

IRAN NEWS

According to an Iranian Provincial Official, an Iranian Fishing Vessel, in Coordination With the Chabahar Maritime Search and Rescue Center, Has Rescued a Foreign National in the Indian Ocean

Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi Will Head to Portugal to Attend the 10th Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), With His Spokesman Saying That the Trip Is Taking Place in Line With Iran's Active Foreign Policy

VOL. XXIX, No. 8139 TEHRAN Price 50,000 Rials

www.irannewsdaily.com

MONDAY NOVEMBER 25, 2024 AZAR 05, 1403

2 DOMESTIC



JICA Highlights Decades of Development Collaboration with Iran Amid Challenges

> SEE PAGE 2

3 INTERNATIONAL

Developing Nations Blast \$300b COP29 Climate Deal as Insufficient

> SEE PAGE 3



All Captains of Criminal, Zionist, Terrorist Gang Must Be Prosecuted



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has urged prosecution of all the political and military officials of the terrorist Israeli regime over their atrocities.

Ayatollah Khamenei made the remarks in a post published in Hebrew language on X, former Twitter, on Saturday.

"All the political and military captains of the criminal Zionist terrorist gang must be prosecuted," the post read.

The post was published amid the Israeli regime's October 2023-present war of genocide against the Gaza Strip, and the regime's escalated deadly aggression towards Lebanon ever since as well as its many assassination operations throughout the region that has led to the martyrdom of venerable resistance commanders and other leaders.

The war has claimed the lives of at least 44,176 Palestinians, mostly women and children, and wounded 104,473 others, in Gaza, while the escalation has killed more than 3,645 people across Lebanon.

The regime's targeted killing operations have also martyred such resistance leaders as former Hamas political leader, Ismail Haniyeh, former Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, and the former head of the Lebanese resistance movement's Executive Council Sayyed Hashem Safieddine.

Ayatollah Khamenei's comments came after the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued arrest warrants against Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the regime's former minister of military affairs Yoav Gallant over war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza.

Despite hailing the verdict as a "victory," Iran has said the warrants should have also included "genocide" by the regime.

"Fourteen long months into the occupying regime's genocidal campaign in #Gaza, marked by the most harrowing atrocities, the ICC Pre-Trial Chamber I finally issued arrest warrants for the two top criminals #Netanyahu and #Gallant," Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei wrote on X on Friday.

"Of course, their indictment should have included '#genocide' which is manifest," he added.

Iran, Saudi Arabia Determined to Establish Endurable Peace



TEHRAN (PressTV) - A top Iranian diplomat says sustained bilateral and regional cooperation between Iran and Saudi Arabia plays a leading role in establishing enduring peace and stability in the region.

Iran and Saudi Arabia are determined to promote sustainable peace and stability in the region, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Majid Takht Ravanchi said in an interview with Asharq al-Awsat newspaper during his visit to Riyadh last week.

He added that the two countries should strengthen sustained bilateral and regional cooperation to address current threats and build a foundation for prosperity and security.

He emphasized that joint efforts by Tehran and Riyadh serve as a "successful model of bilateral and multilateral cooperation" aimed at fostering peace, security, and development on both regional and international levels.

The Iranian diplomat said historical ties and the principle of good neighborliness are the basis for advancing mutual relationships.

In a post on his X platform on Monday, Takht Ravanchi said he had a "very constructive and fruitful" meeting with Saudi Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Waleed el-Khereiji, stressing that cordial mutual relations benefit not only both countries but also the entire West Asia region.

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK



Iran to Launch Advanced Centrifuges in Response to IAEA's Political Moves

TEHRAN - Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, the Speaker of Iran's Parliament, announced the initiation of advanced centrifuge operations as a response to what he described as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors' politicized actions.

Speaking during an open session of parliament on Sunday, Qalibaf criticized the recent resolution passed by the IAEA board regarding Iran's nuclear program. The resolution, supported by the United States and three European nations, was described by Qalibaf as unjustified and non-consensual, accusing the involved parties of adopting a biased and destructive approach.

Qalibaf accused the U.S. and European governments of leveraging Iran's peaceful nuclear activities as a pretext for advancing their own illegitimate agendas, undermining the credibility and independence of the IAEA. He emphasized that such actions tarnish the constructive atmosphere necessary for fostering cooperation between Iran and the IAEA.

In immediate response to the resolution, Qalibaf revealed that Iran has initiated the operation of new and advanced centrifuges. He warned that continued political and non-constructive measures could drive countries to seek alternative approaches outside the IAEA framework to safeguard their national security.

Qalibaf urged the IAEA and nations opposing the recent resolution to protect the agency's technical integrity and independence from the influence of the U.S. and its allies. He called for an end to what he described as the "oppressive dominance" of these nations over the agency.

Turning to regional developments, Qalibaf commended the International Criminal Court (ICC) for issuing arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant. He referred to them as "two of the greatest war criminals of modern history" and hailed the move as a landmark step in holding the Israeli regime accountable for alleged war crimes in Gaza and Lebanon.

He expressed hope that this legal action would pave the way for global recognition of Israel's alleged crimes. He also accused U.S.-aligned media of attempting to whitewash Israeli actions,

stating that public opinion worldwide has increasingly turned against the regime.

Qalibaf attributed Israel's growing isolation and loss of credibility to decades of resistance from figures like Hassan Nasrallah, Qassem Soleimani, Ismail Haniyeh, and Yahya Sinwar, and the sacrifices of Palestinians and Lebanese fighters. He expressed optimism that global youth would one day see the liberation of Jerusalem as a reality.

He extended condolences to Pakistan following a deadly terrorist attack that claimed numerous lives. He expressed sympathy for the victims' families and reaffirmed Iran's commitment to standing by Pakistan as a neighboring and friendly country. He emphasized the importance of regional security cooperation to prevent the recurrence of such tragedies.

Marking the anniversary of the Basij Organization's establishment, Qalibaf paid tribute to its role in supporting Iran's Islamic Revolution. He quoted the late Ayatollah Khomeini, who described the Basij members' sincerity as a source of inspiration.

Qalibaf highlighted the Basij's pivotal role in mobilizing citizens to safeguard the revolution, asserting that without this grassroots participation, the Islamic Republic would not have survived internal and external challenges. He underscored the Basij's continued importance in countering threats and advancing Iran's national interests.

The speaker concluded by wishing success for Basij members across various sectors, including students, women, academics, and workers. He praised the organization as a key innovation of the Islamic Revolution, fostering popular resistance and serving as a model for independent nations worldwide.

The developments underscore escalating tensions between Iran and Western powers over nuclear and regional issues. While Iran continues to assert its right to peaceful nuclear activities, it faces mounting international scrutiny and pressures, with significant implications for regional stability and global diplomacy.

Hezbollah Rains Attack Drones Down on Elite Israeli Brigade

BEIRUT (Dispatches) - Lebanon's Hezbollah resistance movement has launched two successful retaliatory operations against the northern part of the occupied Palestinian territories, targeting an elite Israeli brigade, which is infamous for its decades-long atrocities across the occupied territories.

On Saturday, the movement said it had "launched an aerial attack with a squadron of attack drones on the Shraga base, the administrative headquarters of the Golani Brigade Command, north of the occupied city of Akka, for the second time."

The kamikaze aircraft "hit their targets accurately," the group said. The brigade is considered to be one of the Israeli military's "most highly decorated" elite infantry units, which features five battalions.

The brigade's brown beret-wearing forces have been engaged in war crimes and crimes against humanity since 1948, when the Israeli regime claimed existence on the back of a Western-backed war against regional territories. Their involvement in such atrocities went on throughout the regime's 2000 and 2006 deadly and devastating wars on Lebanon up until now that Tel Aviv is waging a genocidal war against the Gaza Strip and a markedly deadly escalation towards Lebanon.

Last month, Hezbollah's fighters killed at least seven members of the unit and injured scores of others, some 17 of them seriously, during clashes on Lebanon's southern border with the



occupied territories.

Also on Saturday, the movement targeted gatherings of Israeli troops in the illegal settlements of Malikiyah and Manara with rocket barrages, and hit the settlements of Meron and Ayelet HaShahar with more rocket salvos.

The group's fighters, meanwhile, targeted an advanced Israeli Merkava tank with a guided missile in the vicinity of the school in the town of Jebbina in southern Lebanon, destroying the vehicle and causing

deaths and injuries among its crews.

They also launched an aerial attack with a drone squadron on a gathering of Israeli forces at the al-Amra Gate on the southern outskirts of the city of Khiam, and struck an Israeli army position on the northeastern outskirts of the town of al-Bayada with machine guns and rockets in southern Lebanon.

Hezbollah separately released a video, depicting its fighters preparing and loading projectiles onto launchers as part of the movement's ongoing struggle against the Israeli regime. The movement has been conducting hundreds of successful retaliatory operations against the occupied territories since last October, when the regime began its war on Gaza and intensified its deadly attacks against Lebanon.

The war has claimed the lives of at least 44,176 Palestinians, mostly women and children, and wounded 104,473 others, in Gaza, while the escalation has killed more than 3,645 people across Lebanon.

Iran-Russia Comprehensive Deal Will Include Defense, Security Ties



MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia's deputy foreign minister says the treaty on a comprehensive strategic partnership between his country and Iran will include cooperation in the defense and security sectors.

Speaking to Russia's TASS news agency on Sunday, Andrei Rudenko said he would not disclose the details of the agreement that is expected to be signed in the near future.

"I would only note [that] it will meet challenges and requirements of our time and cover almost all current and promising spheres of Russian-Iranian cooperation, including defense and security," he added.

In 2001, Tehran and Moscow signed a long-term cooperation deal, officially known as the Treaty of the Foundation of Mutual Relations and the Principles of Cooperation. It was initially set for 10 years but was extended up until 2026.

Now, the two capitals are making final arrangements for the comprehensive partnership pact, which may determine their bilateral ties in all fields for the next 20 years.

Rudenko emphasized that the nature of Iran-Russia interactions has notably changed over the past two decades.

"We are closely coordinating approaches with our Iranian friends and take necessary measures to strengthen peace and security" in the region, he added.

Last month, Iran's Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali said the strategic partnership treaty would be signed during Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian's visit to Moscow. The date of this visit has yet to be decided.

Iran and Russia are both subject to illegal Western sanctions. They have over the past years deepened their relations in various fields, including military and defense, and become close allies.

Minister of Economy to Visit Saudi Arabia



TEHRAN - The Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance is set to travel to Saudi Arabia to participate in the annual World Investment Promotion Agencies (WIPA) conference, attended by investment companies from 100 countries.

According to the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance, Abdol-Naser Hemmati will attend the 28th annual meeting of the Investment Promotion Agencies Association on Monday, November 25, 2024.

The conference, scheduled from November 25 to 27, 2024, in Riyadh, is themed "Leveraging Digital Transformation and Investment Opportunities for Sustainable Growth." This global event focuses on promoting foreign direct investment (FDI), trade, and technology.

The meeting serves as a platform for discussions among policymakers, investors, and business leaders to address emerging challenges and opportunities. It aims to create a conducive environment for global, regional, and national investment and trade activities.

Beyond enhancing economic cooperation and mutual prosperity among member countries, the conference emphasizes knowledge-sharing, improving trade and investment capabilities, and fostering a more dynamic and prosperous economic outlook.

Key objectives of the event include shaping future investment strategies, facilitating business opportunities, and promoting sustainable economic growth and innovation. The gathering will attract high-ranking government officials, thought leaders, investment promotion agencies, business executives, and stakeholders worldwide to explore unprecedented trends and opportunities across sectors like energy, advanced manufacturing, healthcare, agriculture, tourism, and the digital economy.

The three-day conference will include a ministerial roundtable, where Hemmati is slated to deliver a speech. His agenda also includes attending the WIPA opening ceremony and holding meetings with prominent figures such as Sulaiman Al-Jasser, President of the Islamic Development Bank; Abdulhamid Alkhalifa, President of the OPEC Fund; Mohammed Al-Jadaan, Saudi Minister of Economy; and Khalid Al-Falih, Saudi Minister of Investment.

IRAN NEWS



New Iranian Ambassador to Finland Meets FM

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran's newly-appointed envoy to Finland Javad Aghazadeh Khoei has with Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi before his departure to take charge of his diplomatic mission in Helsinki.

During the talks on Saturday evening, Khoei presented his proposed plans to Araqchi for developing and expanding bilateral relations with Finland in various fields.

Araqchi emphasized the positive trend in relations between Tehran and Helsinki and stressed the necessity of pursuing issues on the agenda of both countries within the framework of a policy aimed at expanding relations with other nations. The top diplomat also wished the country's new ambassador to Finland the best of luck.

Iranian Cheese Exports to Japan to Be Facilitated



TEHRAN - In a meeting with Tsukada Tamaki, Japan's ambassador to Iran, Gholamreza Nouri, Iran's Minister of Agriculture, emphasized the potential for deepening Iran-Japan relations, particularly in environmental issues such as water management.

Nouri highlighted the shared cultural values of resilience and self-reliance between the two nations, rooted in their histories of rebuilding and resisting aggressors. He noted that these shared experiences provide a solid foundation for strengthening bilateral cooperation.

The minister praised Japan's advanced agricultural technologies, which optimize the use of limited resources, and expressed Iran's willingness to collaborate in enhancing agricultural efficiency through modern innovations. He also outlined Iran's achievements in food self-sufficiency, including mechanized agriculture, veterinary medicine, and the production of livestock vaccines, poultry, vegetables, and fruits, despite harsh environmental conditions and international sanctions.

Addressing the Japanese ambassador's request to facilitate the export of Iranian cheese to Japan, Nouri announced that existing obstacles would soon be resolved, allowing Japanese consumers to enjoy the distinctive flavors of Iranian cheese.

Nouri also proposed hosting short-term training courses on modern agricultural technologies, especially in water management, and expressed interest in exchanging experts with Japan to learn from its practices in rice cultivation and irrigation.

Ambassador Tsukada Tamaki recalled decades of cooperation between the two countries, particularly through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), which has been instrumental in water management and engineering projects in Iran.



JICA Highlights Decades of Development Collaboration with Iran Amid Challenges

TEHRAN - In an exclusive interview with ILNA, Osamu Tanaka, Chief Representative of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in Iran, detailed the organization's ongoing and past projects, challenges, and aspirations in Iran. JICA, a pivotal bilateral development agency, has actively collaborated with Iran on initiatives spanning economic growth, disaster management, environmental protection, and healthcare.

Marking 50 years of partnership, Tanaka emphasized JICA's role in fostering sustainable development in Iran. Over the years, more than 3,860 Iranian officials have been trained in Japan, and 1,490 Japanese experts have provided technical guidance in Iran.

"JICA has engaged in diverse projects, including waste management, forest conservation, and healthcare improvement," Tanaka explained. Notable initiatives include enhancing Tehran's medical facilities, air pollution analysis, and equipping the National Museum of Iran.

Tanaka elaborated on JICA's significant contributions to water management, highlighting a comprehensive study of the Sefidrud River Basin completed in 2010. Despite successful initial collaboration, further phases of the project have stalled due to decisions by Iranian authorities.

Additionally, JICA's efforts in managing Anzali Wetland from 2003 to 2019 demonstrated how eco-tourism and stakeholder engagement could promote sustainable wetland preservation. "Challenges remain, but the comprehensive protection plan for 2020-2030 offers a pathway for long-term conservation," he noted.

JICA recognizes the environmental and disaster risks posed by the desiccation of Urmia Lake. Between 2017 and 2020, JICA supported efforts to improve hydrological models to evaluate restoration scenarios effectively. Tanaka affirmed the agency's readiness to reengage in these efforts, emphasizing the

importance of sustained collaboration.

Since 1998, JICA has supported Tehran's earthquake preparedness, conducting vulnerability assessments and implementing projects to enhance the city's resilience. Initiatives like community-based disaster response groups and rapid damage estimation systems have become integral to the city's crisis management framework.

"Tehran now benefits from advanced tools like Quick Damage & Loss Estimation (QD&LE) systems and trained emergency response volunteers," Tanaka stated, highlighting JICA's commitment to ensuring urban safety.

Between 2015 and 2017, JICA conducted training on carbon management in Iran's oil and gas sectors. Past collaborations also addressed marine environmental protection and oil spill response. These efforts reflect Japan's expertise in balancing industrial growth with ecological preservation.

Acknowledging the impact of international sanctions, Tanaka explained how JICA has adapted to logistical challenges. Recent projects, such as donating medical equipment to Tehran hospitals, underscore JICA's determination to fulfill commitments despite financial and material transfer obstacles.

"While sanctions present challenges, JICA has innovated to overcome barriers and deliver impactful results," he said, reaffirming their dedication to Iran's development.

Looking ahead, Tanaka expressed optimism about expanding collaboration, particularly in disaster risk reduction, environmental sustainability, and capacity-building projects. He emphasized that JICA's mission is purely developmental, driven by the goal of fostering long-term partnerships and supporting sustainable growth.

"Through close cooperation and shared expertise, JICA remains committed to helping Iran overcome development challenges," Tanaka concluded.

Lorestan Prepares to Boost ECO Regional Trade



TEHRAN - The President of the Khorramabad Chamber of Commerce, Mohammad Khaki, met with Silabardi Norbardi, Deputy Secretary-General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), on the sidelines of the International Conference on Environment and Urban Health. The conference, attended by members of the Asian Mayors Forum (AMF), was held at the Khorramabad Chamber of Commerce.

During the meeting, Khaki highlighted the vast potential of ECO member states for expanding trade. He noted: "ECO countries, with their large populations and extensive capacities, have created a robust consumer market that facilitates trade among member nations."

Khaki emphasized Lorestan's strengths, stating: "Our province produces over 3 million tons of agricultural products annually, spanning semi-industrial, traditional, and industrial categories. Significant strides have also been made in industrializing agricultural production, including a facility with 50 hectares of greenhouses playing a pivotal role in this sector."

He further elaborated on the province's leading role in pharmaceuticals, with products exported to over 30 countries, and its top national ranking in quarrying and processing building stones. Lorestan's unique four-season climate also positions it as a prime destination for tourism development.

Addressing economic challenges, Khaki mentioned: "International sanctions and banking restrictions have hindered further trade expansion. However, with 700 active economic agents and functioning trade licenses, Lorestan's private sector is prepared to foster collaborations."

Khaki also stressed the importance of environmental considerations: "Sustainable development requires environmental compliance. Over the past two years, our chamber has collaborated with the municipality on multiple initiatives focusing on clean air and environmental opportunities."

Deputy Secretary-General Norbardi praised Lorestan's efforts and outlined ECO's objectives: "Established in 1984 by Iran, Turkey, and Pakistan, and later joined by Central Asian and Caucasus nations, ECO plays a crucial role in identifying opportunities and fostering trade across the region."

Iran's Minor Share in Afghanistan's \$100b Foreign Investment Boom



TEHRAN - Hossein Mohammadian, a member of the Iran-Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce, discussed the limited role of the Khaf-Herat railway in boosting trade between the two countries. He explained that while the railway facilitates the import of goods from Afghanistan to Iran, it is not economically viable for Iranian exports to Afghanistan. Instead, land routes remain more cost-effective for such purposes.

Mohammadian emphasized that the primary purpose of the railway is to access Afghanistan's abundant mineral resources. He highlighted significant iron ore reserves in Herat, which lack local processing infrastructure. The railway serves as a conduit for transporting these resources to Iran. In addition to iron ore, considerable copper reserves from Afghanistan are also transported via this route for processing in Iran.

The processed materials are either consumed domestically in Iran or temporarily imported and re-exported with the involvement of Afghan traders.

Discussing broader implications, Mohammadian noted that the Khaf-Herat railway could potentially connect to Afghanistan-China rail networks in the future. This aligns with China's substantial investments in the Belt and Road Initiative, fostering stronger trade ties across the region.

Despite the strategic potential, Iran's share in Afghanistan's foreign investment landscape remains negligible. Mohammadian revealed that Iran is working on forming a consortium involving Iranian and Afghan traders to invest in Afghanistan's mining sector.

On the topic of investment security, he acknowledged significant improvements in recent years, but security remains a relative concept. Meanwhile, countries like China, Uzbekistan, Turkey, and even some European nations have made substantial investments in Afghanistan, contributing to over \$100 billion in foreign investments. Iran's involvement, by contrast, has been minimal.

Russia Prepares to Send Tourists to Iran



TEHRAN - Russia has expressed its readiness to foster tourism exchange with Iran, aiming to facilitate mutual visits between citizens of both countries. According to a statement by the Public Relations Department of the Association of Air Travel and Tourism Offices of Iran, a delegation representing Iran's tourism sector recently visited Russia at the invitation of the Russian government and the Association of Travel Agencies in St. Petersburg.

Hormetollah Rafiei, President of the Association of Air Travel and Tourism Offices of Iran, led the delegation and announced that Russia has shown a strong willingness to waive all tourist visa requirements for Iranian travelers. During discussions with Russian airlines and travel agencies, the delegation emphasized the significance of establishing seamless travel routes to boost tourism exchanges.

Rafiei urged the Iranian government to reciprocate by lifting group visa restrictions and implementing a complete visa waiver for Russian tourists. He explained that such a move would remove a critical barrier to the expansion of tourism ties, helping both countries tap into their full tourism potential.

Highlighting the annual travel of approximately six million Russian tourists to Turkey, Rafiei pointed out the immense opportunity for Iran to attract a portion of this lucrative market. "Our aim is to create a two-way tourism corridor between Iran and Russia. By showcasing Iran's unique attractions, including its pleasant climate and beautiful coastlines, we can appeal to Russian tourists year-round," he said.

Currently, most Iranian visits to Russia occur during summer and Nowruz (Persian New Year). Rafiei stressed the need for a more balanced exchange, with Russians visiting Iran across all seasons.

A key focus of the discussions was the establishment of regular annual flights between Iran and Russia. Rafiei noted that such connectivity would ensure that Russian tourists could travel to Iran throughout the year, encouraging consistent tourism traffic.

The Russian delegation expressed readiness to collaborate on

launching continuous flights, but Rafiei emphasized the need for Iran's tourism officials to take reciprocal steps, ensuring a sustainable travel route between the two nations.

The Iranian delegation addressed concerns raised by Russian travel agencies regarding the safety of their citizens visiting Iran. These apprehensions, partly fueled by negative media portrayals, were a significant topic of discussion. Rafiei reassured the Russian representatives of Iran's safety for international tourists, highlighting the country's rich cultural and natural heritage as key draws for visitors.

"We guarantee a memorable and enjoyable experience for Russian tourists in Iran," Rafiei stated, urging the Russian delegation to encourage their citizens to explore Iran's attractions.

Another breakthrough during the negotiations was the agreement to design joint tourism packages covering cities beyond St. Petersburg. Rafiei revealed plans for collaborative initiatives between Iranian and Russian travel agencies to offer diverse itineraries, showcasing more of Russia's cities to Iranian travelers.

"The talks were productive, and with concerted efforts from travel agencies and supportive measures from both governments, we can look forward to a thriving tourism exchange between Iran and Russia," Rafiei said.

Rafiei also called on Iranian tourism authorities to address existing obstacles and facilitate bilateral tourism efforts. He noted that delays in creating a robust tourism framework have hindered Iran's ability to penetrate the Russian tourism market effectively. "Russia is ready to encourage its citizens to visit Iran's remarkable attractions. It's time for the Iranian government to act and enable seamless tourist exchanges," he concluded.

With Russia showing a proactive approach toward tourism collaboration, the groundwork is being laid for a significant boost in cultural and economic ties between the two nations through tourism.

Iran Cement Exports Drop by 17%



TEHRAN - Ali Akbar Alvandi, Secretary of the Cement Industry Employers' Association, discussed the impact of gas shortages on cement production in a recent interview. He noted that gas supply to cement factories has been restricted, forcing some facilities near urban areas to reduce production by 50% due to limited gas access. Factories further from cities have switched to alternative fuels like mazut (heavy fuel oil). Despite these challenges, efforts are being made to stabilize the market. Cement production in October even surpassed last year's levels for the same period, maintaining a balanced supply.

Alvandi highlighted that earlier this year, from mid-June to mid-September, factories faced electricity shortages. This led to the closure of 70% of kilns in August, disrupting production and supply. As construction activity peaks in summer, this imbalance in supply and demand caused prices to rise. However, with the onset of cooler weather, production recovered, and prices have since stabilized, particularly in the commodity exchange market.

Gas shortages have not yet significantly impacted supply, but concerns remain. Factories using mazut are grappling with logistical challenges. Policies require them to source mazut from distant locations like Mahshahr and Bandar Abbas, increasing costs and creating transport bottlenecks. If these issues persist, production could face significant setbacks.

Alvandi also addressed the broader energy crisis, praising policies encouraging households to share the burden of power outages during summer shortages. However, he expressed concerns about potential winter electricity cuts affecting industries as temperatures drop.

Regarding exports, Alvandi revealed a 17% decline in clinker exports during the first seven months of the current year compared to last year. This drop stems from summer production disruptions, with domestic demand prioritized over exports. Currently, 80% of Iran's clinker exports go to Iraq, Kuwait, and India. Other major cement export destinations include Afghanistan, Russia, Kuwait, Armenia, Turkmenistan, Pakistan, and Persian Gulf countries.

Russia Accuses U.S. of Using Taiwan to Stir Crisis in Asia

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - The United States is using Taiwan to provoke a serious crisis in Asia, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Andrei Rudenko told TASS news agency in remarks published on Sunday, reiterating Moscow's backing of China's stance on Taiwan. "We see that Washington, in violation of the 'one China' principle that it recognises, is strengthening military-political contacts with Taipei under the slogan of maintaining the 'status quo', and increasing arms supplies," Rudenko told the state news agency. "The goal of such obvious U.S. interference in the region's affairs is to provoke the PRC (People's Republic of China) and generate a crisis in Asia to suit its own selfish interests."

The report did not cite any specific contacts that Rudenko was referring to.



France Marks 80 Years Since the Liberation of Strasbourg From the Nazis



PARIS (Dispatches) - French President Emmanuel Macron marked on Saturday the 80th anniversary of Free French troops liberating the eastern city of Strasbourg from Nazi occupation.

He was also slated later on Saturday to honour overlooked victims of World War II.

The president reviewed troops and attended a military ceremony at the Broglie Square in central Strasbourg, bowing before a monument to General Philippe Leclerc who led Free French troops into the city on November 23, 1944.

"When we knew the flag was up on the cathedral, we had reached our objective—freedom, freeing Alsace, a province dear to the heart of the Second Armoured Division," said Roger Le Neures, a 101-year-old veteran of the fight present at the ceremony.

The general, who commanded the Second Armoured Division, and his men had sworn three years earlier while fighting in Libya to one day liberate Alsace.

France's colours flew from the cathedral's spire during the ceremony in homage to the city's liberators.

Macron was also scheduled to visit Natzweiler-Struthof, around 60 kilometres (40 miles) west of Strasbourg, the only concentration camp built by the Nazis on French soil.

His Elysee Palace office said that Macron would give a speech later on Saturday at Strasbourg University, touching both on Alsace's resistance to the Nazis and the territory's liberation, and on the tens of thousands of Alsatian men forcibly enlisted into the German army.

Berlin saw Alsatians as its own citizens after annexing the province—fought over for decades by France and Germany—following France's defeat in 1940.

The forced conscription is "something that's always been misunderstood", said 99-year-old Jean-Marie Hostert, one of the surviving members of this group known as "Malgre-nous" ("against our will").

"We didn't want to go" to fight alongside the Germans, added Hostert, speaking during the commemorations in Strasbourg.

Hard Right's Simion in With a Chance as Romanians Vote for President



BUCHAREST (Dispatches) -Romanians voted on Sunday in the first round of a presidential election that may give a shot at victory to hard-right politician George Simion, who opposes military aid to Ukraine, admires Donald Trump and wants to emulate Giorgia Meloni's Italy.

Outgoing two-term president Klaus Iohannis, 65, had cemented Romania's strong pro-western stance but was accused of not doing enough to fight corruption.

Voting started at 0500 GMT and ended at 1900 GMT with exit polls to follow immediately. The second round is scheduled for Dec. 8 while a parliamentary election is also due next Sunday.

Voting by Romanians abroad, who can influence the result and where Simion is popular, began on Friday. Simion voted in Rome.

Opinion surveys show leftist Prime Minister Marcel Ciolacu, 56, leader of Romania's largest party, the Social Democrats, will make it into the run-off vote with Simion, 38, of the Alliance for Uniting Romanians the likely runner-up.

Analysts expect Ciolacu to win the second round against Simion, appealing to moderates and touting his experience running Romania during a war next door, but do not rule out a switch-up amid frustration with the high cost of living.

They also say the prospects of a Ciolacu-Simion run-off vote could mobilize centre-right voters in favour of Elena Lasconi, leader of centre-right opposition Save Romania Union.

Developing Nations Blast \$300b COP29 Climate Deal as Insufficient



BAKU (Dispatches) - Countries at the COP29 summit in Baku adopted a \$300 billion a year global finance target on Sunday to help poorer nations cope with impacts of climate change, a deal its intended recipients criticized as woefully insufficient.

The agreement, clinched in overtime at the two-week conference in Azerbaijan's capital, was meant to provide momentum for international efforts to curb global warming in a year destined to be the hottest on record.

Some delegates gave the deal a standing ovation in the COP29 plenary hall. Others lambasted wealthy nations for not doing more and criticized the Azerbaijan host for hurriedly gaveling through the contentious plan.

"I regret to say that this document is nothing more than an optical illusion," Indian delegation representative Chandni Raina told the closing session of the summit, minutes after the deal was gavelled in. "This, in our opinion, will not address the enormity of the challenge we all face. Therefore, we oppose the adoption of this document."

United Nations climate chief Simon Stiell acknowledged the difficult negotiations that led to the agreement but hailed the outcome as an insurance policy for humanity against global warming.

"It has been a difficult journey, but we've delivered a deal," Stiell said. "This deal will keep the clean energy boom growing and protect billions of lives."

"But like any insurance policy, it only works if the premiums are paid in full, and on time."

The agreement would provide \$300 billion annually by 2035, boosting rich countries' previous commitment to provide \$100 billion per year in climate finance by 2020. That earlier goal was met two years late, in 2022, and expires in 2025.

The deal also lays the groundwork for next year's climate summit, to be held in the Amazon rainforest of Brazil, where countries are meant to map out the next decade of climate action.

The summit cut to the heart of the debate over financial responsibility of industrialized countries - whose historic use of fossil fuels has caused the bulk of greenhouse gas emissions - to compensate others for worsening damage from climate change.

It also laid bare divisions between wealthy governments constrained by tight domestic budgets and developing nations reeling from costs of storms, floods and droughts.

Negotiations had been due to finish on Friday but ran into overtime as representatives from nearly 200 countries struggled to reach consensus. Talks were interrupted on Saturday as some developing countries and island nations walked away in frustration.

"We are leaving with a small portion of the funding climate-vulnerable countries urgently need. It isn't nearly enough, but it's a start," said Tina Stege, Marshall Islands climate envoy.

Nations have been seeking financing to deliver on the Paris Agreement goal of limiting global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels - beyond which catastrophic climate impacts could occur.

The world is currently on track for as much as 3.1 C (5.6 F) of warming by the end of this century, according to the 2024 U.N. Emissions Gap report, with global greenhouse gas emissions and fossil fuels use continuing to rise.

Sunday's deal failed to set out detailed steps for how countries will act on last year's U.N. climate summit pledge to transition away from fossil fuels and triple renewable energy capacity this decade. Some negotiators said Saudi Arabia had attempted to block such a plan during the talks.

"There's definitely a challenge in getting greater ambition when you're negotiating with the Saudis," said U.S. climate adviser John Podesta.

A Saudi official did not immediately provide comment.

The roster of countries required to contribute - about two dozen industrialized countries, including the U.S., European nations and Canada - dates back to a list decided during U.N. climate talks in 1992.

European governments have demanded others pay in, including China, the world's second-biggest economy, and oil-rich Persian Gulf states. The deal encourages developing countries to make contributions but does not require them.

The agreement includes a broader goal of raising \$1.3 trillion in climate finance annually by 2035 - which would include funding from all public and private sources and which economists say matches the sum needed to address global warming.

Countries also agreed on rules for a global market to buy and sell carbon credits that proponents say could mobilise billions more dollars into new projects to fight global warming, from reforestation to deployment of clean energy technologies.

Securing the climate finance deal was a challenge from the start.

Donald Trump's U.S. presidential election victory this month has raised doubts among some negotiators that the world's largest economy would pay into any climate finance goal agreed in Baku. Trump, a Republican who takes office in January, has called climate change a hoax and promised to again remove the U.S. from international climate cooperation.

President Joe Biden congratulated the COP29 participants for reaching what he called an historic agreement that would help mobilize needed funds, but said more work was needed.

Ukraine Loses More Than 40% of Territory It Seized in Russia's Kursk Region

KYIV (Dispatches) - Ukraine has lost over 40% of the territory in Russia's Kursk region that it rapidly seized in a surprise incursion in August as Russian forces have mounted waves of counter-assaults, a senior Ukrainian military source said.

The source, who is on Ukraine's General Staff, said Russia had deployed some 59,000 troops to the Kursk region since Kyiv's forces swept in and advanced swiftly, catching Moscow unprepared 2-1/2 years into its full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

"At most, we controlled about 1,376 square kilometres (531 square miles), now of course this territory is smaller. The enemy is increasing its counterattacks," the source said.

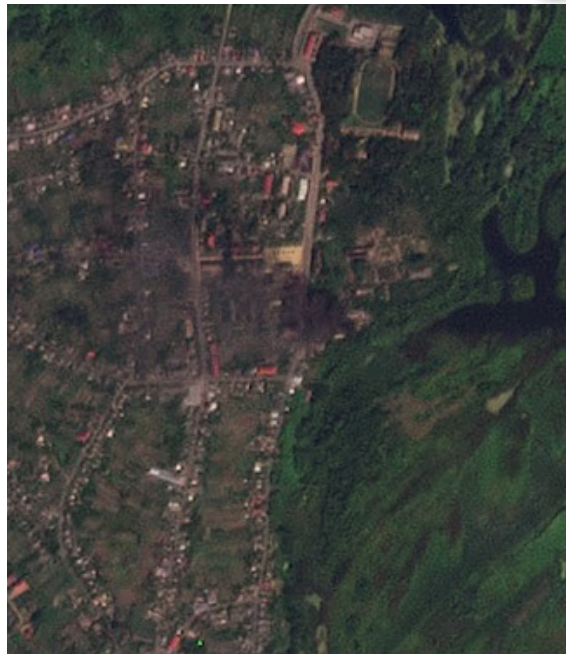
"Now we control approximately 800 square kilometres (309 square miles). We will hold this territory for as long as is militarily appropriate."

With the thrust into Kursk, Kyiv aimed to stem Russian attacks in eastern and northeastern Ukraine, force Russia to pull back forces gradually advancing in the east and give Kyiv extra leverage in any future peace negotiations.

But Russian forces are still advancing in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he believed Russian President Vladimir Putin's main objectives were to occupy the entire Donbas, which consists of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, and oust Ukrainian troops from the Kursk region.

"For Putin, the most important thing is to push us out of the Kursk region."



I am sure that he wants to push us out by January 20," Zelenskyy told media, referring to when Donald Trump will be inaugurated as U.S. president. "It is very important for him (Putin) to demonstrate that he is in control of the situation."

The source at the Ukrainian General Staff source reiterated that about 11,000 North Korean troops had arrived in the Kursk region in support of Russia, but that the bulk of their forces was still finalising their training.

The Russian Defence Ministry did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment. Reuters could not independently verify the figures or descriptions given.

Moscow, which occupies about a fifth of Ukraine, has not confirmed or denied the presence of North Korean forces in Kursk region.

The General Staff source said the Kurakhove region was the most threatening for Kyiv now as Russian forces were advancing there at 200-300 metres (yards) a day and had managed to break through in some areas.

The town of Kurakhove is a stepping stone towards the logistical hub of Pokrovsk in the Donetsk region.

Russia has about 575,000 troops fighting in Ukraine now, the source said, and aims to increase its forces to around 690,000.

Russia does not disclose numbers involved in its fighting. Reuters could not verify those figures.

Ukraine has sought to disrupt Russian logistics and supply chains by hitting Russian weapons and ammunition depots, airfields, and other military targets inside Russia.

Dozens Killed in Sectarian Clashes in Northwestern Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - At least 32 people were killed and 47 wounded in sectarian clashes in northwest Pakistan, an official told AFP on Saturday, two days after attacks on Shiite passengers convoys killed 43.

Sporadic fighting between Sunni and Shiite Muslims in the mountainous Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province bordering Afghanistan has killed around 150 over the past months.

"Fighting between Shiite and Sunni communities continues at multiple locations. According to the latest reports, 32 people have been killed which include 14 Sunnis and 18 Shiites," a senior administrative official told AFP on condition of anonymity on Saturday.

On Thursday, gunmen opened fire on two separate convoys of Shiite Muslims travelling with police escorts in Kurram, killing 43 while 11 wounded are still in "critical condition", officials told AFP.



In retaliation Shiite Muslims on Friday evening attacked several Sunni locations in the Kurram district, once a semi-autonomous region, where sectarian violence has resulted in the deaths of hundreds over the years.

"Around 7 pm, a group of enraged Shiite individuals attacked the Sunni-dominated Bagan Bazaar," a senior police officer stationed in Kurram told AFP.

"After firing, they set the entire market ablaze and entered nearby homes, pouring petrol and setting them on fire. Initial reports suggest over 300 shops and more than 100 houses have been burned," he said.

He said local Sunnis "also fired back at the attackers."

Javedullah Mehsud, a senior official in Kurram said there were "efforts to restore peace ... (through) the deployment of security forces" and with the help of "local elders".

Manchester City's Long Unbeaten Run at Home Ends



MANCHESTER (Dispatches) - Manchester City's misery continued with a shock 4-0 Premier League rout by Tottenham Hotspur at Etihad Stadium, marking the first time in Pep Guardiola's dazzling managerial career that he has lost five games in a row across all competitions.

James Maddison scored twice in the span of seven first-half minutes, while Pedro Porro netted shortly after the break and Brennan Johnson added a fourth goal deep in added time to end City's club record run of 52 consecutive home matches unbeaten in all competitions.

City remain second in the table on 23 points but are five points adrift of leaders Liverpool, with the Reds having a game in hand, while Spurs climbed to sixth on 19 points after 12 games.

"In this moment we are fragile defensively," said Guardiola, who signed a two-year contract extension on Thursday. "We started really well as normal but we could not score and then after that we conceded. After that we conceded some more which is difficult for our emotions right now."

"In eight years we have never lived this kind of situation. Now we have to live it and break it, winning the next games, especially the next one. Now we see things in one way, maybe in a few weeks we see it differently."

It was City's most lopsided loss in their history at Etihad, and their three consecutive league losses are also a first during Guardiola's eight-plus seasons as boss.

"These are rare days, to come to the champions and especially City considering how they have dominated over the last few years in Europe as well," Maddison, who celebrated his 28th birthday on Saturday, told Sky Sports.

"To come home with four-nil is special, these are the days you remember and I think it's important we enjoy it."

Guardiola's four-time defending champions had 23 shots to Tottenham's nine and will rue the missed

chances, including three in the first half from striker Erling Haaland alone.

But they were all over the place defensively and paid the price in the 13th minute when Maddison sprinted in to side-foot home a beautiful long cross from Dejan Kulusevski. Maddison doubled the lead seven minutes later when he chipped the ball over grounded goalkeeper Ederson.

Porro put the match out of reach in the 52nd minute when Dominic Solanke cut back the ball for the Spaniard who unleashed a first-time effort past Ederson, and then substitute Johnson added one more in the 93rd minute.

Timo Werner sprinted down the left past Kyle Walker before sending a low cross across the face of the goal that Johnson slid to knock in, watched by City's shell-shocked fans.

Meanwhile Arsenal returned to winning ways in the Premier League with Bukayo Saka and captain Martin Odegaard inspiring a comfortable 3-0 home victory against Nottingham Forest.

Mikel Arteta's side desperately needed three points to revive their title hopes after four league games without a win and the result never looked in doubt after Saka's early opener.

England forward Saka combined with the influential Odegaard to finish in style after 15 minutes and the hosts should have been further ahead before halftime with Forest keeper Matz Sels making several fine saves to keep his side in it.

Forest began the game level on points with Arsenal but their hopes vanished when halftime substitute Thomas Partey doubled Arsenal's lead with a curled finish in the 52nd minute and teenaged substitute Ethan Nwaneri added a late third.

Victory kept Arsenal in fourth place with 22 points from 12 games, six points behind leaders Liverpool who face bottom club Southampton on Sunday. Forest slipped to sixth.

Celta Fight Back to Hold 10-Man Barca to 2-2 Draw



VIGO (Dispatches) - Celta Vigo fought back with two late goals in quick succession to hold LaLiga leaders Barcelona to a highly entertaining 2-2 draw.

It looked like Barca were cruising towards victory after they opened a two-goal lead thanks to strikes by captain Raphinha in the 15th minute and by Robert Lewandowski in the 61st, but the script changed after their midfielder Marc Casado was sent off due to a second-yellow card for a foul in the 82nd minute.

With Barca down to 10-men, the home side piled on the pressure and managed to score twice with strikes by substitute Alfonso Gonzalez and Hugo Alvarez in the 84th and 86th minutes respectively.

Barca top the LaLiga standings with 34 points, five ahead of Atletico Madrid in second and seven ahead of third-placed Real Madrid, who have two games in hand.

"We had the game under control, but the red-card really affected us," said midfielder Gavi, who was making his first start since suffering an ACL tear with Spain national team over a year ago.

"Celta put us away in two very specific actions, if you lose focus, this is what happens... We can't allow ourselves to have a player sent off because then those things happen."

"Their first goal was stupid. We have to clear the ball away. And with one man down it's difficult to get the three points. It's football and we have to learn..."

Gavi was referring to Barca defender Jules Kounde mishandling the ball on the edge of Barca's box that allowed Gonzalez to pounce and steal it before firing Celta's first past goalkeeper Inaki Pena.

Barca capitalized on a couple of bad mistakes by Celta defenders to score their goals in a game where the home-side were the dominant force.

Oscar Mingueza missed a header while trying to clear away a long ball from Kounde, allowing Raphinha to pounce and fire in the opener in the 15th minute.

Barca goalkeeper Pena made a string of saves to deny an equaliser and they were lucky not to go into the break a man down after Celta captain Iago Aspas was fouled with a tackle from behind by defender Gerard Martin, who already had a yellow card.

Celta players and coach asked for a second-yellow, but the referee only gave a verbal warning to the Barca academy player, while flashing a yellow to Aspas for complaining. A fuming Aspas had to be held back by his manager and team mates.

Another mistake by Mingueza allowed Barca to extend their lead in the 61st minute.

The distracted fullback lost possession to Raphinha, who passed to Lewandowski and the Polish striker eventually scored Barca's second.

Blazers Win Second Game of Back-to-Back With Rockets

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Anfernee Simons hit a tie-breaking 3-pointer with 28.7 seconds remaining and the Portland Trail Blazers claimed the second game of a back-to-back with the host Houston Rockets 104-98.

Simons finished with a team-high 25 points to help Portland survive a wild fourth quarter that included six ties and four lead changes. Simons answered a layup by Amen Thompson with one of his own to tie the game at 96-96 lead with 1:03 remaining.

After Deni Avdija rejected a shot by Rockets center Alperen Sengun on the ensuing Houston possession, Simons delivered his fourth 3-pointer to give Portland its final lead.

Shaedon Sharpe added 24 points, including two free throws that extended the lead to five with 4.3 seconds left.

Jerami Grant scored 20 of his 22 points in the first half while, Avdija added 14 points and 10 rebounds off the bench. Rookie Donovan Clingan grabbed a career-high 19 rebounds as the Trail Blazers finished with a 53-43 advantage on the glass.

After beating Portland by 28 points on Friday, the Rockets shot just 35.6 percent in the rematch.

Sengun posted 22 points while Thompson added 19 points and seven rebounds off the bench. But the starting backcourt of Fred VanVleet and Jalen Green shot a combined 7 for 27, including 1 of



15 from behind the arc, while Dillon Brooks and Tari Eason totaled 17 points on 5-for-18 shooting after combining for 50 points on Friday.

The Trail Blazers fashioned another fast start into an early lead but, unlike Friday when Houston seized control later in the opening quarter, Portland fended off the Rockets' rally.

After Houston pulled even at 12-12 on Thompson's corner 3-pointer, Grant and Simons combined for seven points to help the Trail Blazers reclaim their edge. Grant scored 10 points as Portland carried a 26-21 lead into the second and, when Reed Sheppard drilled consecutive treys to pull the Rockets to within two, Grant responded with a 3-pointer and Sharpe added a layup.

Grant hit a pair of free throws with 4:25 left in the half, giving Portland a 44-35 lead. With Brooks and VanVleet saddled with foul trouble, the Rockets turned to Sengun to slice the margin to 52-50 at the half, with Sengun recording three free throws, two assists and a three-point play over the final three-plus minutes.

Meanwhile the Milwaukee Bucks survived a career-best 50-point night from LaMelo Ball to beat the visiting Charlotte Hornets 125-119 and extend their winning streak to four in a row.

Giannis Antetokounmpo had 32 points, 11 rebounds and six assists for Milwaukee, while Damian Lillard scored 31 points.

Ball started slowly, going 1-of-8 from the floor in the first quarter, before flourishing after halftime. He topped his previous career best of 38 points set earlier this month at Philadelphia.

Ball, who also had 10 assists, scored three points in the first quarter and seven in the second, then scored 40 points in the second half. Brandon Miller had 32 points and 11 rebounds in the loss.

Miller and Ball combined to score all 34 of Charlotte's points in the fourth quarter as the Hornets nearly erased a 20-point fourth-quarter deficit.

Russell Speeds to Pole at Las Vegas Grand Prix



LAS VEGAS (Dispatches) - George Russell seized his third pole position of the season for the Las Vegas Grand Prix.

Russell, of Mercedes, overcame a brush with the Turn 5 wall on his first lap in Q3 on Friday to turn in a top qualifying time of 1 minute 32.312 seconds. He finished just ahead of Ferrari's Carlos Sainz (1:32.410) and Alpine's Pierre Gasly (1:32.664).

"Ultimately you've got to put it on the table sometimes," Russell said. "I felt confident in myself -- I knew if I did a clean lap, it would be enough to secure a front row, so to get pole position is incredible. Ultimately, we've had a few good qualifying recently -- we need to convert that into a win now."

Sainz was happy to finish as close as he did given the cold conditions.

"It was a tight quali," Sainz said. "I'm a bit closer to pole than what I was expecting, really."

Charles Leclerc (1:32.783), also of Ferrari, finished with the fourth fastest in qualifying.

Dutchman Max Verstappen (1:32.797), who won the Las Vegas race in 2023, was fifth in qualifying, just ahead of rival Lando Norris (1:33.008).

Verstappen, who is bidding for his fourth consecutive title, leads Norris of McLaren by 62 points with three races remaining. Verstappen needs to finish ahead of Norris in order to win the title.

Williams rookie Franco Colapinto of Argentina finished 14th after crashing at the exit of Turn 16, forcing a 20-plus minute delay in racing.

Sinner Sends Holders Italy into Davis Cup Final

MALAGA (Dispatches) - Defending champions Italy moved into the Davis Cup final after a 2-0 win over Australia as Jannik Sinner defeated Alex de Minaur in straight sets to follow up Matteo Berrettini's victory over Thanasi Kokkinakis.

A repeat of last year's final ended with the same result and with world number one Sinner again seeing off De Minaur, sending Italy into Sunday's final where they will meet the Netherlands who have reached the decider for the first time.

After an impressive season in which he claimed his first two Grand Slam titles, Sinner is eager to cap the year by leading Italy to their second successive title in the men's team event.

"It will be tough. It's a final and especially in the Davis Cup anything can happen as we saw this week. We are not surprised, we will do our best and we have to choose wisely who will play tomorrow," Sinner told a press conference.

"This competition is very unpredictable, so we can only be happy to be back in the final... Tomorrow will be an intense day, and we are going to enjoy it."



Berrettini lost the opening set on a tiebreak before coming out on top 6-7(6) 6-3 7-5. Sinner broke early to take a 2-0 lead in the opening set and although De Minaur responded with a break of his own, Sinner's second break proved decisive.

The second set went with serve for the first eight games as the Australian gave as good as he got, but Sinner finally made the break to lead 5-4 and served out to wrap up a 6-3 6-4 win.

The ATP Finals champion believes he has improved a lot since last year when he ousted De Minaur.

"I believe I am a very solid player from the baseline and capable of doing very different things, not just hitting hard. I have achieved many things this year, so I take nothing for granted," he added.

"Winning would be a dream ending to the year for everyone... If we are here, it's because we are a great team, and we have shown that reaching this stage is not just luck. However, if we don't win, it will still be a great achievement to have reached the final."