

Iran's Minister of Roads and Urban Development Says the Chabahar Port (Shahid Beheshti port) in Southeastern Iran Will Be Connected to the Chabahar-Zahedan Railway by Late-March 2025

# IRAN NEWS

President's Senior Representative at the Central Arbadeen Headquarters, Saeed Owhadi, Announced the Expectation of Over 4.5 Million Pilgrims Attending This Year's Arbadeen Ceremonies in Iraq, Adding All Required Facilities Are Provided for the Event

VOL. XXIX, No. 8051 TEHRAN Price 50,000 Rials

www.irannewsdaily.com

TUESDAY AUGUST 16, 2024 MORDAD 16, 1403

2

DOMESTIC



## Iran to Produce 80m Tons of Petrochemical Products by Year-End

> SEE PAGE 2

3

INTERNATIONAL

## Ukraine Finally Deploying U.S.-Made F-16 Fighter Jets

> SEE PAGE 3



## Israel's Big Mistake of Assassinating Hamas Chief Will Not Go Unanswered



TEHRAN (PressTV) - President Masoud Pezeshkian says the Israeli regime's assassination of Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran was a "big mistake" that will not go unanswered. In a meeting with Jordan's Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi in Tehran on Sunday, Pezeshkian said the Israeli regime's act of assassination against Haniyeh, the head of the political bureau of the Hamas resistance movement, violated all international regulations. "The Islamic Republic of Iran expects all Muslim countries and free nations in the world to strongly condemn such crimes," he added. He emphasized that the biggest enemies and violators of freedom, democracy and human rights are making use of their utmost scientific and operational capabilities to carry out terrorist acts and commit heinous crimes. "They claim to defend freedom, democracy and human rights and introduce anyone who refrains from complying with them the enemy of such principles and values," the Iranian president said. The Israeli regime on Wednesday killed Haniyeh, who was in Tehran to attend the swearing-in ceremony of the new Iranian president. The Hamas chief was assassinated along with his bodyguard, identified as Wasim Abu Shaaban. Elsewhere in his remarks, Pezeshkian said his administration's foreign policy will focus on the promotion of peace and stability in the region and the world. He stressed the need to forge cooperation among Muslim countries to put an end to the Israeli regime's atrocities and crimes against the oppressed people of Palestine. Pezeshkian expressed hope that the talks between the Iranian and Jordanian diplomatic delegations about the resumption of mutual relations will produce results as soon as possible so that the two Muslim countries can benefit from mutual capacities. He noted that cordial relations and constructive cooperation between Tehran and Amman will also serve the interests of the countries in the region. The Jordanian foreign minister, for his part, said Amman condemns Haniyeh's assassination and regards it as a move in line with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's efforts to spread tensions in the region.

## Zionists Made a Mistake and Will Receive a Strong Response



TEHRAN - Major General Hossein Salami, the Commander-in-Chief of the IRGC, stated during a ceremony commemorating Journalist Day, while expressing condolences for the martyrdom of Ismail Haniyeh, the head of Hamas's political bureau, that the world today is dominated by events over strategies, and this issue is expanding and becoming more prevalent. He added: "Today we witness events unfolding, and powers are forced to adopt strategies to manage these events. We live in a world where incidents create chaos." Salami emphasized: "When we say that the world is one of media battles and narratives, it is because, in today's world, words have power. This century is the century of the death of distances." The IRGC Commander-in-Chief stressed: "The battlefield has shifted from territorial geography to minds. Humans are the main subject of today's battles, and attitudes and social opinions are fundamental in shaping today's human life. Anyone who can create an image is successful." He stated: "As long as we live by repeating the reality of life, we can distinguish between friends and enemies. Therefore, you journalists must create media scenarios to counter falsehoods. A significant portion of the efforts in the world of information dissemination is to produce these falsehoods that do not exist in the real world." Major General Salami, noting that in the Western world, there is a lack of alignment between concepts and their instances, said: "The construction of the mind is the greatest element of a society. The destruction of a society's mental character is the most dangerous threat it faces. The enemy tries to make us doubt our own beliefs, and this is a new form of warfare." Salami emphasized: "The Zionist regime was born in the cradle of terrorism and does not possess any of the elements that constitute a nation. This regime has created a vortex of fire around itself, thinking it can prevent a nation from achieving nuclear energy by assassinating nuclear scientists or by killing a revolutionary and freedom-seeking leader who seeks to restore rights and reclaim his land, believing that such actions will secure their survival."

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK



TEHRAN - Foreign Ministry Spokesman Nasser Kanaani, expressed condolences for the martyrdom of Ismail Haniyeh, who was killed in a cowardly assassination by the Zionist regime and stated that this despicable act by Israel will not undermine the firm resolve of the great Palestinian cause. Kanaani continued, "The pure blood of this martyr will further strengthen the resolve and determination of Palestine and other justice-seekers worldwide." The Foreign Ministry spokesperson emphasized, "We once again strongly condemn this criminal act and extend our condolences to the oppressed Palestinian people and the family and relatives of the martyr." Regarding Iran's response to the assassination of Martyr Haniyeh, Kanaani said, "The Zionist regime's assassination of the high-ranking and political leader of the Palestinian people, while he was a guest of Iran attending the inauguration of Iran's elected President, was a gross violation of international law. Terrorism is inherent to the nature and essence of the Zionist regime. The survival of this regime seems to depend on continuing acts of terrorism and organized state terrorism." He added, "It is necessary for the world to condemn this crime. There must be serious and decisive support for punishing the aggressor. We emphasize that, as Iran, we regard our right to defend our national security, sovereignty, and territorial integrity as clear and undeniable. No one has the right to doubt Iran's legal right to punish aggressors and create deterrence against the usurping regime. To this point, we have taken the necessary political and legal actions." Kanaani noted, "We have pursued the holding of a United Nations Security Council meeting, which has taken place, and the criminal actions of the Zionist regime have been condemned by a significant number of permanent and non-permanent members of the Security Council." He said, "We have conducted legal and political correspondence, including communication with the President of the Security Council, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and the Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. We have also requested an urgent meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, which is scheduled to be held on Wednesday in Jeddah with serious participation from the Organization of Islamic Cooperation at the level of foreign

ministers." He stated, "Based on its inherent right according to international law, Iran will take serious and deterrent measures with power, decisiveness, and firmness against the aggressor. No one should doubt Iran's serious will to punish the aggressor and create deterrence against the criminal and adventurous behaviors of the usurping Zionist regime." The Foreign Ministry spokesperson added, "If international bodies are unable or unwilling under the influence of certain parties to stand against the criminal and human rights-violating actions of the Zionist regime, Iran cannot remain indifferent to the national security and the security of its allies and partners and defend the security of the region." He noted, "Iran operates within the framework of the Charter and international law and will firmly defend its national security with the aim of punishing the aggressor and creating deterrence. Iran has taken the necessary legal and political measures up to this point, has made its expectations clear to the Security Council and international bodies, and will continue to act decisively and firmly to punish the aggressor and defend its security and dignity while creating necessary deterrence against the Zionist regime's adventurous actions. Iran does not seek to escalate tensions in the region." The senior Iranian diplomat highlighted, "Iran believes the international community should act to restore stability to the region and support the punishment of the aggressor. We will strive to enhance stability in the region." Regarding direct messages from the United States to Iran, Kanaani stated, "There is no need for messages, and the responsibility of the U.S. government is clear. The usurping regime acts with direct support from the U.S. America has a clear responsibility and should adhere to international laws." Regarding efforts by various countries to engage with Tehran, Kanaani said, "Both Iran and various countries have established extensive communications with world officials. In the complex regional situation, increased diplomatic activity is naturally expected." He responded to the Kuwaiti newspaper Al-Jarida's claims about an American delegation's visit to Iran, stating, "Some of these reports are not even worth denying, and any communication will be handled by the National Security Council. This news is baseless and lacks merit."

## Tehran Blasts Europe's Silence on Haniyeh Assassination



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's interim Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani has denounced the awkward silence of European countries on the assassination of Hamas political chief Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran, stressing that the Islamic Republic will definitely employ its legitimate right to create deterrence against Israel. Bagheri Kani made the comments in a telephone conversation with Slovenia's Foreign Minister Tanja Fajon on Sunday evening as the two sides discussed the state of affairs in West Asia following Israel's assassination of Haniyeh in Tehran and top Hezbollah commander Fuad Shukr in southern Beirut. "The Islamic Republic is surprised by Europe's silence as well as the absence of a UN Security Council statement in condemnation of the Zionist regime's acts of aggression against Iran, Lebanon and Yemen. Moreover, European countries' failure to condemn the killing of Hamas politburo head has raised questions for Iran," the top Iranian diplomat stated. He noted that Iran will undoubtedly use its legitimate and inherent right to defend its security, sovereignty and territorial integrity so that deterrence is created against the Zionist regime's aggression and security and stability are guaranteed in West Asia. Haniyeh, who was in Tehran to attend the swearing-in ceremony of Iran's newly-elected President Masoud Pezeshkian, alongside other Axis of Resistance leaders, was martyred along with his bodyguard, in an attack early on July 31. Bagheri Kani also noted that Israel, having sustained humiliating defeats from the Palestinian resistance front more than 300 days into the Gaza war, is using fairly sophisticated weapons to massacre defenseless women and children and target civilian facilities. "Zionists also carry out terrorist attacks against civilian buildings in other countries like Yemen, Lebanon, and more recently in Tehran," the Iranian diplomat said. For her part, Fajon pointed to Iran's right to self-defense, stating that Slovenia condemns any violation of international law, and hopes that all parties would exercise restraint in order to protect West Asia's stability.

## Israel Will Be Severely Punished Based on International Laws



TEHRAN - An Iranian judiciary official says that the response to the Israeli regime's assassination of Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran will be more decisive than Operation True Promise which was launched to punish the Tel Aviv regime over its strategic blunder of attacking the Islamic Republic's diplomatic premises in Syria in April. Kazem Gharibabadi, the Iranian Judiciary chief's deputy for international affairs and secretary of the High Council for Human Rights, said on Sunday that the "Zionist regime will be severely punished." "The Zionist regime will be severely punished so it won't dare to violate Iran's sovereignty once again," he said in an interview with Al-Mayadeen channel on Sunday afternoon. "The response to the assassination of Martyr Haniyeh will be more decisive than the Operation True Promise," he added. "The crime committed by the occupiers shows their helplessness and the killing of innocent women and children in Gaza shows their failure," he pointed out. He also explained why the topic of Palestine was chosen for this year's Islamic Human Rights event in Iran: "For nearly ten months, we have witnessed widespread crimes by the Israeli regime in the Gaza Strip and recently in Rafah. So far, nearly 40,000 innocent people have been martyred, about 90,000 have been injured, and nearly 400,000 buildings, infrastructure, and facilities in Gaza and Rafah have been destroyed. We have observed war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide in these two areas. Gharibabadi continued: "Close to two-thirds of those who lost their lives or were injured are women and children, and there is no anticipated halt to the killing machine of the Israeli regime. This regime continues its crimes, while countries claiming to uphold human rights have exerted no pressure on Israel. I wish they had at least remained neutral; however, they did not only fail to remain neutral but also provided various forms of political, economic, logistical, and informational support to the Israeli regime. Unfortunately, international human rights mechanisms have been very ineffective in this regard."

## Hezbollah Attacks Israeli Military Headquarters With Squadron of Drones



BEIRUT (Dispatches) - The Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah says it has targeted an Israeli military headquarters in the northern occupied Palestinian territories with a squadron of suicide drones. Hezbollah said in a statement on Monday morning that the aerial attack was launched from Lebanon on Israel's newly established 91st Division in the Elite Barracks, located in the Upper Galilee region. The resistance movement added that a number of the regime's troops were killed or injured in the drone strike. The fighters of the Islamic resistance targeted "the positions and settlements of the officers and soldiers, hitting them directly and inflicting on them a number of killed and wounded." The resistance movement noted that the air raid was carried out in support of Gaza and in retaliation for the regime's assassinations of its members during attacks on several Lebanese towns. Since the start of the Israeli genocide in Gaza, Hezbollah and the regime's military have been exchanging fires along Lebanon's southern border. Also on Sunday, Hezbollah fired dozens of rockets towards the northern side of the occupied Palestinian territories to avenge a deadly Israeli attack that had earlier targeted the southern part of Lebanon. The movement fired more than 50 rockets towards the

Beit Hillel settlement in the Upper Galilee region, triggering a fire there, various Israeli media outlets reported. The Israeli regime has been staging numerous sporadic attacks against southern Lebanon since October 7, when it launched a genocidal war on the Gaza Strip. In its most daring attack against the country since the beginning of the Gaza war, the regime assassinated Fuad Shukr, a senior Hezbollah military commander and an advisor to the movement's Secretary-General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, on Tuesday. The Israeli regime on Wednesday morning killed Ismail Haniyeh, who was in Tehran to attend the swearing-in ceremony of the new Iranian president. The Hamas chief was assassinated along with his bodyguard, identified as Wasim Abu Shaaban. On Thursday, Nasrallah said fighting against the regime had entered "a new phase" after its assassination of Shukr and Hamas' political leader Ismail Haniyeh, who was killed in an Israeli attack against his residence in the Iranian capital Tehran shortly after the raid that targeted the Hezbollah commander. The regime, the Hezbollah chief said, had "crossed red lines" by carrying out the assassinations and had to expect "rage and revenge on all the fronts."



# IRAN NEWS



## Iran Condemns Mogadishu Terrorist Attack

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokesman Nasser Kanaani has condemned the latest terrorist attack in Somalia that left more than two dozen people dead.

Kanaani on Sunday condemned the attack that was claimed by Al-Shabab, an affiliate to al-Qaeda terrorist group. He expressed sympathy with the Somali government and families of the victims.

At least 32 people were killed in a suicide bombing and gun attack on Lido Beach late on Friday. More than 60 others were wounded in the attack on the popular beach in Somalia's capital Mogadishu.

The violence broke out when a suicide bomber blew himself up at the entrance of a hotel, while several other attackers tried to storm the building. They also fired on people on the beach, according to witnesses and police.

## 6.1% Point Decrease in Producer Inflation



TEHRAN (IRNA) - The Producer Price Index (PPI) continued its downward trend, dropping from 35.1% in July 2023 to 29% in July this year, indicating a 6.1 percentage point decrease in the inflation rate during this period. Additionally, the year-on-year producer price index inflation also continued its downward trend, decreasing by seven percentage points from 32.0% in July 2023 to 25.0% in July this year.

The ongoing improvement of economic variables in 2024 and the achievement of the Central Bank's goals and policies for this year, along with plans to continue reducing inflation, show that the policies and actions taken by the government and the Central Bank have been successful. The examination of the producer price index changes indicates the continuation of this downward trend in July 2024.

Based on the latest statistics, the 12-month producer price index inflation decreased from 35.1% in July 2023 to 29.0% in July 2024, indicating a 6.1 percentage point decrease in the producer price index inflation rate during this period. The 12-month inflation rate for the producer price index for the main groups "Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing" and "Manufacturing (Industry)" was 30.4% and 24.1% respectively.

In this context, the year-on-year producer price index inflation also continued its downward trend from last year, decreasing by seven percentage points from 32.0% in July 2023 to 25.0% in July this year. The year-on-year inflation rate for the producer price index for the main groups "Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing" and "Manufacturing (Industry)" was 24.5% and 19.2% respectively in July 2024.

The monthly inflation rate for the producer price index in July this year was 1.6%. The monthly inflation rates for the main groups "Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing" and "Manufacturing (Industry)" were 0.7% and 1.2% respectively for this month.

## IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK



## Iran to Produce 80m Tons of Petrochemical Products by Year-End

TEHRAN - CEO of the National Petrochemical Company Morteza Shahmirzaei, speaking at the 15th International Petrochemical Industry Conference, highlighted the importance of the catalyst industry not only in upstream sectors, refineries, and metal smelting industries but especially in the petrochemical industry. He expressed the need for all efforts to be focused on alleviating concerns of producers and industrialists regarding feedstock supply.

Emphasizing the critical nature of feedstock supply in the petrochemical industry, he stated that the first priority should be ensuring feedstock for domestic production units, along with fuel and power plant needs. Shahmirzaei noted that Europe, as a "green continent," aims to ban the production and distribution of gasoline and diesel cars by 2030, moving towards renewables. He pointed out China's shift in fossil fuel usage patterns, noting that China, the main buyer of crude oil and fossil fuels, is transitioning from the top crude oil buyer to the second or third largest fossil fuel consumer in the world. The penalties for gasoline vehicle usage are meant to push investors towards renewable energy. Shahmirzaei stressed the importance of not falling behind in reducing fossil fuel consumption in the coming years. He called on all government officials to facilitate and remove barriers to the further development of the petrochemical industry, which already receives significant attention but needs more. He mentioned that oil consumption is projected to decrease from 105 million tons to 90 million tons, which will disrupt the geopolitical and economic landscape of oil-rich countries. Given Iran's hegemony, he noted that it is natural for Iran to face increased targeting and pressure. He estimated that petrochemical production will reach about 80 million tons by the end of the Persian year 1403 (March 2025). Last year, 30 million tons of petrochemical products were exported. He also referred to the inauguration of six petrochemical projects over the past month and a half and the anticipated launch of 15 more projects by the end of this year.

Referring to the signing of approximately \$6.5 billion in investment agreements for petrochemical holdings in the upstream oil industry to ensure sustainable feedstock, he noted that while this is not a top priority, the petrochemical industry leaves no stone unturned for the country's development and value chain completion. Shahmirzaei emphasized the need to create growth and development opportunities within the country to prevent youth migration, suggesting that the petrochemical industry, with its diverse fields, is the best and most effective solution. He stated that around 130 petrochemical projects, requiring over \$100 billion in investments, are currently underway in the country. Previously, there were no significant discounts for liquid feedstock petrochemical units, but now complexes can receive up to 30% discounts on gas feedstock and 17% on liquid feedstock based on location and product type by investing at least 40% of their annual profit in development. Shahmirzaei noted that the localization of catalysts in the oil industry is progressing rapidly and today a commemorative stamp is being unveiled. Some catalysts have been produced in laboratory scales, but approximately 98% of catalysts by weight are produced domestically. The National Petrochemical Company set the goal of localizing catalysts at the start of the government, Shahmirzaei said. The Petrochemical Research and Technology Company compiled the catalyst document, achieving this position given the country's high capacities. He noted that last year about 80 trillion tomans worth of petrochemical products were offered on the commodity exchange. If supported, the petrochemical industry can easily supply feedstock to downstream and supplementary industries, increasing employment and production in the country. In conclusion, Shahmirzaei stated that in the past three years, about 15 principal agreements were canceled and converted into value chain completion projects. He continued, noting that in 2020 the petrochemical industry produced close to 65 million tons, and this number is expected to reach about 80 million tons this year.

## Free Trade With Eurasian Union Member States to Begin Soon



TEHRAN - The Deputy for International Business Promotion at the Trade Promotion Organization Seyed Mohammad Sadegh Ghanadzadeh announced that the free trade agreement between Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union is currently under review in Parliament. After completing the final stages, it will be presented in an open session of Parliament. Emphasizing the need to showcase Iran's investment opportunities through exhibitions, she highlighted efforts to introduce these opportunities and expand foreign trade.

During a press conference, Ghanadzadeh pointed out that the organization is responsible for the country's foreign trade. He stated that services are a significant export sector, yet service exports in Iran have been neglected, despite services constituting 70% of the export package in some countries. Therefore, he stressed the importance of formally recognizing service exports in Iran, similar to goods exports, to maintain and develop the country's export position.

He added that they are making serious efforts to report service export statistics, including technical engineering, software, cultural services, and more. He acknowledged that there are significant capacities in the services sector within the country. For example, free zones have prepared many investment packages, but these have unfortunately been overlooked. Thus, one of the necessities is to provide a platform to identify and introduce these investment capacities and exemptions.

The deputy further mentioned that attracting foreign investment

is a key focus, noting that the event (introducing Iran's investment opportunities) is their first experience. They will hold this event with the participation of both private and public sectors, and it will be organized by the Trade Promotion Organization. The exhibition will take place from October 5 to 7 and will be a comprehensive showcase of Iran's investment capacities.

Ghanadzadeh continued, noting that the free trade agreement between Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union is under review in the Iranian Parliament. He mentioned that the final review stages are underway and the agreement will soon be presented in an open session of Parliament. Once officially approved, trade with the member countries of this union will be free, and over 87% of tariff codes between Iran and the five member countries of the Eurasian Union will be zeroed.

The Deputy for International Business Promotion at the Trade Promotion Organization also mentioned plans to establish free trade with Pakistan and preferential trade with Oman. Currently, there are 22 trade counselors stationed in various countries, with 11 more ready to be dispatched, bringing the total number to 33. The aim is to increase the number of trade counselors to 60 in the first year of the fourteenth government.

Regarding the reduction in trade with Russia, he explained that the majority of Iran's imports from Russia are related to agricultural inputs. Due to anticipated tensions, they increased reserves of these inputs, reducing the need for imports in this area during the first half of last year. The focus is now on increasing exports to Russia.

## Intermediaries Need to Be Eliminated in Selling Petrochemical Products to Turkey



TEHRAN - Mohammad Hassan Habibollahzadeh during a conference on Sunday said: "Last year, the volume of foreign trade between Iran and Turkey was 12 billion dollars, accounting for one-fourth of Iran's total trade volume with Turkey."

He pointed out that Turkey is one of the most important and principal importers of petrochemical products in the world, adding: "This country ranks second in the world for importing pure petrochemical products after China, second in polypropylene imports, second in plastic production in Europe, fifth in paint production, and tenth in chemical fertilizers consumption worldwide."

The Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Turkey continued: "In 2023, Turkey imported approximately 70 billion dollars of oil and gas condensates, 9 billion dollars of organic chemicals, 2.5 billion dollars of inorganic chemicals, and 2.5 billion dollars of chemical fertilizers."

Habibollahzadeh stated that Turkey primarily imports petrochemical products, processes them, and exports them with added value. In 2022, Turkey imported, processed, and exported around \$33b of petrochemical materials.

He added: "The total export of petrochemical products is about \$1.5b, while imports range from 11 to 13 billion dollars. Annually, this country requires about 10 million tons of petrochemical products, producing approximately 3 to 4 million tons domestically and importing 60 to 70% of its needs. The plastic industry is the largest consumer of petrochemical materials in Turkey."

The Ambassador emphasized that negotiations to expand the trade relations of the petrochemical industries of Iran and Turkey are continuously ongoing, stating: "The route for selling Iranian petrochemical products to Turkey should be facilitated, and intermediaries should be reduced."

## Groundwork Set for Doubling Iran's Urea Exports to South Africa



TEHRAN - Speaking at the specialized meeting on "Cooperation and International Relations in Petrochemicals," presided over by Ali Chegini, Director General of Economic Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Hossein Alimorad, Director General of International Affairs at the National Petrochemical Company, on the first day of the 15th International Iran Petrochemical Industry Conference, Iran's Ambassador to South Africa Mansour Shakib-Mehr stated: Sasol is the largest producer of petrochemical products in South Africa, producing over 200 different petrochemical products. Seventy-five percent of the country's petrochemical products are derived from coal.

He added that about 20 percent of petrochemical feedstock in South Africa is supplied by importing crude oil from Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, and Angola.

The Ambassador emphasized that the current market for petrochemical products in South Africa is approximately 8.3 billion dollars. While Sasol produces most of the petrochemical products that Iran also manufactures, Iran can play a role in supplying certain products such as agricultural fertilizers and liquid gas, capturing a share of the market.

Shakib-Mehr mentioned that South Africa imports \$17b worth of petroleum products annually and exports \$2b worth of refined petroleum products each year.

He highlighted that South Africa's imports from Iran mainly include petrochemical products such as urea fertilizer, sulfur, bitumen, caustic soda, and paraffin. The annual consumption of urea in South Africa is about 700,000 tons, of which 150,000 to 200,000 tons are supplied by Iran, with the potential to double this volume.

The Ambassador emphasized the need to establish direct connections between product manufacturers and buyers, as this would reduce production costs and enhance competitiveness in the South African market.

Shakib-Mehr stated that Iran could leverage its pricing advantage to capture the market for certain products such as light polyethylene and linear light polyethylene in South Africa.

He also emphasized utilizing the recently opened Iranian trade office in Johannesburg to present products, stating that favorable conditions and markets are available for Iran's presence in sectors such as LPG, fuel oil, and base oil in South Africa.



## There Is No Way for Iran's Development Except the Sea Development Except the Sea

TEHRAN - Abdolreza Mohebbi stated that Iran has about 8,000 kilometers of borders with 14 countries, 40% of which are maritime and riverine borders. This feature highlights the importance of the sea for the country in various aspects. He mentioned that we can discuss several topics, including underwater resources, fisheries, tourism, and more. He added that one of the important and strategic topics is related to military deterrence, security, and transportation. Iran has a history of several thousand years in this sector and still has room for growth in this industry.

Referring to maritime transport, he said that the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines has had strategic importance for the country during the post-revolution period and before that. The Deputy for Fleet Development of the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines said: In the country's upstream documents, maritime transportation has been given more attention in recent years. This is because we have no path for development except the sea. Of course, there are other ways, but none are as prominent as the sea.

Mohebbi continued: The Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines has always been one of the powerful sectors of the country that has been sanctioned. The imposition of unjust sanctions has been due to the strategic nature of shipping for the Islamic Republic of Iran.

He stated: One of the advantages of shipping is having a domestic fleet; if this were not the case, prices would be several times higher. Another point in shipping is the specialized workforce that we have been able to train over the past four decades.

He mentioned the establishment of insurance, ship repair, fuel supply, and more as masterpieces of the maritime transportation industry, adding: Achieving self-sufficiency in each of these areas, which has reached about 85%, is exceptional and requires years of standardization and must be conducted according to international laws in these sectors.

Last week, Oman's Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology announced a new passenger ferry between Shinas Port and Bandar Abbas Port in Iran.

The move is part of the ministry's efforts to enhance and maximize revenues from Omani ports and develop Shinas Port further as well as boosting cooperation with Iran.



## WHO Chief Mulls Calling Emergency Committee on Mpxo

GENEVA (Dispatches) - The World Health Organisation's chief said he was considering convening an expert committee to advise on whether the growing mpxo outbreak in Africa should be declared an international emergency.

Since last September, cases have surged in the Democratic Republic of Congo due to a strain of the virus which has recently been detected in nearby African countries.

WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said the UN health agency, the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, local governments and partners were increasing their response to the outbreak.

"But more funding and support for a comprehensive response are needed," Tedros said on the social media platform X.

"I am considering convening an International Health Regulations emergency committee to advise me on whether the outbreak of mpxo should be declared a public health emergency of international concern."



## UK PM Vows Far-Right Rioters Will Regret Worst Disorder in Years



LONDON (Dispatches) - UK leader Keir Starmer warned far-right protesters they would "regret" participating in England's worst rioting in 13 years, as disturbances linked to the murder of three children earlier this week flared across the country.Masked anti-immigration demonstrators smashed several windows at a hotel that has been used to house asylum seekers in Rotherham, South Yorkshire.Unrest related to misinformation about the mass stabbing last Monday in the northwestern English seaside town of Southport has hit multiple towns and cities, with anti-immigration demonstrators clashing with police.The violence is a major challenge for Starmer, elected only a month ago after leading Labour to a landslide win over the Conservatives."I guarantee you will regret taking part in this disorder. Whether directly or those whipping up this action online, and then running away themselves," Starmer said in a TV address.There was "no justification" for what he called "far-right thuggery", he added, promising to bring the perpetrators "to justice". Footage aired on the BBC showed rioters forcing their way into a Holiday Inn Express in Rotherham. They also pushed a burning bin into the building. It was not clear whether asylum seekers were inside.Ten officers were injured there, but local police said none of the hotel staff or its clients had been hurt.In the northeastern English city of Middlesbrough, hundreds of protesters squared up to riot police carrying shields. Some threw bricks, cans and pots at officers.Protesters there seized a camera from an AFP crew and broke it. The journalists were not injured.The fresh disturbances came after police said more than 150 people had been arrested since Saturday following skirmishes at far-right rallies in Liverpool, Manchester, Bristol, Blackpool and Hull, as well as Belfast in Northern Ireland.



KYIV (Dispatches) - Ukrainian pilots have started flying F-16s for operations within the nation, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Sunday, confirming the long-awaited arrival of the U.S.-made fighter jets more than 29 months after Russia's invasion.

The Ukrainian leader announced the use of F-16s, which Kyiv has long lobbied for, as he met military pilots at an air base flanked by two of the jets, with two more flying overhead.

"F-16s are in Ukraine. We did it. I am proud of our guys who are mastering these jets and have already started using them for our country," Zelenskyy said at a location that authorities asked Reuters not to disclose for security reasons.

Ukraine's top commander, Oleksandr Syrskiy welcomed the arrival of the jets and thanked the president and other officials for working "24/7" to secure them. Their arrival, he said, would save the lives of Ukrainian soldiers.

"This means that more of the occupiers will be destroyed," Syrskiy wrote on Facebook. "It means a greater number of downed missiles and aircraft used by the Russian criminals to attack Ukrainian cities." The arrival of the jets is a milestone for Ukraine, though it remains unclear how many are available and how much of an impact they will have in enhancing air defences and on the battlefield.

Russia has been targeting bases that may house them and vowed to shoot them down.

Build by Lockheed Martin, the F-16s had been on Ukraine's wish list for a long time because of their destructive power and global availability. They are equipped with a 20mm cannon and can carry bombs, rockets and missiles. Talking to reporters on the tarmac of an airfield, Zelenskyy said Ukraine still did not have enough pilots trained to use the F-16s or enough of the jets themselves.

"The positive thing is that we are expecting additional F-16s ... many guys are now training," he said.

It was important, he said, that Kyiv's allies found ways to expand training programmes and opportunities for

both Ukrainian pilots and engineering teams.

Ukraine has previously relied on an ageing fleet of Soviet-era warplanes that are outgunned by Russia's more advanced and far more numerous fleet.

Russia has used that edge to conduct regular long-range missile strikes on targets across Ukraine and also to pound Ukrainian frontline positions with thousands of guided bombs, supporting its forces that are slowly advancing in the east.

"This is the new stage of development of the air force of Ukraine's armed forces," Zelenskyy said.

"We did a lot for Ukrainian forces to transition to a new aviation standard, the Western combat aviation," he added, citing hundreds of meetings and unrelenting diplomacy to obtain the F-16s.

"We often heard 'it is impossible' as an answer, but we still made our ambition, our defensive need, possible," he said.

It remains unclear what missiles the jets are equipped with. A longer range of missile would allow them to have a greater battlefield impact, military analysts say.

Zelenskyy said he also hoped to lobby allied neighbouring countries to help intercept Russian missiles being launched at Ukraine through conversations at the Ukraine-NATO Council platform.

"This is another tool, and I want to try it, so that NATO countries can talk to Ukraine about the possibility of a small coalition of neighbouring countries shooting down enemy missiles," he said.

"I think this decision is probably difficult for our partners. They are always afraid of excessive escalation, but we are fighting that."

## Bangladesh Protesters Demand PM Hasina Resign

DHAKA (Dispatches) - Thousands of Bangladeshi protesters, many wielding sticks, crowded into a central Dhaka square today for mass protests demanding Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina resign following a deadly police crackdown.

Asif Mahmud, one of the key protest leaders in a nationwide civil disobedience campaign, asked supporters to be ready to fight.

"Prepare bamboo sticks and liberate Bangladesh," he wrote on Facebook on Sunday.

While the army stepped in to help restore order in the wake of earlier protests, some former military officers have since joined the student movement, and ex-army chief General Iqbal Karim Bhuiyan turned his Facebook profile picture red in a show of support.

Current army chief Waker-uz-Zaman spoke to officers at military headquarters in Dhaka on Saturday, telling them the "Bangladesh Army is the symbol of trust of the people".

"It always stood by the people and will do so for the sake of people and in any need of the state," he said, according to an army statement issued late Saturday.

The statement did not give further details, and did not explicitly say whether the army backed the protests.

Rallies against civil service job quotas sparked days of mayhem in July that killed more than 200 people in some of the worst unrest of Hasina's 15-year tenure.

Troops briefly restored order but crowds returned to the streets in huge numbers this week in an all-out non-cooperation movement aimed at paralysing the government.

Yesterday, when hundreds of thousands of protesters marched in Dhaka, the police were largely bystanders watching the rallies.

The protests have grown into a wider anti-government movement across the South Asian nation of some 170 million people.

The mass movement includes people from all strata of Bangladesh society, including film stars, musicians and singers, and rap songs calling for people's support have spread widely on social media.

"It is no longer about job quotas," said Sakhawat, a young female protester who gave only one name, as she scrawled graffiti on a wall at a protest site in Dhaka calling Hasina a "killer".



"What we want is that our next generation can live freely in the country."

Counter-protests supporting the government are also expected.

Obaidul Quader, general secretary of Hasina's ruling Awami League, has called on party activists to gather in "all wards in Dhaka city" and "in every district" nationwide to show their support for the government.

"We don't want to engage in any kind of confrontation," Quader said.

The capital Dhaka was tense on Sunday, with fewer cars and buses on the normally congested streets of the megacity of 20 million people.

Hundreds of thousands of protesters are expected to rally in Dhaka and nationwide.

Students Against Discrimination, the group responsible for organising the initial protests, called for rallies across the country.

Protests will be held at entry points to Dhaka, with the main rallies held in Dhaka's central Shahbagh Square, where crowds gathered on Sunday morning.

"We will hold our protests and rallies peacefully," the group said in a statement late Saturday. "But if anyone attacks us, we urge (all) to take all preparations."

Students Against Discrimination have asked their compatriots to stop paying taxes and utility bills from today to pile pressure on the government.

They have also asked government workers and labourers in the country's economically vital garment factories to strike.

Hasina, 76, has ruled Bangladesh since 2009 and won her fourth consecutive election in January after a vote without genuine opposition.

Her government is accused by rights groups of misusing state institutions to entrench its hold on power and stamp out dissent, including through the extrajudicial killing of opposition activists.

Demonstrations began in early July over the reintroduction of the quota scheme, which reserved more than half of all government jobs for certain groups. It has since been scaled back by Bangladesh's top court.

## Nigeria's President Calls for End to Protests Against Economic Hardship



ABUJA (Reuters) - Nigeria's President Bola Tinubu called for a suspension of protests against a cost of living crisis, saying this would create an opportunity for dialogue, his first public comments since frustrated citizens took to the streets last week.Amnesty International has said at least 13 people were killed in clashes with security forces on the first day of protests on Thursday. Police denied using excessive force and said seven people had died as of Saturday - four from an explosive device during a march in northeast Borno state, two who were hit by a car and another who was shot by a guard when protesters looted a shop.In a televised broadcast, Tinubu called for an end to violence in several states since the protests started, saying he was always open for dialogue."My dear Nigerians, especially our youth, I have heard you loud and clear. I understand the pain and frustration that drive these protests, and I want to assure you that our government is committed to listening and addressing the concerns of our citizens," he said.Nigerians have been mobilising online to organise protests against economic hardship and bad governance and have called for a cut in petrol prices and electricity tariffs, among several demands.Tinubu, in office since May 2023, defended his economic reforms, which have included a partial end to petrol and electricity subsidies and devaluation of the naira, as necessary to reverse years of economic mismanagement.He government revenues had more than doubled to 9.1 trillion naira (\$5.65 billion) in the first half of this year while 68% of revenue now went to debt servicing, down from 97% before he took office in May last year.

## Israeli Strikes Hit Gaza Schools, Hospital Compound

CAIRO (Dispatches) - An Israeli airstrike hit two schools in Gaza City on Sunday, killing at least 30 people, Palestinian officials said, while the Israeli military said it struck a Hamas military compound embedded in the schools.An Israeli airstrike hit a tent camp inside a hospital in central Gaza earlier in the day. Gaza health officials said a total of at least 44 Palestinians were killed on Sunday, the day after a round of talks in Cairo ended without result.Footage circulated on Palestinian media showed bodies scattered inside the yard of one of two blast-wrecked schools as residents rushed to carry casualties, including children, and loaded them into ambulance vehicles that took them to at least two nearby hospitals.Gaza's Civil Emergency Service said dozens were wounded in addition to the fatalities in the schools of Hassan Salama and Al-Nasser, which housed Palestinian displaced families.The Israeli military said it struck militants inside a Hamas command embedded within the schools and that it took steps to reduce the risk to civilians there.Israel says the Islamist militant group Hamas regularly embeds in civilian institutions, using Gaza's population as human shields. Hamas denies this.Earlier in the day, an Israeli strike inside the Al-Aqsa Hospital compound started a fire, and wounded at least 18 people as well as killing five, medical authorities said.The Israeli military said it struck a militant operating there and that secondary explosions were identified, indicating weapons were present in the area.The hospital

compound is in Deir Al-Balah, an area crowded with thousands of people displaced by fighting in other parts of the enclave.Elsewhere in Deir Al-Balah, three Palestinians were killed when an Israeli missile struck a house. Separate Israeli strikes killed eight others inside their home in Jabalia camp in northern Gaza City and three inside a car.Residents in areas southeast of the southern Gaza city of Khan Younis and to the north of Rafah, where there was heavy fighting last month, reported receiving evacuation orders from the Israeli military.The Israeli army spokesman posted orders on X, asking residents of those districts to head towards the humanitarian zone, saying forces would soon act forcefully against militants waging attacks from those areas.In Israel, sirens went off in the area of Ashdod and the Israeli military said five rockets were launched from southern Gaza. No injuries were reported. Hamas said the rocket firing was in response to Israeli "massacres against the civilians."Israel is bracing for a serious escalation following the assassination of Hamas' leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran on Wednesday, a day after an Israeli strike in Beirut killed Fuad Shukr, a top military commander from Lebanese armed group Hezbollah.Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was due to convene special security discussions late on Sunday, a defense official said, following threats of retaliation from Iran and Hezbollah.





## Djokovic Wins Olympic Gold to Complete Career Golden Slam



PARIS (Dispatches) - Novak Djokovic defeated Carlos Alcaraz on Sunday to claim a maiden Olympic title and become just the fifth player to complete a career Golden Slam.

The 37-year-old Serb, competing in his fifth Games, came through 7-6 (7/3), 7-6 (7/2) in an enthralling final at Roland Garros to add Olympic gold to his 24 Grand Slam triumphs. Victory allowed him to join Andre Agassi, Rafael Nadal, Steffi Graf and the watching Serena Williams as the only players to win all four Grand Slam tournaments and Olympic singles gold. He also became the oldest singles champion since tennis returned to the Olympics in 1988 and shattered Alcaraz's bid to add gold to the French Open and Wimbledon titles he has already pocketed this summer. An emotional Djokovic celebrated by holding aloft the Serbian flag on court before clambering into the players' box to embrace his wife and children. "We almost played three hours, the final shot was the only moment when I was sure I could win the match," said Djokovic, who had lost heavily to Alcaraz in the Wimbledon final last month. "I put my body, my family on the line to win gold and finally I did it." Alcaraz was distraught and wept as he attempted to conduct a TV interview. "Three hours, a big battle with tough moments," said the 21-year-old after a final in which neither player dropped serve. "It's very painful to lose." Djokovic carved out a break point in the second game of

the opener and three more in the fourth, all saved by the Spaniard. Then it was the Serb's turn to demonstrate his famed powers of resilience, fighting off three break points in the fifth game and another five in a marathon ninth game. In a rollercoaster duel, Alcaraz saved a set point in the 12th game but his veteran opponent dominated the tiebreak to claim the opener after a breathless 93 minutes on Court Philippe Chatrier. There was no let-up in the second set, scintillating shot-making alongside rousing defence with Alcaraz fighting off the final's 14th break point in the third game. Again the set was decided by a tie-break and it was Djokovic with history on the line again sweeping through to take victory after two hours and 50 minutes. Lorenzo Musetti defeated Felix Auger-Aliassime in three sets on Saturday to claim the bronze medal, giving Italy its first men's tennis medal in 100 years. Later Sunday, Russian athletes can claim their first gold of the Games when Mirra Andreeva and Diana Shnaider face the Italian team of Sara Errani and Jasmine Paolini in the women's doubles. Russian competitors are taking part in the Olympics as neutrals following Moscow's invasion of Ukraine in February, 2022. If Andreeva and Shnaider win gold, their achievement will not be recognised in the medals table while both the Russian flag and national anthem will be banned from the podium ceremony.

## Lyles Clinches Olympic Gold in Men's 100m Final

PARIS (Dispatches) - U.S. sprinter Noah Lyles Sunday took gold in the closest 100m final in modern Olympic history, becoming the first American to win the event since the 2004 Athens Games. Noah Lyles snatched a photo-finish victory in the closest 100m final in modern Olympic history on Sunday to end the United States' 20-year wait to recapture the world's most prestigious sprinting crown. In a nerve-shredding final at the Stade de France, Lyles, the charismatic 27-year-old from Florida, took gold by a fraction from Jamaica's Kishane Thompson. Lyles' winning margin boiled down to just five thousandths of a second, with the American clocked at 9.784sec to Thompson's 9.789sec, though both men's times will be listed as 9.79sec. It was the narrowest margin of victory since electronic timing has been used at the Olympics. Lyles' compatriot Fred Kerley took bronze in 9.81sec. The race was so close that the electronic scoreboard in the arena simply read "photo" beside seven of the eight finalists. After an agonising wait of several seconds, Lyles' victory was confirmed, sparking wild celebrations from the reigning 100m and 200m world champion who is regarded as one of the global superstars as

athletics. "It's the one I wanted," an elated Lyles told Eurosport moments after his win. "It's the hard battle, it's the amazing opponents. Everybody's healthy, everybody came prepared for the fight and I wanted to prove that I'm the man amongst all of them. I'm the wolf amongst wolves." Lyles admitted though that even he had doubted whether he had clinched the gold. "I went up to Kishane and I was like, 'I'm gonna be honest, bro, I think you had that one,'" Lyles said. "And I was fully prepared to see his name pop up and to see my name pop up, I'm like goodness gracious. I'm incredible." The win completes a rollercoaster three years for Lyles, who had left the pandemic-hit Tokyo Olympics in tears after a disappointing campaign, citing his mental health struggles and battles with depression. The American is now targeting an Olympic double with victory in the 200m next week. Lyles' win was the sensational final act of another thrilling day in the Olympic athletics arena that saw three gold medals handed out. In other action, Ukraine's Yaroslava Mahuchikh lived up to her pre-Paris Games billing to win the women's high jump.



## Tennis Pair Win First Olympic Medal for Russians in Paris



PARIS (Dispatches) - Mirra Andreeva and Diana Shnaider on Sunday became the first Russians to win a medal at the Paris Olympics when they took silver in the women's tennis doubles.

Playing as neutrals, they were beaten in three sets in the final by Italy's Sara Errani and Jasmine Paolini.

Athletes from Russia and ally Belarus were banned from world sport following the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

But the IOC has allowed their gradual return under a neutral banner, providing the athletes concerned meet strict conditions.

In Paris, there are just 15 Russians and 17 Belarusians competing.

"It doesn't matter to me," said Andreeva when asked about competing as a neutral.

"I just go on the court to play and I fight. That's what we did together this week."

Shnaider refused completely to discuss the ban on the Russian flag and anthem.

"We are here to fight as a pair and we are very proud of that. I will not answer any questions about politics. I am here to talk about tennis," she told a press conference.

To be invited to Paris, "neutral individual athletes" who achieved good enough results to qualify had to pass a double check.

The international sports federations and the IOC verified that the competitors did not actively support the war in Ukraine or have any links with their countries' armies.

They were not allowed to take part in the opening ceremony or compete under their national flags and their achievements are not recognised in the medals table.

Andreeva, 17, and 20-year-old Shnaider, playing their first event as a team, went down to a 2-6, 6-1, 10-7 defeat to the experienced Italians in Sunday's final.

They had knocked out defending Olympic champions and second seeds Barbora Krejickova and Katerina Siniakova in the quarter-finals.

Andreeva and Shnaider are both top-25 players in singles. At this year's French Open, Andreeva was the youngest player to reach the semi-finals since 1997.

Shnaider arrived in Paris having won a third singles title in Budapest.

## Vandersay Leads Sri Lanka to Big ODI Win Over India



COLOMBO (Dispatches) - Sri Lanka's Jeffrey Vandersay returned career-best figures of 6-33 to trigger a dramatic batting collapse for India and help his team win the second one-day international by 32 runs on Sunday. The 34-year-old Vandersay, a late replacement for injured spinner Wanindu Hasaranga who was ruled out of the series ahead of the match, took the first six wickets to fall in India's chase of 241 for victory at Colombo's R. Premadasa Stadium. Skipper Charith Asalanka took three wickets to bowl out India for 208 and take a 1-0 lead in the three-match series after the opener ended in a tie. India skipper Rohit Sharma hit 64 and handed the team a strong start in his 97-run opening stand with Shubman Gill, who made 35, before Vandersay wreaked havoc with his leg-spin. "Lot of pressure coming into this game. I am coming after a long lay-off and I had to do something," Vandersay said after being named player of the match. "Credit to our batters. They put a competitive total on a tough wicket. That helped me to attack, keep bowling on good areas and the wickets kept coming." Vandersay recognised that he only got his chance because Wanindu Hasaranga was ruled out of the remaining two matches after he injured his hamstring in the opener. "Wanindu Hasaranga is our number one spinner," said Vandersay who did his own cause no harm at all. "I have understood that the selectors have a tough call to make. Whenever the opportunity comes I need to take it." Rohit hit his second successive half-century but fell while attempting a reverse sweep. Kamindu Mendis took a stunning

catch at slip to help send back Gill off Vandersay. Vandersay kept getting wickets including Virat Kohli trapped lbw for 14 and bowled KL Rahul for a duck as India slipped to 147-6. Axar Patel attempted to put the chase back on track with his 44 and a 38-run partnership with Washington Sundar, who made 15, but Asalanka broke through. Asalanka got the left-handed Patel caught and bowled and kept up the bowling charge to bowl out the opposition in 42.2 overs after a final run out. "If you want to win games, we understand we have to play consistent cricket and we failed to do that today," said Rohit. "Disappointing, but these things happen." Dunieth Wellalage, who made 39, and fellow left-hander Kamindu, who hit 40, set up victory with their 72-run seventh-wicket stand after Sri Lanka slipped to 136-6. Kamindu and Wellalage hit back to get Sri Lanka past 200 before Kuldeep broke through to get the left-handed Wellalage. Kamindu kept up the charge in the final few overs to add more muscle to the total along with Akila Dananjaya, who hit 15. He was run out on the penultimate ball of the innings by a direct hit from Shreyas Iyer, who was fielding at mid-wicket, while Kohli ran out Dananjaya. Asalanka won the toss and elected to bat but the Indian bowlers took regular wickets, with Mohammed Siraj getting Nissanka caught behind on the first ball of the match.

Avishka Fernando made 40 and put on 74 for the second wicket with Kusal Mendis, who made 30. However, Sundar broke through to get Fernando caught and bowled and soon also sent back Kusal. Sundar dismissed Asalanka for 25 and returned figures of 3-30. The final match is on Wednesday at the same venue.