

Acting Foreign Minister of Iran Ali Bagheri Kani Has Said That the Regional Nations and the Resistance Front Are Ready Much More Than Any Other Time to Counter the Zionist Regime of Israel's Aggressions

IRAN NEWS

In a Phone Talk With the Russian Foreign Minister, the Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran Assessed the Progress of the Ties Between Tehran and Moscow in the Right Direction and at an Appropriate Pace

VOL. XXIX, No. 8021 TEHRAN Price 50,000 Rials

www.irannewsdaily.com

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Pezeshkian, Jalili to Show Off in Run-Off



TEHRAN - Iran will hold a runoff presidential election after an initial vote saw the top candidates not securing an outright win, the spokesperson for the election headquarters says.

Mohsen Eslami announced the final result on Saturday in a news conference carried by national television.

He said of 24.5 million votes cast, former health minister and senior lawmaker Masoud Pezeshkian got 10.4 million while former lead nuclear negotiator and chief of the top security body Saeed Jalili received 9.4 million. The other two hopefuls - parliament speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf and former interior affairs minister Mostafa Pourmohammadi - trailed behind at 3.3 million and over 397,000 respectively.

Pezeshkian and Jalili will head into a runoff set for July 5. The second round is required if no candidate wins 50 percent of the vote, plus one.

In the final tally, Pezeshkian held his lead with 10,415,991 votes (42.45%) out of 24,535,185 votes. Jalili edged closer with 9,473,298 votes (38.61%).

Qalibaf and Pourmohammadi both came a distant third and fourth with 3,383,340 (13.78%) and 397,206 votes (0.84%) respectively.

The run-off election will be held on upcoming Friday, July 4.

Meanwhile Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi, after the conclusion of the first round of presidential elections, spoke at the country's election headquarters among reporters, saying: "With gratitude to the honorable people, the leadership of Iran, and all those involved in the elections, I announce the end of the first stage of the fourteenth presidential election cycle."

He added: "No disruption occurred in the election process. We thank all those involved, the Guardian Council, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs responsible for organizing overseas elections, and those in charge of security, as well as all media outlets."

He further stated: "This realization of religious democracy among the people has been prominent. We witnessed the martyrdom of two law enforcement personnel in Sistan and Baluchestan during the ballot box transfer, and we honor their memory."

Iran Possesses Over 5b Tons of Iron Ore Reserves.



TEHRAN - The head of Iran's Iron Ore Association stated: "Official figures do not correspond with realities, but it must be noted that the country's iron ore reserves exceed 5 billion tons, which, with technological advancements, extraction capabilities, and mining industry progress, can be considered as usable reserves."

Mehrdad Akbarian, head of Iran's Iron Ore Association, expressed: "We cannot accurately state the extent of the country's iron ore reserves. Unfortunately, official numbers do not align with reality and are based on studies from past years. Nevertheless, we require detailed and deeper studies in this sector. These figures may even be higher."

He further added that based on evidence, the abundance of reserves exceeds this amount. "According to the latest statistics, the estimate has reached 3.2 billion tons, but new estimates suggest it could be 5 billion tons (probable reserves)."

Akbarian noted that since the commencement of exploration activities, 600 million tons of iron ore have been extracted.

Not concerned about iron ore shortages in the future, the head of Iran's Iron Ore Association stated: "However, it must be said that we have considerable reserves in the country, which, if tapped into, will increase our reserves. With technological advancements, increased extractions, and investments in exploration, we can access even more usable reserves."

Akbarian declared that the country's iron ore reserves exceed 5 billion tons and mentioned: "Per capita consumption is low in the country, and there is sufficient iron ore for the steel industry's needs. By utilizing cutting-edge technologies, we can achieve higher estimates from these reserves, so there is no cause for concern in this regard."

Regarding the primary challenges in the iron ore sector, he stated: "Today, our challenge is not the amount of reserves or concerns about running out of iron ore. Rather, there are numerous challenges in the steel industry, such as energy shortages, which alone could negatively impact investments in the mining industries. Ignoring these issues could pose a serious threat to the steel chain."

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK



Leader Hails "Defenders of Shrine" as Saviors of Iran and Region

TEHRAN - Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei in the meeting with the organizers of the International Congress of Resistance Martyrs and Defenders of the Shrine hailed the defenders of the Shrine as the savior of Iran and the region. This meeting was held on June 19 and the text of Leader's speech in this meeting was published yesterday. In the meeting Ayatollah Khamenei described the defenders of the shrine as a remarkable and important phenomenon and one of the manifestations of the global outlook of the Islamic Republic system, emphasizing: The presence of young people from various nationalities in the form of defenders of the shrine demonstrates that the Islamic Revolution, after more than four decades, possesses the power to revive the same spirit and heroism of its initial days. The Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, in commemorating the memory of all martyrs of the defenders of the shrine and the Resistance Front, especially Martyr Soleimani, considered the defense of the shrine as a symbolic aspect of defending the ideology and ideals of the shrine's owner and Ahl al-Bayt (AS), stating: The lofty ideals of the school of Ahl al-Bayt (AS) such as justice, freedom, struggle against oppressive powers, and "self-sacrifice for the sake of truth" are always present in the pure consciences of seekers. He mentioned the movement of American university students in defense of the people of Gaza as an example of the existence of pure consciences in the world and added: The important thing is that this message of defending the shrine, which is actually defending the ideals of humanity, reaches the pure consciences in the world.

He considered another dimension of the issue of defending the shrine as the global outlook of the Islamic Revolution and reminded: Any movement, uprising, or revolution that neglects its international and regional environment will undoubtedly suffer a blow, just as the movement of the Iranian people in the Constitutional Movement and the nationalization of the oil industry suffered damage due to preoccupation with internal issues and neglect of foreign interveners. Ayatollah Khamenei added: The revered Imam (RA) from the early days of the Islamic movement and also from the beginning of the victory of the Islamic Revolution was always aware of foreign interference and the international and regional perspectives and warned appropriately in his statements in this

regard. He considered the presence of the defenders of the shrine in countries where the enemy had designed a very dangerous plan for them as manifestations of the global outlook of the Islamic Revolution and stated: The enemy intended to overthrow the Islamic system by occupying the region and simultaneously imposing economic, political, and "ideological and religious" pressures on Iran, but a group of faithful youth, with the center of the Islamic Republic, thwarted this grand plan of arrogance. He emphasized: With such an outlook, it must be said that the movement of the defenders of the shrine saved Iran and the region. Ayatollah Khamenei, referring to the ruthless and inhumane nature of ISIS and groups sympathetic to it, which were formed with the support of US and Western arms and propaganda, added: The goal of these formations was to destabilize the region, especially Iran, but the defenders of the shrine also neutralized this great danger. He listed the demonstration of the power of the Islamic Revolution in rekindling its inherent enthusiasm and heroism at the beginning of its victory as another dimension of the movement of the defenders of the shrine and added: The presence of youth who did not witness the Imam and the era of the Sacred Defense but defend the shrine indicates the incredible power of the Islamic Revolution in reviving the same religious and revolutionary motivations of four decades ago. He, referring to the expectations and analyses of some individuals with Western intellectual foundations who predicted the decline of the Islamic Revolution and its thoughts and ideals, emphasized: Purity, courage, sacrifice, sincerity, and "deep belief in religious foundations" among the youth of the defenders of the shrine are a remarkable and unparalleled phenomenon that disproves the analyses of Western-oriented thinkers, and this issue could not have taken shape without the grace and favor of the divine and Ahl al-Bayt (AS). The Leader considered the holding of rallies such as February 11 and astonishing processions such as the funeral of Martyr Brigadier General Soleimani and service martyrs as other manifestations of the power of the Islamic Revolution in reviving itself and emphasized: The martyrs of the defenders of the shrine and their families are a source of honor, pride, salvation, and success for Islamic Iran, and the Islamic Revolution is definitely hostage to these martyrs and their families.

Resistance Front to Respond to Any Aggression in Region



TEHRAN - Major General Hossein Salami, the Commander-in-Chief of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), attending the second World Congress of Martyrs of the Defenders of the Shrine and the Resistance Front, held in the Dar al-Mahramah precinct of the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS) in Mashhad, said: "Imam Khomeini (RA) revived the spirit of jihad and martyrdom among the Islamic ummah and clarified the true essence of religion through enlightened mujahideen." He added, "Following in the footsteps of Imam Khomeini (RA), the Supreme Leader of the Revolution during the past 35 years, amidst the most complex and perilous battlegrounds, has taught divine perseverance to all Muslims worldwide and provided a model of steadfastness in the face of severe pressures." Salami emphasized, "The martyrs of the Defenders of the Shrine and the axis of resistance embodied the clear manifestations of bravery, sacrifice, the pillars of martyrdom, symbols of freedom and dignity, and proofs of God." He highlighted, "The Commander of the Martyrs, Major General Qassem Soleimani, over forty years never laid aside the garb of combat and jihad, always pursued the enemies of God's religion, and brought matters to such a point that the adversaries of the world were disgraced. Tens of thousands of martyrs in various chapters of history shine as brilliant stars and demonstrate the path of honor and reverence to Muslims." He emphasized, "Muslims no longer want to accept Western domination. For us, it is worse than death to be under the rule of the tyrannical political system of the West. Palestine today symbolizes exactly what Imam Hussain (AS) said, 'Death with dignity is better than a life of humiliation.'" Salami concluded, "The spiritual tradition of the Resistance Front forms the current framework of the Islamic world, an ideology so attractive that even students in Europe and America are captivated by its divine dimensions. Today, the geography of Palestine must be found within the hearts of all free people worldwide, even in the streets of European countries." "The fact that we believe in the divine promise is why we are victorious," he asserted. "Palestine persists, Lebanon shines, Yemen stands, Afghanistan exposes its enemies, and Syria has repelled the enemies of Islam. These are great lessons in history proving that resistance answers because it is the promise of God."

Germany Asks Iran to Help Prevent Further Escalation in West Asia



BERLIN (Dispatches) - Germany has asked Iran to help prevent further escalation in the region, days after calling on global powers to mediate a decrease in regional tensions.

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock made the plea in a Friday telephone conversation with Iran's interim Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani.

"Further escalation must be prevented at all costs, and Iran must also contribute to this," she told Kani, according to a German foreign ministry post on X, former Twitter.

The comments came amid an October-present genocidal war by the Israeli regime against the Gaza Strip, which has so far claimed the lives of at least 37,765 Palestinians, mostly women and children.

The regime began waging sporadic attacks against Lebanon following the onset of the war, prompting a firefight with the Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah.

The exchange of fire has intensified since the Israeli assassination of senior Hezbollah commander Sami Taleb Abdullah.

The movement has retaliated by firing hundreds of rockets into the northern parts of the occupied territories.

Earlier this month, the Israeli army said it had approved plans for an attack on Lebanon, raising concerns that the regime might try to realize its recurrent threats of turning Lebanon into another Gaza.

On Wednesday, the German top diplomat said there was a need for world powers to chip in towards dialing down the regional tensions.

Israel Continues Bloody Onslaught on Gaza

GAZA (Dispatches) - The Israeli regime continues its bloody onslaught on the Gaza Strip by carrying out more air and artillery strikes against the blockaded territory.

The overnight attacks targeted Gaza City, Rafah as well as Nuseirat refugee camp, leaving nearly a dozen Palestinians, including four children, dead, according to reports published on Saturday morning.

In Bureij refugee camp, Gaza's civil defense agency said three of its medics were killed by Israeli aircraft and 12 others wounded while they carried out rescue efforts.

The Israeli military bombed a home in Gaza City, killing at least four Palestinians and injuring at least 10 more, the Wafa news agency reported.

Two children were among those killed in the strike, which hit the Abu Khadra family home on al-Wehda Street in the center of Gaza City.

Earlier, Israeli fighter jets targeted a residential home in Gaza City's Yarmouk neighborhood, killing two children and injuring at least five others.

On the ground, heavy fighting is underway between Israeli troops and resistance fighters.



Israeli soldiers and tanks attacked Gaza City's Shujayea neighborhood, ordering residents to leave.

UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said the Israeli ground offensive in Shujayea neighborhood forced the displacement of "at least 60,000" residents.

Resistance forces launched a mortar attack on Israeli forces in the same area, leaving casualties.

Israel launched the war on Gaza on October 7 after the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas waged the surprise Operation Al-Aqsa Storm against the occupying entity in response to the Israeli regime's decades-long campaign of bloodletting and devastation against Palestinians.

Since then, the United States has supplied the Tel Aviv regime with more than 10,000 tons of military equipment and used its veto power against all United Nations Security Council resolutions that called for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza.

The Tel Aviv regime has killed at least 37,765 Palestinians and injured over 86,429 since the start of the offensive. Thousands more are also missing and presumed dead under rubble.

IRAN NEWS



No Security Incident During Iran Election Process

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – The presidential election in Iran has been held in complete safety since Friday morning without a single security incident, Commander of the Law Enforcement Command of the Islamic Republic of Iran Brigadier General Ahmadreza Radan said. General Radan said there has not been any report of security incidents in any part of Iran since the polls opened at 8 am this morning. Full security prevails at all polling stations across the country and everything is kept in order, the commander stated. More than 61,450,000 eligible Iranian voters can take part in the ongoing elections inside the country and abroad. There were four candidates seeking presidency in the polls, including Saeed Jalili, Mostafa Pourmohammadi, Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, and Masoud Pezeshkian. Two other hopefuls, Alireza Zakani and Amir Hossein Qazizadeh Hashemi dropped out of the race on Wednesday and Thursday.

Boeing B737-800 Simulator Put Into Operation for First Time in Country



TEHRAN - The head of the Civil Aviation Organization (CAO), during the unveiling ceremony of the simulator, said: "The B737-800 simulator, operated by the Tehran Sky Knowledge Development Center, has entered service. The key to resilience and the development of the aviation industry lies in having efficient, specialized, and up-to-date human resources." He added: "Despite sanctions and the COVID-19 crisis, our efforts in the aviation industry focused on its resilience, with human resources being our top priority. Currently, upgrading human resources is also our top priority, alongside advancements in simulator construction and operation technology within the country."

He emphasized: "We have a young, efficient, and creative workforce, but we face shortages in human resource training." Captain Mohammadi highlighted: "Investing in training is an investment in capital, not expenditure. Timely investment in training will prevent the outflow of millions of dollars due to sending individuals abroad for simulator training." He also stated: "Training and simulation are crucial components in increasing safety in the aviation industry. Fortunately, today the country possesses both the technology and the knowledge to develop a variety of simulators for military and non-military purposes." He expressed hope: "By filling the training gaps and considering the increase in the country's air fleet by the end of this year, we hope not to face shortages in pilot-related infrastructure such as simulators." He further stated: "Due to the knowledge-based companies involved, decisions are based on knowledge, which drives progress. These entities are agile and have a good risk-taking capability." Captain Mohammadi added: "The B737-800 simulator is capable of operating in various weather conditions, day and night, and emergency situations, aligned with aircraft systems."

He also mentioned: "In training courses for B737 type ratings, MCC courses, PIRE SIM programs, pre-operational FFS simulator use, Operator Conversion programs, FDM programs, accident and incident investigations, and initial assessments for pilot recruitment in operating airline companies."



Iran, Saudi Arabia Discuss Regional Developments

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Senior Iranian and Saudi diplomats talked about the interaction between Tehran and Riyadh and the latest regional developments, most notably the situation in Gaza.

In a telephone conversation on Friday, Caretaker Foreign Minister of Iran Ali Baqeri and Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan discussed topics of mutual interest as well as the latest developments in Palestine and the Zionist regime's brutal crimes.

The Iranian diplomat appreciated the facilities and services provided by Saudi Arabia to the Hajj pilgrims, especially the Iranian nationals.

Pointing to the Saudi deputy foreign minister's participation in the recent meeting of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) in Tehran, Baqeri said the growing cooperation between Tehran and Riyadh is promising.

He also denounced the Zionist regime's ongoing savage crimes against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, stressing, "The Zionist regime's threats against Lebanon are the continuation of the regime's crimes against the people in Gaza, and the delusional regime that has occupied al-Quds, in its own opinion, is trying to make up for the failure in Gaza by spreading the scope of the war and crimes to other regions."

"It is incumbent upon Islamic states to make efforts and implement all their capacities to stop the Zionists' crimes, threats, and aggressions in Gaza and other areas as soon as possible," Baqeri added. For his part, the Saudi foreign minister hailed the positive talks between the two countries on the sidelines of the ACD meeting in Tehran, saying the process of ties between Tehran and Riyadh is sufficiently firm.

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK



27th ELECOMP Exhibition Kicks Off in Tehran

TEHRAN - The Electronics, Computer, and E-Commerce Exhibition (ELECOMP) started on Saturday with the presence of the Minister of Communications and Information Technology under the motto "Together for the Digital Economy."

The 27th ELECOMP Exhibition began this morning (Saturday) at the permanent location of the Tehran International Exhibitions with the participation of the Minister of Communications and active players in the communications and technology sectors. The exhibition will continue until July 3.

This exhibition brings together startups and companies active in this field to contribute to the growth of the country's digital economy.

On the sidelines of the event, the Minister of Communications and Information Technology announced the identification and neutralization of 20 cases of sabotage and fiber optic disruptions during the 14th presidential election.

Eisa Zarepour stated to reporters that a positive event during the parliamentary and presidential elections was that people could vote with identification other than their birth certificates. For the presidential election, only a national ID card was required, while other forms of ID were accepted for parliamentary elections.

He mentioned that this required the country's communication infrastructure to manage and respond to online inquiries effectively.

The Minister highlighted that yesterday, out of 58,640 active polling stations nationwide, only one station at the Ministry of

Interior experienced a technical issue and was not connected.

Zarepour emphasized that this level of connectivity meant that even in remote and hard-to-reach rural areas with ballot boxes, there was communication coverage for inquiries.

He stressed that 97% of the inquiries were conducted through APN, indicating that third, fourth, and 4.5G internet was available to the public in 97% of cases. The field data confirmed the statistics we have, demonstrating that network access exists throughout the country.

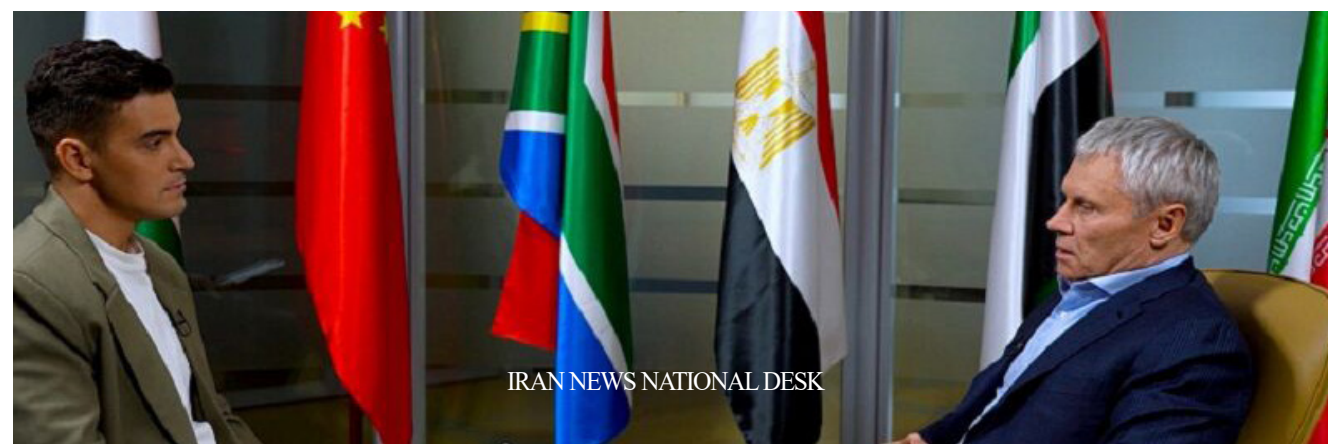
He added that the network had good stability, with 99.3% of inquiries conducted online and disconnections being less than 1%. Many attempts were made by saboteurs to disrupt the elections by cutting fiber optics.

Zarepour continued, stating there were 20 incidents of accidental and intentional disruptions, mostly intentional. There were nine disconnections, but 400 fiber optic connection teams across the country quickly identified and neutralized them. As a result, more than 99.3% of inquiries during the election were conducted online.

The focus of the 27th ELECOMP Exhibition is to make greater use of the private sector's capacity than in the past. A significant portion of investments has been directed towards older industries, and this exhibition provides a platform for investors to direct some of their capital towards new startups.

More than 500 companies and startup teams, as well as 9 science and technology parks, are participating in this year's exhibition.

Russian Business Activist Touches Upon Dimensions of Iran-Russia Trade



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The head of the Russia-Iran Business Council at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Russian Federation elaborated on the dimensions of bilateral trade cooperation in various sectors and described its outlook as promising.

Leonid Lozhchenko, who has been tasked with developing Moscow-Tehran trade relations since 2023, discussed in an interview with the BRICS TV network that the Islamic Republic of Iran's membership in BRICS offers a unique opportunity for Iranian entrepreneurs to pursue trade with other member countries based on shared mechanisms. He noted that among the BRICS countries, Iran and Russia are notable energy producers, while other prominent members like China and India are major energy consumers.

This Russian economic activist stated that Iran's membership in BRICS will boost joint investments in the country's energy sector, naturally enhancing Iran's trade balance through the processing of oil and gas resources. He further highlighted that the trade relations between the two countries are actively developing at various levels with the support of their leaders. He mentioned that major Russian companies are currently participating in the development of Iran's energy sector, and currently, efforts are being made to enhance trade relations between small and medium-sized companies from both countries. Lozhchenko continued, "Today, a large number of Russian companies have entered the Iranian market, and I believe there is an excellent outlook for the development of these relations."

This Russian economic activist further noted the cooperation between Russia and Iran in the electricity industry, production of parts, and equipment, stating that the two countries recently signed a major contract to supply 40,000 Iranian cars to the Russian market, focusing on mid-range vehicles. Referring to the exchanges of trade delegations between the two countries, Lozhchenko said that more than 150 Russian economic activists participated in one of Iran's recent trade exhibitions. He added that in 2023, over 1,000 face-to-face (B2B) meetings were held between Iranian and Russian

companies in Iran alone, supported by Iran to familiarize the parties with each other's capacities. A member of the Russian Chamber of Commerce and Industry also mentioned that Russian companies can currently operate in eight free trade zones in Iran, and they can register companies in Bandar Anzali, benefiting from secure investment opportunities in Iran. He continued, "Conversely, many Iranian companies are entering the Russian market, including in the raw materials sector. Some of these companies are buying land and establishing companies to gain a stable presence in our market and achieve more added value in trade exchanges. Iranian companies in Russia also receive governmental support, including land and tax exemptions." He referred to the signing of the free trade agreement between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the member countries of the Eurasian Union in December 2023, which will be implemented after ratification by the parliaments of the six contracting countries. He said this agreement would provide a great opportunity for the development of Moscow-Tehran trade exchanges by eliminating customs tariffs on over 85% of goods. Lozhchenko recalled that in 2006, the Tehran Declaration on the protection and cooperation of Caspian Sea countries in preserving the ecosystem was adopted, obligating all Caspian Sea countries to implement it. Russia is particularly active in this area. He noted that Russia is currently dredging the maritime transport route from the port of Olya to the last lighthouse in Russia in the Caspian Sea, covering approximately 100 kilometers, and is cleaning and increasing the depth of the Volga canal to allow larger cargo ships to pass. Lozhchenko, referring to the beginning of visa-free group travel exchanges between citizens of the two countries, said, "We recommend Russian citizens visit Iran because there are many sightseeing places in this country, like Isfahan and Shiraz, which have more than three thousand years of civilization history. Additionally, Iran's shrines are also popular tourist attractions." He expressed hope that mutual tourist flows between Iran and Russia would increase significantly.

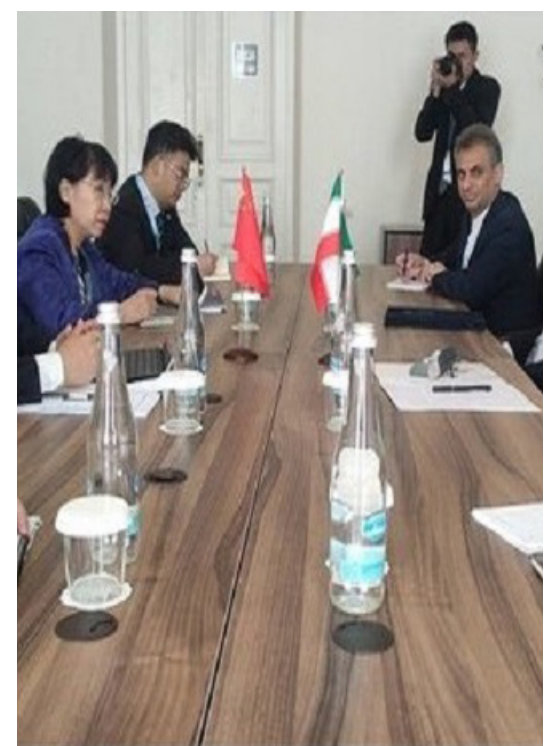
U.S. Only Pretending Human Rights



TEHRAN - Secretary of the Human Rights Headquarters and Deputy for International Affairs of the Judiciary, referring to the political outlook of the United States on human rights, said: America only makes gestures in defense of human rights to advance its own political objectives.

Kazem Gharibabadi, on Saturday during a roundtable on American human rights recollection and disclosure week, mentioned America's crimes on three levels (assassination, sanctions, and crimes against humanity), stating: America has committed crimes against the Iranian nation, its own people, and other nations. He stated that America views human rights entirely through a political lens and does not believe in them, saying: For instance, America has not joined the Convention on the Rights of the Child for unjustifiable reasons. The head of the American Human Rights Recollection and Disclosure Week cited another example of America's political approach to human rights as its indifference towards crimes by the Zionist regime in Gaza and added: While many countries and organizations reacted to the crimes of the Zionist regime in Gaza, America did not issue even the simplest statement and instead provided extensive logistical and intelligence support for these crimes. These are clear examples of how human rights are a political issue for America. Gharibabadi also considered America's good relations with the dictatorship in Iran before the Islamic Revolution as another example of America's political view on human rights. The Deputy for International Affairs of the Judiciary stated: America's invasions of countries like Iraq and Afghanistan, which resulted in the deaths of millions in those countries, are another sign of the political nature of human rights. Additionally, economic sanctions are among the other cases; currently, America has imposed economic sanctions on about 25 countries, which is contrary to the principles and rules of friendly international human rights. The head of the American Human Rights Recollection and Disclosure Week declared: America's economic sanctions, especially when they become comprehensive, are contrary to the principles of friendly international human rights. Gharibabadi reminded: Economic sanctions in Iraq led to the death of 500,000 children in that country. At that time, America reacts and issues a statement even to minor incidents in a country.

VP Meets With Chinese, Russian Counterparts



TEHRAN (IP) - The vice president and head of Iran's Environment Department met with the environment ministers of Russia and China at the 10th meeting of the environment ministers of BRICS member states.

According to the Iran Press News Agency, Ali Salajeghe, the Vice President and Head of the Environment Department of Iran, met with the Minister of the Environment of Russia at the 10th meeting of the Ministers of the Environment of the BRICS countries, in Nizhny Novgorod, Russia, pointing out that the relations between Tehran and Moscow are at a very good level.

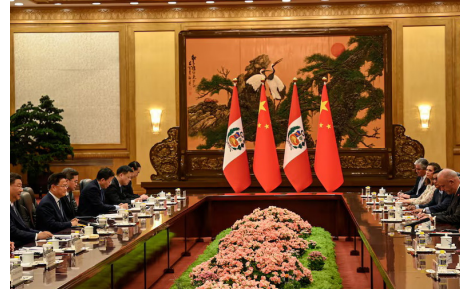
He emphasized: "The leaders of the two countries have a serious will to improve relations and we will use the capacity of the two countries' neighborhood to realize this."

In the continuation of this meeting, Salajeghe said: "This is the only mammal species in the Caspian Sea and we must protect this valuable species."

Ali Salajeghe also met and talked with the Minister of Environment of China on the sidelines of the BRICS meeting.

China, Peru Completed Substantial Negotiations to Upgrade FTA

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China and Peru have achieved "substantial conclusion of negotiations" on the upgrading of a free trade agreement between both countries, Chinese state media said. In a meeting with Peruvian President Dina Boluarte in Beijing, President Xi Jinping said both sides should coordinate and promote cooperation in fields such as minerals, energy, manufacturing, agriculture and others, state broadcaster CCTV said. Peru and China signed a free trade agreement in 2009, which helped the South American nation boost its exports. Peru's press office reported that Boluarte and Xi also signed a series of agreements to strengthen ties, including one on Peruvian grape exports to China, and a memorandum of understanding establishing a Peruvian-Chinese Business Council. China is Peru's top investor and the top market for copper from Peru, the world's third largest producer of the red metal.



IRAN NEWS

Russia May Resume Global Deployment of Intermediate Range Missiles



MOSCOW (Dispatches) - President Vladimir Putin said on Friday that Russia should resume production of intermediate and shorter range nuclear-capable missiles and then consider where to deploy them after the United States brought similar missiles to Europe and Asia. Putin's move finally kills off all that remains from one of the most significant arms controls treaties of the Cold War amid fears that the world's two biggest nuclear powers could be entering a new arms race together with China. The Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, signed by Mikhail Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan in 1987, marked the first time the superpowers had agreed to reduce their nuclear arsenals and eliminated a whole category of nuclear weapons. The United States under former President Donald Trump formally withdrew from the INF Treaty in 2019 after saying that Moscow was violating the accord, an accusation the Kremlin repeatedly denied and dismissed as a pretext. Russia then imposed a moratorium on its own development of missiles previously banned by the INF treaty - ground-based ballistic and cruise missiles with ranges of 500 km to 5,500 km. Putin said Russia had pledged not to deploy such missiles but that the United States had resumed their production, brought them to Denmark for exercises and also taken them to the Philippines. "We need to respond to this and make decisions about what we will have to do in this direction next," Putin was shown on state television telling Russia's Security Council.

"Apparently, we need to start manufacturing these strike systems and then, based on the actual situation, make decisions about where - if necessary to ensure our safety - to place them," he said.

Russia and the United States, by far the biggest nuclear powers, have both expressed regret about the disintegration of the tangle of arms control treaties which sought to slow the Cold War arms race and reduce the risk of nuclear war.



Biden Stumbles, Trump Lies in First Presidential Debate

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The Biden administration has sent to Israel large numbers of munitions, including more than 10,000 highly destructive 2,000-pound bombs and thousands of Hellfire missiles, since the start of the war in Gaza, said two U.S. officials briefed on an updated list of weapons shipments.

Between the war's start last October and recent days, the United States has transferred at least 14,000 of the MK-84 2,000-pound bombs, 6,500 500-pound bombs, 3,000 Hellfire precision-guided air-to-ground missiles, 1,000 bunker-buster bombs, 2,600 air-dropped small-diameter bombs, and other munitions, according to the officials, who were not authorized to speak publicly.

While the officials didn't give a timeline for the shipments, the totals suggest there has been no significant drop-off in U.S. military support for its ally, despite international calls to limit weapons supplies and a recent administration decision to pause a shipment of powerful bombs.

Experts said the contents of the shipments appear consistent with what Israel would need to replenish supplies used in this eight-month intense military campaign in Gaza, which it launched after the Oct. 7 attack by Palestinian Hamas militants who killed 1,200 people and took 250 others hostage, according to Israeli tallies. "While these numbers could be expended relatively quickly in a major conflict, this list clearly reflects a substantial level of support from the United States for our Israeli allies," said Tom Karako, a weapons expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, adding that the listed munitions were the type Israel would use in its fight against Hamas or in a potential conflict with Hezbollah. The delivery numbers, which have not been previously reported, provide the most up-to-date and extensive tally of munitions shipped to Israel since the Gaza war began. Israel and Iran-backed Hezbollah have been trading fire since the start of the Gaza war, and concern is rising that an all-out war could break out between the two sides. The White House declined to comment. Israel's Embassy in Washington did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The shipments are part of a bigger list of weapons sent to Israel since the Gaza conflict began, one of the U.S. officials said. A senior Biden administration official on Wednesday told reporters that Washington has since Oct. 7 sent \$6.5 billion worth of security assistance to Israel.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in recent weeks claimed that Washington was withholding weapons, a suggestion U.S. officials have repeatedly denied even though they acknowledged some "bottlenecks".

The Biden administration has paused one shipment of the 2,000-pound bomb, citing concern over the impact it could have in densely populated areas in Gaza, but U.S. officials insist that all other arms deliveries continue as normal. One 2,000-pound bomb can rip through thick concrete and metal, creating a wide blast radius.

Reuters reported on Thursday that the United States is discussing with Israel the release of a shipment of large bombs that was suspended in May over worries about the military operation in Rafah.

International scrutiny of Israel's military operation in Gaza has intensified as the Palestinian death toll from the war has exceeded 37,000, according to the Gaza health ministry, and has left the coastal enclave in ruins.

Washington gives \$3.8 billion in annual military assistance to its longtime ally. While Biden has warned that he would place conditions on military aid if Israel fails to protect civilians and allow more humanitarian aid into Gaza, he has not done so beyond delaying the May shipment.

Biden's support for Israel in its war against Hamas has emerged as a political liability, particularly among young Democrats, as he runs for re-election this year. It fueled a wave of "uncommitted" protest votes in primaries and has driven pro-Palestinian protests at U.S. universities.

While the United States provides detailed descriptions and quantities of military aid sent to Ukraine as it fights a full-scale invasion of Russia, the administration has revealed few details about the full extent of U.S. weapons and munitions sent to Israel.

The shipments are also hard to track because some of the weapons are shipped as part of arms sales approved by Congress years ago but only now being fulfilled.

One of the U.S. officials said the Pentagon has sufficient quantities of weapons in its own stocks and had been liaising with U.S. industry partners who make the weapons, such as Boeing Co

Biden Acknowledges Bad Debate Performance But Vows to Beat Trump

RALEIGH (Dispatches) - President Joe Biden said on Friday he intended to defeat Republican rival Donald Trump in the November presidential election, giving no sign he would consider dropping out of the race after a feeble debate performance that dismayed his fellow Democrats.

"I know I'm not a young man, to state the obvious," an ebullient Biden said at a rally one day after the head-to-head showdown with his Republican rival, which was widely viewed as a defeat for the 81-year-old president.

"I don't walk as easy as I used to, I don't speak as smoothly as I used to, I don't debate as well as I used to," he said, as the crowd chanted "four more years."

"I would not be running again if I didn't believe with all my heart and soul that I could do this job. The stakes are too high," Biden said.

Biden's verbal stumbles and occasionally meandering responses in the debate heightened voter concerns that he might not be fit to serve another four-year term and prompted some of his fellow Democrats to wonder whether they could replace him as their candidate for the Nov. 5 U.S. election.

Campaign spokesperson Michael Tyler said there were no conversations taking place about that possibility. "We'd rather have one bad night than a candidate with a bad vision for where he



wants to take the country," he told reporters aboard Air Force One.

The campaign held an "all hands on deck" meeting on Friday afternoon to reassure staffers that Biden was not dropping out of the race, according to two people familiar with the meeting.

Though Trump, 78, put forward a series of falsehoods throughout the debate, the focus afterward was squarely on Biden, especially among Democrats.

Hakeem Jeffries, the Democratic Party leader in the U.S. House of Representatives, avoided answering directly when asked whether he still had faith in Biden's candidacy.

"I support the ticket. I support the Senate Democratic majority. We're going to do everything possible to take back the House in November. Thank you, everyone," he told reporters.

Some other Democrats likewise demurred when asked if Biden should stay in the race. "That's the president's decision," Democratic Senator Jack Reed told a local TV station in Rhode Island.

But several of the party's most senior figures, including former presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama, said they were sticking with Biden.

"Bad debate nights happen. Trust me, I know. But this election is still a choice between someone who has fought for ordinary folks his entire life and somebody who only cares about himself," former Democratic President Barack Obama wrote on X.

Bolivia's President Finds New Strength After Seeing Off Military Coup

LA PAZ (Dispatches) - Bolivian leftist President Luis Arce told Reuters support on the streets had strengthened his government after a failed military coup just days ago and that he would keep working until his last day, in one of his first interviews since the dramatic attack. The quiet economist was thrust into the global spotlight on Wednesday when rogue military units seized the central square of La Paz and rammed a door of the presidential palace with an armored vehicle to allow soldiers to rush in. Flanked by armed soldiers, a rogue general, Juan Jose Zuniga, had demanded a shake-up of the government. Arce had warned that the landlocked country of some 12 million people was facing a coup and called for supporters to mobilize. Face-to-face he ordered the general to stand down, and hours later as support for the coup disintegrated the soldiers pulled back. Zuniga and dozens of others have since been arrested. The attack is the most dramatic attempt to overthrow the government in Bolivia in recent years, despite its mottled history with around 190 coup attempts in just two centuries. "The support of the people in the streets and the international support we received has strengthened us to be here again to continue our work," said Arce, a student of Karl Marx credited for driving Bolivia's "economic miracles" in the early 2000s as economy minister under iconic leader Evo Morales.

French Far-Right Extends Poll Lead as Campaign Ends



PARIS (Dispatches) - France's far-right National Rally (RN) extended its lead in a poll published on the last day of campaigning before Sunday's first round of parliamentary elections, with another survey showing it in sight of a slim majority.

Marine Le Pen's anti-immigrant, eurosceptic party has led polling since President Emmanuel Macron called a surprise snap election this

month that has plunged France into uncertainty and unnerved European neighbours and financial markets. A new OpinionWay poll published by Les Echos newspaper on Friday showed the RN could reach as much as 37% of the popular vote, up two percentage points on its score a week ago.

Macron's centrist bloc Together party was seen reaching 20%, down by two

points from the last publication. The New Popular Front leftwing alliance stood at an unchanged 28% of the vote.

BFM TV, in a different poll compiled by Elabe, calculated that the RN and allies could end up with 260-295 seats in the new parliament - potentially crossing the 289-seat bar for an absolute majority giving them a clear mandate to govern.

Accurate seat projections are tricky because the outcome depends on results in 577 constituencies across France. Moreover, after Sunday's first round, rivals to the RN may team up and withdraw candidates in tactical moves to defeat far-right candidates in the July 7 second round. The prospect either of an RN-led government or the political paralysis of a hung parliament has unnerved financial markets, with the risk premium on French government bonds rising on Friday to its widest since the 2012 euro zone crisis. An outright RN victory would position the party for an awkward "cohabitation" with Macron for the remainder of his term through to 2027, the first time a French president would have to share power with a party outside the political mainstream. While the RN has toned down some of its anti-European Union positions and has vowed fiscal responsibility,

questions remain over how it will fund its election promises and what its deep euroscepticism will mean for the future of EU integration.

Critics say racism underlies its "French first" policies despite Le Pen's efforts to detoxify a party inherited from her father Jean-Marie, who was convicted of inciting racial hatred. In a final TV debate on Thursday, Macron's Prime Minister Gabriel Attal accused his RN challenger Jordan Bardella of continuing to tolerate racist speech in the ranks of his far-right camp - an accusation Bardella rejected. The party has benefited from anger at Macron, whose decision to run as president back in 2017 at the head of a newly formed, broad-based centrist movement has reshaped French politics and was intended to counter the rise of extremist parties. His rule has been credited with pro-business reforms but is perceived by many French voters to have ignored their concerns about the rising cost of living and weaker public services. Le Pen gave a foretaste of the type of clashes that a cohabitation could trigger on Friday when she said an RN prime minister would veto Macron's preferred choice to serve as the French official in the European Commission in Brussels.



Tabilo in Third Final of Season in Mallorca

MALLORCA (Dispatches) - No. 4 seed Alejandro Tabilo of Chile rallied past French sixth seed Gael Monfils 2-6, 6-2, 7-6 (3) in the semifinals of the Mallorca Championships in Spain. Tabilo reached his third final of the season, one on each surface -- hard court, clay and grass. After he absorbed Monfils' 12 aces and won 40 of 49 first-serve points (81.6 percent), Tabilo seeks his second career title after winning the season opener in Auckland, New Zealand. His opponent in the final will be Austria's Sebastian Ofner, a 6-4, 7-5 winner over qualifier Paul Jubb of Great Britain. Jubb had upset top-seeded Ben Shelton in the quarterfinals. No. 1 seed Taylor Fritz is one win away from his third title at the Rothesay International after eliminating Australian lucky loser Aleksandar Vukic 7-6 (5), 7-6 (4) in Eastbourne, England. Fritz, who won this event in 2019 and 2022, smashed 15 aces with only one double fault on Friday. Both tiebreakers were close, as Vukic tied it 5-5 in the first set and drew within 5-4 in the second before Fritz pulled away both times. Fritz will square off with another Australian, qualifier Max Purcell, in the final. Purcell defeated British wild card Billy Harris 6-4, 4-6, 6-4. Harris had a 37-21 advantage in winners but also committed triple the number of unforced errors as Purcell (27 to 9).

Meanwhile no. 6 seed Daria Kasatkina of Russia reached the Rothesay International final for the second straight year, rallying for a 3-6, 7-5, 6-3 win against No. 3 seed Jasmine Paolini of Italy. Kasatkina, who fell to Madison Keys in last year's final, won six of the final seven games to finish the match in two hours and 16 minutes. She saved 10 of 14 break points and broke Paolini's serve five times, including the final game in the second set. Canada's Leylah Fernandez also won a three-setter to make the final, dethroning the fourth-seeded Keys 6-3, 3-6, 6-3 in the other semifinal in two hours and three minutes. Two unseeded players will fight for the title in Germany as Donna Vekic of Croatia prepared to face Russia's Diana Shnaider. Vekic defeated Bulgaria's Viktoriya Tomova 6-0, 7-6 (6) and Shnaider knocked out No. 3 seed Emma Navarro 7-5, 2-6, 6-3 in the semifinals. Vekic, who won the first eight games before Tomova rallied to force the tiebreak, saved four of five break points and finished with 10 aces. Shnaider saved a whopping 13 of 17 break points against Navarro.

Colombia Into Copa Quarters After Costa Rica Romp



GLENDALE (Dispatches) - Colombia marched into the quarter-finals of the Copa America on Friday with a confident 3-0 victory over Costa Rica in Arizona. Goals from Luis Diaz, Davinson Sanchez and Jhon Cordoba sealed all three points for the Colombians, who are now guaranteed a top two-finish in Group D. Colombia will qualify for the quarter-finals as group winners if they can secure at least a point against Brazil in their final group game next Tuesday. The Colombians will head into that game brimming with confidence after extending their unbeaten streak to 25 games at Glendale's State Farm Stadium on Friday. Nestor Lorenzo's well-organised side have not lost since a defeat to Argentina in February 2022, and never looked like surrendering that record on Friday. Liverpool star Diaz opened the scoring from the penalty spot in the 31st minute after Costa Rica goalkeeper Patrick Sequeira inexplicably crashed into Jhon Cordoba on the edge of the area. Diaz stepped up to smash an emphatic spot-kick into the top corner. Colombia almost doubled their tally on 37 minutes, with veteran midfielder James Rodriguez picking out Diaz at the back post. Diaz poked a cross into the six-yard area but center-back Davinson Sanchez just couldn't get a touch to guide the ball into the net. Sanchez made no such mistake in the 59th minute, however, as he glanced in Jhon Arias's cross from the left to make it 2-0.

Djokovic Pain Free Ahead of Wimbledon

LONDON (Dispatches) - Novak Djokovic proclaimed himself "pain free" after defeating Daniil Medvedev in an exhibition match on Friday ahead of Wimbledon. Former world number one Djokovic, the seven-time Wimbledon champion, needed surgery earlier this month following a serious knee injury at the French Open. But on Friday the 37-year-old took his place in the draw for Wimbledon, which starts on Monday, with Djokovic, seeded two, taking on 123rd-ranked Vit Kopriv of the Czech Republic at the grass-court Grand Slam. Djokovic's movement was not completely smooth in a 6-3, 6-4 win over Medvedev during an exhibition event at London's Hurlingham Club, with the Serbian's right knee strapped up. But he struck the ball crisply and served well. "I can tell you that I enjoyed myself really, really much today," said Djokovic afterwards. "I can tell you that pain-free tennis is the best tennis. I



was pain-free and I'm really glad. It was a great test obviously against one of the best players in the world. "I've played a couple of practice sets but I really wanted to test myself. The test was very successful so I'm obviously really glad. It's been an intense three week after surgery, spending a lot of hours rehabbing." Djokovic, whose tally of 24 singles titles at Grand Slam tournaments is the most won by any man in tennis history, added: "I kind of always wanted to give myself a chance to be in London. I think my surgeon is here. He's the MVP (most valuable player) for sure the last three weeks. "I'm trying to take it day by day and see how far it goes." Djokovic was forced to pull out ahead of his quarter-final at the French Open against Casper Ruud after tearing the medial meniscus in his right knee.

India Look to End Title Drought, South Africa Seek Redemption



LONDON (Dispatches) - India will be out to end their global title drought while South Africa are seeking to bury their 'chokers' tag at Kensington Oval today when the tournament's two unbeaten sides clash in the Twenty20 World Cup final. Their blemish-free campaigns and comprehensive victories in the semi-finals leave no doubt that the 20-team tournament's best two sides have made the final in Bridgetown. A day after South Africa stopped Afghanistan's fairytale run in the first semi in Trinidad, India ended England's title defence in Guyana to make the third consecutive final of a global event across all formats. Skipper Rohit Sharma will hope India, who lost in the finals of the World Test Championship and the 50-overs home World Cup last year, will make it third time lucky. Both Rohit, 37, and stalwart Virat Kohli, 35, are playing what could be their last T20 World Cup, and winning the trophy would be a perfect farewell for them. They appear to have both the game plan and personnel to do just that. At the top of the order, Rohit personifies India's batting philosophy, which values a string of attacking cameos more than one match-winning knock from any one batter. Their three-pronged spin attack has served them well in the second half of the tournament, while pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah has been almost unplayable so far. Rohit believes a calm dressing room has been key to India's strong run. "We do understand the occasion but for us it's important to keep calm and composed," he said. "That helps us make good decisions. We need to make good decisions through the 40 overs." Kohli's struggles for runs appear to be India's only worry heading into the final but Rohit has no concerns about the form of his opening partner. "We understand his class. When you have played for 15 years, form is never a problem," he said. "He's probably saving it for the final."

Hamilton, Leclerc Bemoan Tough Start to Austrian GP

SPIELBERG (Dispatches) - Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton described his driving as "disastrous" and Ferrari's Charles Leclerc was left baffled after a tough sprint qualifying at the Austrian Grand Prix on Friday. Hamilton qualified a disappointing sixth for the sprint grid, with Leclerc only 10th behind Max Verstappen's Red Bull pole-sitter. "I wasn't in the mix at all, the whole session was pretty disastrous from our point of view," said Hamilton, who went wide and off on his first flying lap in SQ1. "Practice was good, the car felt good, I don't think we had the pace to be on pole, but very bad laps. "I don't think overtaking is mega here, but we'll give our best. It's usually not such an eventful race, so I think the focus will be mostly on getting a better qualifying tomorrow." His team-mate George Russell qualified fourth. Russell said he felt capable of challenging and believed Mercedes form endorsed a view that they are on the way back to becoming a more competitive force again. A luckless Leclerc was mystified by his and Ferrari's latest flop. The Monegasque, who claimed an emotional home win at last month's Monaco Grand Prix, was classified 10th after failing to clock a lap due to a car problem as he exited the pit lane. His Ferrari team-mate Carlos Sainz, who is leaving the team this year to be replaced by Hamilton was fifth. "I don't know what happened," said Leclerc, whose Ferrari



complete a warm-up lap and cross the start-finish line before the chequered flag. As a result, he did not clock a flying lap time. "We weren't looking super-strong, but definitely better than P10," he added. "So it is a bit disappointing. We have to see what happened and try to have a strong sprint race and come back to the front." After winning in Monaco with Sainz third behind him, Leclerc and Ferrari suffered a double DNF (Did Not Finish) in Canada, where both drivers failed to make the top-ten shootout in qualifying, and then finished fifth and sixth in Spain last Sunday. He arrived in Austria with some confidence in having a chance to repeat his 2022 victory, but appeared to be suffering from the Italian team's ongoing inconsistency. "In Montreal, we identified quite well what was going wrong and it was more down to the tyres," said Leclerc. "But in Barcelona, we were lacking just raw pace and we were slower than we expected. I don't think we optimised our package. "So we'll keep on working, try to optimise also the new package that we have on the car, which obviously was out for the first race in Barcelona. "And we still have some work to try to understand a bit more these new parts that we are using now. However, I don't think that the issues we have are the same and we don't have a trend."