

Foreign Ministry's Spokesman Expressed Support for the People of Bangladesh and Restated Iran's Unshakable Friendly Relations With Dhaka, Whose Prime Minister Has Resigned and Fled to India

IRAN NEWS

Acting Foreign Minister of Iran Ali Bagheri Kani, in Phone Talks With the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bahrain Abdullatif bin Rashid Al-Zayani, Emphasized Iran's Right to Take Countermeasures Against the Zionist Regime

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Iran Revitalizes Venezuela's Petrochemical Industry



TEHRAN - Eduardo Fernandez, a board member of Venezuela's National Petrochemical Company, stated at the 15th International Petrochemical Industry Conference that the Venezuelan Petrochemical Company is fully state-owned, with 100% of its shares belonging to the Venezuelan government.

He added that several companies operate as subsidiaries of this company in various parts of Venezuela, with domestic and foreign partners, producing products such as olefins, plastics, fertilizers, and other industrial products.

Fernandez noted that polyethylene and polypropylene are other petrochemical products produced in Venezuela. He mentioned another complex called the Hugo Chavez complex, with a capacity of 2 million tons of urea and ammonia, and various phosphate fertilizers.

He continued by describing the Jose Antonio complex, another petrochemical complex with partners from Japan and Italy, producing fertilizers and some industrial products.

Regarding Iran-Venezuela relations in petrochemicals, Fernandez said the first connection between the two countries dates back to 1960, but the development of relations pertains to the presidency of Hugo Chavez.

He added that in 2005, a law was passed in Venezuela for economic, cultural, scientific, and technological cooperation between Iran and Venezuela, providing a legal framework for developing bilateral relations.

Fernandez highlighted that since then, 300 agreements in oil, gas, transportation, science, technology, tourism, food, health, culture, and defense have been signed between the two countries.

He continued, stating that an important document was signed between the two countries in 2023, an agreement on developing petrochemicals with the expertise of Iranian specialists in Venezuela. Fifteen Venezuelans came to Shiraz for project management training, and a petrochemical empowerment center was established in Venezuela.

Tehran Prepared for Expansion of All-Out Cooperation With Caracas



TEHRAN (PressTV) - President Masoud Pezeshkian has reassured his Venezuelan counterpart Nicolas Maduro of Iran's readiness for expansion of all-out cooperation with the Latin American country.

The chief executive made the remarks in a telephone conversation with Maduro on Monday.

Pezeshkian laid particular emphasis on the Islamic Republic's preparedness for enhancement of economic and commercial exchanges and cooperation with Venezuela, and provision of technical and engineering services to the country.

In the same context, he stressed the need for complete and expeditious implementation of existing agreements between the two sides. The Iranian president, meanwhile, congratulated Maduro on his victory in Venezuela's recent presidential election that extended his incumbency in the position.

Pezeshkian expressed solidarity on the part of Tehran with the Venezuelan nation, condemning whatever instance of foreign interference in the country's internal affairs.

Maduro, for his part, emphasized his country's readiness for further expansion of cooperation with the Islamic Republic, asserting, "A leap forward in the [bilateral] cooperation would constitute a path towards attainment of progress, welfare, and prosperity for both countries." He expressed gratitude towards Pezeshkian for congratulating him on the occasion of his electoral victory.

The Venezuelan president also pointed to the post-election riots that took place in his country following his victory, calling the unrest the result of a Zionist plot hatched in cooperation with the United States and some other Western states with the aim of wreaking destruction on independent countries.

"We will resist and confront such plots once again, and will undoubtedly emerge victorious," Maduro said.

Venezuela's National Electoral Council declared Maduro the winner of the July 29 election with 51 percent of the vote against opposition candidate Edmundo Gonzalez's 44 percent.

Strengthening Ties With Moscow a Foreign Policy Priority for Iran

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK



TEHRAN - President Masoud Pezeshkian has described Russia as a "strategic partner" of the Islamic Republic, stressing that the expansion of relations with Moscow is a top foreign policy priority of his government.

Pezeshkian made the remarks in a Monday meeting with Secretary of Russia's Security Council Sergei Shoigu, who was in Tehran on a day-long visit to hold talks with Iranian authorities.

He noted that Russia has been a steadfast ally during Iran's challenging times and underscored the need to expedite the implementation of agreements reached between the two countries.

"We believe that the era of unilateralism by certain powers, including the United States, is over," the president said. "The alignment of positions and collaboration between Iran and Russia in promoting a multipolar world will undoubtedly enhance global security and peace."

The visit by Shoigu comes amid heightened tensions in the region after Israel assassinated Ismail Haniyeh, the political leader of Hamas, in Tehran on Wednesday, pushing the region to the brink.

Tehran has vowed that the brazen act of aggression on its soil will not go unanswered.

The Iranian president said on Monday that the assassination of Haniyeh was a blatant violation of international laws and regulations.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran is in no way seeking to expand the scope of war and crisis in the region, but certainly this regime will receive a response for its crimes and audacity," he said.

Moscow has also strongly condemned the assassination of Haniyeh, who was a key negotiator in ceasefire talks for Gaza. Senior Russian officials have said that those behind the killing were seeking to scuttle all hope of peace in the region and to draw the United States into confrontation with Iran.

During the meeting on Monday, Pezeshkian condemned Israel's horrific crimes in Gaza as well as its efforts to spread the war in the entire region.

Shoigu, for his part, congratulated Pezeshkian once again on his election as president of Iran and described the Islamic Republic as a key strategic ally of Russia in the region.

Expressing satisfaction with Russia and Iran's joint efforts to create a "multipolar world" and ensure regional security, he emphasized that relations between the two allies are growing across all sectors.

Before meeting with Pezeshkian, Shoigu sat down with Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Baqeri.

Gen. Bagheri described the Iran-Russia relations as "strategic and deep-rooted", and said both sides were determined to work on further expanding bilateral ties.

He said the change of governments will not disrupt the improvement of ties between Tehran and Moscow.

The top Iranian general noted that the United States is now aware that the era of unilateralism is over. "We will welcome tripartite cooperation among Iran, Russia and China," he said.

Shoigu, in response, said Russia is keen to strengthen all-out cooperation with Iran on regional issues.

Shoigu's visit to Tehran was on the invitation of his Iranian counterpart, Ali Akbar Ahmadian, secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, Tasnim news agency reported.

The two met earlier in the day to discuss regional developments.

Hezbollah Hits Israeli Military Positions in Occupied Territories



BEIRUT (Dispatches) - Fighters from the Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah have conducted a series of operations, targeting various Israeli military positions in the northern part of the 1948 occupied territories with combat drones.

Hezbollah said in a statement that it struck the Mount Neria base, which currently serves as the headquarters of the Israeli military's Golani Division, with a number of explosive-laden drones at around 7:00 p.m. local time (1600 GMT) on Monday.

The statement added that the aerial attack hit buildings housing Israeli soldiers and officers, leaving casualties in the targeted area.

Hezbollah stressed that the operation was conducted in retaliation for Israeli strikes on southern Lebanese regions, especially a deadly attack on Mays al-Jabal village.

Earlier, Hezbollah combat drones had struck the newly established headquarters of the Israeli army's 91st Division in the Ayelet barracks, inflicting several casualties on soldiers stationed there.

Lebanese resistance fighters also shelled the Israeli Zebdine barracks in the occupied Lebanese Shebaa Farms with artillery rounds, hitting it directly.

Moreover, Hezbollah targeted artillery bunkers at the Khirbet Ma'ar military base with salvos of rockets.

The group also pummeled several other Israeli sites, including the Ras al-Naqoura site, the Zarit barracks, the Ramim barracks, and Karantina Hill near the Hadab Yaron site.

Sirens sounded in at least a dozen illegal Israeli settlements over an area of about 180 square kilometers from Kfar Giladi kibbutz in the Galilee Panhandle region to Ayelet HaShahar kibbutz at northern sector of the 1948 occupied lands.

The area houses several strategic Israeli military installations, including the headquarters of the Sahel Battalion in the Beit Hillel barracks, the headquarters of the 769th Brigade in the Kiryat Shmona barracks, the Ramot Naftali barracks and the Yiflah barracks, where so-called Iron Dome missile systems are deployed.

Meanwhile, a Hezbollah resistance fighter was killed and another wounded on Monday afternoon in an Israeli airstrike targeting a motorcycle in the village of Ebba in southern Lebanon.

Lebanese military sources, who requested anonymity, said that an Israeli drone fired two air-to-ground missiles at the motorcycle, killing the driver identified as Ali Jawad Badreddine and wounding his companion.

According to the sources, Israeli drones and warplanes conducted seven airstrikes on four villages and towns in southern Lebanon, while Israeli artillery units fired 20 shells on four villages and towns in southern Lebanon.

Hezbollah and Israel have been exchanging deadly fire since early October last year, shortly after the regime launched a genocidal war against the Gaza Strip following a surprise operation by the Palestinian Hamas resistance group.

The Lebanese resistance movement has vowed to keep up its retaliatory attacks as long as the Israeli regime continues its Gaza war, which has so far killed at least 39,623 Palestinians, mostly women and children, in Gaza.

Hezbollah officials have repeatedly said they do not want a war with Israel while stressing that they are prepared in case it occurs.

Two Israeli wars were waged against Lebanon in 2000 and 2006 were met with strong resistance from Hezbollah, resulting in the retreat of the regime in both conflicts.

Israel Should Be Rendered Incapable of Intensifying Aggression in Region



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's acting foreign minister says the Israeli regime should be rendered incapable of intensifying its acts of aggression in the region.

Ali Bagheri Kani made the remarks in a telephone conversation with Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijarto on Monday.

Bagheri was addressing the recent assassination of Ismail Haniyeh, the political leader of the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas, which took place in the Iranian capital Tehran.

Iran has blamed the Israeli regime for the assassination, with Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei warning of a "harsh response," and reaffirming the Islamic Republic's duty to avenge the blood of the resistance leader.

Bagheri underlined that the Zionist atrocity had violated the country's sovereignty, while also breaching the regional peace and stability. "By the same token, their (the Zionists') action serves as a threat to the international peace and security too," he added.

"Therefore, it is necessary that [such] an evil entity that is a source of instability in the region be confronted, and met with counteraction so it would not be able to intensify its acts of aggression in the region [again]," the top diplomat concluded.

For his part, Szijarto said his country was intensely concerned about the ongoing trend of escalation of tensions in the region.

He cited the case of Lebanon, which recently lost a ranking resistance commander to a similar Israeli assassination and is subjected to daily attacks by the regime that has threatened to bring the country under another war.

Possible Export of Iranian Gold to Europe



TEHRAN - President of the Tehran Gold, Jewelry, Silver, and Coin Union Nader Bazrafshan, in a press conference, stated: "The Tehran Gold, Silver, Jewelry, and Coin Union currently has about 5,000 members, with an additional 2,500 mobile and qualitatively active members."

He mentioned that the gold sector in Iran operates under conditions of tension and peripheral issues. He said: "Although this sector has high potential and capabilities, unfortunately, it faces challenges and cumbersome regulations that prevent us from having comprehensive and complete activities. Unfortunately, non-expert systems have been imposed, and every few months a new system is activated for this sector, disrupting the peace of our colleagues in this industry."

The President of the Tehran Gold, Jewelry, Silver, and Coin Union criticized the Integrated Trade System and continued: "12 sectors must conduct their transactions through this system, but its functionality has prevented us from utilizing the capacities of this field." Bazrafshan emphasized: "In the past decade, the production sector in this industry has improved, creating good conditions that can play a pivotal role in the community's economy. We can export gold to European and Middle Eastern countries, but certain systems have prevented us from utilizing these capacities. For instance, last year, Iran exported 875 kilograms of gold, whereas Turkey exported over 700 tons of gold from 2021 to 2023." He added: "This is while Turkey used to take second-hand Iranian gold, which was no longer in demand domestically, 20 years ago and engaged in economic activities with it, selling it afterward. However, the Turkish government started its activities in this field 15 years ago and has now reached this position in exports."

The President of the Tehran Gold, Jewelry, Silver, and Coin Union stated: "We request the fourteenth government to pay attention to this part of the country's economy, which can be very effective in job creation and bringing in foreign exchange. In 2009, the imposition of value-added tax seriously harmed this sector. Today, after 12 years, through specialized meetings with the parliament, it has been realized that the principal gold should not be subject to value-added tax. However, during this period, people have borne its cost, and 30 to 40 percent of our colleagues have left this field and industry. Today, this system is repeating the same issue."

IRAN NEWS



Electricity Consumption Up 9% Amid Scorching Heat

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Minister of Energy Ali-Akbar Mehrabian has said that unprecedented heat has caused a 9% rise in the country's electricity consumption as summer heat has reached record levels.

The minister said on Monday that the surge has happened while the authorities had expected a maximum 6% surge in electricity consumption in the worst case scenario.

The Iranian government has cut working hours of state organizations and banks and even announced some days off to prevent power outages across the country.

Acting FM Rebukes UNSC for Not Reacting to Israeli Crimes



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran's Acting Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani has criticized the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for its failure to react to crimes committed by the Zionist regime, blaming the council's stance as one of the reasons behind instability in the West Asia region. In a Farsi post on his X account on Monday, Bagheri Kani said that he had telephone conversations with the Foreign Ministers of Slovenia and Hungary. He emphasized that the UNSC and the European Union's failure to react to the crimes committed by the Zionist regime, including the mass killing of children and women in Gaza, and the assassination of Palestinian leaders in other countries, is one of the most important factors of instability in the region. He underlined that the Islamic Republic of Iran will exercise its legitimate and inherent right to confront the terrorist acts committed by the Israeli regime with the aim of protecting its national security. The Iranian diplomat held his phone talks on Sunday. He told Slovenia's Foreign Minister Tanja Fajon that more than 300 days into the Gaza war, the Israeli regime, which has faced defeats inflicted by the resistance front, continues to kill defenseless Palestinians in Gaza and has resorted to terrorist acts against civilian areas in Yemen, Lebanon and recently in Tehran. Hamas political chief Ismail Haniyeh lost his life in an attack on his accommodation in Tehran in the early hours of July 31, a day after he attended the swearing-in of Iran's new president Masoud Pezeshkian. His assassination took place a day after Israel killed top Hezbollah commander Fuad Shukur in an airstrike in Beirut.



Call for Implementation of Iran-Kazakhstan Agreements

TEHRAN - The President of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (ICCIMA) stated that the Iran Chamber is pursuing the expedited implementation of the joint cooperation agreement between Iran and Kazakhstan to enhance trade relations between the two countries. At a meeting with Ontalap Onalbayeva, Kazakhstan's ambassador to Iran, Samad Hasanzadeh continued: The \$300 million trade volume between Iran and Kazakhstan does not match the capacities and potentials of the two countries. We all need to work towards achieving the \$3 billion trade target set in the joint cooperation agreement between Iran and Kazakhstan. Referring to the logistics agreement among Iran, Kazakhstan, and Russia, he added: We must be able to utilize this suitable opportunity in the field of transportation to promote trade among the regional countries. The President of the Iran Chamber invited the President of the Kazakhstan Chamber and its trade delegation to visit Iran, stating: Considering Iran's capabilities in technical and engineering services, power plant construction, petrochemical industries, food industries, agriculture and livestock, construction, pharmaceuticals and medical fields, tourism, handicrafts, information and communication technology, and knowledge-based productions, we can establish good cooperation between the private sectors of the two countries. He mentioned the investments of Iran's private sector in Kazakhstan and said: We expect more support from the Kazakh government for Iran's private sector. Hasanzadeh emphasized: With the resolution of banking issues between Iran and Kazakhstan, especially in the agricultural and livestock sectors, there is a very suitable ground for joint investments that must be utilized. Qadir Qiyafeh, Vice President of the Iran Chamber, stated that Iran's engineering sector has a significant presence in Kazakhstan. Considering the rich mines in Kazakhstan, including copper and iron, establishing concentrate and pelletizing plants, and producing green steel, oil and gas technology and petrochemical equipment, agricultural products, and livestock products are excellent areas for cooperation between the two countries. He emphasized that the exports of the two countries should be based on joint investments. In this way, the exports of the two countries will increase. Ontalap Onalbayeva, Kazakhstan's ambassador to Iran, also referred to the good political and economic cooperation between the two countries in regional organizations. He said: In the field of freight transit and sea, rail, and land transportation, good cooperation has been and is being formed between the two countries, which

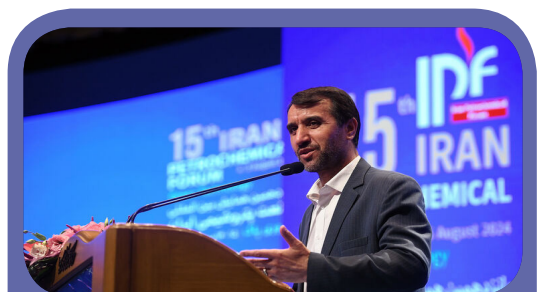
should continue. He added: About 70% of the \$302 million trade volume between the two countries last year was related to Iran's exports to Kazakhstan. While in the fields of production and supply of meat and agricultural products, petrochemicals, and building materials, good cooperation can be established, leading to an increase in this trade volume and more balance. Onalbayeva mentioned the monetary and banking mechanisms between the two countries and said: The private sectors of the two countries are not yet fully aware of the process of resolving banking obstacles, which should be communicated. I suggest that a joint online meeting be held between the chambers and relevant officials to inform traders about the details of this banking mechanism. He called for the speedy implementation of the joint cooperation agreement between Iran and Kazakhstan and continued: In this agreement, responsibilities for the chambers of the two countries, including the creation of a trade cooperation council between Iran and Kazakhstan, have been defined. My suggestion is to create a roadmap for the implementation of the defined tasks with the cooperation of the chambers of the two countries and embassies. He stated that the two sides should provide each other with a list of their free trade goods, expressing: We welcome the presence of Iranian companies in Kazakhstan, especially in infrastructure projects, including dam construction and the food industry. Amir Abedi, President of the Iran-Kazakhstan Joint Chamber, also considered technical and engineering services as one of the good cooperation capacities between the two countries. He continued: Currently, projects worth over \$150 million are being implemented by Iranian companies in Kazakhstan. He stated that Kazakhstan has high capacity in agricultural inputs and mining and continued: I suggest, with the cooperation of the Iran Chamber, to organize the Iran pavilion at the Almaty International Food Industry Exhibition in the next three months. The Gorgan Chamber and the Joint Chamber intend to introduce Iranian food products and packaging industries at this exhibition. Referring to Kazakhstan's \$135 billion trade with the world, he said: We must increase our share of this trade volume. To achieve the \$3 billion target, we need to set up a committee to remove obstacles and introduce investment opportunities to traders on both sides. He stated that the Joint Chamber would soon establish a marketing services office in Almaty, saying: There are excellent opportunities in agriculture and cross-border cultivation, especially in rice cultivation, which should be utilized.

Foreign Investment Challenges Extend Beyond FATF



TEHRAN - Mohammad Khazaei, Secretary-General of the Iranian Committee of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), discussed the prerequisites for attracting foreign investment in an interview with ILNA. He explained that foreign investment can take various forms, such as loans, bond issuance, and direct investment by individuals and entities in any country, and numerous factors influence the attraction or repulsion of such investment.

He added that one of these factors is the quality of financial transactions through banking networks. Here, issues like FATF (Financial Action Task Force) and SWIFT (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication) become prominent. Complaints from Iranian traders with foreign financial relations become relevant in this context, as they report issues like the inability to conduct financial transactions or difficulties in receiving funds from global banks, forcing them to resort to currency exchange offices. Khazaei noted, however, that FATF, SWIFT, and banking transactions are just one aspect of the broader foreign investment discussion. Attracting foreign investors also requires addressing other factors such as political stability, legal and judicial security, assurances provided by governments and investors to foreign investors, and guarantees for the return of the principal and profit. These factors are crucial in attracting foreign investment. The former head of the Iranian Organization for Investment, Economic and Technical Assistance further explained that fulfilling commitments is crucial for attracting foreign investment. The government must honor the assurances given to foreign investors, such as converting profits into foreign currency for repatriation or compensating for damages caused by tax changes. Addressing these issues is vital for enhancing foreign investment, and thus, the government, banks, and other legal and natural persons must be committed to fulfilling their obligations to foreign investors. Khazaei added that the current foreign investment climate in Iran is less attractive despite FATF being a significant issue. He also mentioned that recent statistics on foreign investment in the country seem unrealistic. When he previously held a position in the Investment Organization, foreign investments in the oil, gas, and petrochemical sectors, which were guaranteed by the Ministry of Oil and National Oil and Gas Company, were not included in the statistics provided by the Investment Organization. The data only covered investments that came through the organization and were granted permission by it. He pointed out that there was a distinction between attracting and securing foreign investment. Attracting investment meant issuing a permit to the investor, but the investor might decide against investing for various reasons, meaning that attracting investment did not necessarily lead to actual investment. Therefore, investment permits included clauses stating that if the investor did not bring a significant portion of their investment into the country within six months, the permit would be invalidated. Thus, it is important to verify whether current foreign investment figures reflect actual investment or just the attracted investments. Khazaei elaborated that the Investment Organization's method to determine the accurate amount of foreign investment involved checking with the Central Bank to see how much capital was registered, which aligned with the actual foreign investment figures. However, he expressed doubts that today's statistics match the reality of foreign investment in the country.



Number of Petrochemical Complexes Will Reach 200

TEHRAN - CEO of the National Petrochemical Company Morteza Shahmirzaei stated at the closing ceremony of the 15th International Iran Petrochemical Forum: "Many valuable and useful topics were discussed and examined during the two-day forum in alignment with correct strategies to enhance and develop Iran's petrochemical industry."

He added: "The results of the 15th International Iran Petrochemical Forum are expected to be compiled and documented so that all industry participants at various levels can benefit from them."

The CEO of the National Petrochemical Company mentioned that desirable discussions regarding the collection of flaring gas were held at this forum. He said: "We must understand the value of this national wealth and prevent its wastage to create added value and avoid international penalties for environmental pollutants."

Shahmirzaei emphasized the determination of the National Petrochemical Company and the support of the Ministry of Petroleum to collect flaring gas and stressed that the National Iranian Oil Company and its subsidiaries must cooperate with the petrochemical industry in this regard.

He pointed to the greater freedom of the private sector in implementing projects and noted: "The collection of associated gas will provide feedstock for NGL plants and gas refineries such as Bid Boland Persian Gulf, and subsequently supply feedstock for petrochemical complexes."

Regarding specialized sessions for water supply and consumption in the petrochemical industry at this forum, the Deputy Minister of Petroleum explained: "The location of many petrochemical projects was not properly selected, but in the past three years, some of these projects have been relocated closer to the southern coasts or their production patterns have been changed."

Shahmirzaei highlighted the review of new financing methods at the 15th International Iran Petrochemical Forum and stated: "The investment management of the National Petrochemical Company is expected to collect and finalize these methods to facilitate investments in the petrochemical industry."

According to him, the world is rapidly moving towards process optimization, energy consumption optimization, and efficiency enhancement, and petrochemical companies should take significant steps in this direction, considering the specialized topics discussed at this forum.

The CEO of the National Petrochemical Company, addressing the complaints of some petrochemical industry activists about feedstock supply, emphasized: "We hope that the challenges of feedstock supply will be resolved with the support and planning of the Planning Directorate of the Ministry of Petroleum."

Youm-e-Istehsal Observed at Embassy of Pakistan



TEHRAN - Embassy of Pakistan in Tehran organized an event to commemorate the abrogation of article 35 A and 370 by Indian Government on 5th August 2019 thus paving the way for changing demography in illegally Indian Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK).

On the occasion, H.E Deputy Head of Mission Mr. Muhammad Shami mentioned that Iranian leadership has also given a great regard to the struggle in Kashmir and at multiple times called upon the world community to break its silence on the human rights violations in Jammu & Kashmir. H.E, thanked the Iranian leadership for supporting the Kashmiri Muslims and also the Iranian print and electronic media for projecting the Kashmir cause and highlighting massive human rights violations in the Indian occupied Kashmir.

In his remarks, H.E. said that Kashmiris are subjected to Barbarism of Indian forces since October 1947. The Indian security

forces have maimed, executed, murdered, blinded, raped, and suffocated the innocent Kashmiris. H.E in his address mentioned that the world community has acknowledged the efforts of Pakistan as the flag bearer of Human rights by its re-election as member of the United Nations Human Rights Council.

Pakistan calls upon world leaders, international community including the United Nations, and all Human rights organizations to urge India to halt the brutal use of force against the people of Kashmir and resolve the issue diplomatically under the charter of the United Nations Security Council, he added. H.E condemned the atrocities and human rights violations being committed by the Indian forces in Indian Occupied Jammu & Kashmir.

The messages of Prime Minister of Pakistan Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari were read out on the occasion. A large number of Pakistani nationals and students participated in the event.

OIPF in Charge of 19 Projects



TEHRAN (Shana) - The head of the presiding board of the Oil Industry Pension Fund (OIPF) Abdolhossein Bayat has said that the fund is in charge of implementing 19 projects, worth 10 billion dollars.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the 15th Iran Petrochemical Forum in Tehran on August 4, he said: the Oil Industry Pension Fund is a Petroleum Ministry subsidiary, dependent on neither the government nor the state budget.

Elaborating on the fund's projects, he said that generating the fund assets, completing the value chain, boosting fund's investments productivity and profitability, avoiding getting involved in non-economic projects, moving toward growing production and being export-oriented, getting a larger share of profitable markets and protecting the environment are the main priorities of Oil Industry Pension Fund.

He further stressed the importance of completing the value chain noting that oil industry development should be based on expanding the value chain. Bayat continued that in line with that policy, the fund is developing Kangan Petro-refining, Dehloran olefin, and Nakhli Asmari petrochemical projects.

The Oil Industry Pension Fund is involved in implementing 19 projects, worth 10 billion dollars, of which equivalent to 6 billion euros has been spent up to the 20 June this year.

Potential Saied Opponent Jailed in Lead-Up to Tunisian Presidential Elections

TUNIS (Dispatches) - Abir Moussi, a fierce critic of incumbent Tunisian President Kais Saied regarded as a potential candidate in the upcoming presidential election, was given a two-year jail sentence on Monday for criticising the country's High Independent Authority for Elections, joining dozens of recently jailed Saied critics. A key Tunisian opposition figure and potential candidate for the upcoming presidential election jailed since October was sentenced to two years in prison late Monday night, according to local media. Abir Moussi, 49, head of the Free Destourian Party and a former parliament member, had submitted her candidacy on Saturday via her lawyers, two days before her sentence, which local radio Mosaïque FM reported. Moussi is a staunch critic of the incumbent Tunisian President Kais Saied and has been sentenced under Decree 54, a law enacted by Saied in 2022 to combat "false news". The High Independent Authority for Elections (ISIE) filed complaints against Moussi in February after she made public statements criticising ISIE as the country readies for its presidential election. On Monday morning, Saied submitted his official candidacy for the election set to take place on October 6, while key candidates were being barred from challenging the incumbent president — including by prosecution and imprisonment.



IRAN NEWS

The Silent Symphony: Kashmir's Echoes of Loss and Longing



In the enchanting valleys of Kashmir, where the serene Dal Lake mirrors the azure sky and the mighty Chinar trees stand tall as sentinels of history, a silent symphony of sorrow plays on. This land, where poets once found inspiration in every breath of wind, has become a crucible of suffering and strife. The abrogation of Article 370 by the Indian government on August 5, 2019, not only altered the political landscape of Jammu and Kashmir but also deepened the fissures in the human soul, bringing forth a cacophony of human rights violations that reverberate through its snow-capped mountains and lush meadows.

As the world woke to the news of the abrogation, Kashmir was plunged into a veil of darkness. The abrupt end of its special autonomous status under Article 370 felt like the snuffing out of a candle in a long night. This legislative decision was not just a political move; it was an existential shift that stripped the region of its unique identity, sparking an existential crisis among its people. The government's sudden imposition of a communication blackout—severing phone lines, internet access, and cable networks—plunged Kashmir into an eerie silence, cutting it off from the world and silencing the cries of its people.

Under the guise of security, a heavy military presence tightened its grip on the valley. Soldiers lined the streets, their presence a constant reminder of an unspoken martial law. The valley, once resonant with the songs of birds and the murmur of rivers, now echoed with the heavy footfalls of armed men. The detention of political leaders, activists, and civilians under the draconian Public Safety Act became a common narrative. This law, which allows detention without trial for up to two years, became a tool for quelling dissent, stifling the voice of a populace rendered voiceless by the very system meant to protect it.

The abrogation of Article 370 also dismantled the legal barriers protecting the demographic integrity of Kashmir. The fear of a demographic shift, akin to a cultural erosion, gnawed at the hearts of Kashmiris. The region, long protected from the acquisition of land by non-residents, now stood vulnerable to an influx that threatened to dilute its cultural and religious fabric. This fear, coupled with the loss of political autonomy, fueled a profound sense of alienation and disenfranchisement. It was as if the very soul of Kashmir was being stripped away, leaving its people as mere shadows of their former selves, haunted by the specter of losing their homeland.

The most heart-wrenching tales of this era belong to the children of Kashmir. These young souls, for whom the future should be a canvas of dreams, found themselves trapped in a nightmare of uncertainty. The prolonged closure of schools, exacerbated by the pandemic, severed their access to education—a vital lifeline in any child's development. Confined within the four walls of their homes, deprived of play and peer interaction, these children became prisoners of a conflict not of their making. The psychological impact of growing up amidst violence and fear is a scar that may take generations to heal.

The use of pellet guns by security forces, often justified as a means of crowd control, left many, including children, with grievous injuries. The haunting image of young boys with bandaged eyes, blinded for life, became a symbol of the state's heavy-handedness. These "non-lethal" weapons, in reality, maimed and scarred, leaving behind a trail of trauma and broken dreams.

In this landscape of loss, the plight of Kashmiri women stands as a poignant testament to resilience amidst adversity. With husbands and sons frequently detained or disappeared, women found themselves thrust into roles of unprecedented responsibility. The burden of running households, coupled with the psychological trauma of loss and fear, weighed heavily on their shoulders.

These women, often silenced by societal norms, carried the scars of an unspoken war, their pain an echo of the larger anguish that gripped the valley.

As the world looked on, Kashmir's cries for justice and dignity seemed to fade into a void. The abrogation of Article 370 was not merely a legal maneuver; it was a seismic shift that altered the lives of millions. The international community, while expressing concern, failed to catalyze meaningful change, leaving the people of Kashmir to navigate their shattered reality alone.

Yet, amidst the despair, a quiet hope lingers. The resilience of the Kashmiri people, their enduring spirit in the face of adversity, is a testament to the unyielding human will. The story of Kashmir is not just one of conflict and suffering; it is also a story of courage, resilience, and an undying hope for a brighter tomorrow.

In the silent valleys and snow-clad peaks of Kashmir, the echo of loss and longing remains. But so does the whisper of hope—a hope that one day, the silent symphony will transform into a chorus of freedom and peace, and the land once called 'paradise on earth' will again know the true meaning of paradise.

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U.S. Personnel Injured in Rocket Attack on Iraq Base

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) - A rocket attack on a base in Iraq wounded multiple U.S. personnel on Monday, officials said, adding to already heightened regional tensions over an expected Iranian counterattack on Israel. The rocket fire is the latest in a series of attacks targeting Ain al-Assad base in western Iraq, which hosts American troops as well as personnel from the U.S.-led coalition against the Islamic State jihadist group. "There was a suspected rocket attack today against U.S. and coalition forces" at the base, a U.S. defense spokesperson said. "Initial indications are that several U.S. personnel were injured." "Base personnel are conducting a post-attack damage assessment" and updates will be provided as more information becomes available, the spokesperson added. U.S. President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris were briefed on the attack, the White House said. "They discussed the steps we are taking to defend our forces and respond to any attack against our personnel in a manner and place of our choosing," it said in a statement. An Iraqi military source had earlier said that multiple rockets were fired at the base, with some landing inside it and another hitting a nearby village but not causing damage. A commander in an armed group told AFP that at least two rockets targeted the base, without saying who had carried out the attack. Another source in the group and a security source confirmed an attack occurred. Such attacks were frequent early in the war between Israel and Hamas Palestinian militants in Gaza but since then have largely halted. The latest rocket fire comes as fears grow of an attack by Iran and its allies on Israel in retaliation for the killing of top Hamas and Hezbollah figures in strikes

last week either blamed on or claimed by Israel. The killings, with both Iran and Hezbollah vowing retaliation, are among the most serious series of tit-for-tat attacks that have heightened fears of a regional conflagration stemming from the Gaza war. The Iran-aligned "Axis of Resistance" against Israel, which also includes Iraqi groups and Yemen's Huthis, have already been drawn into the nearly 10-month war. Monday's rocket attack occurred after U.S. forces carried out a strike last week on combatants who were attempting to launch drones that were deemed a threat to American and allied troops, a U.S. official said. The strike, which Iraqi sources said left four killed, was the first by American forces in Iraq since February. There have been two recent attacks targeting bases hosting US and allied forces in Iraq — on July 16 and 25. Prior to that, U.S. troops in Iraq and Syria had not been targeted since April. But attacks against them were much more common in the first few months of the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza, when they were targeted more than 175 times. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq, a loose alliance of pro-Iran groups, claimed the majority of the attacks, saying they were in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza. In January, a drone strike blamed on those groups killed three U.S. soldiers at a base in Jordan. In retaliation, U.S. forces launched dozens of strikes against Tehran-backed fighters in Iraq and Syria. Baghdad has sought to defuse tensions, engaging in talks with Washington on the future of the US-led coalition's mission in Iraq, with Iran-backed groups demanding a withdrawal. The U.S. military has around 2,500 troops in Iraq and 900 in Syria.

Bangladesh Student Protesters Call for New Gov't Under Yunus



DHAKA (Dispatches) - Bangladesh student protest coordinators called for the formation of a new interim government with Nobel Peace laureate Muhammad Yunus as its chief adviser, according to a video released by the coordinators on Facebook early on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh army chief planned to meet the protest coordinators later on Tuesday, the army separately said in a statement. On Monday, Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina resigned and fled the country, multiple sources said, as more people were killed in some of the worst violence since the birth of the South Asian nation more than five decades ago. Army chief General Waker-Us-Zaman said in a televised address that Hasina 76, had left the country and that an interim government would be formed. Media reports said she had flown in a military helicopter with her sister and was headed to the eastern Indian state of West Bengal just across the border. Another report said she was headed to India's northeastern state of Tripura. Reuters could not immediately verify the reports. Television visuals showed thousands of people pouring into the streets of the capital Dhaka in jubilation and shouting slogans. Thousands also stormed Hasina's official residence 'Ganabhaban', shouting slogans, pumping fists and showing victory signs. Television visuals showed crowds in the drawing rooms of the residence, and some people could be

seen carrying away televisions, chairs and tables from what was one of the most protected buildings in the country.

"She has fled the country, fled the country," some shouted. Protesters in Dhaka also climbed atop a large statue of independence leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Hasina's father, and began chiselling away at the head with an axe, the visuals showed. Student activists had called for a march to the capital Dhaka today in defiance of a nationwide curfew to press Hasina to resign, a day after deadly clashes across the country killed nearly 100 people. About 150 people were killed in protests last month. On Monday, at least six people were killed in clashes between police and protesters in the Jatrabari and Dhaka Medical College areas today, the Daily Star newspaper reported. Reuters could not immediately verify the report.

Bangladesh has been engulfed by protests and violence that began last month after student groups demanded scrapping of a controversial quota system in government jobs.

That escalated into a campaign to seek the ouster of Hasina, who won a fourth straight term in January in an election boycotted by the opposition.

Opposition Leaders Targeted by Investigation in Venezuela

CARACAS (Dispatches) - Venezuela's attorney general, Tarek Saab, announced a new criminal probe against opposition candidate Edmundo Gonzalez and leader Maria Corina Machado after they posted a letter urging the country's security forces to "stand by the people" protesting President Nicolás Maduro's contested victory at July 28's presidential election. Venezuela is launching a criminal probe against the opposition leaders contesting last month's election for inciting police and military officials to break the law, the country's top prosecutor said, as security forces targeted people they say committed violent crimes during recent election protests. The announcement by attorney general Tarek Saab followed a letter posted on social network X by opposition candidate Edmundo Gonzalez and leader Maria Corina Machado calling for security forces to "stand by the people" and respect the results of the election they say they won. President Nicolas Maduro's assertion that he won a third term in the July 28 vote has triggered angry protests from Venezuelans across the country over the last week, demanding that Maduro step down and a Gonzalez win be honored. Venezuelan security forces have begun targeting alleged perpetrators of violent crimes during the protests, in an operation informally called "knock-knock" that advocacy groups say has left protesters fearful. Three advocacy groups told Reuters security forces are working



intensely to capture protesters, including minors, who they said are not being provided with lawyers and who have in some cases been charged with terrorism. Maduro and other officials have touted "knock-knock" as a means of targeting those behind violence at the protests, who they have described as "fascist criminals." "Operation knock-knock is the name given by certain government spokespeople, informally, to the escalating repression," said Gonzalo Himiob, vice president of legal advocacy group Foro Penal. "It's called knock-knock because that's the bang on the door you get in the early hours of the morning," he said. Venezuela's electoral authority, who the opposition says favors the ruling socialists, has said Maduro was reelected with around 51% of the vote, beating Gonzalez. The

opposition says its own detailed tally shows Gonzalez likely received 67% of the vote, winning by a margin of nearly 4 million votes, and earning more than double Maduro's support, a result in line with independent exit polls. Russia and China - among others - have congratulated Maduro as the election winner, but most Western countries have demurred, calling for the full release of voting results. In answer to a question on Monday as to whether the U.S. was ready to recognize an interim president the way it did in 2019 with Juan Guaido, State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said: "That's not a step that we are taking today." Venezuela's next presidential term is due to start in January 2025. Maduro told supporters on Saturday that some 2,000 people had been arrested during the protests. In the joint letter signed on Monday, Gonzalez and Machado, a popular opposition leader, wrote: "We are appealing to the conscience of the military and the police and asking them to stand at the side of the people and of their own families." But the military has long been loyal to Maduro. "I'm willing to do anything and I am counting on you to ensure order prevails," Maduro told them in a broadcast on state television on Sunday. Venezuela's government is taking a hardline approach, moving quickly, to make sure it holds on to power, advocacy groups said.

Record-Breaker Duplantis Soars to Olympic Pole Vault Gold



PARIS (Dispatches) - Armand Duplantis soared over his rivals in clinching back-to-back Olympic pole vault crowns on Monday with a new world record as Keely Hodgkinson won Britain's first gold of the Paris Games on the track with a sensational 800m final victory. Swedish star Duplantis cemented his status as the greatest pole vaulter in history with a superb display, blowing the roof off the Stade de France with a world record-breaking final leap of 6.25 metres. The 24-year-old Duplantis, popularly known as "Mondo", is the first man to win consecutive Olympic pole vault golds since the USA's Bob Richards, who achieved the feat with victories in 1952 and 1956. In perfect, warm conditions in Paris, defending champion Duplantis never looked like being threatened by his rivals as he clinched victory. The only suspense in a dominant performance was whether the US-born Swede could break his own world record to crown victory. He duly delivered with his third and final attempt, beating his previous best of 6.24m to deafening roars of appreciation from the Parisian crowd. American Sam Kendrick won silver with a best of 5.95m, Greece's Emmanouil Karalis taking bronze (5.90). "What can I say? I just broke a world record at the Olympics, biggest possible stage for a pole vaulter," Duplantis said after his incredible performance. "The biggest dream since a kid was to break the world record at the Olympics, and I've been able to do that in front of the most ridiculous crowd I've ever competed in front of." Duplantis's gold was one of four titles up for grabs at the Stade de France on Monday. On the track, British middle distance runner Hodgkinson finally ended her long wait to capture a major global championship title with gold in the 800m. Hodgkinson, who had claimed three consecutive silver medals at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021 and the World Championships in 2022 and 2023, led from start-to-finish to win in 1min 56.72sec. Ethiopia's

Tsige Duguma claimed silver in 1:57.15 and Kenya's Mary Moraa took bronze (1:57.42). "I have worked really hard for the last year and I think you can see how much it meant to me when I crossed the line. I can't believe I have finally done it," Hodgkinson, 22, told the BBC after her triumph. In the women's 5,000m Kenya's "smiling assassin" Beatrice Chebet dethroned the Netherlands' defending champion Sifan Hassan with a tactical masterclass. The pre-race hype had focused on the Ethiopian-born Hassan's attempt to win an improbable treble of 5,000m, 10,000m and marathon golds at the same Olympics. But Hassan's dream of emulating Czech great Emil Zatopek -- who completed the same triple at the 1952 Helsinki Games -- was put to bed ruthlessly by Chebet. The 24-year-old 10,000m world record holder bided her time before accelerating past compatriot Faith Kipyegon down the home straight to win in 14min 28.56sec. Kipyegon, the reigning 5,000m world champion, crossed the finish line in second place but was initially disqualified for a shove on Ethiopia's Gudaf Tsegay with two laps to go. However she was reinstated on appeal, leaving Hassan with bronze. In the women's discus, American Valarie Allman defended her Olympic crown comfortably with a throw of 69.50m. China's Feng Bin won silver with a best effort of 67.51m and Croatia's Sandra Elkasevic took bronze. Elsewhere on Monday, newly-crowned 100m champion Noah Lyles sailed through the opening heats of the 200m to remain on course for a hat-trick of Olympic golds in Paris. Lyles, who is aiming to add the 200m and 4x100m titles to his 100m crown won in thrilling fashion on Sunday, romped home in his heat in 20.19sec. "I spent years working on the 100m, but the 200 is where it's at," Lyles said. "This is where I get to show my speed and endurance and my top-end speed. "This is where I get to show I'm stronger than everybody else."

Korda Celebrates Most Special Washington Win



WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Sebastian Korda said he had achieved one of the biggest goals of his career by capturing the Washington Open title and emulating his father Petr, who won the tournament 32 years ago.

The younger Korda's 4-6 6-2 6-0 win over Flavio Cobolli on Sunday marked the first time in ATP Tour history that a father and son had both won the same event.

Czech Petr Korda won the event in 1992.

"I've been coming to this tournament since I was a teenager. My dad used to coach Radek Stepanek, who also won here in 2011," said American Korda, who is now coached by Stepanek.

"We have a lot of history with this tournament. One of my biggest goals was one day coming here and hopefully winning the tournament and putting my name up there on the stadium.

"This is probably the most special moment of my career so far."

Victory also ensured Korda became the first U.S. man to win the Washington crown since Andy Roddick in 2007, as he gears up for the U.S. Open beginning on Aug. 26.

Korda is among a group of U.S. men looking to end the country's 21-year Grand Slam drought since Roddick's triumph at his home Grand Slam, and he said there was "healthy jealousy" between them.

"When someone does a great result, the other guys want to do an even better one," said Korda, who reached a career-high world number 18 on Monday.

"It's really great that all the Americans are close. All the Americans are playing really great tennis right now. Hopefully we can make a big push in the coming Grand Slam soon."

France Set Up Olympic Men's Football Final Against Spain

LYON (Dispatches) - Jean-Philippe Mateta scored twice as hosts France came from behind to beat Egypt 3-1 after extra time on Monday and set up an Olympic men's football final showdown with Spain, who edged Morocco 2-1. Thierry Henry's France looked to be heading for defeat in their semi-final in Lyon after Mahmoud Saber put Egypt ahead against the run of play just after the hour mark. But Crystal Palace striker Mateta levelled late on to force extra time, in which he headed France in front after Egypt's Omar Fayed was sent off. Michael Olise then sealed the win on 108 minutes and France, looking for their second Olympic men's football gold medal and first since 1984, will now face Spain at the Parc des Princes in Paris on Friday. "When you see France picking up medals all over the place, you say to yourself it is up to us now to not let everyone down," said France coach Henry. "You don't want to be the team who don't win a medal so at least that is done. Now we will see what colour we get, but honestly I am living a dream here and I don't want to wake up." France hit the woodwork through Loic Bade late in the first half and were caught out by a sucker punch when Saber fired Egypt ahead against the run of play on 62 minutes. The hosts then pushed frantically for an equaliser and struck the woodwork twice in a matter of seconds, captain Alexandre Lacazette heading off a post and Bade nodding the follow-up against the bar. The leveller arrived in the 83rd minute, with

new Bayern Munich signing Olise the creator as he cut through the middle on a driving run before playing in Mateta to finish. France hoped to find a winner before extra time, but a penalty appeal after Fayed blocked a Bade header with his hand was dismissed after a long VAR review. Egypt were quickly reduced to 10 men in extra time when Fayed -- already booked for arguing against the penalty call -- saw yellow again for chopping down Desire Doue. France went ahead in the 99th minute when Kiliann Sildillia headed Olise's delivery back across goal for Mateta to head in his fourth goal of the tournament. The excellent Olise fired in the third at the start of the second half of extra time after a clearance struck Doue and fell into his path and France celebrated wildly at full-time. Earlier, substitute Juanlu Sanchez struck a late winner for Spain as they fought back to beat Morocco in the first semi-final in Marseille. Morocco had led through a Soufiane Rahimi penalty towards the end of the first half, a sixth goal at the Olympics for the tournament's top scorer, and his fourth to come from the spot. That sent the large Moroccan support at the Stade Velodrome wild, but Spain kept their cool to equalise through their own star man in the 66th minute. Fermin Lopez, a member of Spain's triumphant Euro 2024 squad, who scored twice in the Olympic quarter-final against Japan, pounced in the 66th minute when the ball broke loose in the box and fired low into the net to make

it 1-1. With the prospect of extra time looming, Spain won it in the 85th minute as Lopez found Sanchez bounding into the area, and he sent a shot low into the far corner. Morocco now go to Nantes for the bronze medal match on Thursday against their North African rivals Egypt.



Sinner Hopes to Complete His Healing in Montreal Return



MONTREAL (Dispatches) - Jannik Sinner will test his form after a month of illness which culminated in the bronchitis that forced him to skip the Paris Olympics.

The Italian world number one takes to the court to defend the Masters title he won a year ago in Montreal.

Sinner was forced to bypass Paris after focusing his season on the Olympics date, but he will be back in action in the second round here after a bye.

"It has been a little while since my last match, since Wimbledon," Sinner said on a rainy Monday that wiped out qualifying rounds for the tournament, which starts on Tuesday due to the Olympics.

"I'm very excited to be here. Hopefully I can show some good tennis."

Sinner last competed on July 9, managing to go five sets in the Wimbledon quarter-finals before losing to Daniil Medvedev.

The top seed was treated on court for fatigue and had his vital signs measured before soldiering on to defeat.

Sinner said he feels ready to get started again: "The body feels good. I got here early to cure the jetlag.

"The first practices were easy but now we're working harder."

Sinner should get a confident start on what he calls his favourite surface.

"Hardcourt is my favourite but every situation is different. The ball is flying here quite a lot, you have to feel the ball a bit more. You have to play with a good mindset."

Sinner heads the Montreal field ahead of 2021 Olympic champion Alexander Zverev and third-seeded Daniil Medvedev.

Biles Upstaged by Rebeca Andrade in Floor Final at Paris Games

PARIS (Dispatches) - It definitely was not the ending Simone Biles was expecting as she was surprisingly upstaged in the floor exercise final by Brazilian gymnast Rebeca Andrade -- but a silver medal on Monday capped the American's remarkable Olympic comeback.

Stepping out of bounds with both feet at the end of two of her four tumbling passes meant she missed out on the top prize in the floor final, with the six tenths of a point penalty she incurred making the difference between gold and silver. That score of 14.133 did not stop Biles from earning an 11th Olympic medal. The final day of the artistic gymnastics program also saw Biles suffer disappointment in the balance beam final as she finished fifth after slipping off the 10-cm wide apparatus. Italy won their first ever Olympic title in women's gymnastics when Alice D'Amato emerged as the surprise winner in a beam competition where four of the eight finalists suffered falls. The celebrations did not end there for Italians, with D'Amato's compatriot Manila Esposito scooping bronze behind Chinese silver medalist Zhou Yaqin. Like Biles, Japanese sensation Shinnosuke Oka will be heading home with four Olympic medals, with three of them being glittering gold. The 20-year-old's Games breakthrough continued as he finished with the bronze in the parallel bars, behind back-to-back Olympic champion Zou Jingyuan

and Ukrainian silver medalist Illia Kovtun. Zou handed China their second gymnastics gold of the Games, while Kovtun earned Ukraine their first podium finish. Just two hours later Oka emerged triumphant with his gravity defying routine on the horizontal bar, a final that was riddled with errors. Colombian teenager Angel Barajas took silver and Taiwan's Tang Chia-hung and China's Zhang Boheng shared bronze despite botched performances.



With the hundreds of TV and still cameras capturing her every move, there was no doubt that Biles was the standout star of the Paris Olympics. But she is also the ultimate teammate and rival. She whopped with joy and hugged fellow American Jordan Chiles tightly after her friend was promoted from fifth to the bronze-medal position when her score was upgraded to 13.766 following a successful enquiry submitted by the Americans right at the end of the floor exercise competition. Biles, the world's most decorated gymnast with 41 world and Olympic medals, admitted that exhaustion had started to creep in on the final day of a gruelling competition. "Obviously wasn't my best performances but at the end of the day, whoever medalled, medalled," she said. "I'm not very upset or anything about my performance at the Olympics. I'm actually very happy, proud and even more excited that it's over." Biles was heavily favoured coming into the floor final given the difficulty of her high-flying floor routine but paid the price for miscuing two of her landings, which meant she lost out on winning a fourth gold medal of these Games. Biles' routine got off to a promising start when she nailed her triple twisting double back but the power she generates during the tumbling sequences left her completely stepping out of bounds on her next attempt. She again found herself out of the marked area on her final pass.