

Iran's Acting Foreign Minister Called for an Emergency Meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and Collective Condemnation by the Regional States of the Israeli Regime's Assassination of Ismail Haniyeh

IRAN NEWS

Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud Has Sent a Written Message to Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian Concerning Relations Between the Two Countries.

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DOMESTIC



Signing Free Trade and Preferential Agreements a Prerequisite for Iran-Brazil Trade Ties

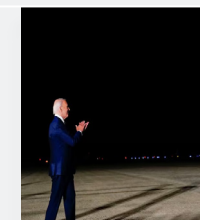
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INTERNATIONAL

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Iran Will Punish Criminal Zionists



TEHRAN - Interim Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani has reiterated Iran's "inherent right" to self-defense and reciprocal action after Israel's assassination of Ismail Haniyeh, the head of the political bureau of the Palestinian Hamas resistance group, in Tehran. "The Zionist regime's terrorist act of assassinating Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran did not only violate the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of the Islamic Republic, but also endangered regional and international peace and stability," Bagheri Kani said during a telephone conversation with UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres on Thursday, a day after Haniyeh was assassinated in the Israeli act of terror. "Iran will not forgo its inherent right to defend itself and take reciprocal action to punish the criminal Zionists," he stressed. The top Iranian diplomat also emphasized the need for holding an emergency meeting of the foreign ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to condemn and confront the criminal actions of the occupying regime. He further referred to Wednesday's meeting of the UN Security Council, during which the United States and European countries prevented the body from denouncing Haniyeh's assassination. The aggressive Israeli action will put regional peace and stability at risk, he warned, calling on the international community to stand up against the criminal regime. Haniyeh, who was in Tehran to attend the swearing-in ceremony of Iran's newly-elected President Masoud Pezeshkian, was assassinated along with his bodyguard, in an Israeli attack on his residence in northern Tehran early on Wednesday. The UN chief, for his part, said that he had condemned the two attacks by the Israeli regime in Beirut and Tehran in a statement. Meanwhile, he acknowledged that under international law, Iran has the right to legitimate self-defense in response to violations of its national security and territorial integrity. Guterres also expressed concerns about the repercussions of an all-out Israeli war on Lebanon. At the end of the conversation, Bagheri Kani said the international community should put pressure on Israel to stop its crimes in Gaza, where the Israeli genocidal war has killed at least 39,480 Palestinians over the past 10 months.

Tehran Warns UN of Israel's Efforts to Expand Gaza War to Entire Region



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's ambassador to the United Nations has warned the world body of attempts by Israel to expand the scope of its genocidal aggression against the Gaza Strip to the entire region. Amir-Saeed Irvani made the remarks on Wednesday in an address to an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council after Israel assassinated Ismail Haniyeh, the head of the political bureau of the Palestinian Hamas resistance group, in the Iranian capital Tehran. The terrorist act followed the regime's targeted killing of Fuad Shukur, a senior commander of the Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah, in Beirut. "The warmongering leaders of this rogue regime have shown complete disregard for the basic norms and principles of international law," he said. The Tel Aviv regime's crimes, he added, "reveal a lack of commitment to peace and stability in the region and suggest an intention to escalate conflict and expand the war through the entire region." Irvani also said the Islamic Republic condemns in the strongest possible terms the terrorist assassination of Haniyeh as a violation of international law and the UN Charter, as well as a grave breach of Iran's sovereignty and national security. The act of terror is yet another manifestation of Israel's "decades-long pattern of terrorism" targeting Palestinians and their supporters, he emphasized. Haniyeh was in Tehran on an official invitation from the Iranian government to attend the inauguration of President Masoud Pezeshkian. He was targeted in his residence at around 2:00 a.m. local time on Wednesday. "In addition to its terrorist objectives, Israel was also pursuing a political goal with this act, aiming to disrupt the first day of the new government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which has prioritized strengthening peace, and stability in the region, and enhancing cooperation and constructive engagement with international community," the Iranian envoy said. He further noted that the recent Israeli crime "is not isolated," but part of a broader pattern of aggressive actions by the occupying entity against other regional nations. He also stressed that the United States, as a strategic ally of the regime and its main supporter, is also responsible for the Israeli crime.



Ayatollah Khamenei Leads Funeral Prayers for Martyr Haniyeh

TEHRAN - Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei led funeral prayers for Hamas's Political Bureau Chief Ismail Haniyeh and his security guard, who were assassinated during his visit to Tehran on Wednesday. During a ceremony held at Tehran University on Thursday, Ayatollah Khamenei paid homage to the Hamas chief and his bodyguard, identified as Wasim Abu Shaaban. Massive crowds of Iranian mourners took part in funeral procession for the assassinated Hamas official. Haniyeh was in the Iranian capital to attend Tuesday's swearing-in ceremony of Iran's newly-elected President Masoud Pezeshkian, where he was accompanied by other Axis of Resistance leaders. The details of the assassination plot aren't known yet, but the preliminary investigation points to the direct role of the Israeli regime and the green light from the Joe Biden administration in Washington. Addressing the ceremony, Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said the Israeli regime is desperate in the face of resistance fighters. He added that the Tel Aviv regime's crimes are rooted in its inability to counter the resistance forces. The top Iranian parliamentarian emphasized that Israel will commit a "strategic mistake" if it thinks that targeting the resistance front will have an impact on the ongoing developments in the

region. Qalibaf said the era of "hit and run" for the apartheid Israel and its main ally US has come to end. "It is our duty to react in the right place and at the right time," he pointed out. The Iranian speaker warned that the Israeli regime will pay a "heavy price" for its act of assassination. He noted that the Israeli regime's move to assassinate resistance commanders in Iran and Lebanon is the outcome of its "weakness" and said, "Such acts of terror will have no impact on the [continuation] of our path." Pointing to the Tel Aviv regime's genocidal war against the people of Palestine in Gaza, particularly women and children, Qalibaf added, "We are witnessing the confrontation of humanity with crime there." Addressing huge crowds of mourners, Khalil al-Hayya, deputy chief of the Hamas Political Bureau in the Gaza Strip, said the Zionist regime is delusional to think that it can change the path of the resistance front or weaken its will through Haniyeh's assassination. He added that the world should try to uproot the Israeli regime as a cancerous tumor. Today, the Muslim Iranians and all free nations in the world bid farewell to Ismail Haniyeh, who led the great Operation al-Aqsa Storm against the Israeli occupiers, he noted.

Iran Not to Forget China's Assistance to Counter U.S. Sanctions



TEHRAN (PressTV) - President Masoud Pezeshkian has described China as a strategic partner in Iran's foreign policy, emphasizing that the Islamic Republic will never forget the East Asian powerhouse's assistance in countering the cruel sanctions imposed by the United States. Pezeshkian made the remarks in a Wednesday meeting with Peng Qinghua, Chinese President's Special Envoy and Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, who traveled to Tehran to participate in the swearing-in ceremony of the fourteenth term of Iran's presidency. "China has always been a friend of Iran in difficult times, and we will not forget Beijing's help to deal with the brutal sanctions of the United States," the Iranian president said. He also underlined the need for the swift implementation of agreements between the two countries, particularly the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the landmark 25-year comprehensive strategic partnership accord. Pezeshkian went to note that Iran and China enjoy enormous capacities for joint cooperation, whose utilization will create new opportunities for both Asian countries. He referred to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the BRICS group of emerging economies as international platforms for interactions between Tehran and Beijing. Pezeshkian also stressed that the relationship between Iran and China is not

influenced by international developments. "Whilst the United States is seeking continued war and insecurity in our region in order to market weapons, the Chinese government's efforts to maintain peace and stability through resolution of differences among regional countries are highly commendable," he said. Elsewhere in his remarks, Pezeshkian pointed to Israel's assassination of the head of the political bureau of the Hamas resistance movement, Ismail Haniyeh, in Tehran, blaming US financial, military, and political support for the ongoing Israeli atrocities in the Gaza Strip and its targeted killings across West Asia. He said the international community bears a responsibility in the face of the Zionist regime's unprecedented, brutal, and inhumane crimes in Gaza, and human rights organizations as well as so-called advocates of human rights must be answerable for their silence amid this modern-day barbarism. Pezeshkian said Israel and its sponsors want to exacerbate tensions and perpetuate insecurity in West Asia, called on China as a permanent member of the UN Security Council to use all its capacities to condemn Israeli crimes. For his part, Peng voiced China's readiness to implement the 25-year comprehensive strategic partnership agreement with Iran, and promote mutual economic, political, social, and cultural cooperation. He stated that China roundly condemns the assassination of Hamas political chief Ismail Haniyeh, and emphasizes the need for adherence to international principles and respect for Iran's territorial sovereignty.

Revenge with a Hundred Scenarios

"Indeed, we belong to Allah, and indeed, to Him we return"

By: H. R. Naghashian



Congratulations on the martyrdom of Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran to him, to the Palestinian nation, to the Islamic Ummah, and especially to the Resistance Front. This tragic martyrdom in the capital of resistance imposes a heavy responsibility

on us Iranians for seeking justice.

Haniyeh was a guest of the Islamic Republic of Iran. We Iranians are well aware of the duties of hospitality. We also clearly see the Hand of God in the increased unity and resistance. As acknowledged by the deep thinkers of the world, the prayer of the leader of the world's Shia Muslims over the body of a martyr seemingly from the Sunni sect undoubtedly strengthened the Shia-Sunni unity.

Therefore, the happening events necessitate that while designing and realizing a harsh response and revenge for this pure Ismaili blood, we must think prudently. Undoubtedly, the Zionist regime, even after its official death in the occupied territories, will continue its sedition by extending and maintaining terrorist groups worldwide.

A few days ago, in an editorial published in the newspaper titled "Zionist Iranians," I mentioned that the underground and sinister international Zionist party recruits members and mercenaries from all schools of thought, religions, and sects, including Satanists and secularists in countries worldwide, even in China and Russia, and recently, with the assassinations of Fuad Shukur (Sayyid Mohsen) in Beirut and Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran, and in the past, Ahmad Yassin to Fathi Shaqaqi, Imad Mughniyeh, and our scientists and advisors, it is evident that the method of bloodshed and killing of opponents has been the primary tool for the 75-year survival and expansion of the occupied territories.

Undoubtedly, 300 days of brutal killing of innocent people, children, women, and civilians in Gaza and the West Bank have paved the way for the official demise and dissolution of this occupying structure.

The disgraceful meeting and speech of Benjamin Netanyahu in the U.S. Congress and the encouragement of Zionist members of Congress for the continuation of killings and sedition by this bloodthirsty and terrorist regime have provided the illusion of a mandate for a theatrical demonstration of power survival in this regime, and apparently, these assassinations send the message that the regime is still alive and breathing.

However, if we look closely, these actions stem from mercenaries influenced by the Zionist party, with the adventurism of Mossad and assassination machines created over the past years and they are not new issues, though they may have received a new mission.

The strong and insightful Resistance Front, undoubtedly with increased intelligence, sees itself facing the final struggles of this terrifying octopus, the Zionist regime, and witnesses the gasping breaths of the occupiers and they may have underestimated the infiltration, but the very actions taken to destroy this disgusted regime will not prevent comprehensive planning with hundreds of defensive and, of course, vengeful scenarios for timely responses, as unexpected actions from this regime are entirely conceivable.

The seditious nature stemming from the frustration of not achieving past dreams and the military, political, media, and intelligence defeats demand this insight that we must be prepared for any event even after the collapse of the regime in the near future and have operational scenarios ready.

Underestimating the capabilities of Iranian mercenaries of the Zionist party after the assassination of Fakhri Zadeh in Iran undoubtedly facilitated the relatively uncomplicated relocation of Hamas' head office chief martyr Ismail Haniyeh (may Allah have mercy on him) to the Islamic Republic, which was a blow that, although it could be avenged harshly and intelligently, remains irreplaceable.

The academically driven military offensive tools globally have provided a sharp edge for seditious actions. If we are not equipped for intelligence and deterrent confrontations with them, we will face similar incidents every day and it is evident that naivety, gullibility, underestimating, and misinterpreting the enemy's capabilities and malice have always been costly.

For the future, in confronting the seditious in the region and each country belonging to the Axis of Resistance, we need to have hundreds of effective, dynamic, and knowledge-based scenarios. I recommend involving knowledge-based entities for this preparedness and creating enduring offensive and defensive structures for the apocalyptic seditions.

Wa al-salam.

IRAN NEWS



Oil Production in the Persian Gulf to Increase by 9,600 Barrels Per Day

TEHRAN (ILNA) - Alireza Mahdizadeh stated during a visit to the construction progress of platforms A20 and A21 of the Abuzar field in the Khorramshahr yard, that the construction of these platforms is 85% complete. He mentioned that 99% of the materials required for this project have been procured, with some items awaiting customs clearance, and that the project's execution activities are progressing at a satisfactory pace. He added that each of the A20 and A21 platforms in the Abuzar field weighs over 1,100 tons and is being constructed entirely using the capabilities of domestic contractors. The CEO of the Iranian Offshore Oil Company stated that drilling of four wells related to platform A21 was completed in 2023, and drilling of four additional wells for platform A20 is nearing completion and will be finished by next month. Mahdizadeh noted that the jackets for these platforms have already been fabricated and installed at the designated location. He emphasized that pre-commissioning and commissioning activities for this project will begin soon. With the selection of the installation company for these platforms, the process of transporting, installing, and commissioning them has started and is expected to take one month.

Establishment of Iran-China Home Appliance Technology Research, Development Center



TEHRAN (IRNA) - The Secretary of the National Association of Home Appliance Industries announced: "We will establish a joint home appliance technology research and development center with China."

Abbas Hashemi, in a press conference regarding the 24th Home Appliance Exhibition to be held from August 19 to 22, stated: "We will seriously pursue product design and innovation, training experts, supply chain management, and setting standards through this center."

The Secretary of the National Association of Home Appliance Industries continued: "We will also follow up on marketing and sales through this center, as China has a significant share in the global market."

He emphasized: "We have held meetings with trade delegations from other countries to expand the links in the home appliance industry."

Hashemi noted that the global home appliance market is valued at 600 billion dollars and said: "The home appliance sector accounts for 1.4 percent of the gross domestic product; additionally, the tax contribution of this industry is 68 percent of the total tax revenue."

Referring to price controls, the Secretary mentioned: "This issue existed in the country, and the association has held various meetings with relevant organizations, including the Ministry of Industry, Mine, and Trade and the Chamber of Commerce, to address it."

He added: "It has been announced that price controls will focus on essential goods and be lifted from other industries."

Hashemi emphasized the development of connections with other countries in the home appliance industry and said: "The position of the home appliance industry must be determined to achieve sustainable industrial development and consequently, exports."

The Secretary of the National Association of Home Appliance Industries stated: "In terms of raw material procurement, we can source on credit from upstream industries, independent of rent-seeking and other issues, which will lead to production growth."



TEHRAN - The President of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture stated that the absence of free trade and preferential agreements between Iran and Brazil has been the most significant obstacle to the development of economic relations between the two countries so far.

In a meeting with Geraldo Alckmin, the Vice President of Brazil, who was present at the Iran Chamber, Samad Hasanzadeh added that another barrier to the development of economic relations between the two countries is the issues related to money transfer and banking relations, which the governments of Iran and Brazil need to address as soon as possible.

He mentioned the signing of a memorandum of understanding to consider exemptions in the export and import of agricultural products between Iran and Brazil, continuing: Despite the signing of this memorandum, unfortunately, it has not been operationalized in the past 10 years, and traders from both sides have not been able to benefit from it.

The President of the Iran Chamber pointed out that the membership of Iran and Brazil in BRICS provides a very suitable capacity for the development of commercial cooperation between the two countries, saying: Unfortunately, the two countries have not been able to make much use of this opportunity. Increasing the dispatch and acceptance of trade delegations between Iran and Brazil can enhance the level of economic relations by increasing the knowledge of traders from both sides about the potentials and areas of cooperation.

Hasanzadeh, inviting the President of the Brazil Chamber of Commerce to visit Iran along with a trade delegation, added: Considering Iran's capabilities in the fields of medical and pharmaceutical production, renewable energy, oil, gas and petrochemicals, automotive industries, food industries and agriculture, and technical and engineering services, there are suitable grounds for joint cooperation.

He stated that the Iran Chamber is determined to develop economic relations with all countries in the world, especially to strengthen and deepen relations with the chambers of commerce of these countries. He added: The Iran Chamber is striving to create better activity opportunities for Iranian traders and businessmen with target countries.

Geraldo Alckmin, the Vice President of Brazil, also stated in this meeting that he has been tasked by the President of Brazil to take the necessary actions to further strengthen the relations between the two countries. He added: Yesterday, in a meeting with the Iranian Minister of Agriculture, we had constructive discussions to open our markets to the traders of both countries. We can have good cooperation in the trade of fruits, pistachios, and caviar.

Emphasizing that we must move towards strengthening the relations between the two countries, he continued: There are numerous opportunities for traders from both countries in the fields of health and pharmaceutical production, engineering, industry, and the

production of agricultural fertilizers.

Earlier in the day, the Iran-Brazil Business Forum was held with the participation of the President and Vice President of the Iran Chamber, the Vice President of Brazil, the Deputy Minister for Trade Development, Science, Technology, Innovation, and Culture of Brazil, the Brazilian Ambassador to Tehran, the President of the Iran-Brazil Joint Chamber, and a group of economic activists from both countries.

In the business forum attended by Alckmin, Hasanzadeh mentioned the inauguration ceremony of the President and said that Iran is interested in developing its economic relations with friendly and neighboring countries, and the government strives to ensure that economic activists can benefit from these relationships.

The President of the Iran Chamber added that Iran has capacities in various fields, and it is hoped that traders and economic activists will have solid plans and cooperation to utilize these capacities.

Referring to the trade relations between Iran and Brazil, he noted that the lack of free trade and preferential agreements between Iran and Brazil has been a major obstacle to the development of economic relations between the two countries, which we hope will be resolved during this period.

The President of the Iran Chamber highlighted the numerous areas for economic cooperation, stating that Iran has suitable grounds for joint cooperation in medical and pharmaceutical production, renewable energy, oil, gas and petrochemicals, mining, automotive industries, food and agriculture, and technical and engineering services. Strengthening this cooperation requires the development of bilateral relations.

He emphasized that the Iran Chamber is ready to develop cooperation with countries worldwide and hopes that good steps will be taken in developing cooperation with Brazil.

Ludmar Gonzales D'Aguiar Neto, Deputy Minister for Trade Development, Science, Technology, Innovation, and Culture of Brazil, spoke about the historical friendship between Iran and Brazil and expressed hope that this good friendship will be used to strengthen economic relations. He mentioned Brazil's interest in increasing trade with Iran and enhancing exports.

duardo Gradilone, the Brazilian ambassador to Iran, also told reporters on the sidelines of the Iran-Brazil business conference: "Given the presence of the Vice President of Brazil in Iran, we had various meetings with Iranian officials and discussed various topics, including trade relations and enhancing them."

He added: "We know that part of the trade between Iran and Brazil is informal, with Brazilian goods entering Iran through the UAE and Qatar. If we account for this as well, the trade value between the two countries is significant, and we hope the trade value between Iran and Brazil will return to the \$4 billion mark as it was in the past."

Removal of the Travel Advisory Against Visiting Iran by the Chinese Embassy



TEHRAN - Director General of Marketing and Foreign Tourism Development Muslem Shojaei stated: Since May, the Chinese Embassy had issued a yellow warning on their website for their citizens, advising caution when traveling to the Islamic Republic of Iran if necessary.

He added that this measure resulted in restrictions on individual and group tourist trips by Chinese nationals to Iran.

Shojaei noted: Following persistent efforts by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to clarify the real conditions and full security of the country, the cautious travel advisory to Iran was removed. As of March 15, 2023, corresponding to the 24th of Esfand 1401 in the Iranian calendar, Chinese citizens are allowed to travel to 40 countries, including Iran, for tourism.

The Director General of Marketing and Foreign Tourism Development said: Currently, the level of diplomatic relations between Iran and China is high, as evidenced by the presence of the representative of the People's Republic of China at the inauguration ceremony of our President, and various Chinese trade delegations are expected to visit Iran in the coming weeks.

Shojaei mentioned that there is now an opportunity for Iranian travel agencies and tour operators to benefit from the thriving Chinese tourism market, and our country's tourism professionals can engage in the exchange of tourists.

Iran, Bangladesh Consider Expanding Trade Opportunities



TEHRAN - The Minister of Industry, Mine, and Trade stated that activating existing capacities will enable the Islamic Republic of Iran and Bangladesh to achieve significant trade goals.

Abbas Aliabadi, Iran's Minister of Industry, Mine, and Trade, said during a meeting with Bangladesh's Minister of State, Hasan Islam Tito, that the two friendly and independent nations need comprehensive development, especially in the construction of buildings and infrastructure, to increase their power and prosperity. This can create a foundation for long-term and extensive cooperation.

He added that Iran has significant capacities in producing various construction materials and equipment and is, in fact, one of the largest producers and exporters in this field.

According to the Iranian Minister of Industry, Mine, and Trade, there are opportunities for cooperation between the two countries in other areas such as agriculture and food, tourism, pharmaceuticals and medical industries, sports, academia, and other fields.

He further emphasized that the current records for Iran's economy reflect its high capability and strong resilience against external tensions and pressures.

Aliabadi also spoke about Bangladesh's economic potential, noting that historical documents show that the friendship and deep cultural, scientific, and trade exchanges between Iran and the Indian subcontinent, particularly Bengal, have always been strong. The active membership of both Iran and Bangladesh in international organizations, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and the Non-Aligned Movement indicates similar strategic inclinations and shared interests in the present era.

During the meeting, Hasan Islam Tito described Iran as a country with abundant economic potential, stating that economic actors and political officials cannot ignore Iran's market and economy.

Meanwhile The Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) is reportedly going to host a meeting to review solutions for developing economic cooperation between Iran and Bangladesh and removing trade barriers in the way of the two countries, the ICCIMA portal reported.

Scheduled to be held on August 10 at the ICCIMA building in Tehran, the meeting will be attended by the Minister of Commerce of Bangladesh and the Ambassador of this country in Tehran.

ICCIMA has invited the Iranian private companies active in various sectors including textile, food products, oil, gas, bitumen and petrochemical sectors as well as shipbuilding and ship parts to partake in this meeting.

Tentative Exports of Iranian Chicken to Pakistan and Oman



TEHRAN - Ali Ebrahimi, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the National Union of Broiler Chicken Farmers, in an interview explained about the supply of chicken meat and poultry feed in the Thirteenth Government. He stated: "As evidence suggests, chicken production has seen a significant increase this year compared to last year. In 2023, around this time, we faced a shortage of chicken and resorted to imports to meet the demand, but today, after a year, there is a surplus of this type of meat in the market, and even chicken exports have begun this year, whereas strategic reserves used to be imported from Brazil." He added: "Chicken farmers experienced a shortage of day-old chicks and soybean meal for part of 2023, with the price of chicks reaching up to 30,000 Tomans per kilogram and soybean meal up to 40,000 Tomans per kilogram. Currently, the price of chicks is about 25,000 to 27,000 Tomans, and the price of soybean meal is about 21,000 Tomans." Ebrahimi continued: "The conditions for increasing chicken production have led to a decrease in market prices for consumers, and producers have also been able to produce more. However, it is the end consumers in the production chain who have benefited the most from the new conditions. Since production exceeds demand and prices have fallen, producers face reduced profit margins, pushing production to the brink of loss."

He clarified: "Currently, chicken production has reached 3 million tons per year, exceeding the country's demand." In response to whether exports can restore lost balance to the market, the Chairman of the National Union of Broiler Chicken Farmers said: "Since the beginning of this year, 13,000 tons of chicken have been exported from Iran, primarily to Iraq. However, it is important to note that marketing chicken is not simple and takes time. For export development, special products must be produced for export, which differ from domestic consumption products."

He noted: "To balance the market, the current production process must be managed, and higher quality chicken with better packaging must be produced so that Iranian chicken can find its place in export markets. Unlike Iranians, foreign customers prefer smaller chickens that should not weigh more than one and a half kilos. Nevertheless, the Union of Poultry Farmers is striving to establish special export chicken production units in the provinces. It is also noteworthy that in past years, if there were exports, they came from surplus domestic chicken, but today we are focusing on special export production."

Cargo Unloading, Loading at Imam Khomeini Port Increased by 17%



TEHRAN - The Director General of Khuzestan Ports and Maritime Organization announced that the total unloading and loading of oil and non-oil goods in the special economic zone of Imam Khomeini Port reached 16.3 million tons in the first four months of this year, marking a 17% increase compared to the same period last year.

Aboutaleb Goraylou stated in an interview that approximately five million tons of basic goods were unloaded at this port in the first four months of this year, representing a 35% increase compared to the same period last year.

The Director General added that the unloading and loading of general cargo at Imam Khomeini Port during this period exceeded 766,000 tons, which is a 4% increase compared to the same period last year.

Goraylou mentioned that the amount of cargo unloaded and loaded at the container terminal of the Imam Khomeini Port

special economic zone reached 27,777 TEUs, indicating a 70% increase compared to the same period last year.

He specified that the loading of export cargoes, including various mineral, construction, chemical, and container goods, increased by 5%, reaching more than 7.59 million tons.

The Director General noted that the unloading of various imported goods at this port increased by 31%, reaching 6.255 million tons.

Goraylou highlighted a 156% growth in transit through this port, stating that 1.5 million tons of transit cargo were handled in the Imam Khomeini Port special economic zone during the first four months of this year.

In the first three months of this year, the special economic zone of Imam Khomeini Port accounted for 34% of the country's total cargo transit.

Colombia Rebels to Halt Attacks During UN Biodiversity Summit

BOGOTA (Dispatches) - Colombia's EMC guerrilla group said Thursday it would not launch attacks in the city of Cali during the upcoming COP16 UN biodiversity summit, as it had previously threatened. The rebels, who broke away from the FARC guerrilla movement when that group signed a peace deal in 2016, had ramped up attacks in towns around Cali in recent months, with a spate of bombings and shootings setting authorities on edge. "To guarantee the smooth running of COP16 we decree the suspension of offensive military operations against public forces in the city of Cali, in the period between October 11 and November 6." The summit runs from October 21 to November 1. In July, the EMC warned the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP16) of the Convention on Biological Diversity "will fail even if they militarize the city with foreigners." The event hopes to attract some 12,000 delegates and exhibitors, as well as heads of state, to one of the world's most biodiverse countries. Presenting itself as "protector of forests, waters and animals," the EMC criticizes COP16 as an event that prioritizes commercial interests and "justifies militarism."

But this summit is an opportunity "to open a debate on the need for a change in the economic model and a questioning of extractivism and predatory exploitation of the planet," the statement said.



Fresh Russian Advances in Eastern Ukraine Send Locals Fleeing



POKROVSK (Dispatches) - Sitting in a spartan, third-class train carriage about to leave Pokrovsk's railway station in eastern Ukraine, Volodymyr Arkhipov reflected on the grinding Russian advances which this week forced him to flee his second home in two years. "I hauled out a corpse where (the Russians) bombed us, a woman of 37 ... by the time we dug her up, she had suffocated," the 57-year-old told Reuters, describing his final days in the embattled town of Toretsk before being evacuated. The heavy Soviet-era train jolted into motion, taking him and his 84-year-old uncle, Mykola Arkhipov, towards western Ukraine from Pokrovsk, where they had spent the night after arriving by bus from embattled Toretsk, 30 miles to the east. The two men are part of a wave of people fleeing Russian advances on several fronts in the eastern region of Donetsk, as Moscow batters slowly through formerly solid Ukrainian defences. Pressing home their advantages in manpower and weapons, Russian forces have fought their way towards major towns and supply routes in pursuit of their goal of full control of Ukraine's industrialized and mineral-rich Donbas. One recent advance has allowed Russia to open a salient only 20 km (12 miles) from Pokrovsk, an important logistical hub and still home to about 60,000 people. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said on Thursday that Pokrovsk was now Russia's main target. Moscow has claimed control of four villages east of Pokrovsk in the last week. Ukraine did not comment on those claims. Russian soldiers have reached the edge of Toretsk, where the regional governor said a week ago that only 3,500 people were left, just over 10% of the prewar population. More have since been evacuated by authorities and humanitarian organisations.



WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - U.S. journalist Evan Gershkovich and ex-U.S. Marine Paul Whelan returned to the United States on Thursday, hours after being freed from Russian detention in the biggest prisoner exchange between the two countries since the Cold War. The White House said it negotiated the trade with Russia, Germany and three other countries. The deal, negotiated in secrecy for more than a year, involved 24 prisoners - 16 moving from Russia to the West and eight sent back to Russia from the West. They included Vadim Krasikov, convicted of murdering an exiled dissident in Berlin, the German government said. U.S. President Joe Biden hailed the deal as "a feat of diplomacy and friendship" and praised Washington's allies for their "bold and brave decisions." Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris greeted freed Americans Gershkovich, Whelan and journalist Alsu Kurmasheva, as well as Russian-British dissident and U.S. resident Vladimir Kara-Murza, as they arrived at Joint Base Andrews, Maryland, shortly before midnight (0400 GMT). Russian President Vladimir Putin met the prisoners returning to Russia on their arrival in Moscow, saying they would be given state awards. "Today is a powerful example of why it's vital to have friends in this world," Biden said earlier at the White House, flanked by relatives of freed prisoners. Biden expressed gratitude to German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, who made the politically difficult choice to release Krasikov. The deal provides the Biden administration with a marquee diplomatic success as the U.S. presidential campaign, pitting Harris against Republican former President Donald Trump, enters its final months. Still, the multi-country deal appeared to be a one-time exchange that does not reset the antagonistic U.S.-Russia relationship. U.S. deputy national security adviser Jon Finer said U.S.-Russia ties remain "in a very difficult place" despite the prisoner swap. "There was no trust involved in this relationship or negotiation," Finer told CNN. Critics said the freeing of Russians convicted of serious crimes could encourage more hostage-taking by U.S. foes. "I remain concerned that continuing to trade innocent Americans for actual Russian criminals held in the U.S. and elsewhere sends a dangerous message to Putin that only encourages further hostage taking by his regime," Michael McCaul, the Republican chair of the U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee, said in a statement. Trump, who said he did not have details

of the swap, asked whether "murderers, killers, or thugs" were released. "Just curious because we never make good deals, at anything, but especially hostage swaps," the presidential nominee said on social media. Also involved in the deal were Poland, Slovenia, Norway and Belarus. Turkey coordinated the exchange. The Kremlin said in a statement its decision to pardon and free prisoners "was made with the aim of returning Russian citizens detained and imprisoned in foreign countries." The last major exchange between the United States and Russia, in 2010, involved 14 prisoners. The two countries had a high-profile exchange in December 2022, swapping U.S. basketball star Brittney Griner, sentenced to nine years for vape cartridges containing cannabis oil in her luggage, for arms dealer Viktor Bout, who was serving a 25-year sentence. The release of Russians convicted in the West represented a victory for Putin, who had indicated he wanted Krasikov back. Their homeland "had not forgotten you for a moment," he told them at the airport. Krasikov is a colonel in the Russian FSB security service who was serving a life sentence for murdering an exiled Chechen-Georgian dissident in a Berlin park. Among the Westerners freed, Gershkovich, a Wall Street Journal journalist, had been accused of collecting sensitive military information for the CIA, a charge he and the newspaper denied. The White House posted an emotional two-minute video of the moment the families of the U.S.-bound detainees spoke to their loved ones by phone from the Oval Office. "This is momma. Do you hear me? It's your mom," Gershkovich's mother tells her son in the clip, posted on Biden's social media account on the X platform. Whelan, the former marine, was serving a 16-year sentence in a Russian penal colony on espionage charges that he denied. Rico Krieger, a German, had been sentenced to death in Belarus on terrorism charges. He was pardoned by President Alexander Lukashenko, a close Putin ally, before being freed. Also released was Kurmasheva, a Russian-American journalist sentenced to 6-1/2 years in prison on July 19, the same day as Gershkovich, as well as Kara-Murza, who was serving 25 years for treason after saying Putin was bombing Ukrainian homes, hospitals and schools. Released with them were human rights activist Oleg Orlov and Russian opposition politician Ilya Yashin.



Bombing in Nigeria's Borno State Kills Over a Dozen

BORNO (Dispatches) - Although no one has claimed the attack, Boko Haram are suspected to be behind a bombing which killed at least 16 people on Wednesday, the latest in a series of lethal attacks against civilians in the area. A bomb exploded in a roadside market in Nigeria's Borno state killing at least 16 people and wounding dozens of others, police said. The government imposed a 24-hour curfew after the bombing attack, the second in recent weeks. The attack happened at about 8 p.m. local time Wednesday at a teashop that hosts mostly locals in Kawori, a rural community in the Konduga area, some 50 kilometers (31 miles) from the state capital Maiduguri, according to local media reports. No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack but analysts and some local officials suspected the Islamic militant group Boko Haram, which has since 2009 waged an insurgency in Nigeria and neighboring countries in the Lake Chad region. "This latest bomb explosion targeting civilians is a stark reminder of the continued threat posed by Boko Haram, especially as it is coming after a triple suicide attack" in Gwoza in the southern part of the state, said Malik Samuel, a researcher on the Lake Chad conflict at the Institute for Security Studies. Local police said the bomb used in Kawori was an improvised explosive device that was planted in the cafe, not a suicide attack. The police said 16 people were killed but did not give a definitive number of other victims who they said were "critically injured" and undergoing treatment in hospitals around the state. The state emergency management agency said about 24 people were seriously injured.

Brazil, Mexico and Colombia Call for Venezuela to Release Full Vote Tallies

BRASILIA (Dispatches) - Brazil, Mexico and Colombia called for Venezuela to release detailed voting tallies on Thursday, while the United States said it considered the opposition candidate as the winner, amid a dispute over presidential election results that sparked protests. Venezuela's electoral council has proclaimed President Nicolas Maduro, who has been in power since 2013, the winner of the July 28 election with 51% of the vote. But the country's opposition says its tally of about 90% of the votes shows its candidate Edmundo Gonzalez received more than double the support of the incumbent president, in line with independent polling conducted before the contest. The opposition has released detailed tallies on a public website, but the government has so far not shared any information beyond a national total of votes for each candidate. The current presidents of Brazil, Colombia and Mexico have traditionally been friendlier with Maduro and have adopted a more neutral stance on the election, as countries around the world call for the release of full tallies and the U.S. said Maduro should acknowledge a Gonzalez win. "We call on the electoral authorities in Venezuela to move ahead quickly and let itemized ballot box level results be known publicly," Brazil, Mexico and Colombia said in a joint statement after a call between their presidents Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador and Gustavo Petro. Results should be verified impartially, the countries said, and all political actors should avoid an escalation of violence and electoral controversies should be solved via institutions. "We reiterate our willingness to support



dialogue efforts and the search for agreements that benefit the Venezuelan people," the statement said. In response to election-related criticism, Venezuela has expelled diplomats from Argentina and five other countries - Chile, Costa Rica, Panama, the Dominican Republic and Uruguay. Caracas and Lima expelled each other's diplomats after Peru recognized Gonzalez as Venezuela's elected president. Maduro has also requested a call with Lula, a Brazilian source said. The United States on Thursday recognized Maduro's opponent and opposition candidate Gonzalez as the winner, rejecting the Venezuelan president's victory claim. "Given the overwhelming evidence, it is clear to the United States and, most importantly, to the Venezuelan people that Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia won the most votes in Venezuela's July 28 presidential election," U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement on Thursday. The disputed election has led to deadly protests that Maduro and his allies in the military have denounced as an attempted coup. Human Rights Watch said on Wednesday it had received reports of 20 deaths in post-election demonstrations. The protests closed shops and caused cuts to public transport around Venezuela, which is mired in a deep and lengthy economic crisis marked by high inflation, but many places were returning to normality by Thursday. Major government figures including Maduro have said Gonzalez and high-profile opposition leader Maria Corina Machado should be held responsible for the anti-government protests, with some going as far as to call for their arrests. There have been more than 1,200 arrests of protesters, Maduro said on Thursday, and the government is seeking 1,000 more.

Mali Rebels Claim to Have Killed at Least 130 Soldiers, Russians

TUAREG (Dispatches) - Mali's Tuareg rebels announced on Thursday that they had killed at least 131 Malian soldiers and Russian Wagner mercenaries during intense clashes in late July. Despite the heavy losses, Russia reaffirmed its commitment to supporting the Malian junta, emphasising ongoing military and socioeconomic cooperation.

Mali's northern Tuareg rebels said on Thursday they had killed at least 84 Russian Wagner mercenaries and 47 Malian soldiers over days of fierce fighting in late July, as Russia signalled its ongoing commitment to the Malian junta.

The rebel movement, the Permanent Strategic Framework for Peace, Security and Development (CSP), previously said it had killed dozens in the clashes around the northern border town of Tinzaouaten, while an al Qaeda affiliate said it had killed 50 Wagner fighters in an ambush in the same area. Even before the latest death toll claimed by the CSP, the losses appeared to be Wagner's heaviest defeat since it stepped in two years ago to help Mali's military authorities fight groups that have been waging insurgencies in West Africa's Sahel region since 2012. Neither Mali nor Wagner have said how many troops they lost in the clashes, although in a rare statement on July 29, Wagner said it had suffered heavy losses. Malian authorities have also acknowledged severe losses in the battle without giving

numbers. The apparent rout does not appear to have damaged the outlook for Russian-Malian cooperation. On Thursday, Russia's foreign ministry said Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov had spoken with his Malian counterpart and expressed Russia's "firm intention to continue rendering the necessary support," including on socioeconomic issues, boosting the combat capability of the armed forces, and training military personnel. The statement did not mention the recent fighting. The Russians have been in Mali since the army, which seized power in two coups in 2020 and 2021, kicked out French and U.N. troops that had been involved in fighting Islamist insurgents for a decade, replacing them with Wagner. The Malian authorities have accused Tuareg and jihadist groups of collaborating, but in its statement the CSP said it had fought alone "exclusively from the beginning to the end" of the recent clashes. It said it had taken seven Malian soldiers and Wagner fighters prisoner, as well as seizing a large amount of weapons, ammunition, vehicles, and other equipment. The Tuareg live in the Sahara desert, which includes parts of northern Mali. Many complain of marginalisation by the Malian government. Tuareg separatists launched an insurgency against Mali in 2012, demanding an independent homeland called Azawad. Their struggle later became entangled with an al Qaeda-aligned Islamist rebellion in the same region.





Zheng Stuns Swiatek, Djokovic on Course for Gold

PARIS (Dispatches) - Iga Swiatek must wait four more years to try and win an Olympic gold medal after the Polish top seed was shocked by China's Zheng Qinwen in the semi-finals of the tennis tournament, but Novak Djokovic's hopes are intact despite a scare. The Pole was the overwhelming favourite for gold after a third successive French Open title this year confirmed her as the undisputed Queen of Clay, but she was outplayed 6-2 7-5 by sixth seed Zheng on another sultry day at Roland Garros. Zheng, 21, faces Croatia's Donna Vekic in Saturday's final after she beat Slovakia's Anna Karolina Schmiedlova 6-4 6-0. Both are their country's first Olympic singles finalists. Serbia's 37-year-old Djokovic, desperate for a long-overdue Olympic gold medal, reached the semi-finals for a record fourth time, edging out Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas 6-3 7-6(3), although he was troubled by his suspect right knee. As in the women's Paris draw, there will be a first-time Olympic men's singles champion after Tokyo winner Alexander Zverev crashed to a quarter-final defeat against Italy's Lorenzo Musetti who will be standing in Djokovic's way on Friday. But there will be no farewell Olympic medal for Britain's Andy Murray after his illustrious career, including two Olympic golds, ended in defeat in the doubles quarter-finals with Dan Evans against Taylor Fritz and Tommy Paul. In snapping world number one Swiatek's 25-match winning run at Roland Garros, dating back to 2021, Australian Open runner-up Zheng did not even have to bring her A-game. "I'm so happy that I could make history for Chinese tennis because I always wanted to be one of the athletes who can get a medal for China, for our country," Zheng said. "Right now I'm one of them, but I know the fight is not over it's not the end." With so many big names missing from the Olympic singles and with several seeds having wilted early, Swiatek was odds on to add the Olympic gold to her five Grand Slam titles. She held a 6-0 career record against Zheng, but the 23-year-old Swiatek picked the worst possible time to produce one of her worst displays of the year, spraying 36 unforced errors. Swiatek broke down in tears during a TV interview afterwards and will have to console herself with a bronze medal match. "I just had a hole in my backhand. It

happens rarely because it is usually my most solid strike," she told Eurosport Poland. Swiatek struggled to find her range in the humid conditions as her shots often missed the lines by metres. After a bathroom break to re-set she seemed to have regained control in the second set as she went 4-0 ahead. But it proved a false dawn as the errors returned and Zheng took full advantage to claw her way back and surpass China's best Olympic singles result, Li Na's fourth place in 2008. Men's top seed Djokovic was imperious as he won the first set against Tsitsipas. But he went a break down in the second and more worryingly appeared to slip and aggravate the knee that required surgery after the French Open. He needed treatment at a change of ends and almost went 5-1 down before recovering and surging back to seal victory. "I'm concerned about the state of the knee but I can't give you exact information," Djokovic, whose best Olympic result was a singles bronze in 2008, told reporters. "I need to go and examine the knee now with my physio. I'm hopeful to be ready." Djokovic will need to be moving freely on Friday against Italy's 11th seed Musetti who impressed in a 7-5 7-5 defeat of third seed Zverev who complained of feeling horrible. Musetti effectively now has two shots at a medal but said his eyes are only on the title despite having lost six of his seven previous matches against Djokovic. "I'm not thinking about the bronze, that's not the right spirit," the 22-year-old said. Spain's Carlos Alcaraz remained on course for gold at his maiden Games as he battled past American Tommy Paul into the semi-finals, winning 6-3 7-6(7) after saving a set point. The second seed will face Felix Auger-Aliassime after the Canadian beat Norway's Casper Ruud 6-4 6-7(8) 6-3.

United States duo Rajeev Ram and Austin Krajicek followed up their defeat of Alcaraz and Rafa Nadal on Wednesday to book their place in the final as they overcame Czech pair Tomas Machac and Adam Pavlasek 6-2 6-2.

The mixed doubles final offers more medal opportunities for China with Wang Xinyu and Zhang Zhizhen up against Machac and Katerina Siniakova.

Klopp Dismisses England Job Speculation



LONDON (Dispatches) - Former Liverpool coach Jurgen Klopp distanced himself from the vacant England manager position on Wednesday, saying that he had no plans to take up a new role anytime soon.

The 57-year-old German, who ended his successful nine-year stint with Liverpool at the end of last season, was one of the top names linked in British media reports with the demanding England job.

While speaking at the International Coaches' Congress in Wurzburg, he was asked about future job opportunities, including succeeding Gareth Southgate who stepped down as England boss after their Euro 2024 final loss to Spain.

"England? That would be the biggest loss of face in the history of football if I said: 'I'll make an exception for you'," he said.

Southgate, in charge since 2016, announced his departure less than 48 hours after England's second consecutive European Championship final defeat on July 16.

Klopp added that there were no other jobs in the pipeline for him.

"At the moment, there is nothing at all in terms of jobs. No club, no country," he said.

"I've also coached the best clubs in the world. Maybe we can talk about it again in a few months."

Liverpool appointed Feyenoord manager Arne Slot as Klopp's replacement in May.

Hungary's Kos Wins Olympic Men's 200m Backstroke Gold

PARIS (Dispatches) - Hubert Kos powered to gold in the men's 200m backstroke on Thursday, touching in 1min 54.26sec to deliver Hungary's first gold of the Paris Olympics. Greece's Apostolos Christou, who had led until the final turn, took the silver medal, finishing 0.56sec behind Kos, while Switzerland's Roman Mityukov won bronze. Kos came into the race as the favourite, after American Ryan Murphy, gold medallist in Rio and silver in Tokyo, surprisingly failed to qualify for the final. But he still had plenty of work to do on the final lap after Christou's impressive showing. "I knew I had to go fast so I didn't really know where anybody else was. I just kept swimming and swimming. I was happy to get my hand on the wall first," said Kos. "I feel really sick right now. I haven't really processed this. I need a little time. I am over the moon. I knew I

had to have speed coming back. It doesn't matter how I got there, it matters that I got there," he added. Christou said he had not expected to medal in the 200 having focused on the 100 backstroke and he was delighted to have surprised himself. "It's the best achievement in my career. I'm really happy. The best day of my life, so I'm really glad, blessed, and very, very satisfied with my results," he said. Kos, the 2023 world champion, who is trained by Michael Phelps's former coach Bob Bowman, produced a devastating final 25 metres to leave the Greek in his wake and finish a comfortable winner in the end. It continues an impressive Olympics for Bowman's swimmers, with French favourite Leon Marchand having already claimed three gold medals. "Without him I'd probably be like 15th in the 2IM (200m individual medley) right now.

It's been an incredible journey with him, and I'm just too happy to be part of a team like that," he said. "The magic touch is the work. He doesn't let us be second best. He doesn't let us stoop down to a level he doesn't want from us. That brings out the best in us," he added.

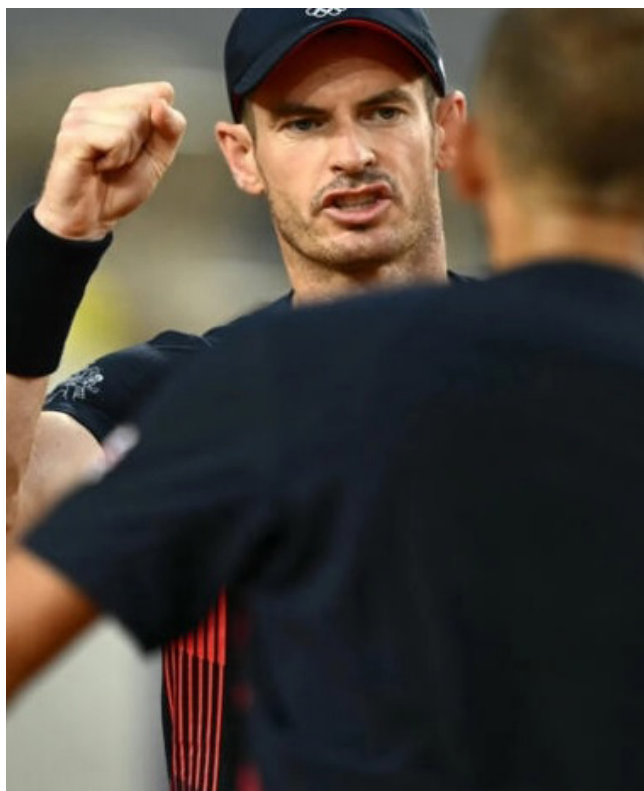


Azarenka, Rublev Roll in Washington Open

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Two-time Australian Open champions Aryna Sabalenka and Victoria Azarenka will meet in the WTA and ATP Washington Open quarter-finals after Azarenka foiled an upset bid Thursday by China's Wang Yafan. A day after her 35th birthday, Azarenka ousted 73rd-ranked Wang Yafan 6-1, 6-7 (5/7), 6-3 after two hours and 46 minutes to advance at the US Open hardcourt tuneup. Top seed Sabalenka, the 2023 and 2024 Australian Open winner, and her sixth-seeded Belarus compatriot are the only two seeds in the last eight ahead of Friday's showdown. "The most important thing right now is playing an opponent like Aryna and seeing where my game is at and what I can do," Azarenka said. "My focus is more internal this week for the purposes of preparing for the US Open." World number three Sabalenka owns a 4-1 edge in her WTA career rivalry with 20th-ranked Azarenka after taking their most recent matchup in January in a Brisbane semi-final. "I had a lot of great matches against Victoria. It's always great matches against her," Sabalenka said. "I'm really looking forward facing her again." Sabalenka won their first meeting in the opening round at the 2019 US Open while Azarenka took a 2020 US Open second-round rematch. The other Sabalenka triumphs included the 2020 Ostrava final and a 2021 Montreal quarter-final. "Maybe our last matches I can try some new things to hopefully turn it my way," Azarenka said. Both Sabalenka and Azarenka withdrew from Wimbledon with shoulder injuries but haven't had problems this week. "I was able to serve without pain," Sabalenka said. "It's not going to be easy to come back after injury, especially the one I had. I feel OK." Azarenka, who won the 2012 and 2013 Australian Opens, was confident matches would restore top form. "Not having a lot of matches under the belt lately and also coming off injury, I think the positives are that I played almost three hours in back-to-back matches and my shoulder feels good," Azarenka said. "That was one of my main goals this week, that I'm able to handle the match play." On the men's side, top seed Andrey Rublev reached the quarter-finals by defeating French 16th seed Arthur Rinderknech 7-6 (7/4), 6-4.

Rublev and Rinderknech held serve into a first-set tiebreaker, where the Russian took three of the last four points, including his 14th ace, and took the first set after 49 minutes when the Frenchman netted a forehand.

Murray Bows Out of Tennis With Paris Olympics Defeat



PARIS (Dispatches) - Andy Murray said he was retiring "on my terms" as his trophy-filled career came to an emotional end at the Paris Olympics on Thursday, closing another chapter on tennis's golden generation.

The former world number one and three-time Grand Slam title winner slipped into retirement aged 37 when he and Dan Evans lost in the men's doubles quarter-finals at Roland Garros. American pair Taylor Fritz and Tommy Paul delivered the knockout blow with a 6-2, 6-4 victory on a packed Court Suzanne Lenglen. Britain's Murray had already announced that the Olympics would be his last event. "I'm proud of my career, my achievements and what I put into the sport," said Murray. "Obviously it was emotional because it's the last time I will play a competitive match. But I am genuinely happy just now. I'm happy with how it finished." He added: "I'm glad I got to go out here at the Olympics and finish on my terms because at times in the last few years that wasn't a certainty." Just a few hours after Murray had made his exit, he cheekily wrote on X: "Never even liked tennis anyway". Career-long rival Novak Djokovic described Murray as "an incredible competitor". "One of the greatest warriors tennis has seen. His fighting spirit is definitely something that I'm sure is going to inspire many generations to come," said the Serb. One of the 'Big Four' in the sport, Murray joins 20-time Grand Slam winner Roger Federer in retirement

after the Swiss great quit in 2022. Rafael Nadal, the winner of 22 majors but battling more injuries at the age of 38, exited the Paris Olympics on Wednesday and suggested that he had played his last match at Roland Garros, where he won 14 of his Slams. Nadal also effectively ruled himself out of the US Open, sparking more speculation that the great Spaniard is also finished in the sport. That would leave just 37-year-old Djokovic -- winner of a record 24 Grand Slams -- still active amongst the sport's eminent talents who have carved up 69 majors between them. Murray famously ended Britain's 77-year wait for a men's champion at Wimbledon when he triumphed in 2013, defeating Djokovic in the final. He added a second title in 2016, taking his career majors total to three after breaking his duck at the 2012 US Open. Murray won gold at the 2012 Olympics on an emotional day at the All England Club when he defeated Federer just weeks after he had lost the Wimbledon final to the Swiss on the same Centre Court. Four years later he defeated Juan Martin del Potro to become the first player, man or woman, to win two Olympic singles golds. Murray also led Britain to the Davis Cup title in 2015, the country's first in 79 years. He has won 46 titles in all and banked around \$65 million in prize money. However, he has been ravaged by injuries in recent years, slumping to 117th in the world. The Scot has played with a metal hip since 2019 and suffered ankle damage earlier this year before undergoing surgery to remove a spinal cyst, which ruled him out of singles at Wimbledon