

Major General Yahya Rahim Safavi, Senior Military Adviser to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, Urges That Iran Expand Its "Strategic Defense Depth" as Far as the Mediterranean Sea

IRAN NEWS

The Meetings Related to Iran in the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Ended Without Issuing a Resolution Against Iran's Nuclear Program, Despite All the False Claims, Machinations, Threats and Political Camp of the Western Countries

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SATURDAY MARCH 09, 2024 ESFAND 19, 1402

2

DOMESTIC

First Fully Iranian Developed Oil Fields Inaugurated

> SEE PAGE 2

3

INTERNATIONAL

Gaza Ceasefire Talks Show No Sign of Progress

> SEE PAGE 3

IRGC Commander Highlights Steady Missile Advancements



TEHRAN (Tasnim) - The commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps Aerospace Force Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh highlighted the ongoing advancements in missile technology, noting that technological barriers in the aerospace field have been overcome. "Advancements in the aerospace and missile fields are continuous... as the barriers of technology have been broken, and advancements in this area will be made faster in the future," Hajizadeh said, speaking during a ceremony in Khuzestan province on Friday. He also emphasized the importance of young people as the future builders of the country and stated that the future belongs to them. The commander also stressed the importance of informing and educating future generations about the achievements of the country, expressing hope that by doing so, they will feel a sense of responsibility for these achievements and remain optimistic about the future. In February, Hajizadeh stated that Iran is among the top global defense powers. He noted advancements since the era of the Sacred Defense (the Iraqi-imposed war on Iran in the 1980s), citing US acknowledgment of Iran's defense capabilities. Iranian military experts and technicians have in recent years made great headways in manufacturing a broad range of indigenous equipment, making the armed forces self-sufficient in the arms sphere. Iranian officials have repeatedly underscored that the country will not hesitate to strengthen its military capabilities, including its missile power, which are entirely meant for defense, and that Iran's defense capabilities will be never subject to negotiations.

Resistance Front Has Great Unexploited Potential



TEHRAN (Tasnim) - The resistance front proved to be an integrated power following the Al-Aqsa Storm operation, although its capabilities have not been used to the maximum extent, IRGC Quds Force Commander Brigadier General Esmail Qaani said. Addressing a session of Iran's Assembly of Experts in Tehran, General Qaani said the Al-Aqsa Storm operation against the Zionist regime indicated that it is impossible to ignore the resistance front. Describing the resistance front as an integrated power, the commander said the front has massive capabilities, although it has not fully exploited its potential yet. He noted that the havoc on Gaza wreaked by the Israeli onslaught will be made up for, but the Zionist regime won't be able to save face and repair its credit. The Israeli regime's sole achievement in the war on Gaza has been the massacre of around 40,000 people, most of whom were women and children, while the Palestinian forces have maintained their lands and dignity and have frustrated Israel, he added. "The resistance front, specifically the Hamas forces in the Al-Aqsa Storm operation, have taken up offensive position and have heroically inflicted fundamental challenges upon the Israeli army by relying on their faith and weapons," the general stated. In remarks in November 2023, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said the Zionist regime had been "knocked out" in the Al-Aqsa Storm operation. The Leader stated that Hamas, a Palestinian group of resistance fighters and not a government or a country that is well-equipped, managed to knock out the usurping Zionist regime which is well-equipped with resources. The heavy defeat that the Zionist regime suffered will not be compensated by these crimes, Ayatollah Khamenei said, adding, "They should know that this oppression and these atrocities will not go unanswered and the bombings will shorten the life of the usurping regime."

IRA NEWS NATIONAL DESK



Islamic Democracy Model in Iran Challenging West

TEHRAN - Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said the Islamic Republic in Iran led to the formation of a new front based upon Islamic democracy that has jeopardized the interests of the Western liberal democracy front. Ayatollah Khamenei made the remark in a meeting with the members of the Assembly of Experts of the Leadership in Tehran on Thursday. "Prior to the establishment of the Islamic Republic, the only existing global front was the front of democracies that were dependent on Western liberal democracy. However, with the victory of the Islamic Revolution, a new front was formed based on Islamic democracy, which has naturally stood in opposition to the Western front of democracy," the Leader said. Ayatollah Khamenei stated that the emergence of the model of Islamic democracy in Iran threatened the interests of the Western front of democracy, leading to its continual opposition to the Islamic system. "The reason they felt endangered was that in the essence of Western democracy, there is imperialism, aggression, violation of the rights of nations, warmongering, and endless bloodshed in the pursuit of power. This may be seen in their colonization of many countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America during the 19th century, which was the peak of the period when they were shouting slogans and making claims regarding democracy, freedom, and human rights," he said. The Leader underlined the fact that the primary focus and strategy of the Islamic front of democracy is to confront oppression and aggression. In response to the question of why the Islamic Republic is opposed to the Front of Arrogance, he explained, "We are not opposed to other countries, governments, or nations as a rule. Rather, we are opposed to the oppression and aggression that exists in the front of Western

democracy." Ayatollah Khamenei considered the tragic events in Gaza to be a clear manifestation of the oppression and aggression of the Front of Arrogance against the people of a land and the merciless massacre of innocent civilians. He highlighted that the Islamic Republic opposes such atrocities and crimes, which are supported by the United States, Britain, and certain European countries despite the fact that they are denounced by rational, traditional, religious, and human moral standards. He stressed that it should be evident that the Arrogant Front is concealing oppression, aggression, and murder behind the facades of democracy, human rights, and liberalism, Khamenei reported. Highlighting the importance of the Islamic Republic leading the way in opposing Arrogance, the Leader also emphasized the need to continually raise the battle flag against the Arrogant Powers, while ensuring that the flag remains in the hands of the Islamic Republic. Elsewhere in the speech, Ayatollah Khamenei considered the Assembly of Expert's duty, which is to select the Leader of the Islamic Republic and to oversee the maintenance of the leader's qualifications, to be the most important managerial duty in the Islamic Republic. "The members of the Assembly of Experts must ensure that the fixed principles of the Islamic Republic are upheld in their decisions," he stated. Referring to the recent Parliamentary elections in Iran, the Leader said the coming into office of each new parliament is a positive development that brings fresh opportunities for the country. "The presence of new representatives alongside representatives from previous periods brings a blend of innovation and experience. This is a valuable asset. It is like fresh blood in the veins of the political structure," he said.

Iran Reiterates Need for Inclusive Government in Afghanistan

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - The Iranian ambassador to the UN called on the Taliban to advance genuine ethnic and political inclusivity in Afghanistan, stressing the need for the establishment of a broad-based Afghan government that would safeguard the rights of all ethnic groups and combat terrorism. Addressing the UN Security Council briefing on "the situation in Afghanistan", held in New York, Saeed Iravani said the de facto authorities in Afghanistan have failed to advance genuine ethnic and political inclusivity. "Instead, they have imposed stricter limitations on women and girls, restricting their educational opportunities. Additionally, attacks on minority people such as the Hazara Shiites continue, as confirmed by the UN report," he said. "We stress the importance of prioritizing and carefully addressing the legitimate concerns of neighboring countries in all initiatives aimed at engaging with de facto authorities," Iravani said. "These include the establishment of an inclusive government, safeguarding the rights of all ethnic groups, combating terrorist groups, preventing illegal immigration, and addressing drug production and trafficking. These concerns, to some extent accommodated in the independent assessment (S/2023/856), which underscores positive elements and recommends coherent engagement with de facto authorities," the Iranian envoy said. "An inclusive government in Afghanistan can help tackle many problems, like stopping conflicts and reducing the number of Afghan refugees moving to neighboring countries. It sets a foundation for stability and security in Afghanistan and helps protect human rights, especially those of women. For Iran, a crucial sign of an inclusive government is improving the lives of Afghan people and bringing back refugees, which sadly has gotten worse in the last two years, causing us significant hardship," he underlined. "Challenges like terrorism, drug trafficking, and border control deficiencies continue and threaten the stability of Afghanistan and its neighbors," he noted, adding, "The threat of terrorist groups is causing concern to the neighbors. Regrettably, de facto authorities have yet to implement their obligations to combat terrorism." "Iran as an immediate neighbor still faces challenges with illegal immigration. The migration of millions of Afghans to Iran has brought a burden to our country under sanctions. Unfortunately, the international community and individual countries have shown little sensitivity to this issue," the envoy stated. "Furthermore, Iran has been denied access to even the most basic border monitoring equipment under the pretext of sanctions. This underscores the differing priorities and concerns of neighboring countries and the global community regarding Afghanistan," he stated.



World Demands Israel's Expulsion From UN Women's Commission



TEHRAN (PressTV) - The spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry says the world demands the expulsion of Israel from the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women due to the regime's crimes against civilians, particularly women and children. "The expulsion of the usurping Zionist regime from the UN Commission on the Status of Women is a global demand due to the killing of thousands of women and committing crime against humanity as a result of organized starvation of the civilian population, especially women and children," Nasser Kanaani wrote on his X account on Friday on the occasion of International Women's Day. He added that Israel must be excluded from the UN body for its measures which have caused acute mental and psychological suffering to mothers due to the gradual death of their children. This year's International Women's Day belongs to brave women and mothers and should turn into an opportunity for global condemnation of the brutal Israeli regime, the Iranian spokesman said. Kanaani emphasized that the event should not become an opportunity for the false claimants of women's rights to make "absurd" statements. These so-called defenders of women's rights, he maintained, have pursued an instrumental view of women and left behind a "black record" of violation of human, cultural and social rights. Turning a blind eye to the "brutal killing of thousands of innocent women and children in Palestine" and continuing to support a "terrorist regime" has revealed the "hypocritical" approach of these false rights claimants to the entire world, he added. Iran's Permanent Mission to the UN also on Thursday called for the ouster of Israel from the United Nations women's rights body, citing the regime's killing of thousands of Palestinian women in relentless strikes against the Gaza Strip. The Health Ministry in Gaza announced in a Thursday statement, on the eve of International Women's Day, that the Israeli military has killed nearly 9,000 Palestinian women in the course of its devastating onslaught on the enclave.

Iran Warns Against Israeli 'Military Adventurism' in Region



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iran's permanent ambassador to the United Nations Amir Saeed Iravani warned against Israel's "military adventurism" in the region, asserting Tehran's right to respond to threats and attacks from the regime. In a letter to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and the current president of the UN Security Council, Yamazaki Kazuyuki, Iran's UN envoy rejected Israeli allegations and threats. "While strongly warning against any military adventurism or malicious activities by the Israeli regime in the region, the Islamic Republic of Iran reserves its legitimate and inherent right, in accordance with international law and the United Nations Charter, to take all necessary measures to respond to any threat or attack originating from the Israeli regime against its national security, interest, and its people," the ambassador wrote. The letter was in response to an earlier communication from Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz to the UN, claiming that Iran has increased weapons deliveries to the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement. "The accusations in the letter are entirely baseless and are categorically rejected. This letter represents yet another cynical attempt by the Israeli regime to deflect the attention of the international community from the ongoing egregious atrocities and acts of genocide committed by this apartheid regime against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip," the Iranian ambassador stated. "It is also a misleading effort aimed at covering up and legitimizing Israel's aggression against Lebanon and its continual breaches of international law, the United Nations Charter, and UNSC Resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006) by leveling unfounded allegations against Iran," he added.

IRAN NEWS



Deputy FM Calls for Stopping Israeli Genocide in Gaza

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs, Ali Bagheri Kani, has called for an end to the crimes committed by the Zionist regime in Gaza. In a Farsi post on the social media platform X, Bagheri Kani mentioned that he had a meeting with Minister of State in the Qatari Foreign Ministry, Mohammed bin Abdulaziz bin Saleh al-Khulaifi, during which they discussed the latest inexplicable situation in Gaza. Bagheri Kani expressed gratitude to the Qatari side for their efforts to halt the genocide in Gaza. He asked which court has sentenced Gazan women and children, who are victims of Zionists' atrocities and American weapons, to such punishment. He emphasized that Gaza is not merely a workshop for policy and diplomacy for the self-styled advocates of human rights in the West, but it is a place where innocent and helpless human beings are being slaughtered. Stopping genocide is a fundamental human obligation, and waiting for the criminal's consent should not be an option, he added.

Iran Refutes Kuwait's Stance on Arash Field, Trio Islands



TEHRAN (Tasnim) - The Iranian Foreign Ministry's spokesperson dismissed the "interfering" opinions of Kuwait about Iran's three islands in the Persian Gulf and about the Arash oil and gas field, reminding the Arab state that one-sided claims would not entitle it to any right. In a statement, Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Nasser Kanaani brushed aside the communiqué issued at the conclusion of the Kuwaiti emir's visit to the United Arab Emirates regarding the three Iranian islands of the Lesser Tunb, the Greater Tunb and Abu Musa as well as Kuwait's claim to the Arash gas field. Kanaani rejected the interfering clauses of the Kuwaiti emir's statement, saying Iran has stressed times and again that the three islands - the Lesser Tunb, the Greater Tunb and Abu Musa - are integral and eternal parts of the Iranian soil. He added that referring to the islands in the statement or repeated statements at other meetings have no political and legal value and are considered interference in Iran's internal affairs, the Foreign Ministry's website reported. The Islamic Republic of Iran never regards its territorial integrity as negotiable, the spokesman underlined. As for the repetition of Kuwait's claim on the Arash field in that statement, Kanaani noted, "We have said many times that making unilateral claims in such statements does not create any rights for the claimant." He pointed to the previous talks between Iran and Kuwait, saying technical and legal negotiations are the best and most appropriate way to deal with the issue. Based on its historical rights and records of bilateral negotiations with Kuwait, Iran is ready to continue talks with the Kuwaiti government over a framework that would entail respect for mutual interests, he added.



Iran Indigenizes 80% of Oil Equipment

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - Iran's deputy oil minister said the country has succeeded in manufacturing 80 percent of oil parts and equipment domestically despite being under sanctions. The Iranian Oil Ministry has focused on taking advantage of the expertise and technical know-how of knowledge-based companies, Jalil Salari said, emphasizing that more than 80 percent of the oil equipment is manufactured in the country. Speaking in a meeting held in Abadan on reviewing the quality plans of oil byproducts, he said that the oil ministry took effective steps in the past two years for the domestic production of oil parts and equipment. One of these measures is related to the launch of extraterritorial refining plans overseas and the export of technical and engineering services, he stated. So far, three- to four technical know-hows have fully been localized in refining companies in the field of producing catalysts, compressor manufacturing and streamlining the quality of fuel oil, the chief executive of the National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC) said. He put the oil production capacity at Abadan Oil Refinery (AOR) at 500,000 barrels of oil per day (bpd), Mehr news agency reported. With the increase in the capacity and quality of oil byproducts, the country's gasoline production capacity has reached 129 million liters/day, Salari highlighted. He went on to say that the export of oil and oil byproducts in first the nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21 to December 22, 2023) registered a 4.5 percent growth compared to the same period last year.

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK



First Fully Iranian Developed Oil Fields Inaugurated

TEHRAN - President Ebrahim Raisi inaugurated the Sephar and Jofeir oil fields on Friday, marking a significant milestone in the country's oil industry. These fields, located in Khuzestan province and the western Karun region, are notable for their fully Iranian development, with all studies, engineering, and implementation conducted by Iranian experts. The inauguration ceremony, part of Raisi's visit to Khuzestan province, showcased the importance of the Sephar and Jofeir oil fields, which are now contributing over 50,000 barrels per day to Iran's oil production. Managed by Pasargad Energy Development Company, the development of these fields under an IPC contract signifies a crucial step in Iran's exploration and production endeavors. The project has already achieved stable production, reaching a capacity of approximately 55,000 barrels per day. Mohsen Khojastehmehr, the Head of the National Iranian Oil Company, emphasized the project's national significance, highlighting a \$2.8 billion contract aimed at exporting 50,000 barrels per day of light crude oil. Despite challenges posed by the high pressure of the reservoir, the project prioritized domestic construction, utilizing specialized equipment to meet stringent operational requirements. This included the installation of a 51-kilometer oil flow pipeline and the construction of access roads spanning over 32 kilometers. Expressing

gratitude to the teams involved, Khojastehmehr underscored the project's role in promoting domestic production and technological advancement. According to a contract signed in March 2018 between the National Iranian Oil Company and Pasargad Energy Development Company, the project's first phase production rate must be 36,000 barrels per day, rising to 110,000 barrels per day by the end of the second. The goal is to extract 540 million barrels of oil from this field over a 20-year period, with an investment of more than \$2.8 billion. This 20-year contract, which aims to produce oil from one of Iran's deepest and most pressured oil layers, is the first of the new oil contracts to result in oil production. Meanwhile during the official opening ceremony of multiple projects by the Ministry of Energy and Oil of Khuzestan Province, President Raisi commended the workers, technicians, and engineers for their dedication. Despite the obstacles posed by Iran's enemies, Raisi emphasized that the country's growth was achieved through the unwavering determination of its people. The president highlighted that Iran's success in implementing a resistance economy was a direct result of the efforts made by its citizens. He noted that despite opposition from external forces, Iran managed to increase production and employment rates.

Iran, Uzbekistan Call for Broadening Economic Ties

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iranian ambassador to Uzbekistan Mohammad-Ali Eskandari and Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Chamber of Uzbekistan and Chairman of the Iran-Uzbekistan Friendship Group Alisher Kadyrov urged bolstering economic ties between the two countries. Eskandari met and held talks with Kadyrov in Uzbekistan on Friday. Elaborating on the latest status of ties between Iran and Uzbekistan in the fields of politics, economics, and culture, Eskandari said that the existing common ground on cultural issues and good relations between the authorities of both countries, along with signed documents and memoranda of understanding (MoUs), have paved the way for a robust and unified partnership to take advantage of existing opportunities to achieve mutual benefits.

He added that the roadmap laid out and signed by the foreign ministers of Iran and Uzbekistan is under serious consideration, expressing hope that there would be a significant expansion of economic and trade exchanges between the two countries in the upcoming year. Kadyrov, on his part, referred to successful trips of members of parliament and the presidents of both countries, emphasizing the need for the implementation of signed documents. He mentioned that despite the brotherly relations between the two countries and their potential for collaboration, the current \$500 million volume of economic relations is insufficient. He highlighted the significance of historical, cultural, and religious ties in strengthening the relations between Iran and Uzbekistan.



Iran After Sustainable Peace in Caucasus



TEHRAN - The Iranian defense minister reaffirmed Tehran's support for sustainable peace in the Caucasus and direct interaction between Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan. In a meeting with his Armenian counterpart in Tehran, Iranian Defense Minister Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Ashtiani reiterated Iran's support for comprehensive and sustainable peace in the region, as in the Caucasus. Expressing Iran's support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the regional states and its opposition to any change in the internationally-recognized boundaries, Ashtiani said, "We back direct negotiations, sustainable peace, and direct contact between the two neighbors - the Republic of Azerbaijan and Armenia - and believe that it would prepare the ground for progress and development of the Caucasus region." He underlined that the "architecture of regional security" must be shaped by the regional countries alone. Any quest for security from outside the region will backfire, turn the region into a battlefield between the powers, and disrupt regional security and stability, the Iranian defense minister warned. "We should not allow the Caucasus region to become a ground for rivalry between the others, otherwise the stability and security of every single country will be jeopardized," Ashtiani said. For his part, Armenian Defense Minister Suren Papikyan said his country shares views with Iran about the regional stability. Stressing the need for closer cooperation considering the regional developments, Papikyan said Yerevan agrees with Iran's stance on the improvement of relations between Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan. In a telephone conversation with Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan in September 2023, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi assured Armenia of Iran's opposition to any alteration to the regional boundaries, saying Iran is prepared to play "an effective role" as a "powerful neighbor" to prevent regional clashes or geopolitical changes.

Iran Urges Islamic States to Turn Stance Into Effect



TEHRAN (IRNA) - An Iranian judiciary official has urged Islamic states to turn their verbal condemnations into practical acts against the Israeli regime. Iranian Judiciary's Deputy Chief for International Affairs and Secretary General of the Islamic Republic of Iran's High Council for Human Rights Kazem Gharibabadi made the remark in the international congress on the occupation of Palestine from the point of view of international law and violation of humanitarian rights in Gaza. We witnessed good stances taken by Islamic states, but there has not been any practical effort to stop the genocidal war in the besieged strip, he said. The United Nations Human Rights Council, which issues resolutions against independent countries, has not yet convened an urgent meeting on the situation in Palestine, he said, noting that despite inaction by international entities, public opinion throughout the globe showed support for the oppressed Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Gharibabadi also underlined that inaction by those states who claim to be flag-bearers of human rights as well as the international community shows a double standard at the international level.

Trump Wins North Dakota Caucus Ahead of Super Tuesday Vote

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Donald Trump won the North Dakota Republican presidential caucuses on Monday, according to a projection by Edison Research, ahead of a slew of contests known as Super Tuesday when he is expected to further strengthen his grip on the party's presidential nomination.



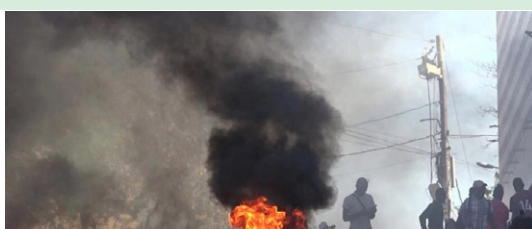
IRAN NEWS

Ukraine Conflict Could Escalate Into Full-Scale War in Europe



MOSCOW (Dispatches) - A senior Russian military officer has warned that the conflict in Ukraine could escalate into a full-scale war in Europe and said the probability of Moscow's forces becoming involved in a new conflict is increasing "significantly."

Armed Gangs Try to Take Control of Haiti's Main Airport After Jailbreak



PORT-AU-PRINCE (Dispatches) - Heavily armed gangs tried to seize control of Haiti's main international airport on Monday, exchanging gunfire with police and soldiers in the latest attack on key government sites in an explosion of violence that includes a mass escape from the country's two biggest prisons.



Gaza Ceasefire Talks Show No Sign of Progress

CAIRO (Dispatches) - Hamas on Thursday left Gaza ceasefire talks in Cairo where there was no sign of progress just days before the start of Ramadan, while the U.S. said the onus was on the Palestinian militant group to strike a deal on Israeli hostages.

be released. Hamas officials have said a ceasefire must be in place before the hostages are freed, Israeli forces must leave Gaza and all Gazans must be able to return to homes they have fled.

Biden Attacks Trump, Defends Democracy



WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - President Joe Biden turned his State of the Union speech Thursday night into an animated argument for a second term as he laced into GOP front-runner Donald Trump for espousing "resentment, revenge and retribution" and jeopardising freedom at home and abroad.

— and some of you here — seek to bury the truth about Jan. 6 — I will not do that," Biden said. "This is a moment to speak the truth and to bury the lies. Here's a simple truth. You can't love your country only when you win."



OPEC+ to Consider Extending Voluntary Oil Output Cuts

DAKAR (Dispatches) - Several hundred people rallied in the Senegalese capital Dakar on Saturday calling for the country's postponed presidential elections to be held before April 2, the date when incumbent Macky Sall's term is set to end.

Sweden Joins NATO as War in Ukraine Prompts Security Rethink

STOCKHOLM (Dispatches) - Sweden joined NATO in Washington on Thursday, two years after Russia's invasion of Ukraine forced it to rethink its national security policy and conclude that support for the alliance was the Scandinavian nation's best guarantee of safety.



of the accession: "Before, we were outside and felt a little bit alone. ... I think that the threat from Russia, it's going to be much less now." U.S. President Joe Biden, in a statement, said the addition of Sweden made NATO "more united, determined, and dynamic than ever."

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4

SPORTS

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Grizzlies Edge Nets, Snap Five-Game Skid

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Luke Kennard scored a season-high 25 points as the Memphis Grizzlies held on in the final minute and snapped a five-game losing streak with a 106-102 victory over the Brooklyn Nets in New York. A week after absorbing a 111-86 loss to the Nets in Memphis, the Grizzlies won for just the third time in 17 games thanks to Kennard. He was one of six Memphis players who scored in double figures. Kennard made a season-high six 3-pointers, including one from top of the key that gave the Grizzlies a 99-90 lead with three minutes left. He shot 8-for-11 overall, 6-for-9 from long range, handed out seven assists and scored at least 20 points for the first time this season. After Kennard's final triple, the Nets pulled within 103-99 on two free throws by Cameron Johnson with 30 seconds left. Following a five-second violation by Memphis, Dennis Schroder split two free throws with 20.9 seconds to go to make it 103-100. Two free throws by Mikal Bridges got Brooklyn within 105-102 with 6.7 seconds left before Kennard hit a free throw on the next possession to ice it. Jake LaRavia added 14 points and 10 rebounds for the Grizzlies, who dominated the glass throughout the game and finished with a commanding 50-33 rebounding edge. Lamar Stevens added 13 points, Santi Aldama finished with 12, Vince Williams Jr. contributed 11 and Trey Jemison had 10 for the Grizzlies, who shot 46.3 percent overall. Nic Claxton scored 21 points, but Brooklyn fell 2 1/2 games behind the 10th-place Atlanta Hawks for the Eastern Conference's final play-in spot. Johnson added 18 points as the Nets dropped to 3-4 under

interim coach Kevin Ollie, shot 44.3 percent from the field and were a dreadful 17-for-30 (56.7 percent) at the foul line. Bridges was held to 14 points and shot 4-for-14 after getting 38 points in Brooklyn's win over Atlanta on Saturday. Schroder and Lonnie Walker IV added 13 points apiece for the Nets, who were denied their first three-game winning streak since early December. After the Grizzlies took a 53-52 lead into halftime following a basket by Stevens with 15.6 seconds remaining in the second quarter, Kennard's triple put the Grizzlies ahead 71-63 with 5:53 remaining in the third quarter. Claxton's baseline dunk snapped a 75-75 tie with 2:07 left in the third, but a 12-footer by Stevens with 73 seconds left put Memphis ahead 80-77 entering the fourth. Meanwhile Rudy Gobert scored 25 points and grabbed 16 rebounds for the Minnesota Timberwolves, who held on for a 119-114 win over the Portland Trail Blazers in Minneapolis. Mike Conley added 19 points and seven assists for Minnesota, which snapped a two-game skid. Karl-Anthony Towns finished with 14 points. Anfernee Simons led Portland with 34 points and 14 assists. Rookie Duop Reath tallied a career-high 26 points on 10-for-14 shooting for the Trail Blazers, who lost for the first time in three games. Portland played without Jerami Grant (quadriceps), Deandre Ayton (hand) and Matisse Thybulle (hip). Timberwolves top scorer Anthony Edwards finished with 13 points on 4-of-10 shooting. Edwards left the game because of a right elbow contusion but later returned to the court.

Rublev Calls on ATP to Review Rule That Led to Default in Dubai



LONDON (Dispatches) - Andrey Rublev has called on the ATP Tour to change the rule that led to him being defaulted at the Dubai Tennis Championships last week. Rublev was defaulted by the chair umpire after a Russian-speaking official said he had used an obscenity while yelling at a line judge over a call during his semi-final with Kazakhstan's Alexander Bublik on Friday. Rublev denied the accusation and urged the officials to review video of the incident, a request which was rejected. Bublik was ahead 6-7(4) 7-6(5) 6-5 when he was awarded the win but world number five Rublev later successfully appealed the decision and will retain the ranking points and prize money he earned, barring a fine of \$36,400 for a code violation. In a post on Instagram, Rublev thanked the appeals committee but said the rules needed a rethink. "I hope that in the future, the ATP will take a closer look at this rule and make changes to it, so that an official can't force a match outcome without having clear evidence and not letting the player have a video review," Rublev said. Reuters has contacted the ATP for comment. "While I'm disappointed that I wasn't able to finish my semi-final in Dubai, I am grateful for all the support I had from you the last two days, I received a lot of messages," Rublev added.

Arsenal Hit Sheff Utd for Six to Set Record Scoring Streak

LONDON (Dispatches) - Arsenal entered the record books as a 6-0 demolition of Sheffield United on Monday kept the Gunners on Liverpool and Manchester City's tails in the Premier League title race. Martin Odegaard, Jayden Bogle's own goal, Gabriel Martinelli, Kai Havertz and Declan Rice put the visitors 5-0 at half-time before Ben White rounded off the scoring. Mikel Arteta's men become the first side to ever win three consecutive away games in the English top-flight by five or more goals. "When we had the ball, we were in a good mood today," said Arsenal captain Odegaard. "Created a lot, scored the goals early on - a nice performance." By contrast, Sheffield United also set a new record by becoming the first English top-flight side to concede five or more goals in three straight home matches. "They were in a different league, a different planet to us. We couldn't lay a glove on them." Arsenal's stunning streak of 31 goals in seven consecutive Premier League wins since a winter break has at least built up a big advantage over their rivals should the title be decided on goal difference. They remain in third, just two points behind leaders Liverpool and one adrift of defending champions City. However, Arteta's men can go top with victory at home to Brentford on Saturday ahead of Sunday's showdown between Liverpool and City at Anfield. "I love the way the team played. The quality and the aggression we showed from the beginning," said Arteta. "We have to continue to do what we are doing." There appeared little doubt over the outcome from the first whistle at Bramall Lane. Bukayo Saka rattled the crossbar after just two minutes and what little resistance there was from the Blades ended just five minutes in. Rice's cross picked out the unmarked Odegaard to turn into the bottom corner. Saka's five-game scoring streak in the league came to an end but he did bag two assists before going off at half-time due to illness. The England international turned former Arsenal defender Austin Trusty with ease as he got to the by-line and his driven cross flicked off Bogle into his own net. Martinelli's deflected effort quickly made it 3-0 and forced Wilder to make a change after just 17 minutes.



Inter Beat Genoa to Take Further Step Towards Serie A Title



MILAN (Dispatches) - Serie A leaders Inter Milan beat Genoa 2-1 to move 15 points clear of second-placed Juventus as they search for a 20th league title. Youngster Kristijan Asllani and veteran Alexis Sanchez scored within six minutes of each other in the San Siro as Inter move closer to going one better than local rivals AC Milan and their Scudetto tally, which would get them a second star above their club badge. Juve trail Inter with 11 games of the season remaining after losing 2-1 at Napoli on Sunday. "15 points is a significant advantage," Asllani said. "But we can't get carried away, there are still a lot of games to play and we have to stay focused," the 21-year-old added. Simone Inzaghi's Inter were looking to stretch their winning run in all competitions to 12 games, and last lost at home in the league in September. In an open first half an hour, Inter midfielder Nicolo Barella and Genoa attacker Mateo Retegui threatened to break the deadlock. After 31 minutes, Asllani did one better than them following a smooth Alexis assist. Albania's Asllani, who turns 22 on Saturday, fired home into the top corner, claiming his first senior goal since June 2022, which came against Inter when he was still at Empoli, to put the hosts 1-0 up. "To be honest, I had waited a long time for this goal and hoped it would come at San Siro," Asllani said. "It's a special emotion scoring here," he said. Inzaghi's outfit doubled their advantage six minutes later from a penalty checked by VAR, as Alexis converted Inter's 11th spot kick of the season, following Asllani in opening his account for the campaign. Inter kept up the pressure on Genoa after the break with attacker Henrikh Mkhitaryan troubling visiting goalkeeper Josep Martinez after 52 minutes before the away side surprisingly cut the deficit. Mexico centre-back Johan Vasquez volleyed low past Yann Sommer two minutes later, as Inter conceded just their 13th goal in 27 league games this season. Alberto Gilardino's side thought they had equalised after 66 minutes but Portuguese striker Vitorinha was denied his first goal for the club after drifting offside. Inter held on for three points, as France attacker Marcus Thuram came off the bench for Sanchez after two weeks out with injury, despite English defender Djed Spence's late chance for the visitors. Next up for Inter is Saturday's trip to fourth-placed Bologna before heading to Atletico Madrid for March 13's Champions League last 16 second leg with a 1-0 lead.

Djokovic, Nadal Return at Indian Wells

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Novak Djokovic returns to Indian Wells for the first time in five years seeking a record sixth title while Coco Gauff looks to become the first U.S. woman to win the tournament since Serena Williams in 2001 when main-draw action begins on Wednesday. The Serbian winner of 24 Grand Slam titles hasn't competed at the BNP Paribas Open since 2019 due to U.S. travel restrictions related to COVID-19. But he has looked relaxed in Southern California the past few weeks, catching Lakers and LA Galaxy games and training at UCLA. Feeling no pressure could make Djokovic even more lethal, said Paul Annacone, who coached Roger Federer and Pete Sampras and is a commentator with Tennis Channel. "With some people you can say relaxation can lead to complacency but not for him, not with his personality and his desire to compete," Annacone told Reuters. "Relaxation for Novak should lead to more joy, which should mean more fun. And joy and fun with that great talent tends to equal winning." Also back after missing last year's event is Nadal, who has 22 Grand Slam titles and three Indian Wells crowns. The Spaniard has suggested that his career might be coming to a close and said he just wants to negotiate the desert event "unscathed" so he stays healthy for the clay court season. Nadal returned to competition in Brisbane in January after almost a year sidelined

with a hip flexor injury, but had to miss the Australian Open with another muscle tear. Meanwhile the next generation continues to make inroads. A successful title defense for Carlos Alcaraz would provide a huge boost in confidence for Nadal's 20-year-old compatriot. "To go back-to-back would be spectacular," Annacone said. A title at the event sometimes nicknamed the "fifth Slam" would be confirmation that 22-year-old Italian Jannik Sinner's maiden Grand Slam title in Australia in January was no fluke. Russian hard-court specialist Daniil Medvedev, dangerous Dane Holger Rune and American 2022 champion Taylor Fritz are among the other men who should prove tough to beat. On the women's side, defending champion Elena Rybakina comes to the desert full of confidence after winning Abu Dhabi last month. "It's going to be playing quick through the air, the courts tend to be gritty, which will work with her great serve and power tennis," Annacone said. There was something of a Big Three developing in the women's game with Rybakina, world number one and 2022 champion Iga Swiatek and reigning two-time Australian Open champion Aryna Sabalenka separating themselves from the pack. But U.S. Open champion Gauff and world number five Jessica Pegula would love to break up the party with a title to end a long drought for American women at Indian Wells.

