

A Member of the Iranian Parliament and a Senior Iranian Lawmaker Has Said that the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei Will Receive Members of Parliament on Sunday

IRAN NEWS

The Saudi Crown Prince Has Once Again Congratulated Iranian President-Elect Masoud Pezeshkian on His Recent Electoral Victory, Placing a Premium on Closer Cooperation Between the Two Countries

VOL. XXIX, No. 8036 TEHRAN Price 50,000 Rials

www.irannewsdaily.com

SATURDAY JULY 20, 2024 TIR 30, 1403

2

DOMESTIC

Allocating Over \$20b for Imports This Year

> SEE PAGE 2

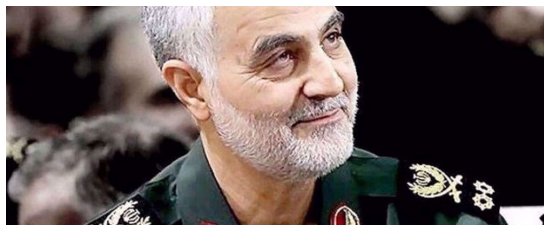
3

INTERNATIONAL

Israel Bombards Central Gaza as Tanks Advance Deeper in Rafah

> SEE PAGE 3

Iran Insists on Exhausting All Legal Capacities in Pursuing Gen. Soleimani's Assassination Case



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's acting foreign minister insists that the country will exhaust all available domestic and international legal capacities towards consigning those involved in the assassination of the country's top anti-terror commander to justice.

Ali Bagheri Kani made the remarks to CNN's Fareed Zakaria in New York, to which the top diplomat has travelled to attend two United Nations Security Council meetings.

The Islamic Republic would spare no legal efforts to ensure that "justice is served in the case," he said, asserting, "This is our right."

Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, commander of the Quds Force of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the second-in-command of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), and their companions were assassinated in a US drone strike authorized by former US President Donald Trump near Baghdad International Airport on January 3, 2020. The commanders were highly revered across West Asia due to their key role in fighting the Daesh Takfiri terrorist group in the region, particularly in Iraq and neighboring Syria.

Zakaria also questioned Bagheri regarding allegations that were leveled by CNN earlier in the week, in which the network claimed that American authorities had obtained "intelligence from a human source in recent weeks on a plot by Iran to try to assassinate Trump."

The claim emerged after an assassination attempt against Trump that took place while he was campaigning in Butler, Pennsylvania. Trump survived the attempt, suffering an ear injury.

The Islamic Republic has reacted by roundly rejecting the allegation, and considering it to be a product of malicious political goals and intents.

Bagheri reiterated the rejection, stating, "We have only used and will continue to use our own domestic legal and judicial frameworks and mechanisms and the [available] international ones towards [ensuring] administration of justice regarding those who had ordered, perpetrated, and advised the assassination of General Soleimani."

Elsewhere in his remarks, the Iranian official commented on the Israeli regime's repeated threats of expanding its ongoing genocidal war against the Gaza Strip to Lebanon.



Blast Near U.S. Consulate Rocks Tel Aviv; Yemen Claims Drone Operation

SANAA (Dispatches) - Yemeni armed forces announced an operation against Tel Aviv as a powerful explosion hit an area near a US consular facility amid the failure of Israeli air defenses to intercept the drone. The blast occurred in the city's Ben Yehuda Street on Friday, Israeli media outlets reported. Meanwhile, Yemeni Armed Forces spokesman Brigadier General Yahya Saree announced that the country had launched an operation against Tel Aviv on Friday morning. He said that further details of the operation would be announced soon. The Israeli military has said it is opening an investigation to find out why the country's air defense systems were not activated to intercept the drone. Other Israeli officials were quoted as saying that an "attack drone" had entered the occupied territories' airspace from the direction of the Mediterranean Sea. The aircraft exploded in a building lying less than 100 meters away from a US consular facility in the city, they added. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reportedly delayed his trip to Washington following the explosion. The explosion, however, comes amid the Israeli regime's ongoing genocidal war against the Gaza Strip, which has prompted resistance groups from across the region to stage hundreds of retaliatory strikes against targets across the occupied territories. Ever since the onset of Israel's genocidal war on Gaza early last October, the Yemeni forces have carried out scores of operations in support of the war-hit Gazans, striking targets throughout the occupied Palestinian territories, in addition to targeting Israeli ships or vessels heading towards ports in the occupied territories. The regime's bloody onslaught on Gaza has so far killed 38,848 Palestinians, mostly women and children, leaving 89,459 others injured. Meanwhile the spokesman for Yemen's Armed Forces warned Israel against any further act of aggression against

Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, saying the coastal city of Tel Aviv in the 1948 Israeli-occupied territories is no longer a safe place as it is within range of Yemeni weapons. "The Yemeni Army hereby declares that occupied Yafa [the name of the ancient Palestinian port city where Tel Aviv is established] is no longer a safe zone, and will continue to be a primary target within the range of our weapons. We will focus on targeting sites and facilities deep inside the occupied lands," Brigadier General Saree said in a televised speech broadcast live from the Yemeni capital Sana'a on Friday morning. The remarks come as a drone hit an area near a US consular facility in Tel Aviv early on Friday, killing one person and injuring 10 others as the Israeli air defenses failed to intercept the drone. Saree highlighted that Yemeni air defense units employed for the first time an advanced and radar-evading unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), dubbed "Yafa," to strike Tel Aviv.

Saree described the operation as successful, noting that it had accomplished the desired objectives. The high-profile Yemeni military official added that the drone strike was carried out in support of oppressed Palestinians in Gaza and their valiant resistance fighters, and in retaliation for the massacres that the Israeli military is perpetrating against the civilian population in the besieged territory. Saree underscored that Yemeni Armed Forces have "a bank of Israeli targets", including sensitive military and security buildings, and they will continue to strike such structures in response to the Israeli military's atrocities and daily crimes in Gaza. "The Yemeni Armed Forces' operations will continue in support of heroic resistance fighters in Gaza, who are defending our Arab and Muslim lands. Our operations will not cease until the ongoing aggression against Gaza stops and the tight blockade on Palestinians is lifted," he pointed out.

Iran Urges UNSC Action to Halt Gaza Genocide



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iran's acting foreign minister has called for immediate decisive action by the United Nations Security Council to bring Israel's genocidal campaign in Gaza to a halt. Ali Bagheri Kani made the remarks as he was addressing the Security Council in New York on Wednesday. The Iranian minister highlighted the crimes of Israel in Gaza over the past nine months, which have resulted in the massacre of innocent people, mostly women and children. "Over the past 285 days, the Israeli-occupying regime has been committing extensive international crimes in Gaza. This regime, through a campaign of brutality and terror, continues to massacre innocent people, mostly women and children." The Iranian foreign minister said approximately 20 people are killed or injured every hour in Gaza, with over 80% of residential areas and all infrastructure, including hospitals, mosques, churches, educational centers, and historical sites, destroyed. Bagheri Kani said the Israeli regime has also weaponized starvation by blocking aid routes and attacking refugee camps and displaced people. "Despite the global condemnation of the genocide and war crimes committed by the Israeli regime in Gaza and the unanimous and united call of the international community for an immediate end to the genocide ... the Zionist regime continues its brutal crimes with full impunity."

The Iranian minister was pointing to the adoption of four UN Security Council resolutions and three provisional measures asked by the International Court of Justice. Bagheri Kani proposed adopting a comprehensive and legally binding resolution under Chapter VII of the UN Charter ordering Israel to end its genocide. "We urge the Security Council to take the necessary measures ... to compel the Israeli regime to immediately and unconditionally end genocide and aggression against Gaza, implement a permanent ceasefire in Gaza, and open border crossings for the rapid and unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid."

Bagheri Kani also called for Security Council action to press Israel to "immediately, fully, and unconditionally withdraw its military and security forces from Gaza."

Hamas, Islamic Jihad Urge PLO to Withdraw Recognition of Israel



GAZA (Dispatches) - The Palestinian resistance movements of Hamas and Islamic Jihad have called on the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to withdraw its recognition of Israel.

The appeal was made during a meeting with Ismail Haniyeh, head of the Hamas political bureau, in the Qatari capital Doha on Thursday.

Secretary-General Ziyad al-Nakhleh also led the Islamic Jihad delegation. "The leaderships viewed that, in light of the Knesset's declared position rejecting the Palestinian people's right to establish their independent state, the national collective is required today to take a unified stance to confront these attempts to erase the Palestinian cause," they said in a joint statement.

The Israeli parliament on Wednesday passed a resolution rejecting the establishment of a Palestinian state. The vote came before Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's visit to the US to address a joint session of Congress and meet with President Joe Biden. Biden has supported the so-called two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Prominent Palestinian politician Mustafa Barghouti, the secretary-general of the Palestinian National Initiative, also slammed the resolution. "No Zionist party from both the government and the opposition voted against the resolution," he wrote on X.

"This resolution represents a rejection of peace with Palestinians and an official declaration of the death of [the] Oslo agreement." The Oslo Accords were first signed between the PLO and Israel in 1993. They called for a viable and sovereign Palestinian state. But Israel has continued to adopt policies such as building settlements on Palestinian land across the occupied West Bank.

As of June 2024, the State of Palestine is recognized as a sovereign state by 145 of the 193 member states of the United Nations - or over 75% of all UN members.

Elsewhere in the statement, the Palestinian resistance movements said Operation Al-Aqsa Storm generated new realities in the struggle against Israel.

"The two delegations emphasized that the of Operation al-Aqsa Storm has constituted a strategic national achievement and created new realities in the struggle with the occupation that must be built upon and accumulated in the coming phase."

Iran Urges Int'l Action to Stop Israeli Genocide in Gaza



TEHRAN (PressTV) - President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Mirjana Spoljaric Egger has expressed deep concern over the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza, appreciating Iran's contributions to the Geneva-based humanitarian organization.

She made the remarks in a Thursday meeting with Iran's acting Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani, who is in New York to participate in two United Nations Security Council meetings.

Egger elaborated on efforts being made by the ICRC in order to send humanitarian aid supplies to Gaza and alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian population there, stressing she will do her utmost for the delivery of humanitarian aid to the besieged territory.

For his part, Bagheri Kani praised the ICRC's efforts regarding Palestine and Gaza, describing the humanitarian conditions of oppressed Palestinians as very worrying.

"Unfortunately, politically-motivated and wrong approaches together with double standards have so far frustrated attempts aimed at ending the Gaza crisis." Regrettably, over 20 individuals get killed and injured in Gaza every hour. What has taken place is a humanitarian tragedy. The international community must quickly stop the Zionist regime and hold it accountable," the top Iranian diplomat stated.

Israel launched the war on Gaza on October 7 after Palestinian resistance groups carried out a surprise retaliatory operation into the occupied territories. The regime has been enforcing a near-total siege on the coastal territory, which has reduced the flow of foodstuffs, medicine, electricity, and water into the Palestinian territory into a trickle.

Israel has killed nearly 39,000 Gazans, most of them women, children,

and adolescents, since.

Meanwhile, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator Joyce Masoya lauded Iran's "constructive" role in humanitarian issues and stressed the need for enhancement of cooperation between the two sides.

Masoya made the remark during a meeting with Bagheri Kani in New York on Thursday, on the sidelines of two United Nations Security Council meetings. She called for greater efforts in order to stop the Gaza war, and end the current alarming situation in the war-ravaged territory.

Bagheri Kani, for his part, described the massacre of innocent Palestinians in Gaza as a clear example of genocide of Palestinians and their forced displacement. He also called upon the international community to shed light on such crimes, and take immediate measures to stop them.

"The continuation of the current situation is no more acceptable. The Zionist regime's attacks and attempts to displace the people of Gaza must cease right away," he said.

While demanding immediate delivery of sufficient humanitarian aid in Gaza, Bagheri Kani condemned Israeli attacks against Gazans as vindictive.

"There is no chance for Israel to emerge victorious in the war. It only drives up the costs of the US administration as the biggest sponsor of the regime and its partner in continuation of the ongoing genocide," the Iranian interim foreign minister said.

Bagheri Kani also called for the United Nations' strong and urgent management in order to completely remove the blockage of the Rafah border crossing, and send humanitarian aid to Gaza.

Rejection of Palestinian Statehood Proves Israel's Racist Nature



TEHRAN - In a post on his X account on Friday, Nasser Kanaani said, "The new resolution passed by the Knesset of the fake Israeli regime in opposition to the establishment of a Palestinian state, following nine months of war crimes and constant genocide of Palestinians by the terrorist army of this regime, has once again exposed the racist nature of the usurping Zionist regime to the world."

The Iranian spokesman warned that the apartheid Israeli regime poses a threat not only to the Palestinian nation, but also to international peace and security.

"In the shadow of inaction of governments and the international organizations, including the United Nations, in fulfilling the inalienable rights of the Palestinian nation and in imposing the international peremptory norms against the usurping Zionist regime, resistance and struggle against the occupiers until full restoration of the rights of Palestinians will be the right of this nation under occupation," Kanaani stated.

His comments came after the Israeli parliament on Thursday passed a resolution that overwhelmingly rejected the establishment of a Palestinian state.

The resolution passed in the Knesset with 68 votes in favor and just nine against it.

Mustafa Barghouti, the secretary-general of the Palestinian National Initiative, slammed the passing of the resolution, saying, "No Zionist party from both the government and the opposition voted against the resolution."

A growing number of countries have recognized Palestinian statehood, including Spain, Slovenia, Norway, Ireland and others.

IRAN NEWS



Licenses Issued for 2 Iranian Commercial Centers in Libya and Malaysia

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Trade Promotion Organization of Iran has issued a license for the establishment and operation of a commercial center of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the country of Libya, in the city of Tripoli. This license is valid from July 14, 2024, and will remain valid for one year.

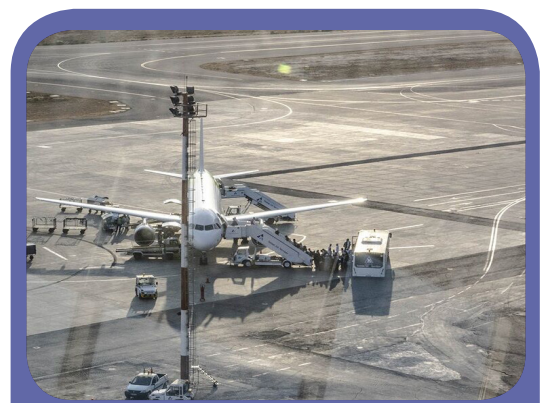
The Trade Promotion Organization has also issued a license for the establishment and operation of a commercial center of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the country of Malaysia, in the city of Kuala Lumpur. This license is valid from July 7, 2024, and will remain valid until September 8 of the following year.

According to the Trade Promotion Organization, the implementing company is required to carry out its activities within the framework of the issued rules and conditions. If the conditions and requirements are not met, the mentioned license can be suspended or revoked based on the decision of the commercial centers' working group.

300m Cubic Meters of Russian Gas to Be Imported Daily via Submarine Pipelines



TEHRAN - In a cabinet meeting chaired by Mohammad Mokhtbar, acting president, Oil Minister Javad Owji pointing to the signing of an agreement for the transfer of Russian gas to Iran, appreciated the efforts and follow-ups of the late President in signing this document and stated: Currently, the total production of sweet gas from the country's 23 refineries is about 850 million cubic meters per day. The establishment of a gas transit line from north to south through Iran is considered a significant event that is unprecedented in Iran's history, and it will involve financial exchanges amounting to 10 to 12 billion dollars annually, he said. He added: With this plan, 300 million cubic meters of gas will be imported daily from Russia, with Russia bearing the cost of constructing this pipeline, as they possess the technology for building pipelines on the seabed. He mentioned that with the implementation of this transfer line, in addition to ensuring a stable domestic gas supply, the country's gas export capacity and stability will also increase remarkably. He described the construction of the gas transit line from north to south through Iran as a significant event unprecedented in Iran's history, with an annual financial exchange of 10 to 12 billion dollars. The Oil Minister emphasized that the fruition of this 30-year contract, which can be considered the peak of the late President Raisi's regional diplomacy, will not only address domestic imbalances but also turn Iran into a regional gas hub, significantly increasing trade exchanges and enhancing the country's economic and political security. In the same meeting, Davoud Manzoor, head of the Planning and Budget Organization, highlighted the monthly provision and payment of around 40 trillion tomans in cash subsidies, livelihood assistance, drug subsidies, and other government support expenses. He clarified that these resources are obtained from the sale of gasoline, natural gas, and other products domestically and are returned directly to the people, with the government not receiving any portion. This has led to an improvement in social justice indicators and a reduction in the Gini coefficient under the current administration.



Kish Has Capacity to Become a Regional Hub for Int'l Flights

KISH (IRNA) - The CEO of the Kish Free Zone Organization, referring to the island's airport capacities, stated: "We are striving to turn Kish into a regional hub for international airline companies."

Rahim Sarhangi, during a meeting with managers from Russian, Turkish, and Armenian airline companies, said: "Establishing and launching flight routes between Kish and Central Asian countries is on the agenda and can play a significant role in the development of the tourism industry." He continued: "With the initiation and continuation of flight routes, active foreign airlines will benefit from airport facilities." The CEO of Kish Free Zone expressed readiness to welcome tour operators from Central Asian countries, emphasizing the creation of opportunities to introduce and promote Kish as a tourist destination in these countries. He added: "Kish's infrastructure and diverse tourism facilities will be well-received by foreign tourists." Sarhangi considered the economic prosperity, increased investment, and business expansion in Kish to be dependent on tourism development. He stated: "This island, with its excellent and world-class accommodation, catering, and tourism centers, is ready to host foreign tourists as an important factor in balancing payments and generating foreign exchange." He suggested organizing attractive events such as seminars, conferences, exhibitions, and specialized educational and scientific courses, considering them significant factors in attracting foreign tourists. Referring to the pristine and beautiful nature of Hendorabi Island in the Persian Gulf, he said: "This island, with its natural tourist attractions, beautiful beaches, clear sea, high density of corals, and suitable location, can complement Kish in hosting and creating memorable experiences for foreign tourists." The development and promotion of various thematic tourism, considering the infrastructure and specific features of Kish Island, especially in health tourism, medical tourism, marine-based tourism, exhibition tourism, cultural, artistic, and recreational tourism, were among the topics discussed in this meeting.

The meeting was attended by a member of the board and advisor to the CEO of Vegas Holding and the chairman of the board of directors of Satrap Seir, Nordwind and Vegas Fly Russia, as well as managers from Pegasus and Southwind Airlines of Turkey, and Armenia Airlines.

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK



Allocating Over \$20b for Imports This Year

TEHRAN - According to the Central Bank, from the 1st of Farvardin (March 20) to the 23rd of Tir (July 13), of Iranian calendar year 1403 (2024), a total of \$20.182 billion has been allocated for the import of essential goods, medicine, commercial and trade goods, imports in exchange for exports, and services.

According to this report, \$4.771 billion was allocated for essential goods and medicine, \$10.901 billion for commercial and trade goods, \$388 million for services, and \$4.122 billion for imports in exchange for exports.

Based on this report, the Central Bank has allocated \$3.807 billion for the import of essential agricultural commodities including wheat, oilseeds, and livestock feed, and \$964 million for medicine, pharmaceutical raw materials, and medical equipment, making a total of \$4.771 billion for essential goods and medicine at an exchange rate of 28,500 tomans to support consumers and ensure the public has access to essential goods at lower prices.

This report indicates that NIMA (Integrated System of Currency Transactions) foreign currency allocations have been made for "transportation and automotive industries" amounting to \$1.416 billion, "electrical and electronic equipment industries" amounting to \$1.584 billion, "machinery and production equipment" amounting to \$934 million, "mining industries" amounting to \$790 million, and "textiles and clothing" amounting to \$538 million. These industrial

groups have also received \$1.011 billion, \$175 million, \$771 million, \$755 million, and \$35 million respectively through agreed foreign currency or imports in exchange for exports by the end of July 13.

Additionally, \$5.639 billion of NIMA foreign currency and \$1.375 billion of imports in exchange for exports have been allocated to other industries.

The report mentions that the weighted average exchange rate for the one-month period ending July 17 was 39,067 tomans for the dollar, 42,524 tomans for the euro, 10,637 tomans for the dirham, 5,375 tomans for the yuan, 438 tomans for the ruble, and 1,181 tomans for the lira.

It is noted that on July 17, 2024, in the currency exchange hall of Iran's exchange center, the dollar was traded at 46,696 tomans, the euro at 50,828 tomans, and the dirham at 12,715 tomans. Similarly, in the remittance currency hall, the dollar was traded at 43,601 tomans, the euro at 47,459 tomans, and the dirham at 11,872 tomans.

It should be noted that in the first quarter of 2023, oil and non-oil exports amounted to \$21.5 billion, and in the first quarter of 2024, this amount was \$25.5 billion. Accordingly, oil and non-oil exports have increased by 18.6% compared to the same period in 2023. Additionally, customs (non-oil) exports in the first quarter of 2023 were \$12.6 billion, and in the first quarter of 2024, they were \$13.5 billion, marking a 7.1% increase compared to the same period in 2023.

Over 9300 Megawatts Added to Country's Power Capacity



TEHRAN - Energy Minister Ali Akbar Mehrabian, in a meeting with Reza Khosravi and Mohammad Amiri, employees of the Ramin Ahvaz Power Plant whose recent acts of heroism in fixing a condenser turbine leak gained public attention on social media, said: "When work is done with expertise, along with faith and sincerity, it is met with public acceptance. We witnessed this sincerity and faith in the recent dedication of two Ramin Ahvaz Power Plant employees who prevented the plant from going offline."

Referring to the extensive impact of the short videos showing the workers' efforts to fix the Ramin Power Plant condenser circulating on social media, he added: "These short videos, originally taken as mementos, unexpectedly created a significant wave on social media, proving to be far more effective than extensive promotional films. This is due to the purity of intention witnessed in these actions."

The Minister added: "The dedication shown by our two colleagues at Ramin Power Plant had two clear outcomes. Firstly, it prevented the plant from going offline during the challenging heat of this summer, and secondly, it helped millions of Iranians understand the hardships involved in power generation and the high value of this energy."

He noted that many citizens do not have an accurate picture of the power generation process, adding: "Some people are only familiar with the visible aspects of electricity, whereas the construction of power plants, as well as the complex and arduous processes involved in power transmission and distribution, require significant effort, and the public needs to be more aware of this."

The Minister expressed satisfaction with the high impact of the two Ramin Ahvaz Power Plant workers' actions in raising public awareness of the industry's efforts. He stated: "What happened at the Ramin plant, where two dedicated workers entered the boiler area to prevent problems in power generation, happens repeatedly at this

and other plants across the country. Many engineers and workers are working around the clock to ensure stable electricity supply."

Mehrabian highlighted that over the past three years, more than 9300 megawatts have been added to the country's power generation capacity. He mentioned that 600 megawatts of new capacity are about to be connected to the grid, and an additional 8000 megawatts from thermal power plants will be added within the next year and a half.

He emphasized the critical role of skilled human resources in the power industry in solving its problems and increasing production capacity: "For instance, in Kerman Province, the Shahid Soleimani Power Plant was entirely out of production, and even foreign engineers had declared it incapable of generating electricity. However, with the help of knowledge-based companies and skilled, dedicated industry personnel, we managed to bring it back to full capacity."

Mehrabian asserted that achieving a 98% readiness level for the country's power plants would not be possible without skilled and dedicated human resources, adding: "Experience has shown that whenever we have invested in the capacity and abilities of our young, skilled, and committed workforce, we have been able to advance our work successfully."

He also pointed out the formation of a thermal dome in West Asia during this year's hot season and the resulting temperature surge, stating: "While many countries with strong infrastructures, like Kuwait, have issued blackout schedules due to the severe temperature rise in West Asia, we in Iran are providing a stable power supply to our compatriots. This achievement is due to the tireless efforts of dedicated power industry workers like the two heroic employees of Ramin Ahvaz Power Plant."

Claim of Removing Dollar from Iran-Russia Transactions Denied



TEHRAN - Although Majlis Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf announced in an interview with Russia Today the complete removal of the dollar from Iran-Russia transactions, Iranian traders do not confirm this. Abdollah Mohajer Darabi, Vice President of the Iran-Russia Joint Chamber of Commerce, explained in an interview with ILNA and said: "For over a year, the use of rubles and rials in the financial exchanges between the two countries has been on the agenda, but the implementation of this matter requires time. However, overall, the execution of this plan is desirable and will certainly strengthen and develop trade between Iran and Russia. The removal of the dollar could even extend to Iran's trade with other Eurasian Union countries after Russia." He added: "Currently, the dollar is involved in the trade between the two countries, and Iranians, due to sanctions, are forced to spend 20 to 30 percent of the total revenue from exports on money transfer costs when transferring their funds from Russia. If the dollar is removed, this cost would no longer be necessary. However, private sector traders are still compelled to use the dollar in trade with Russia." The Vice President of the Iran-Russia Joint Chamber of Commerce further expressed hope for reforms in Iran's foreign trade with the change in government and said: "The elected president, before winning, referred to the current issues in Iran's trade, the most important of which is the JCOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action). Solving these issues can facilitate Iranian traders' relations with the world and reduce artificial costs in the trade process." He reminded: "Apart from external issues, multiple exchange rates in Iran have always been one of the main concerns for traders, and the ruble is no exception. This multiple exchange rate system only benefits brokers."

410 Iranian Trucks Waiting at the Afghanistan Border



TEHRAN - Hossein Mohammadian, a member of the board of the Iran-Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce, explained the details of the weeks-long halt of trucks at the Iran-Afghanistan border.

He stated that the 410 trucks, all driven by Iranian drivers, are carrying fuel purchased by the Afghan private sector from Iraq. However, this fuel has not been approved for quality in Afghanistan, leading to the entrapment of the Iranian trucks at the Mahirood border.

He added that the board members of the Iran-Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce, recognizing the difficulties faced by Iranian drivers in this transaction, have recently communicated with the Afghan Consulate in Mashhad. They have requested expedited resolution of this issue due to the involvement of Iranian drivers, hoping to free them from this uncertainty. They expect to receive a response to this letter in the coming days.

Mohammadian noted that, unlike in Iran, fuel supply in Afghanistan is not managed by the government but by the private sector. Additionally, Afghanistan's adherence to certain standards is weak, and there are few laboratories to inspect the quality of imported goods. This situation tempts private traders to import lower-quality goods.

The head of the Export Development Commission of the Khorasan Razavi Chamber of Commerce clarified that this problem also exists in fuel transactions between Iranians and Afghans. To address this, the Iran-Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce has issued a resolution mandating that all fuel trucks be sampled by the Afghan side at every border before leaving Iran and entering Afghanistan. The Afghan authorities must provide the sampling results within 48 hours to determine whether the cargo can enter Afghanistan. If the cargo is allowed to enter, the Iranian side will not accept its return, placing the responsibility on the Afghan side. Iran has even offered to assist in testing to prevent such issues.

Venezuelan Opposition Security Chief Released From Jail

CARACAS (Dispatches) - Venezuelan opposition leader Maria Corina Machado's security chief has been released from jail a day after he was arrested on charges of gender violence. Security chief Milciades Avila is set to appear in court every 30 days, Machado said in a post on X on Thursday, in which she thanked people for their support and contribution to "reverse this injustice." Avila was detained in the early hours of Wednesday on charges of violence against a group of women who had reportedly tried to attack Machado alongside opposition coalition candidate Edmundo Gonzalez at a food store in Aragua state over the weekend. His arrest came less than two weeks before the July 28 vote, where Gonzalez is polling significantly ahead of President Nicolas Maduro, who is seeking a third term. Venezuela's opposition has repeatedly denounced arrests and other moves by the authorities that they say are meant to harm its election campaign and prevent a fair election. The government denies the allegations.



EU Commission Boss von der Leyen Elected for Second Term



STRASBOURG (Dispatches) - Ursula von der Leyen won a second term as president of the European Commission on Thursday after pledging to create a continental "defense union" and to stay the course on Europe's green transition while cushioning its burden on industry.

Members of the European Parliament backed von der Leyen's bid for another five-year term at the helm of the European Union's powerful executive body with 401 votes in her favour and 284 against in a secret ballot in the 720-member chamber. In an address to the Parliament in Strasbourg earlier in the day, von der Leyen, 65, laid out a programme focused on prosperity and security, shaped by the challenges of Russia's war in Ukraine, global economic competition and climate change. "The next five years will define Europe's place in the world for the next five decades. It will decide whether we shape our own future or let it be shaped by events or by others," von der Leyen said ahead of the vote. She stressed the need not to backtrack on the "Green Deal" transformation of the EU economy to fight climate change - a key pledge for Green lawmakers, who joined her core coalition of center-right, center-left and liberal groups in supporting her. After pledging to support Ukraine for as long as it takes in its fight against Russia, von der Leyen said Europe's liberty was at stake and that it must invest more in defense. Asked after the vote about the possibility of facing a protectionist and isolationist U.S. administration under Donald Trump, von der Leyen said the EU was working on "reducing our dependencies" irrespective of elections elsewhere.



Israel Bombards Central Gaza as Tanks Advance Deeper in Rafah

GAZA (Dispatches) - Israeli forces bombarded the Gaza Strip's historic refugee camps in the center of the enclave and struck Gaza City in the north on Thursday, killing at least 21 people, and tanks pushed deeper into Rafah in the south, health officials and residents said.

A barrage of Israeli airstrikes killed 16 in Zawayda town, Bureij and Nuseirat camps and the overcrowded city of Deir-Al-Balah, the last major urban centre in Gaza not to be invaded by Israeli forces, health officials said. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who is due to address the U.S. Congress next week, made a surprise visit to Israeli troops in the area around Rafah, telling them that military pressure combined with a demand to bring back 120 hostages still held in Gaza was producing results. "This double pressure is not delaying the deal, it is advancing it," he said, according to a statement from his office.

The Israeli military said in a statement its forces killed two senior Islamic Jihad commanders in two airstrikes in Gaza City, including one whom it said had taken part in the Oct. 7 attack in southern Israel that triggered the Gaza war. Palestinian medics said five people were killed in the two strikes.

In Rafah, residents said Israeli tanks advanced deeper in the western side of the city and took position on a hilltop there. The Israeli military said forces located several tunnels and killed several gunmen.

At Al-Amal Hospital, run by the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, in Khan Younis in southern Gaza, Palestinian health officials exhumed at least 12 bodies buried inside the medical facility to bury them at another location. Reuters journalists saw medical workers digging up bodies from graves inside the facility, wrapping them in white shrouds before placing them inside vehicles for transfer to a new burial site as some relatives watched, some in tears. Areej Hamouda, a mother of one of the dead, clutched some of the sandy earth from the grave of her son and kissed it before medics exhumed the body. "They (Israel) shot him and he had a loaf of bread with him, which he had to beg for to get for his daughter, they shot him in

the eye and the head - it rained on him, he was washed with blood," Hamouda said, weeping. "He was (lying) there all day long, they weren't able to move him, (then) they pulled him with a rope when they brought him to be buried here." The fighting has pushed the 60-bed Red Cross field hospital in Rafah to the brink of capacity, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said in a statement on Thursday. "The repeated mass casualty events resulting from the unrelenting hostilities have stretched to breaking point the response capacity of our hospital - and all health facilities in southern Gaza - to care for those with life-threatening injuries," said William Schomburg, head of the ICRC's subdelegation in Gaza. More than a million people had sought shelter in Rafah from fighting further north, but most have scattered again since Israel launched an offensive in and around the city in May to root out brigades of militant group Hamas operating there. More than nine months into the war, Palestinian fighters led by Hamas are still able to attack Israeli forces on the ground, occasionally firing rocket barrages into Israel. Islamic Jihad said it fired missiles at two southern Israeli communities on Thursday and the armed wing of Hamas said it fired mortar bombs at Israeli forces in southwest Rafah. There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military. Israel vowed to eradicate Hamas after its militants killed 1,200 people and took more than 250 hostages in the Oct. 7 attack, according to Israeli tallies. At least 38,848 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's retaliatory offensive since then, Gaza health authorities say. On Tuesday, Israel said it had eliminated half of the leadership of Hamas' military wing and killed or captured about 14,000 fighters since the start of the war. Israel says 326 of its soldiers have been killed in Gaza. Hamas does not release figures of casualties among its ranks and said Israel was exaggerating to portray a "fake victory".

Diplomatic efforts by Arab mediators to halt the hostilities, backed by the United States, appear on hold, though all sides say they are open to more talks, including Israel and Hamas.

Bangladesh TV News Off air, Communications Widely Disrupted as Protests Spike

DHAKA (Dispatches) - Television news channels in Bangladesh were off the air and telecommunications were widely disrupted on Friday amid violent student protests against quotas for government jobs in which nearly two dozen people have been killed this week.

There was no immediate word from the government.

French news agency AFP reported that the death toll in Thursday's violence had risen to 32. Reuters had reported that 13 people were killed, adding to six dead earlier in the week, and could not immediately verify the higher number.

There was fresh violence in some parts of the country on Friday and police were using tear gas to disperse protesters, a Reuters photographer said.

India's Economic Times newspaper reported that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government "was forced" to call in the army late on Thursday to help "maintain order". Reuters could not independently verify the information.

Although the protests were sparked by student anger against the controversial quota system, some analysts have said that tough economic conditions, including high inflation, rising unemployment and depleting foreign reserves, were providing fuel to the fire.

The protests have also opened old and sensitive political faultlines between those who fought for Bangladesh's independence from Pakistan in 1971, including Hasina's Awami League, and those who are accused of collaborating with Islamabad, after Hasina called the protesters "Razakar", as the collaborators were referred to.

Authorities had cut some mobile services on Thursday to try to quell the unrest but the disruption spread across the country on Friday morning, Reuters witnesses in Dhaka and New Delhi said.

Telephone calls from overseas were mostly not getting connected and calls through the internet could not be completed.



Web sites of several Bangladesh-based newspapers were not updating on Friday morning and their social media handles were also not active.

Only some voice calls were working in the country and there was no mobile data or broadband on Friday morning, a Reuters photographer in Dhaka said. Even SMSes or mobile-to-mobile text messages were not going through, he added.

News television channels and state broadcaster BTV were off the air while entertainment channels continued normal transmission, a Reuters witness said.

Some news channels displayed a message which said they were not able to broadcast due to technical reasons and that programming would be back soon, the witness said.

Streets in the capital Dhaka were deserted on Friday, which is a weekly holiday in the country. There was little traffic and very few rickshaw pullers on the streets and thin crowds near a vegetable and fish market, he said, adding that a protest rally had been called at the main mosque at around 0800 GMT.

The official web sites of the Bangladesh central bank, the prime minister's office and police appeared to have been hacked by a group calling itself "THE R3SISTANC3".

"Operation HuntDown, Stop Killing Students," it said in identical messages on both sites, adding in bright red font: "It's not a protest anymore, it's a war now."

"Prepare yourselves. The fight for justice has begun," said another message at the bottom of the page which also had small pictures of five men and two dogs without giving details about them.

"The government has shut down the internet to silence us and hide their actions. We need to stay informed about what is happening on the ground," it said, adding that the "spirit of our students remains unbroken".

Trump Abandons Unity Theme in Marathon Convention Speech

MILWAUKEE (Dispatches) - Donald Trump described on Thursday how he narrowly survived an attempt on his life, telling a rapt audience at the Republican National Convention in his first speech since the attack that he was only there "by the grace of Almighty God."

"I heard a loud whizzing sound and felt something hit me really, really hard on my right ear," he said during a 14-minute account, a thick bandage still covering his ear. "I said to myself, 'Wow, what was that? It can only be a bullet.'"

When he told the Milwaukee crowd that he was "not supposed to be here," the delegates chanted back, "Yes you are!" With photos of a bloodied Trump showing on screens behind him, Trump praised the Secret Service agents that rushed to his side and paid tribute to the volunteer firefighter who was killed, Corey Comperatore, kissing his fire helmet.

The former president struck an unusually conciliatory tone during the speech's opening moments, when he formally accepted the Republican presidential nomination for the Nov. 5 election.

"I am running to be president for all of America, not half of America, because there is

no victory in winning for half of America," he said, in a marked shift in tenor for the typically bellicose former president.

But he swiftly pivoted to well-worn attacks on the Biden administration, which he said was "destroying" the country. He claimed without evidence that his criminal indictments were part of a Democratic conspiracy, predicted President Joe Biden, his Democratic rival, would usher in "World War Three," and described what he called an "invasion" of migrants over the southern border.

In the meandering remarks that followed - at 90-plus minutes the longest convention speech in history - Trump abandoned the message of unity he had promised to embrace in favor of his usual mixture of bombast and grievance, repeating his false claim that Democrats stole the 2020 election.

Trump asserted, as he has throughout his political career, that only he was capable of saving the country from certain doom.

"I could stop wars with a telephone call," he said.

The speech capped a four-day event during which he was greeted with adulation by a party now entirely in his thrall.





Nadal Rallies Into Bastad Quarterfinals

BASTAD (Dispatches) - Spain's Rafael Nadal trailed in the second set before overcoming No. 5 seed Cameron Norrie of Great Britain 6-4, 6-4 to reach the Nordea Open quarterfinals in Bastad, Sweden. The opening set was on serve before Nadal broke Norrie in the seventh game. He then fell behind 4-1 in the second before sweeping the last five games. He recorded 22 winners and only seven unforced errors. The unseeded Nadal will meet No. 4 seed Mariano Navone of Argentina next in his first quarterfinal since January. Navone was a 6-4, 6-2 winner against India's Sumit Nagal. Kazakhstan's Timofey Skatov ousted No. 3 seed Tallon Griekspoor of the Netherlands 1-6, 6-3, 6-4, and seventh-seeded Nuno Borges of Portugal rallied past countryman Henrique Rocha 1-6, 6-4, 6-0.

No. 5 seed Arthur Fils of France advanced to the quarterfinal in Germany with a 7-6 (3), 6-2 victory against Serbian Laslo Djere. Fils, 20, saved six of seven break points and became the fifth man to reach multiple Hamburg quarterfinals before the age of 21, a list that includes Novak Djokovic and Mats Wilander. Up next is No. 2 seed Holger Rune of Denmark, a 6-4, 6-3 winner over Argentina's Marco Trungelliti.

Top-seeded Alexander Zverev of Germany outlasted Frenchman Hugo Gaston 4-6, 6-2, 7-5 and No. 8 seed Zhizhen Zhang of China defeated Italy's Flavio Cobolli 6-1, 7-6 (5).

No. 3 seed Felix Auger-Aliassime of Canada moved into his fourth quarterfinal of the season with a 7-6 (6), 6-2 win over Germany's Yannick Hanfmann in Switzerland. Auger-Aliassime, seeking his maiden title on clay, fought off two set points in the opening set. He will face 2018 champion Matteo Berrettini of Italy next. The sixth-seeded Italian won 6-4, 6-2 over Daniel Elahi Galan of Colombia. Brazil's Gustavo Heide knocked out No. 2 seed

Ugo Humbert of France 6-7 (2), 6-2, 6-3, while Frenchman Quentin Halys defeated Lukas Klein of Slovakia 6-3, 6-7 (7), 6-4. No. 2 seed Marcos Giron shrugged off a slow start to record a 4-6, 7-5, 6-4 win against Benoit Paire of France in Newport, R.I.

Giron, who hit eight aces while capitalizing on Paire's nine double faults, will face Australia's Alex Bolt in the quarterfinals.

The afternoon in Newport saw two quarterfinal matches. No. 3 seed Alex Michelsen hung on for a 6-4, 6-4 win over Aleksandar Kovacevic, overcoming Kovacevic's 12 aces without a double fault. Reilly Opelka defeated Mackenzie McDonald 4-6, 6-3, 6-4.

Meanwhile Reilly Opelka hammered 27 aces in a 4-6, 6-3, 6-4 victory over Mackenzie McDonald to book a semi-final meeting with Alex Michelsen at the ATP grass-court tournament in Newport, Rhode Island. Opelka, playing on a wild card in his first tournament in almost two years, became the lowest-ranked player to reach a semi-final in the ATP era, having fallen to 1,188th in the world as he recovered from hip and wrist operations. "There is a bit of a good element to that," said Opelka, who shocked top seed and defending champion Adrian Mannarino in the previous round. "Let's just call it like it is, these guys don't want to lose to a guy that hasn't played in two years," Opelka said.

"I'm playing with house money. It allows me to be a little bit more free and there's extra nerves on the other side of the net."

But Opelka, who last played at Washington in 2022 when he was ranked 17th in the world, acknowledged he has some rust to shake off before a hoped-for appearance at the US Open in August.

FIFA Postpones Decision on Palestinian Bid to Suspend Israel



ZURICH (Dispatches) - FIFA has put off a decision on a Palestinian bid to suspend Israel from international soccer until after the Paris Olympics, saying both parties had requested more time to submit their positions.

The Palestinian Football Association (PFA) had submitted a proposal to suspend Israel in May over the war in Gaza, with FIFA ordering an urgent legal evaluation and promising to address it at an extraordinary meeting of its council in July.

Soccer's global governing body said on Thursday the legal assessment would now be shared with its council by Aug. 31.

"Following requests for extension from both parties to submit their respective positions, duly granted by FIFA, more time is needed to conclude this process with due care and completeness," FIFA said on its X account.

The Paris Olympics will be held from July 26-Aug. 11, with group matches for the men's soccer tournament starting on July 24.

Israel qualified for the men's tournament and play Mali, Paraguay and Japan in the group phase.

A report this week by lawyers who specialize in international law called on FIFA to ban Israel for violating several of FIFA's statutes related to human rights and humanitarian objectives.

Since an Oct. 7 cross-border raid by militant group Hamas that Israel says killed more than 1,200 people, Israel's Gaza offensive has left more than 38,000 Palestinians dead, according to Gaza health officials.

Critics have accused Israel of committing genocide against Palestinians, which Israel denies.

Hamilton Says It's Game On

BUDAPEST (Dispatches) - Lewis Hamilton and his Mercedes team-mate George Russell will be fighting to win and hope to deliver a sustained 'silver arrows' resurgence through the second half of the season, the seven-time champion said on Thursday.

Speaking to reporters at a news conference ahead of this weekend's Hungarian Grand Prix where he seeks a record-extending ninth victory, Hamilton, 39, said: "It's game on.

"We're fighting for wins and we're chasing -- and we're going to try and win as many races as George (Russell) has mentioned or to compete for as many wins as possible.

"It might turn out this weekend that the Red Bull is still light years ahead or that McLaren is still there this weekend. Who knows?

"But I think what we've shown over the last few races is that with determination, with real focus and by persistently chasing for perfection, and improvement, you can make a difference.

"And, so, we are united as a team and we're going to try and make sure that we can end the season on a high."



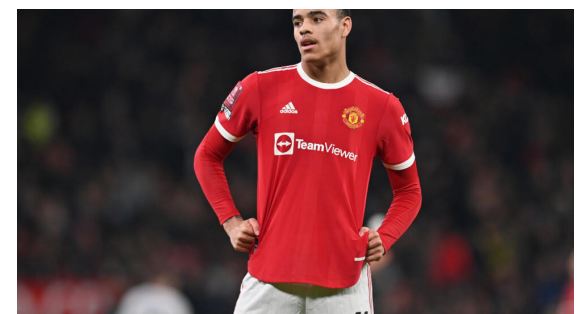
Hamilton added: "And if we can lift the team up in the ladder of constructors... if we can progress -- and we're not too far off the drivers up ahead of us -- then that would be great."

Fresh from his emotional and long-awaited record ninth victory at the British Grand Prix, and the record 104th of his career, Hamilton was in upbeat mood at the Hungaroring, one of his favourite circuits, where he has won eight times and claimed his most recent pole position last year.

Russell, 26, who won in Austria a week before Hamilton's Silverstone triumph, hopes to see the team extend their winning streak by completing a hat-trick on Sunday -- and then going on to continue winning races for the rest of the year.

"Our goal for the rest of the year is to win as many more races as we can -- and if we can have good weekends here and in Spa (Belgium) next weekend, then I'm sure we can be fast everywhere," said Russell.

Marseille Sign Greenwood From Man Utd Amid Controversy



MARSEILLE (Dispatches) - Marseille have signed striker Mason Greenwood from Manchester United, the Ligue 1 side announced on Thursday, despite the objection of some of the French club's fans. The 22-year-old, who has played once for England, was suspended in January 2022 by Manchester United following allegations of attempted rape and sexual assault but prosecutors dropped charges in February 2023. He spent last season on loan at Getafe in La Liga. "Olympique de Marseille are delighted to announce the signing of Mason Greenwood from Manchester United. The 22-year-old striker has signed for the club following a successful medical," said the French club on their website. Marseille made no mention of the allegations in their statement. They called Greenwood "a precocious talent" and an "English nugget". The southern club, eighth in Ligue 1 last season, said their new striker will wear the number 10 shirt but did not specify the length of his contract or mention any fee to Manchester United. However the deal is reported to be worth an estimated 30 million euros (\$32.7m). "We wish Mason all the best in his future career," said United on their website. Before the transfer became official, Marseille's left-wing mayor Benoit Payan told French media: "I don't want my club to be covered by shame." Greenwood has always denied the allegations. "I did not do the things I was accused of, and in February I was cleared of all charges," he said when he joined Getafe. "However, I fully accept I made mistakes in my relationship." Greenwood made his debut for Manchester United aged 17 years and 156 days in the Champions League in 2019 and his Premier League debut four days later. He made his debut for England in September 2020. The forward made 129 appearances and scored 35 goals for United but had not played for the Premier League club since January 2022.

Greenwood scored 10 goals in 36 games for Getafe last season.

His arrival in Marseille comes the day after the official departure of Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, the Gabon international who was Marseille's top scorer last season.

Marseille face Sunderland in a pre-season friendly on August 3 in Bradford, where Greenwood was born.

If he plays it could be his first game in England since he was arrested in January 2022 following allegations made against him.

Brown Takes Shock British Open Lead



TROON (Dispatches) - Unheralded Englishman Daniel Brown shot into a shock lead of the British Open at six under par as Rory McIlroy was among the big names to struggle on day one of the 152nd British Open at Royal Troon. Brown, the world number 272, birdied two of the last three holes to lead by one from 2019 winner Shane Lowry.

"I'm going to try and sort of keep my feet on the ground a bit and take on the job again tomorrow," said Brown, who is competing at his first major. McIlroy posted a seven over par round of 78 with his hopes of ending a 10-year wait to win a major floundering as most of the field struggled in the wet and windy conditions on Scotland's west coast.

Of the 156 players in the field to complete their rounds, only 17

posted a score under par. Lowry, who won his sole major at the British Open five years ago, made the most of the calm late afternoon conditions with three birdies in five holes around the turn and picked up another at the 18th. "I'd give anything to win this tournament again," said Lowry. "It's great, but there's three rounds left. If I don't play well the next three rounds, it doesn't matter what I shot today. I'm fully aware that I have a job to do over the next three days." Two-time major winner Justin Thomas is lurking at three under, while recently crowned USPGA Championship winner Xander Schauffele is among a group of seven on two under that also includes Justin Rose. World number one Scottie Scheffler cut a frustrated figure on the greens but is still in the mix after a one under round that featured four birdies and three bogeys.

McIlroy was aiming to get over his heartbreak at the US Open last month, where he missed two short putts to blow the lead as Bryson DeChambeau claimed his second major by one shot. However, the Northern Irishman's round, and probably championship, was blown off course at the postage stamp 120-yard eighth. McIlroy was unfortunate as his near-perfect tee shot slipped off the green into a bunker, which he took two attempts to escape, to post a double bogey five. Another double bogey followed at the 11th. He also dropped shots at the 10th, 15th and 18th. "All I need to focus on is tomorrow and try to make the cut," said McIlroy. "I need to go out there and play better and try to shoot something under par and at least be here for the weekend, if not try to put myself up the leaderboard a bit more and feel like I have half a chance." DeChambeau had been the form player in the majors so far this year, despite his defection to the breakaway LIV Tour. The American finished sixth at the Masters and runner-up in the USPGA Championship before claiming his second US Open. However, his struggles with the windy conditions of links golf continued as he was six over par for his opening nine holes. DeChambeau battled back on the back nine as an eagle on the 17th helped him to a 76. "I'm just proud of the way I performed today," said DeChambeau.

"I could have thrown in the towel after nine and could have been like, 'I'm going home'. But no, I've got a chance tomorrow. I'm excited for the challenge."