - The secretary general of the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement says he is confident that the Palestinian nation and resistance factions will eventually emerge victorious and the Israeli regime will suffer a humiliating defeat in the Gaza Strip. Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah made the remarks in a meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian in the Lebanese capital Beirut on Saturday, during which they discussed the latest regional developments, most notably the ongoing Israeli offensives against Palestinians in the besieged coastal territory. The meeting was also attended by Iran's ambassador to Beirut Mojtaba Amani, senior adviser to the Iranian foreign minister Ali Asghar Khaji, and director general of the Iranian Foreign Ministry's West Asia and North Africa Department Mahdi Shoushtari. Nasrallah hailed the unflinching support offered by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei as well as the Iranian government and nation for oppressed and resilient Palestinians. He pointed to the high combat readiness as well as utmost unison and cooperation among all forces of the Axis of Resistance, stressing that, "The Zionist enemy is faced with a strategic crisis and has failed to achieve any of its declared objectives goals" for the war on Gaza. The Hezbollah leader went on to commend Ayatollah Khamenei's

sensible, transparent and sovereign positions vis-à-vis unfolding developments in the Gaza Strip and the occupied West Bank as matchless among world leaders. Nasrallah described the resistance front as an important playmaker in regional equations, saying, "The victory of the Palestinian nation and the resistance front is certain and definite." For his part, Amir-Abdollahian briefed the Hezbollah chief on Iran's diplomatic efforts at the international arena in support of Palestine and their resistance groups, stressing that the measures have especially focused on a political solution to the Palestinian issue that would help restore the people's rights. He stated that recognition of the Axis of Resistance as the main party in proposed political initiatives attests to the significant role that the umbrella group plays in Palestine and the entire West Asia region. "The Palestinian resistance front has acted wisely and authoritatively both on the path of resilience and a political solution [to the Gaza conflict]." In any political initiative, the role of Palestinians and consensus among Palestinian leaders and groups should be taken into serious consideration, "the Iranian foreign minister emphasized. Heading a political delegation, Amir-Abdollahian has traveled to Lebanon in the first leg of a regional tour that focuses on ways to bring an end to the Israeli regime's onslaught on Gaza.

Eurostat Puts Iran's Gas Exports to Turkey at 5.4 bcm



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - The Statistical Office of the European Union "Eurostat" said Iran's export of gas to Turkey in 2023 reached 5.4 billion cubic meters (bcm), showing a 42 percent decline compared to a year earlier. Eurostat put the total volume of the natural gas exported from Iran to neighboring Turkey in 2023 at 5.4 billion cubic meters. Iran had exported over 9.4 billion cubic meters of gas to Turkey in 2022, the report added. Iran's export of gas to Turkey in 2023 faced a hiatus for some months and reached almost zero from July to September of that year but the flow of Iranian gas to Turkey was resumed in October and reached the previous level in November and December. Iran normally exports 500 to 900 million cubic meters of gas to Turkey every month. According to the report, Iran exported 682 million and 781 million cubic meters of gas to Turkey in November and December respectively. Explaining the reason for the suspension of Iran's gas export to Turkey for several months, the head of the dispatching department of the Iranian National Gas Company (NING) said that gas export was disconnected at the request of the Turkish side for repair and maintenance services and after that, Iran's gas export to Turkey was resumed.



IRAN NEWS



Iran Space Industry to Reach GEO Orbit in 2028

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Iran’s minister of communications and information technology (ICT) said the country’s space industry will reach the GEO orbit in 2028. Expanding on the strategic vision of the country’s space industry, Issa Zarepour noted that it has gained outstanding achievements, especially over the past two years. The minister pointed out that his ministry has formulated a 10-year road map for the country’s space industry which was approved last year (2022), details of which were announced by President Ebrahim Raisi. According to the road map, the country should get access to the Geo orbit at 36,000 km altitude, Zarepour emphasized. All experts and specialists in the country’s space industry are trying to materialize this objective, he added. During the second meeting of the Supreme Space Council, headed by the president, a 10-year strategic space plan was approved and endorsed by the Council, he said, adding, “According to the plan, Iran will become a regional hub in the development of the space technology in the next 10 years.” Planning and implementing space missions so that citizens, startups, businesses and executive organizations can benefit from the world’s most modern technologies, are among the goals of the plan, he noted.

Tehran to Host 17th Int'l Tourism Exhibition

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK



TEHRAN – The 17th Tehran International Tourism and Related Industries Exhibition will open today (Monday) where some 11 countries are to attend it. Deputy Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Ali-Asghar Shalbafan in a press conference said that the exhibition will open as of today at the Tehran International Permanent Fairground with the presence of tourism industry activists from Russia, Turkey, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Uzbekistan, Vietnam, Tajikistan, Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Sri Lanka. Shalbafan noted that 69 foreign travel agencies except those which have pavilions in the exhibition have announced readiness to attend the event and they are mostly from cities of Kazan and Saint Petersburg of Russia. He also said that Georgian Secretary General of UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Mr. Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary General of the ECO Ambassador Khurov Noziri, Chairman of the Tourism Committee of Uzbekistan Mr. Umid Shadiev as well as some managers from the OIC are to attend the event. He went on to say that the 4-day event will be one of the biggest exhibitions in Iran and it will be held in 20 halls in an area around 60,000 square meters.



200 Essential Items Made by Iranian Manufacturers Under 13th Administration

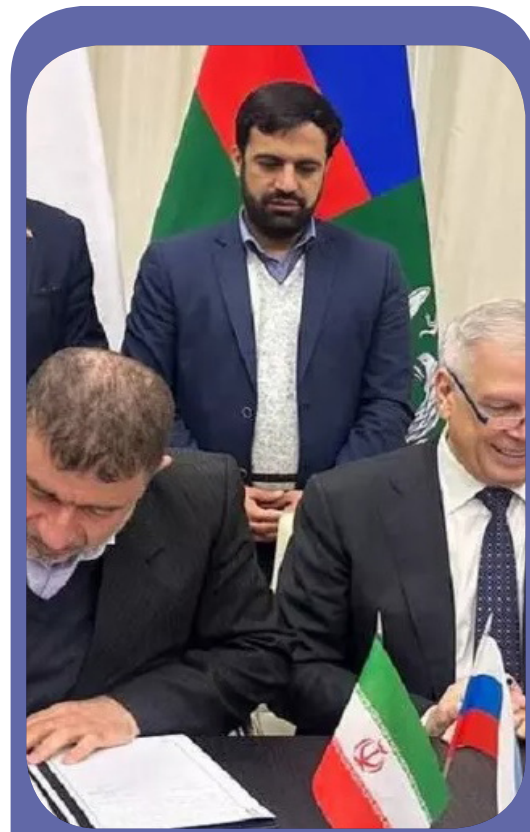
TEHRAN (Shana) - Iran’s oil minister said 200 essential items have been produced by domestic manufacturers under the 13th administration. Javad Owji, who made the statement on the sidelines of an exhibition dubbed the “Narrative of Progress” in the northeastern city of Mashhad on Thursday, added the products were previously imported. He said the oil industry is now self-sufficient in different sectors, underlining the presence of knowledge-based companies and elites in the industry proves the claim. The Oil Ministry got cooperation from 150 knowledge-based companies when the 13th administration took office in August 2021, pointed out Owji, continuing the number of knowledge-based firms cooperating with the ministry has now exceeded 650. Different ministries including the Oil Ministry and its affiliates – the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC), the National Iranian Oil Products Distribution Company (NIOPDC), and the National Petrochemical Company (NPC), the Health and Medical Treatment Organization – have displayed their

latest achievements in the exhibition. Earlier, Economy Minister Seyyed Ehsan Khandouzi visited the second “Narrative of Progress”. Meanwhile the National Iranian Gas Company managing director said domestic manufacturers are now meeting about 98 of NIGC’s needs. Majid Chegeni added NIGC prides itself on supporting the country’s knowledge-based companies, inventors, and innovators. The exhibition has displayed the great Iranian nation’s power achieved through round-the-clock efforts, he underlined. Great achievements have been made in the oil and gas industry, the CEO of NIGC continued, pointing to self-reliance in all aspects. Different ministries including the Oil Ministry and its affiliates – the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC), the National Iranian Oil Products Distribution Company (NIOPDC), and the National Petrochemical Company (NPC), the Health and Medical Treatment Organization – have displayed their latest achievements in the exhibition.

Iran, India Emphasize Expanding Agricultural Cooperation



TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Officials from Iran and India stressed the need to enhance cooperation on balancing the import and export of agricultural products. The first meeting of the joint agricultural working group was held in New Delhi between Iran’s Deputy Minister of Agriculture Ahmad Khani Nozari and India’s Deputy Minister of Agriculture Pramod Kumar Meherda. The two sides exchanged views on the import and export of agricultural, horticultural and fishery products between the two countries. They termed the two countries’ economies as complementary to each other and stressed strengthening cooperation on balancing the import and export of agricultural products, IRNA reported. Also, the general directors and representatives of different agricultural, horticultural, fisheries and customs organizations of the two countries discussed the capabilities and challenges facing the bilateral trade and economic cooperation. Unification of the import and export tariff of agricultural products between the two countries was the main topic of discussion between the Iranian and Indian officials.



Iran, Russia Sign Long-Term Grain Supply Agreement

MOSCOW (IRNA) - Iran and Russia have signed a long-term agreement for supply of grains from Russia to Iran. The agreement was signed on Saturday on the sidelines of a meeting between Iranian and Russian deputy agriculture ministers in Moscow. The deal allows Russia’s Sberbank and VTB Bank to open letters of credit for supply of grains to Iran in the coming years. The two banks became officially involved in grain supply arrangements between Iran and Russia in early 2023 when Iranian central bank authorities and Russian counterparts agreed on opening a line of credit worth 6.5 billion rubles (\$71.4 million). The agricultural ministry delegations of Iran and Russia also signed an agreement on Saturday to facilitate the exports of fisheries and dairy products from Iran to Russia. The agreement was signed between Iranian and Russian veterinary chiefs Mojtaba Norouzi and Sergei Dankvert.

Sudan Seeks to Deepen Scientific and Technological Ties With Iran

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - The Sudanese acting foreign minister has stressed the need to develop scientific and technological cooperation with Iran. “I am happy that Islamic countries such as Iran have made rapid advances in the field of technology,” Ali Al-Sadiq Ali said in a meeting with Amir-Hossein Mirabadi, the director of the Center of International Science and Technology Cooperation (CISTC), at Iran’s House of Innovation and Technology (iHiT) in Tehran on Tuesday. “Nowadays, countries with low scientific productivity and power are not respected. Therefore, we should expand our knowledge and exchange experiences so that all Muslims can benefit from advancements in science and technology,” the Sudanese official added. He went on to say that Sudan is a large country with a population of about 50 million. The country has vast areas of agricultural land. However, these resources cannot be utilized without the use of technology. “I hope the two sides would be able to

develop cooperation in science and technology in areas of common interest.” During the meeting, Mirabadi said there are many opportunities for cooperation in the field of science and technology between Iran and Sudan. “The two countries can collaborate in various fields. Iran is interested in expanding technological cooperation with Sudan. Some 10,000 knowledge-based companies, a large number of startups, and science and technology parks are active in our country, which provides a good capacity for cooperation with Sudan,” Mirabadi added. Iranian companies are ready to cooperate with African companies. The two governments also agree on the necessity of technological cooperation, and Iran is well prepared for technology transfer to Sudan, he concluded. Mirabadi said earlier that accessing new markets is a newly adopted strategy, that is, deepening trade ties with countries, like Africa, that the country has failed to note before.

Iran Leading Country in ME in Overhauling Thermal Power Plants



TEHRAN (Tasnim) – The chief executive officer of the Iran Power Plant Repairs Company (IPRC) said Iran is the forerunner in the Middle East in the field of repairing thermal power plants. Iran has no dependency on foreign countries for repairing thermal power plants, Masoud Moradi stated, noting that it owes its success in the field to experienced and expert specialists. The company has taken giant strides in recent years in cutting its dependency on foreign countries for constructing equipment and reconstructing power plant equipment, he said, adding that the country has attained the technical know-how of manufacturing power plants in the country. Iran has joined the club of five countries having the technology to manufacture power plants’ equipment, Moradi highlighted, IRNA reported. Elsewhere in his remarks, he pointed to the success of experts in Iran’s electricity industry in repairing power plant turbines of the regional countries and said 37,000 parts and equipment needed by the power plants of the country have been manufactured at this company in the current administration, which assumed office in August 2021. Hence, the company has prevented up to €16.5 million in capital flight, he added.



Hungarian President Resigns Over Abuse Case Pardon

BUDAPEST (Reuters) - Hungarian President Katalin Novak resigned after coming under mounting pressure for pardoning a man convicted of helping to cover up sexual abuse in a children's home. Novak, a close ally of conservative Prime Minister Viktor Orban, resigned a week after her presidential pardon was first reported by local news site 444.hu. The revelation caused a public uproar and demands from the opposition for her and former Justice Minister Judit Varga to quit. Varga, who has been a rising star in Orban's ruling Fidesz party, resigned as a lawmaker on Saturday. The scandal was a rare setback for Orban, who has been in power since 2010, and who faces European parliament elections just as the country emerges from an inflation crisis. Orban has for years campaigned to protect children from what he has described as LGBTQ activists roaming the nation's schools. This has been one of several issues over which Orban has clashed with the European Commission.



Putin Says Russia Has No Interest in Attacking Poland or Latvia



MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russian President Vladimir Putin said in an interview that Russia will fight for its interests "to the end" but has no interest in expanding its war in Ukraine to other countries such as Poland and Latvia. In his first interview with an American journalist since before Russia's invasion of Ukraine nearly two years ago, Putin said Western leaders had come to realize it was impossible to inflict a strategic defeat on Russia and were wondering what to do next. "We are ready for this dialogue," he said. Putin also said he believed it was possible to reach an agreement to free U.S. journalist Evan Gershkovich of the Wall Street Journal, who has been detained in Russia for nearly a year and is awaiting trial on spying charges. Putin made the comments in a more than two-hour interview with conservative talk-show host Tucker Carlson that was conducted in Moscow on Tuesday and aired on tuckercarlson.com. Asked if he could imagine a scenario in which he would send Russian troops to Poland, a NATO member, Putin replied: "Only in one case, if Poland attacks Russia. Why? Because we have no interest in Poland, Latvia or anywhere else. Why would we do that? We simply don't have any interest." Putin spoke in Russian and his remarks were dubbed into English. He began with lengthy remarks about Russia's relations with Ukraine, Poland and other countries. Putin devoted a substantial part of the interview to complaining that Ukraine had been on the verge of agreeing a deal to end hostilities at talks in Istanbul in April 2022, but backed away, he said, once Russian troops withdrew from near Kyiv. "Well now let them think how to reverse the situation," he said. "We're not against it. It would be funny if it were not so sad that. This endless mobilization in Ukraine, the hysteria, the domestic problems, sooner or later it will result in an agreement." The Russian leader said the U.S. had pressing domestic issues to worry about. "Wouldn't it be better to negotiate with Russia? Make an agreement. Already understanding the situation that is developing today, realizing that Russia will fight for its interests to the end," Putin said. Washington, which has sent Ukraine more than \$110 billion in aid since Russia invaded in February 2022, has made clear it has no interest in talking on Putin's terms.



Palestinians Brace for Israel Attack on Rafah

DOHA (Dispatches) - Israeli air strikes killed 17 people in Rafah on the Gaza border overnight, medics said on Saturday, as over a million Palestinians crammed into the city awaited a full-scale offensive with the rest of the enclave in ruins and nowhere left to run. Four months into the war, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said it had ordered the military to develop a plan to evacuate Rafah and destroy four Hamas battalions it says are deployed there. The Israeli military said the air force killed two Hamas operatives in Rafah on Saturday. Israel's military ordered civilians to flee south before previous assaults on Gaza's cities, but now there is no obvious place to go and aid agencies have said many people could die. "Any Israeli incursion in Rafah means massacres, means destruction. People are filling every inch of the city and we have nowhere to go," said Rezik Salah, 35, who fled from Gaza City for Rafah with his wife and two children early in the war. A possible assault on Rafah prompted international concern, including posts on social media from British Foreign Secretary David Cameron and Dutch Foreign Minister Hanke Bruins Slot. "Deeply concerned about the prospect of a military offensive in Rafah - over half of Gaza's population are sheltering in the area. The priority must be an immediate pause in the fighting to get aid in and hostages out, then progress towards a sustainable, permanent ceasefire," Cameron said on X, formerly known as Twitter. "Hard to see how large-scale military operations in such a densely populated area would not lead to many civilian casualties and a bigger humanitarian catastrophe. This is unjustifiable," Bruins Slot said. In Yemen, the Houthi militia held a funeral on Saturday for at least 17 militants killed during joint U.S.-British airstrikes, the Houthi-run Saba news agency said. The Houthis have used drones to attack merchant ships since Nov. 19 in what they say is a response to Israel's military operations in Gaza, prompting retaliatory strikes from Britain and the United States. The U.S. Central Command said its forces conducted self-defence strikes against Houthi missiles and drones on Saturday. In Lebanon, an Israeli strike targeted a Palestinian figure close to Hamas, security sources said. The

target survived but three others were killed, including a member of Hezbollah. Much of Gaza has been reduced to rubble by Israeli airstrikes, artillery fire and controlled detonations. More than 85% of Gaza's 2.3 million inhabitants have been left homeless. Most of the displaced have sought shelter in Rafah, on the border with Egypt, but after fruitless ceasefire talks, Netanyahu this week said Israeli forces would fight on until "total victory." On Friday night an airstrike on a Rafah house killed 11 people and wounded dozens and a second strike killed six people in another house, medical officials said. Earlier on Saturday two separate Israeli airstrikes killed five members of the Hamas-run police force in Rafah, including a senior officer, Hamas and medics said. In the other main southern Gaza city of Khan Younis, where many displaced people initially fled before an Israeli offensive last month, the Palestinian Health Ministry voiced alarm at Israeli operations around the main Nasser Hospital. The ministry said Israeli forces had surrounded the hospital and were shooting in the vicinity, raising concerns about 300 medical staff, 450 patients and 10,000 people sheltering there. Footage circulating on social media, which Reuters could not independently verify, showed tanks at the hospital gates. Israel's military said its forces were continuing intensive activities in Khan Younis as well as northern and central Gaza, killing militants, seizing weapons and striking infrastructure. It did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the situation at Nasser hospital. In Gaza City, the first major population center targeted after Israeli ground forces invaded in October, residents reported fierce fighting on Saturday. Israel said its forces had discovered a tunnel network hundreds of metres (yards) long running partly under the Gaza City headquarters of UNRWA, the main relief agency for Palestinians. The military said it was evidence of how Hamas had exploited UNRWA, which has launched an internal probe and seen some donor countries freeze funding over Israel's allegations that 12 of its roughly 13,000 employees in the Gaza Strip had participated in the Oct. 7 attacks.

Protests in Senegal Turn Deadly as Political Crisis Deepens



DAKAR (Dispatches) - Senegal's political crisis deepened as a second person died Saturday in increasingly violent protests against President Macky Sall's decision to postpone upcoming presidential elections. A 23-year-old man died Saturday after being shot during clashes in the capital Dakar, two of his relatives told AFP, while a 22-year-old student died Friday in the northern town of Saint-Louis in still uncertain circumstances. "The international and regional community must bear witness to the excesses of this dying regime," said presidential candidate Khalifa Sall (no relation). Modou Gueye, a market vendor, took "a live round to the stomach" on Friday in the Colobane neighbourhood of the capital Dakar, said his brother Dame Gueye, 29, who was with him at the time. His brother-in-law Mbagnick Ndiaye said he succumbed to his injuries Saturday morning. Authorities have yet to confirm Gueye's death, but videos posted to social media suggest there were others injured as well. In Saint-Louis, Alpha Yoro Toukara died on the campus of Gaston Berger University where he was studying geography, and a hundred of his classmates held an all-night vigil for him. The Interior Ministry issued a statement denying that security forces had operated within the university campus. Anger has mounted since President Sall last week postponed until December a presidential election scheduled February 25. The postponement came hours before official campaigning was due to begin. Protests were held across the country Friday and police made wide use of tear gas to keep crowds away from a main central square in Dakar, also closing main roads, rail lines and major markets.



Trump Threatens to Urge Russian Attack of NATO Allies Behind on Payments

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - White House hopeful Donald Trump said he would "encourage" Russia to attack members of NATO who had not met their financial obligations, his most extreme broadside against the military alliance he has long expressed skepticism about. With US lawmakers debating new aid for Ukraine ahead of the second anniversary of Russia's invasion, the former president has repeatedly said it was unfair to commit the United States to defending NATO's 30 other member nations. Speaking at a campaign rally in South Carolina Saturday, Trump described a conversation with a fellow head of state at an unspecified NATO meeting. "One of the presidents of a big country stood up and said, 'Well, sir, if we don't pay, and we're attacked by Russia, will you protect us?' I said, 'You didn't pay, you're delinquent?'" "No, I would not protect you. In fact, I would encourage them to do whatever the hell they want. You got to pay. You got to pay your bills." Trump said today during a campaign rally he would encourage Russia to "do whatever the hell they want" to any NATO member country that didn't meet spending guidelines. pic.twitter.com/azwR3IzeFE Trump's remark comes after Senate Republicans on Wednesday rejected a

bipartisan bill that would have included sorely needed new funding for Ukraine, plus aid for ally Israel, along with reforms to address the U.S.-Mexico border crisis. The White House hit back at Trump's assertions, touting President Joe Biden's efforts to bolster alliances around the globe. "Encouraging invasions of our closest allies by murderous regimes is appalling and unhinged," White House spokesman Andrew Bates said in a statement Saturday night. "Rather than calling for wars and promoting deranged chaos, President Biden will continue to bolster American leadership," Bates added. The Senate bill's death highlighted Trump's iron grip on the Republican Party, as its lawmakers acceded to the former president's calls to torpedo any deal in order to deny Biden a win on immigration ahead of November's election. At the rally Saturday, Trump celebrated the collapse of the legislation, vowing that, if reelected, he would carry out a massive "deportation operation" on his first day in office. "Let's not forget that this week we also had another massive victory that every conservative should celebrate. We crushed crooked Joe Biden's disastrous open borders bill," Trump declared at a rally in South Carolina.



Polish Farmers' Protests Crank Up Pressure on EU Agriculture Head

WARSAW (Dispatches) - Polish politicians called on the EU Commissioner for Agriculture to quit as farmers blocked roads across his home country Poland and at border crossings with Ukraine, kicking off a month-long general strike to protest against EU policies. Farmers in France, Belgium, Portugal, Greece, Spain and Germany have also been protesting against constraints placed on them by EU measures to tackle climate change, as well as rising costs and what they say is unfair competition from abroad. Polish farmers are angry about the impact of cheap food imports from neighbouring Ukraine and what they say is the "passivity" of their government. EU Agriculture Commissioner Janusz Wojciechowski came under fire from all sides. "There is a man in Europe who united all European and Polish farmers against the reform he proposed. This is Janusz Wojciechowski. Resign!" said Deputy Prime Minister Wladyslaw Kosiniak-Kamysz. Wojciechowski was also criticised by the leader of the former ruling Law and Justice (PIS) party that proposed him for the position. Jaroslaw Kaczynski said he would call the commissioner to ask him to quit. Wojciechowski told private broadcaster Polsat News that he had not answered or looked at his telephone, adding that he would make a statement on his future in a few days, probably on Thursday. He defended his record, saying that he was the only commissioner to have opposed imports from Ukraine. About 100 farmers and 50 cars blocked the approach to Medyka border crossing, blocking traffic for all vehicles. Ukrainian border service spokesman Andriy Demchenko said on television. The Ukrainian border service also said that traffic flow had been disrupted at two other crossings. Elsewhere in central Europe, a farmers' protest was taking place at the Zahony crossing on the border between Hungary and Ukraine. In a comment to the Ukrainian Pravda outlet, Demchenko said there was no disruption for trucks during the day.

Imran Khan's Party Wants to Form Government, Threatens Protests

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - Candidates backed by the party of jailed Pakistani opposition leader Imran Khan plan to form a government, a senior aide to the former prime minister said on Saturday, urging supporters to peacefully protest if final election results are not released. The nation of 241 million people voted on Thursday in a general election, as the country struggles to recover from an economic crisis and battles militant violence in a deeply polarised political environment. Both Khan and his main rival, three-time former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, declared victory on Friday, increasing uncertainty over who will form the next government at a time when swift policy action is needed to address multiple challenges. Gohar Khan, the chairman of Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-Insaf (PTI) party who also acts as the former prime minister's lawyer, called on "all institutions" in Pakistan to respect his party's mandate. At a press conference, he said if complete results of the polls were not released by Saturday night, the party would hold peaceful protests on Sunday outside government offices returning election results around the country. Hundreds of Khan's supporters rallied in the northwestern city of Peshawar led by two of his aides who said they had been declared losers despite having won the polls. "We never expected it would happen to us," said Taimur Khan Jhagra, one of Khan's former provincial ministers. The protesters chanted slogans against what they called a vote fraud. Sharif said on Friday his party had emerged as the single largest group and would talk to

other groups to form a coalition government. By end of Saturday, results were still not in for 10 of the 265 seats contested in the election - 48 hours after the polls closed. The latest tally, posted on the election commission's website, showed independent candidates had won 100 seats, with Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) taking 72 seats. At least 90 of the victorious independent candidates were backed by Khan and his party, a Reuters analysis showed - putting them well ahead of Sharif's party. Khan's supporters were running as independents because they had been barred from contesting the polls under his party's electoral symbol by the election commission for not complying with electoral laws. Despite the ban and Khan's imprisonment for convictions on charges ranging from leaking state secrets to corruption to an unlawful marriage, millions of the former cricketer's supporters came out to vote for him, even though he cannot be part of any government while he remains in prison. However, under Pakistan's electoral laws, independent candidates are not eligible to be allocated reserved seats, 70 of which are meant to be distributed according to party strength. Sharif's party could get up to 20 of these seats. Khan's close aide and media adviser, Zulfi Bukhari, told Reuters the party would announce within the next day the party banner they will ask independents to join. In Pakistan, independent candidates cannot form a government on their own and need to join a party.





Curry Lifts Warriors Over Suns, Mavs Silence Thunder

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Stephen Curry drilled the game-winning three-pointer in the Golden State Warriors' thrilling 113-112 NBA victory over former teammate Kevin Durant and the Phoenix Suns. Curry made nine three-pointers on the way to 30 points, but the 35-year-old star saved his best for last. In a back-and-forth battle that featured 22 lead changes, the Warriors trailed 112-110 with 3.3 seconds remaining when Curry caught an awkward inbounds pass from Brandin Podziemski, turned and unleashed a long trey that put Golden State ahead with seven-tenths of a second remaining. It was just one more signature moment for Curry, a four-time champion and two-time NBA Most Valuable Player with the Warriors, who are struggling this season to maintain their status as Western Conference contenders. Devin Booker scored 32 points to lead the Suns, with his turnaround jump shot with 35.6 seconds left to play giving Phoenix a 112-110 lead. Durant added 24 but on the Suns' last-gasp inbounds play he couldn't get a shot up. Elsewhere the Dallas Mavericks, fueled by 32 points from Luka Doncic and 25 from Kyrie Irving, routed the high-flying Oklahoma City Thunder 146-111, notching a fourth straight victory to match their longest winning streak of the NBA season. Daniel Gafford added 19 points and nine rebounds as he made his Mavs debut along with P.J. Washington -- both acquired at the trade deadline. Doncic found both newcomers for alley-oop dunks in the first quarter, when Dallas took a 47-30 lead. Doncic outshined Canadian Shai Gilgeous-Alexander in a battle between the league's top two scorers. Doncic, the NBA scoring leader, added eight rebounds and nine assists, and had the luxury of resting in the fourth quarter. Gilgeous-Alexander scored 25

points with six rebounds and five assists, but the Thunder -- who came into the contest just a half-game behind Minnesota for the Western Conference lead -- trailed by as many as 41 and dropped a second straight contest. Irving added eight assists, delivering the 4,000th of his career in the second quarter. Mavs coach Jason Kidd was delighted to see both Gafford and Washington mesh seamlessly with their new teammates, indicating they provide just what Dallas need as they try to climb from eighth in the West. "I thought Gafford was great on both ends," Kidd said. "P.J., he just let the game come to him. The pace was high (and) we didn't have to run anybody's minutes up. Just a lot of good stuff." As the Thunder faltered, the Los Angeles Clippers moved into second place in the West with a tougher-than-expected 112-106 victory over the league-worst Detroit Pistons. Paul George scored 15 of his 33 points in the fourth quarter as the Clippers battled back from a 13-point deficit early in the third quarter. Kawhi Leonard added 24 points for the Clippers, who had seized a quick 12-2 lead in front of home fans only for the Pistons to hit back. Detroit led by five going into the final period, but the Pistons couldn't contain the Clippers down the stretch. The Cleveland Cavaliers pushed their winning streak to nine games with a 119-95 victory over the Raptors in Toronto. Jarrett Allen scored 18 points and pulled down 15 rebounds and eight Cavaliers players scored in double figures. The Philadelphia 76ers, trying to keep their playoff aspirations on track despite the injury absence of NBA Most Valuable Player Joel Embiid, halted a four-game losing streak with a 119-113 victory over the Wizards in Washington.

Iran Football Federation Asks FIFA to Completely Suspend Israel Over Gaza War



TEHRAN (PressTV) - The Iranian football federation has called on world football's governing body, FIFA, to "completely suspend" Israel from football-related activities due to the regime's war on Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip. In an announcement on its official website, the Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran asked FIFA, its member associations and football unions to take "immediate and serious measures" to suspend Israel's football federation in a bid to "prevent the continuation" of the Israeli war on Gaza and "to provide food, drinking water, and medical supplies to civilians." The federation said the suspension was recommended in response to the "inhumane actions carried out by the Zionist regime in Palestine and the commission of war crimes in Gaza, and the massacre that took place against innocent civilians, especially women and children." "Beyond a shadow of a doubt, an immediate action by FIFA, football associations and member unions will be a symbol of philanthropy and the implementation of the charter of the world football community in the field of social and human responsibilities, and will be a brilliant and lasting move in the history of football," the announcement said. Britain's Sky News television network reported on Thursday that a group of football associations in West Asia, including Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates had also "asked world football chiefs to ban Israel over the war on Hamas in Gaza."

Qatar Beat Jordan to Retain Asian Cup With Afif Hat-Trick

DOHA (Dispatches) - Hosts Qatar retained the Asian Cup with a 3-1 win on Saturday against surprise packages Jordan as Akram Afif scored a hat-trick of penalties. It was a fitting final act to a month of football that began with 24 teams and witnessed a series of dramatic games and plenty of goals. It will also help dispel the memories of Qatar's 2022 World Cup, when they lost all three games, the worst record of any host in the competition's history. The 27-year-old Afif was the hero, holding his nerve once from the penalty spot in the first half and, after underdogs Jordan equalized, twice more in the second period. He was named player of the tournament and finished top scorer with eight goals. His team-mates threw him in the air at the final whistle. "It is not about the technique or the angle," said Afif, asked how he was able to score three penalties under pressure in front of 86,492 spectators at Lusail Stadium. "It's about the feeling that the team and people are behind me." Jordan were in their first Asian Cup final and contesting the biggest match in their history. Ranked 87th in FIFA's world rankings, 29 places below their opponents, they fell behind midway through the first half when Afif slotted home after being brought down in the box. Qatar deserved their half-time lead but Jordan roared back to equalize through Yazan Al-Naimat's smart finish. Jordan were level however for just six minutes, Afif scoring once again from a penalty after the referee was advised by VAR to go to his pitch-side monitor. This time there was to be no Jordan comeback and Afif capitalized again from the spot for his hat-trick in injury time, again after a VAR intervention. Qatar came into the final attempting to become the fifth team to lift back-to-back Asian titles. Qatar parachuted in the Spaniard Tintin Marquez to replace Carlos Queiroz just a month before the Asian Cup, in a major gamble that paid off handsomely. "I took charge just before the tournament but what was most important was that I knew the players and they implemented my ideas fast and executed my plans," said Marquez, who has a decade-long association with Qatari football and managed one of their club sides. His team went ahead on 22 minutes when the danger man Afif, playing off the left, was clipped in the box by Abdallah Nasib. Afif brushed himself down to plant his spotkick into the bottom corner, just beating the outstretched arms of Yazan Al-Naimat. In an unusual celebration, Afif did a card trick -- he produced a playing card with his picture on it before the image flipped to an "S", in dedication to his wife. Jordan, who defeated Son Heung-min's South Korea 2-0 to reach the final, had been disappointing but they cranked up the pressure in the second half. A goal was coming and in the 67th minute it duly arrived, Naimat bringing the ball down with his right foot and then thrashing in with his left on the half-volley. Qatar responded almost immediately however, and Afif produced the card trick once more after beating Abulaila from the spot for a second time. It was Afif, inevitably, who won the third penalty and he did the business once again.



Liverpool Regain Top Spot But Suffer Alexander-Arnold Injury Scare



LIVERPOOL (Dispatches) - Jurgen Klopp is sweating on Trent Alexander-Arnold's fitness after the Liverpool defender was injured as the Reds regained top spot in the Premier League with a 3-1 win against Burnley. Klopp's side had been knocked out of pole position by Manchester City's 2-0 victory against Everton earlier in the afternoon. It looked as though Liverpool might end the weekend off the summit after Burnley's Dara O'Shea cancelled out Diogo Jota's opener. But Liverpool recovered their composure in the second half as goals from Luis Diaz and Darwin Nunez lifted them two points clear of second-placed City. However, Alexander-Arnold was forced off at half-time with a knee injury after setting a new Premier League record of 58 assists by a defender with his corner for Jota's opener. Now Klopp is waiting to discover how long he will be without the 25-year-old England right-back. "His knee again? Yes, it felt like that. He got it stuck in the grass and we will see. We have to assess it," he said. "Same area in the knee. Nothing really bad, but he felt it again and we have to see." Trent said "it's fine" but it's not fine (because) he feels it so we had to be careful and took him off and that's a double problem if you want: Trent is off and the other is we had no other right-backs available. "In front of Liverpool's record league crowd of 59,896, following the full opening of the Anfield Road stand, the Reds responded to last weekend's damaging defeat at title rivals Arsenal. It was a hard-fought success rather than an eye-catching performance, with Liverpool's flu and injury-hit side dragging up just enough quality to dispatch second-bottom Burnley.

Leverkusen Thump Bayern to Seize Control of Bundesliga Title Race

LEVERKUSEN (Dispatches) - Xabi Alonso's Bayer Leverkusen took control of the Bundesliga title race, thoroughly outclassing Bayern Munich in a 3-0 home win to go five points clear at the top of the table. Munich-born defender Josip Stanisic, on loan from Bayern, scored the opener in the 18th minute and Alex Grimaldo added another early in the second half. Jeremie Frimpong grabbed a third in injury time, scoring on the counter after Manuel Neuer came up for a Bayern corner, with Leverkusen rounding off an emphatic victory in style as they chase the club's first German title. Bayern had few answers against an energetic and skilful Leverkusen side, fluent in attack, and kept tight control of star striker Harry Kane in defence. With 13 games remaining this season, five-time runners-up Leverkusen now have a golden chance to break Bayern's 11-year reign in the Bundesliga and shed their unwanted "Neverkusen" moniker. "From minute one until minute 90, we had our foot on the pedal," Leverkusen midfielder Robert Andrich told Sky. Alonso told reporters "when you have players willing to make sacrifices, the team gets better." A visibly frustrated Thomas Mueller lamented Bayern's dismal performance. "Leverkusen were taking risks, looking for solutions and playing football," he said. "We're playing from A to B, B to C -- and nobody plays freely or takes risks." Bayern came into the game under an unusual amount of pressure despite sitting just two points behind Leverkusen. The game was

delayed by 10 minutes due to ongoing protests against the German football association's decision to allow increased foreign investment, with fans throwing tennis balls and other objects onto the pitch as the players jogged to keep warm. Despite the delay, Leverkusen showed none of the nerves seen among recent challengers for Bayern's crown, sticking to their high-risk, high-reward approach despite a tight press from the visitors. Amine Adli had a half-chance and blasted straight at Neuer early, but it would be Stanisic who gave Leverkusen the lead against his parent club. Stanisic beat new Bayern full-back Sacha Boey and tapped in a fine Andrich assist from close range, for first Leverkusen goal. Winners all 16 times they have taken the lead this season, the goal reshadowed a period of Leverkusen dominance reminiscent of their best under Alonso, with Florian Wirtz and Jonathan Tah forcing last-ditch stops. Not content to protect their lead, Leverkusen came out firing after the break and soon doubled their lead. Summer signing Grimaldo collected Nathan Tella's pass and blasted past Neuer five minutes into the second half. With the clock winding down, Neuer went up for a Bayern corner, allowing Leverkusen wing-back Frimpong to run the length of the field to seal a statement win.

