

Iran and Tajikistan Are Due to Put Into Force an Agreement for Waiving Visa Requirements as of August 10 and the Agreement Allows the Citizens of the Two Countries to Visit the Other Country and Stay There for 30 Days Without a Visa

IRAN NEWS

Iran's Acting Foreign Minister Has Emphasized His Country's Readiness to Interact and Cooperate with the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) to Help It Flourish Using Potential of Member Countries

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Iran Not to Let Tel Aviv Terrorist Gang Undermine Security of Region



TEHRAN - Iran's interim foreign minister has stressed that the Islamic Republic will not allow Israel to treat stability and security in the West Asia region as "playthings" in order to serve the illegitimate interests and goals of the terrorist ruling gang in Tel Aviv.

Ali Bagheri Kani made the remarks in a telephone conversation with Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad on Tuesday evening, as the two sides condemned Israel's recent assassination of the head of the political bureau of the Hamas resistance movement, Ismail Haniyeh, in Tehran, as well as top-ranking Hezbollah military commander Fuad Shukur in an airstrike in the suburbs of southern Beirut.

"The Zionist regime has turned into an instigator of instability and insecurity in West Asia by means of its criminal actions in Yemen, Tehran and Beirut. The United States and certain European countries have also fostered instability in the region by supporting the terrorist acts of the Zionist regime," the top Iranian diplomat said.

Pointing to Iran's decision to take a legitimate, decisive and deterrent action against Israel, Bagheri Kani said, "The Islamic Republic of Iran will not allow the Zionist regime to treat regional stability and security as playthings for the sake of the illegitimate goals and interests of the terrorist ruling gang in Tel Aviv."

For his part, Mekdad vehemently denounced Israel's terrorist acts and underscored Syria's all-out and unflinching support for Iran.

He censured Israel's escalatory measures and its expansion of aggression across West Asia, and condemned the Tel Aviv regime for the ongoing war crimes and genocide against Palestinians in the occupied territories.

The Syrian foreign minister stressed that such actions must not go unpunished.

Mekdad also condemned the West's complicity in Israeli violations, stating that Washington and its European allies have been complicit in acts of aggression against Iran, Lebanon, Yemen and Syria. Separately, the interim Iranian foreign minister held a telephone conversation with British Foreign Secretary David Lammy, during which he said that silence vis-à-vis Israeli atrocities only encourages the criminal Tel Aviv regime, and emboldens the Zionist entity to forge ahead with its destabilizing moves.

Tehran Rejects Links With Assassination Plot Against U.S. Politicians



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran has roundly rejected having any connection with a Pakistani individual, who has reportedly been arrested in the United States and charged with being behind a foiled plot to assassinate U.S. politicians.

The Islamic Republic's permanent mission to the United Nations made the remarks in a statement on Tuesday after American news outlets broke stories about an "arrest" of the person in question, who has been named as Asif Merchant.

Merchant, the stories have claimed, was arrested last month, and charged with having paid purported hitmen to carry out the plot. The outlets have also cited an alleged affidavit by an FBI agent suggesting that he had "current or former high-level officials like [former President Donald] Trump in mind."

Reacting to the stories, however, the Iranian mission said, "We have not received any reports in connection with this issue from the U.S. government."

The mission also commented on allegations about the likelihood that the so-called plot was aimed at Trump, who ordered the assassination of Iran's top anti-terror commander, General Qassem Soleimani, in Iraq in 2020.

"It is clear that this method contradicts the policy that is being led by the Iranian government

towards legal prosecution of Martyr Soleimani's murderer," it said.

FBI Director Christopher Wray claimed the Pakistani national had "close ties to Iran" and that the alleged murder-for-hire plot was "straight out of the Iranian playbook".

Merchant was arrested on July 12 as he planned to leave the country.

The spokesperson for Pakistan's foreign ministry, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, said in a statement that the government was in touch with U.S. authorities over the matter.

Merchant, 46, allegedly sought to hire a hitman to assassinate a politician or a U.S. government official in the United States, the department said in a statement.

On July 13, Trump survived an assassination attempt while campaigning in Butler, Pennsylvania, suffering only minor injury to his ear.

Various US officials and media reports subsequently accused the Islamic Republic of having devised a plot to assassinate Trump.

Reacting to the accusations on July 17, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kan'ani called them a product of malicious political goals and intents, while the Iranian mission asserted that "Iran has chosen the legal pathway to hold Trump accountable" for General Soleimani's assassination.

Belarusian Air Force Commander Meets Army Commander



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Major General Andrei Yulianovich Lukaryovich met and held talks with Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi, Commander-in-Chief of the Islamic Republic of Iran Army, at the Army Headquarters.

Major General Lukaryovich, Commander of the Belarusian Air Force and Air Defense, visited the Army Headquarters and met with Major General Seyed Abdolrahim Mousavi, Commander-in-Chief of the Islamic Republic of Iran Army.

In this meeting, Major General Mousavi highlighted the shared threats and interests of Iran and Belarus, both of which are subject to oppressive sanctions by the United States and the West, and both countries' independence and non-dependence.

Expressing gratitude for Belarus's noble and independent stance on the assassination of Martyr Ismail Haniyeh, he stated, "Belarus holds a strategic position and serves as a solid barrier against NATO expansion. We and the countries in the region also oppose NATO expansion."

Referring to the unilateral sanctions imposed by global arrogance on Iran since the Islamic Revolution's victory, he added, "We have tried to make the most of this threat and have not made our country's defense dependent on external powers."

He emphasized, "We are confident that similar conditions exist in Belarus. The people, government, and army of Belarus are also under sanctions, but we know that they have their own initiatives and methods to overcome the current situation and counter NATO's influence and the U.S.'s unilateralism."

Major General Mousavi stressed, "The political, military, and defense officials of both countries are determined to develop and deepen cooperation. A clear example of this is the visit of Belarusian President Mr. Lukashenko to Iran and his meeting with the beloved Martyr Raisi, which laid the foundation for joint relations and commissions."

Sinwar's Appointment Proves Israel's Goal of Assassinating Resistance Leaders Fails



BEIRUT (PressTV) - Lebanon's resistance movement Hezbollah has hailed the election of Yahya Sinwar as the new political leader of Hamas, saying the appointment once again proves Israel's goals of assassinating the resistance group's leaders have failed.

Hezbollah made the remarks in a statement on Wednesday after Sinwar succeeded his predecessor Ismail Haniyeh, who was assassinated in the Iranian capital Tehran, in an attack blamed on Israel.

It also noted that Sinwar's election is sending "a strong message to Israel, the United States and allies that Hamas is united in its decision, solid in its principles, firm in its important choices, and determined" to continue its path of resistance.

Hezbollah further stated that choosing Sinwar as Hamas chief "at this important time" and in the midst of war boosts the determination of Palestinians as well as the regional countries to unify efforts and press ahead with resistance until the complete liberation of Palestine.

In a statement on Tuesday, Hamas announced the selection of Sinwar as head of the movement's political bureau to succeed Haniyeh.

Haniyeh was assassinated in an attack on his residence in the early hours of July 31, in the Iranian capital Tehran, where he had attended the swearing-in ceremony of Iran's newly-elected president, Masoud Pezeshkian, a day earlier.

He was the second high-profile Hamas leader to be assassinated by Israel since Operation Al-Aqsa Storm on October 7, 2023, after Salah al-Aroui, who was assassinated in southern Beirut on January 2.

Sinwar, a high-ranking Hamas military commander, previously became the leader of Hamas in the besieged Gaza Strip in February 2017, taking over from Haniyeh.

He was a key architect of the surprise Operation Al-Aqsa Storm that Hamas launched against the occupying regime in response to its decades-long campaign of oppression and devastation against Palestinians.

Entry of European Tourists Has Been Zeroed

TEHRAN - Amir Pouyan Rafiei Shad, head of the Association of Air Travel, Tourism, and Pilgrimage Offices of Tehran, in an interview, stated that more than two thousand offices in this association have operating licenses. He said: "After COVID-19, some offices exited the market, and today around a thousand active members remain. We are currently assessing the active and inactive offices."

He added: "Our main activities are in three areas: selling domestic and international flight tickets, inbound and outbound tour operations. However, due to regional developments and recent events, even China and Russia are not cooperating with us in terms of inbound tours."

The head of the Association of Air Travel, Tourism, and Pilgrimage Offices of Tehran emphasized: "The number of inbound tours and tourists from Europe has almost reached zero. There are no longer group tours, and if there are any, they are very few. The reason for this is the extensive anti-Iran propaganda and the inclusion of Iran on the travel ban lists of Western foreign ministries. Additionally, foreign insurance companies do not cover travel to Iran."

Rafiei Shad continued: "Unfortunately, we have lost the European and American markets. Regarding neighboring countries, we have Afghan commercial travelers and Iraqi pilgrims who come to Iran for treatment, meaning that Iraqi tourists go to Qom and Mashhad or at most to Mazandaran, but other cities are neglected."

He stressed: "The presence of tourists from neighboring countries in terms of revenue is not comparable to Europeans and East Asians, even though their numbers might be higher, the revenue is not. So, we must look for new markets, such as other neighboring countries and Central Asia."

The head of the Association of Air Travel, Tourism, and Pilgrimage Offices of Tehran pointed out the intense anti-Iran propaganda in other countries, saying: "A significant issue is that the families of Iranian expatriates sometimes believe this propaganda. The only way to reduce this Iranophobia is through the effective presence of Iranian cultural attachés in other countries."

Rafiei Shad continued: "For example, after the summer of 2022, the Iranian cultural attaché in Spain announced on the country's television network that



only one tourist from Spain had visited Iran that year."

He stated that another issue is the low cost of travel to Iran due to the exchange rate difference between the dollar and the rial, adding: "I do not agree with this because, due to the lack of direct flights to many countries, flight prices have increased, making travel to Iran economically unjustifiable. The visa waiver for various countries is an important development that is underway, but the increase in flight costs has overshadowed this difference."

He added: "The slogan of medical experts is to use specialists in every position, which we hope will be the case. However, our suggestion to increase foreign tours and promote travel attractions is to use diplomacy and political stability in this regard. After the JCPOA, regardless of the agreement's provisions, tourism saw a peak in 2018."

Rafiei Shad continued: "Of course, we have some weaknesses in infrastructure, but the point I must make is that in 2018, in some cities like Isfahan and Shiraz, we faced accommodation problems for tourists. Although today with the current travel volume there is no problem, we must think ahead to update and increase the infrastructure to avoid future problems."

He noted that the Supreme Leader also emphasized this issue, adding: "Tourism is an industry that can generate more foreign currency than oil, with economic returns, no specific foreign currency expenditure, and reduced unemployment rates. If the country has stability, there will definitely be no shortage of tourism demand."

The head of the Association of Air Travel, Tourism, and Pilgrimage Offices of Tehran said: "Considering that we cannot ban foreign travel, the 43% increase in Iranian tourists to Turkey last year, with the foreign currency outflow, is a catastrophe. Alongside this, introducing new land tour destinations like Van, Erbil, and other cities has increased the tourism appeal of neighboring countries to the extent that compatriots prefer foreign travel over domestic travel."

Rafiei Shad said: "Currently, the cost of a four-day, three-night trip to Turkey during off-peak times is about 20 million toman, which is less than many domestic trips and practically less compared to neighboring countries."

Qeshm Free Zone, Russia's Dubna Sign Cooperation Agreement



MOSCOW (IRNA) - The Qeshm Free Zone Organization and the Dubna Special Economic Technology Zone of the Russian Federation have signed a cooperation agreement aimed at mutual investment attraction and infrastructure development.

The agreement was signed on the sidelines of a visit by a delegation from Qeshm Island to the Dubna region near Moscow, Russia's capital. The agreement was signed by Edris Ramouz, the Deputy for Cultural, Social, and Tourism Affairs of the Qeshm Free Zone Organization, and Igor Koroglov, Deputy CEO of the Dubna Special Economic Technology Zone. In the sidelines of the ceremony, the Deputy for Cultural, Social, and Tourism Affairs of the Qeshm Free Zone Organization stated that the agreement aims to develop international relations for Qeshm Island, foster profitable and mutual cooperation in the management of free and special economic zones, and attract foreign investment. Ramouz continued by highlighting other objectives of the agreement, such as maintaining and developing infrastructure, exchanging expertise, and providing specialized solutions for collaboration in industries, transportation and transit, tourism, technology, and environmental protection.

Ramouz emphasized that both parties are interested in expanding economic and commercial relations, including cooperation in shipbuilding, energy, pharmaceutical production, artificial intelligence, information exchange during research, joint investments, and investments in high-tech projects. He added that this beneficial mutual cooperation would enhance the investment appeal of both regions.

During a meeting with Dubna Special Zone managers, issues related to project financing, tax policies, land allocation for company construction, trade of innovative products, and the development of cooperative relations for government support measures for companies were discussed. Additionally, the delegation visited several modern technology manufacturing companies in the Dubna Special Zone, indicating potential for successful knowledge and technology transfer collaboration.

Given the friendly relations and numerous commonalities between Russia and Iran, both the Qeshm Free Zone Organization and the Dubna Special Economic Technology Zone have expressed interest in long-term cooperation in experience and information exchange regarding investment attraction and the implementation of joint projects. The Dubna Special Economic Technology Zone, near Moscow, hosts a large number of knowledge-based companies.

IRAN NEWS



Iran's Judiciary Focused on U.S. Violations of Human Rights

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's Judiciary Spokesman said the judicial system of the country has in recent years paid special attention to the disclosure of the U.S.'s violations of human rights.

Asghar Jahangir said that one of the important issues on the agenda of the Judiciary in recent years has been the disclosure of the UN reports on the U.S. violation of human rights.

Expressing regret that human rights tragedies are taking place in most of the countries, mainly European countries, that advocate human rights, Jahangir complained that one is held accountable by international forums for the crimes.

"An example is the genocide that we are witnessing in Gaza today. The genocide is happening by the Zionists with the U.S. support," he added.

As with the judiciary's practical steps in this regard, Jahangir said the approach of the judiciary, along with these follow-ups, is to introduce American human rights to the world, while at the same time developing legal, judicial, and diplomatic cooperation with the world.

80 Countries Invited for Investment in Iran



TEHRAN - The exhibition introducing investment opportunities in Iran will be held in the style of Iran expos, aimed at attracting both domestic and foreign investment. Key objectives of this exhibition include presenting the country's investment opportunities and capacities, showcasing ready projects and plans in various economic sectors, and creating a multi-faceted negotiation environment between domestic and foreign economic actors.

According to the Public Relations of the Iran Trade Promotion Organization, Mohammadreza Qaderi, the organizer of the exhibition, highlighted the differences between the first Investment Opportunities in Iran Exhibition and the export expo event. He stated that this event would not invite traders, but instead, focus on hosting investors.

Qaderi mentioned that approximately 1,000 investors are expected to attend the exhibition. The initial area designated for the exhibition is about 20,000 square meters. The event will be held in the main halls of the permanent venue of Tehran International Exhibitions, and since no other event will coincide with this exhibition, the entire exhibition site may be dedicated to it. The exhibition will cover sectors such as oil, gas, petrochemicals, steel, infrastructure (transportation, construction), food industries and agricultural products, information technology, and municipalities and free zones, which are considered part of the country's investment system. Emphasizing that the primary focus of the exhibition is on attracting foreign investment, Qaderi added that the goal is to facilitate the presence of domestic investors alongside foreign investors, thereby defining joint projects and providing initial assurances to foreign investors. Qaderi noted that about 80 countries are invited to this exhibition, anticipating the presence of investors from neighboring countries, China, Russia, India, Southeast Asian countries, African and Latin American countries, as well as Spain and Italy.

According to him, based on existing statistics, Iranians residing abroad have made the most investments in Iran after China, Russia, and the UAE. The Investment Opportunities in Iran Exhibition will take place from October 5th to 7th at the Tehran International Exhibition Center.



Gas Extraction From SP to Increase by 36m Cubic Meters in Next 3 Years

TEHRAN - Project manager for drilling wells within the South Pars field Hamidreza Shafiei Makvand emphasizes that the South Pars gas field is considered the largest shared gas field in the world. He added that all oil and gas fields worldwide face pressure drops and production declines after several years of production and exploitation.

He continued: Various methods are employed in oil and gas fields to prevent production decline.

He stated that the engineering management of Pars Oil and Gas Company, after conducting reviews, studies, and research, defined the project of drilling 35 infield wells in various phases of this reservoir to prevent gas production decline in the initial phase.

Shafiei Makvand emphasized that the South Pars shared field will face production decline in the coming years, and drilling in various locations with high gas extraction potential can prevent this decline.

He pointed out that the drilling of 35 wells will be carried out on 17 existing platforms. This project has been assigned to four Iranian drilling companies in four work packages.

He added: Based on this plan, Petropars will drill 8 wells, Petoiran will drill 9 wells, North Drilling will drill 9 wells, and Pasargad Energy Development will drill 9 wells. After completing the drilling and making these wells operational and connecting them to the platforms, gas production will commence.

Shafiei Makvand continued: The investment value for drilling 35 infield wells in the South Pars shared field is 1.2 billion dollars, which is unique and significant in its own right.

He detailed the implementation of this plan: Petroiran started drilling the first well from July 10, by installing the "DCI2" drilling rig on phase 12 platform.

The Project Manager for drilling wells within the South Pars field emphasized: Additionally, Petropars has also started its drilling operations by installing the "Well Target 1" rig, which belongs to an Iranian company, on phase one platform.

Shafiei Makvand noted that other companies, including Pasargad Energy Development and North Drilling, will also deploy their drilling rigs in designated positions in the coming months. The "Sahar 1" rig, belonging to North Drilling, is being prepared at the ISOICO yard in Bandar Abbas and will be moved to the specified position by mid-September after its major overhaul is completed.

He continued: Pasargad Energy Development has also purchased an offshore drilling rig, which will begin its work package in the South Pars field with the arrival of the new rig in two months.

He stated: Four drilling rigs have been selected for the drilling of 35 infield wells in this project to avoid delays due to the limited use of drilling rigs in Iran.



122,000 Iranian Traders Active in UAE

TEHRAN - The UAE Ambassador to Iran Saif Mohammed Al Zaabi stated that economic data shows that trade relations between Iran and the UAE have increased in recent years, with over 122,000 Iranian traders conducting business in the UAE.

Al Zaabi during a meeting with the head of the Iran Chamber of Cooperatives Bahman Abdollahi, mentioned that the issues faced by Iranian and Emirati traders and economic activists are legal rather than political. He noted that cooperation between the two countries in the development of maritime and air transport has also increased.

In another part of this meeting, Al Zaabi referred to the meeting of the Iran-UAE Joint Economic Commission and said: This meeting was held earlier this year, and two important memorandums of understanding regarding the establishment of this commission and economic cooperation between the two countries were signed by officials.

He pointed out the problems and restrictions resulting from sanctions, emphasizing that sanctions have created limitations in international relations, and by conducting trade exchanges using dirhams instead of dollars, a good opportunity can be created.

The UAE Ambassador also highlighted the importance of investment guarantees, noting that while the UAE is keen to encourage private sector investment, there are concerns regarding investment guarantees.

Based on this report, the head of the Iran Chamber of Cooperatives introduced the capabilities of the cooperative sector in Iran during this meeting and said: Cooperatives hold a significant and influential position in Iran, with a substantial portion of production in our country being carried out by cooperatives. Abdollahi added: Cooperatives play an important role in the production of agricultural products, and we are seeking to create a framework for exporting cooperative products to the Persian Gulf countries, especially the UAE.

He stated: Nearly 65% of agricultural products in the country are produced by cooperatives, which is a good capacity to meet the needs of the UAE.

The head of the Iran Chamber of Cooperatives continued: In other economic areas such as petrochemicals, industry, fisheries, tourism, etc., there are also high capacities within the cooperative sector. Additionally, an extensive

distribution network with over 7,000 distribution stores across the country represents a significant capacity for distributing products from that country.

He added: In Iran, more than 30 million people benefit from the services of consumer cooperatives, making it a large market for the export of UAE products.

Abdollahi continued: We are in contact with national cooperative organizations in other countries and are striving to establish connections with the responsible cooperative organization in the UAE as well.

In another part of this meeting, the head of the Iran Chamber of Cooperatives referred to the capacities of the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) and the membership of the Iran Chamber of Cooperatives on the ICA board. He said: This alliance includes more than 110 countries, covering over 1.2 billion people worldwide.

He stated: Due to the close relations and extensive interactions between Iran and the UAE, the Iran Chamber of Cooperatives, as a member of the ICA board, is tasked with developing UAE cooperatives and is interested in transferring cooperative sector experiences to Emirati economic activists.

Abdollahi emphasized: Cooperatives play an important role in the global economy, with the top 300 ICA cooperatives having a turnover of over \$2.4 trillion. The head of the Iran Chamber of Cooperatives mentioned: Barter trade in commercial exchanges, with the identification of counterpart organizations in other countries, is also a good opportunity for economic activists. We have carried out trade interactions this way in countries such as Pakistan, Turkey, and India. He said: Considering the existing capacities, we can, in coordination with the public sector, provide the mentioned investment guarantees in the cooperative sector.

Abdollahi also expressed: Increasing commercial exchanges in various fields such as agriculture, tourism, etc., can lead to the development and growth of trade between the two countries.

In another part of this meeting, he invited the ambassador and economic activists of this country to visit the latest achievements of the International Building Industry Exhibition, which will be held by the Iran Chamber of Cooperatives from September 8 to 11, 2024.

Participation of Russian and BRICS Banks in Iran's FX

TEHRAN - The 16th Financial Industry Exhibition (Banking, Stock Exchange, and Insurance) is estimated to attract over 20,000 visitors daily from August 9 to 12 this year.

According to the event's organizer, numerous companies and organizations, including many banks, insurance companies, stock exchange companies, and fintech firms, will be present. For the first time, a Russian bank will attend this exhibition, and BRICS member countries have also announced their readiness to participate.

The exhibition coincides with the start of the 14th government and will be held from August 9 to 12. This 16th iteration of the Financial Industry Exhibition, beginning this Friday, will gather professionals from the banking, insurance, and stock exchange sectors to discuss this critical industry. It is the first specialized exhibition under the 14th government, particularly important as a significant portion of its audience includes stockholders and industry activists. Saleh Sepasdar, the event organizer and a member of the policy council, elaborated on the importance and achievements of this exhibition, especially its timing with the 14th government.

Touching upon the philosophy behind such exhibitions, he said: "The emergence and growth of various industries occur in forums or exhibitions. Over the past two decades, exhibitions related to stock exchanges, banks, insurance, or the financial industry have aimed to showcase capabilities, tools, and technologies, acting as direct public forums for industry stakeholders."

He added: "Financial industry exhibitions effectively pursue the mission of knowledge transfer, with enhancing financial literacy being a key component. This exhibition has followed this mission for the past 16 years, providing a platform for improving financial literacy, driven by both participants and organizers. This year, our emphasis is on knowledge transfer through conferences, panels,



debates, and discussions on current issues. We have a special focus on fintech this year. Technology, which can significantly enhance and shape the financial industry, is highlighted by holding an international competition called Fintech Cup at the 16th exhibition. We hope this event will foster the growth and better display of fintech achievements."

On this year event's motto "Production Leap with People's Participation," he said: "The Financial Industry Exhibition is a specialized event primarily for industry professionals, drawing the largest audience among such events. With 70 to 80 percent of people involved in the stock exchange, one of the key aspects of a successful event is providing tools for participants and visitors, which we aim to achieve through side events focused on knowledge transfer. Exhibitors will showcase their efficient tools. Showcasing exhibitors' achievements is a critical marketing tool, enabling participants to interact visually with customers, offering prizes, and holding raffles to maintain continuous and constructive engagement with visitors. The exhibition serves as a reliable venue for visitors to learn about new technologies." On the participants in the event, he said: "A very hot topic is the participation of the second-largest Russian bank for the first time in the financial industry exhibition, indicating a strong will to develop relations and promising plans to expand ties with banks, provide services to financial institutions, traders, and producers. This is a significant event and a good start for international activities under the 14th government."

He reiterated banks from BRICS countries have been invited, and their representatives have confirmed their attendance, adding that engagement with BRICS is expected to be constructive. We hope this exhibition will lay a strong foundation for expanding interactions with all countries. So, it's a great opportunity for our traders to establish trade relations with some of these countries and have financial interactions."

30% Growth in Exports to the UAE in Q1



TEHRAN - Iran's exports to the UAE in the first three months of current Iranian calendar year 1403 experienced a 30% growth compared to the same period last year.

According to the public relations office of the Iran Trade Promotion Organization, the West Asia Office of the Iran Trade Promotion Organization provided a report on the trade trends between Iran and the UAE in the first three months of this year.

The report stated that in the first quarter of 1403, Iran's exports to the UAE amounted to \$1.774 billion, reflecting an increase of \$411 million, which indicates a 30% growth compared to the same period last year.

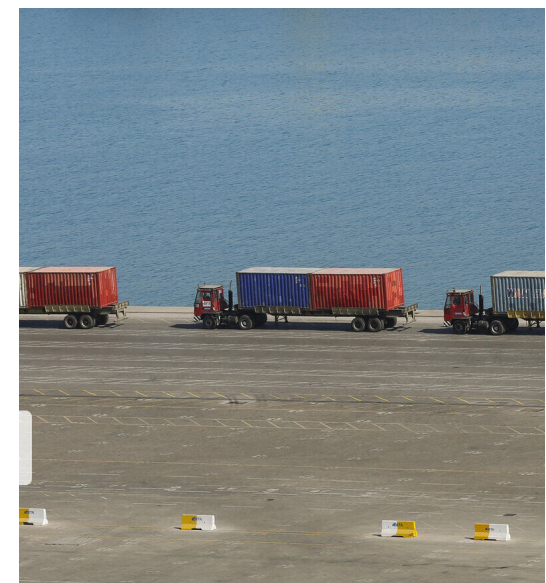
The top ten exported goods from Iran to the UAE included: other petroleum gases, aromatic substances, other petroleum oils, bitumen, organic chemical products, other petrochemicals, other petroleum-based products, other metal industries, tomatoes, and copper cathodes.

Iran's imports from the UAE in the first quarter of 1403 amounted to \$4.491 billion, showing an increase of \$361 million, which represents a 9% growth in imports from this country during this period.

The main imported items from the UAE during this period included: mobile phones, precious metals, corn, conversion industries, animal and poultry feed, oilseeds, textile products, chemical fertilizers, and power plant equipment.

It is also noteworthy that the UAE was the primary source of imported goods to Iran last year, and the imported goods through this country were mainly not produced in the UAE. Instead, due to sanctions and monetary transfer issues, the documents were changed to list the UAE as the country of origin.

Transit of 16m Tons of Goods Via Road and Rail



TEHRAN (Shana) - The head of the presiding board of the Oil Industry Pension Fund (OIPF) Abdolhossain 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 Nakhil 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.



Muhammad Yunus Named Head of Bangladesh's Interim Gov't



DHAKA (Dispatches) - Bangladesh's Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus will head the country's interim government after former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina stepped down and fled the country amid a mass uprising against her rule led mostly by students.

The announcement early on Wednesday came from Joynal Abedin, the press secretary of President Mohammed Shahabuddin. Abedin spoke to The Associated Press over the phone.

The leaders of the student protests, the chiefs of the country's three divisions of the military, and civil society members, as well as some business leaders held the meeting with the president for more than five hours late on Tuesday to decide on the head of the interim administration.

Bangladesh's president dissolved Parliament Tuesday, clearing the way for new elections to replace the longtime prime minister who resigned and fled the country following weeks of demonstrations against her rule that descended into violence.

President Mohammed Shahabuddin also ordered the release of opposition leader Khaleda Zia from house arrest. Zia, a longtime rival of ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, was convicted on corruption charges by Hasina's government in 2018.

On Tuesday, some senior positions in the military were reshuffled. The student protesters said they would not allow any military-backed government.

Hezbollah to Respond Alone or With Allies to Israeli Killing of Commander



BEIRUT (Dispatches) - The leader of Hezbollah on Tuesday pledged a "strong and effective" response to the killing of its military commander by Israel last week no matter the consequences and said Hezbollah would act either alone or with its regional allies.

Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah said Hezbollah would wait for the right moment to respond but did not hint at its form or timing.

All international attempts at persuading Hezbollah not to retaliate were futile, he said. "Whatever the consequences, the resistance will not let these Israeli attacks pass by," he said in a televised address to mark one week since the assassination of Hezbollah military commander Fuad Shukur in Beirut.

"Our response, God willing, will be strong, effective and impactful," he said in a speech that was met with cheers from members and supporters of Hezbollah who gathered to watch in Beirut's southern suburbs.

Just before the speech began, Israeli warplanes swooped low over the Lebanese capital, setting off a series of sonic booms that rattled windows across the city and sent people ducking for cover. Nasrallah began by saying these were "small-minded" attempts by Israel to provoke people.

There was no comment from the Israeli military. Concern is rising that the Middle East could tip into full-blown war following Hezbollah's vows to avenge Shukur's killing, and Iran's anger over the assassination in Tehran last week of the head of Palestinian militant group Hamas.

Iran has blamed Israel while Israel has not confirmed or denied involvement.

Describing the twin killings as clear "Israeli achievements," Nasrallah said they should not be taken as a sign the tide of the conflict was turning against Iran's Axis of Resistance. "Take it easy," he said.

He said Hezbollah had tried to prevent fighting with Israel from spreading beyond the border area to the rest of Lebanon, where summer parties have continued and vacationers were still arriving in throngs until last week.

But "the Israelis are the ones that chose this escalation with Lebanon," Nasrallah said.

"Nobody in Lebanon or abroad can ask us to deal with the aggression that happened last Tuesday as a normal aggression within the context of the battle that has been going on for 10 months," he said.

The strike that killed Shukur on July 30 was the second time Israel had struck the southern suburbs throughout the hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel that are taking place in parallel with the war in Gaza between Israel and Hamas.

Hezbollah earlier on Tuesday said it launched attack drones at two military sites near Acre in northern Israel and attacked an Israeli military vehicle in another location.

The Israeli military said a number of hostile drones were identified crossing from Lebanon and one was intercepted. Israeli medical officials said seven people were evacuated to hospital, to the south of the coastal city of Nahariya, one in critical condition.

The Israeli military said an initial investigation indicated the injuries were caused by an interceptor that "missed the target and hit the ground, injuring several civilians".

Reuters journalists saw one impact site near a bus stop on a main road outside Nahariya.

Earlier on Tuesday, four Hezbollah fighters were killed in a strike on a home in the Lebanese town of Mayfadoun, nearly 30 km (19 miles) north of the border, medics and a security source said.

Nasrallah said these tit-for-tat attacks were part of regular fighting since October 2023 to support Palestinians in Gaza and the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

He said the response to the twin killing of top Hezbollah and Hamas figures would be more powerful but that delaying it was part of a strategy to exert psychological pressure on Israel.

"Iran will respond and Hezbollah will respond and the enemy waits... Making the enemy wait is part of the punishment," he said.

Venezuela Army Vows Absolute Loyalty to Maduro

Harris, Walz Campaign Together for First Time as White House Ticket

PHILADELPHIA (Dispatches) - Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris and her newly selected vice presidential running mate, Minnesota Governor Tim Walz, campaigned for the first time together in Philadelphia, kicking off a multi-day tour of battleground states aimed at introducing Walz to the national stage.

In his remarks to a raucous crowd of more than 10,000 at Temple University, Walz described his upbringing in a small Nebraska town, his 24 years serving in the Army National Guard and his prior career as a high school social studies teacher and football coach.

"It was my students who encouraged me to run for office," he said. "They saw in me what I was hoping to instill in them: a commitment of common good, a belief that one person can make a difference."

He also went after the Republican presidential nominee, Donald Trump, and his running mate, Senator JD Vance, an early demonstration of how Walz will approach the traditional "attack dog" role of the vice presidential candidate despite his affable, folksy style.

"He mocks our laws, he sows chaos and division, and that's to say nothing of his record as president," Walz said of Trump. "He froze in the face of the COVID crisis, he drove our economy into the ground, and make no mistake, violent crime was up under Donald Trump. That's not even counting the crimes he committed."

Harris' entry into the race after President Joe Biden abandoned his reelection bid just over two weeks ago has rapidly upended the election campaign, with polls showing she has erased the lead Trump had built.

CARACAS (Dispatches) - Venezuela's military yesterday criticised an appeal by the opposition for the support of the armed forces amid the disputed reelection of President Nicolas Maduro, saying it was "desperate and seditious."

Opposition leaders Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia and Maria Corina Machado on Monday appealed to the "conscience" of the military and police officers — traditionally staunch allies of Maduro — to "take the side of the people".

They were met with a swift criminal probe from prosecutors investigating them for announcing an election winner other than Maduro, instigating disobedience, insurrection, and conspiracy.

In a statement declaring "absolute loyalty" to Maduro, Defense Minister and army chief Vladimir Padrino said: "We strongly reject the desperate and seditious approaches" that "seek to undermine our unity and institutionality, but will never succeed."

The opposition insists Gonzalez Urrutia was the rightful victor of the July 28 presidential election, which has plunged the oil-rich nation into political crisis.

Multiple countries, including the United States and Argentina, have recognized Gonzalez Urrutia as the winner, while others, such as the European Union, have stopped short of doing so while calling for full



publication of voting records.

The National Electoral Council said Monday it had presented all these records to the Supreme Court for certification, as requested by Maduro — but not publicly.

The contested election sparked protests last week that left at least 24 civilians dead as of yesterday, according to rights groups, with more than 2,000 arrested.

Maduro on Monday called for a boycott of the WhatsApp messaging platform, alleging that military, police and community leaders who support his re-election had received threats via the app.

"I am going to delete my WhatsApp from my phone forever, little by little I will move my contacts to Telegram, to WeChat," said Maduro, who has also taken aim at TikTok and Instagram for promoting "division" and "hatred" among Venezuelans.

Machado — who was barred from running in the election and backed Gonzalez Urrutia — yesterday denounced a "campaign of terror" in the country.

"They want to intimidate us so that we do not communicate, because isolated we would be much weaker and that is not going to happen. Fear will not paralyze us and we will not leave the streets," Machado said in an audio message released on social media.

European Union spokesman Peter Stano told Venezuela's government that a campaign of intimidation against the opposition "needs to stop".

"We are calling on the authorities to stop this, this campaign of intimidation of the opposition and judicial intimidation," he said.

Russia Says Forces Repel Ukrainian Armored Raid in Kursk Region

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia said that Ukraine had launched an armored assault into Russia's southern Kursk region, but Moscow's forces had responded and the region's governor described the situation on the border as "controllable".

Kursk's acting governor Alexei Smirnov said five people were killed including two members of an ambulance crew, and at least 20 were wounded in the fighting. A senior human rights official said six children were among the injured.

Ukraine made no official comment, though there was evidence of some military action from the Ukrainian side of the border.

Moscow's defense ministry said it had sent reserves to help repel hundreds of Ukrainian fighters backed by tanks, in what would be one of the largest ground incursions into Russian territory of the more than two-year-old war.

"The enemy today launched another attempt to break into the territory of Russia's Kursk region," the latest ministry statement said. "Artillery fire, army aviation strikes and drone strikes are being inflicted on the enemy."

Ukraine regularly fires artillery and missiles into Russian territory, and has hit targets deep inside Russia with long-range attack drones, but infantry raids are rare.

Forces describing themselves as voluntary paramilitaries fighting on Ukraine's side staged a major incursion into parts of Belgorod and Kursk region earlier this year. The purpose of those raids, which inflicted minimal damage, remains unclear.

Ukraine's general staff on Tuesday reported Russian strikes on border villages but made no mention of any Ukrainian offensive operation inside Russia.

Reuters was unable to verify battlefield accounts from either side.

Russia's defense ministry appeared to have deleted an earlier account of the attack in which it said a "Ukrainian sabotage group" had suffered heavy losses and retreated into Ukraine.

Official Russian social media accounts said that up to 300 Ukrainian fighters, backed by tanks, had attacked border units in two localities in Kursk - Nikolayev-Daryino and Oleshnya.

Acting governor Smirnov said three Russian civilians had been killed initially, one by shelling and two by drones.

Writing on the Telegram messaging app late in the evening, Smirnov also said Ukrainian forces had shelled a border area, injuring two children.

Officials said the border town of Sudzha had also come under assault and Smirnov said a Ukrainian attack drone had hit an ambulance outside the town, killing the driver and a paramedic and wounding a doctor.

He posted a video telling residents: "I ask you to remain calm and not to be subject to the enemy's information provocations. The situation is controllable."

A senior Orthodox clergyman said Ukrainian shelling had set ablaze a cathedral and other buildings within a large monastery outside Sudzha, but no one was hurt.

Kursk region is also the site of a nuclear power plant, but Smirnov said the facility was operating without incident.

Military authorities in Sumy region - on the other side of the border from Kursk region - said Ukrainian forces had destroyed a Russian ballistic missile, two drones and a helicopter in the region.

Unofficial Ukrainian military blogs showed pictures of what they described as the destroyed



helicopter and other equipment.

Ukraine's main military effort is focused on pushing back Russian military forces who control nearly a fifth of its territory. Russian troops have made a series of gradual gains in the past six months.

A Russian missile attack on the city of Kharkiv in northeastern Ukraine killed at least one person, injured 12 others and damaged a medical clinic, according to Ukrainian officials.

USA Breezes Past Brazil in Basketball Quarters

PARIS (Dispatches) - The United States overwhelmed Brazil 122-87 on Tuesday to book an Olympic basketball semi-final against comeback kings Serbia as hosts France lined up a last-four clash with World Cup champions Germany.

Devin Booker scored 18 points and Anthony Edwards added 17 as six US players scored in double figures.

That included Los Angeles Lakers superstar LeBron James, who had 12 points, nine assists, three rebounds and three steals before he departed early in the third quarter after taking an inadvertent elbow to the eye.

He briefly visited the locker room then returned to watch his teammates polish off another dominant win. The Americans connected on 57.7 percent of their shots from the field, including 48.4 percent from three-point range. They piled up nine steals and six blocks while delivering a stream of highlight reel dunks.

"That's what our team is built on, depth and, you know, we can have anybody get it going as far as scoring," James said. "We understand what the main goal is. The only main goal is for us to win gold, that's all I care about." Anthony Davis scored 13 points and Kevin Durant scored 11. With a dunk in the third quarter Durant nabbed the 489th point of his Olympic career, making him the most prolific scorer among US men or women players in the Olympics, passing Lisa Leslie. Brazil's Bruno Caboclo led all scorers with 30 points, but the South Americans made little impression on a US side that has rolled through to the final four.

They will face a battle-tested Serbia, who erased a 24-point deficit to edge Australia 95-90 in overtime.

Reigning NBA Most Valuable Player Jokić scored 21 points with 14 rebounds and eight assists and Bogdan Bogdanović added 17 points.

Five Serbian players scored in double figures -- and they needed those contributions after 35-year-old NBA veteran Patty Mills exploded for 14 straight points in a 20-0 Australia scoring

run. Mills finished with 26 points and Josh Giddey added 25, but Serbia out-scored Australia 25-11 in the third quarter to lead 67-65 going into the final period.

Mills drilled a jump shot over Jokić to send it to overtime, but Jokić essentially sealed it with back-to-back baskets that put Serbia up 93-90 with 25 seconds left in overtime.

Bogdanović described the atmosphere in Serbia's locker room at halftime as "a lot of madness". "But I think we found momentum in the second quarter," he said.

France had Bercy Arena rocking with a wire-to-wire 82-73 victory over previously unbeaten Canada, while Germany weathered an early push from Giannis Antetokounmpo's Greece to triumph 76-63. On a quiet night for Victor Wembanyama, Guerschon Yabusele scored 22 points and Isaia Cordinier added 20 for the hosts, who were buoyed throughout by the crowd as they booked a semi-final meeting with Germany.

Wembanyama scored just seven points but pulled down 12 rebounds. Evan Fournier's 15 points included a monster three-pointer with less than a minute to play.

"We had 40 solid minutes and I think if I'd made my shots we would have won the game even earlier," Wembanyama said. "It just shows that we can be much better."

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander recorded a game-high 27 points for Canada, who pulled within striking distance in the fourth quarter but could not get over the hump.

"They came out the aggressors and they punched us in the mouth," Gilgeous-Alexander said. "They played with more force."

Franz Wagner led Germany with 18 points and Dennis Schroder added 13 points off the bench for Germany, who withstood a 22-point performance from two-time NBA MVP Antetokounmpo.

"I think it speaks to our maturity," Wagner said of Germany's ability to recalibrate after falling in a 12-point hole early.

"We even talked about it at halftime, not everything is going to go perfect all the time."

Hocker Upsets Favorites to Win Olympic 1500m



PARIS (Dispatches) - American Cole Hocker produced a devastating finish in the home straight to pull off an upset victory in the men's Olympic 1500m in Paris on Tuesday.

Hocker outsprinted defending champion Jakob Ingebrigtsen of Norway and Britain's world champion Josh Kerr to take gold in an Olympic record of 3min 27.65sec.

"That's an unbelievable feeling," said Hocker. "My body just kind of did it for me. My mind was all there and I saw that finish line."

"Winning gold was my goal this entire year. I wrote that down and I repeated it to myself even if I didn't believe it."

"My performances showed me that I was capable of running 3:27, whatever it took. I knew I was a medal contender, and I knew that if I got it right, it would be a gold medal. I've been saying that."

Hocker said he was happy to have flown in relatively unnoticed. "I told myself that I'm in this race, too. If they let me fly under the radar, then so be it. I think that might've just been the best," the American said. Kerr bagged silver in a national record of 3:27.79, while Ingebrigtsen came fourth after being passed by another American, Yared Nuguse, who clocked a personal best of 3:27.80.

"No and yes," was Ingebrigtsen's response when asked if he had employed the wrong strategy.

"When I saw I had run a 54-second first lap I was really surprised. I thought though that is fine, I feel strong and in good enough form."

"It was a misjudgment in the end."

Ingebrigtsen added: "Of course it's a tactical error that I'm not able to reduce my pace over the first 800."

"It's just a little too hard but I think I saw in the back straight with 650 to go that they were opening a little bit of a gap. I tried to respond by going just a little bit too much on the gas. It was just 100 metres too much."

Nishikori Advances With Montreal Fightback, Raonic Out

MONTREAL (Dispatches) - Japan's Kei Nishikori staged a 3-6, 7-5, 6-4 fightback over Alex Michelsen on Tuesday to earn his first victory at an ATP Masters match in three years.

The 2014 US Open runner-up, who has been plagued in recent seasons by injury, turned the tide at the Montreal Masters as he put out the 55th-ranked American teenager who played last month's Newport grass final. The tournament lost another big name Tuesday when Canadian Milos Raonic withdrew an hour before his opening match with a shoulder injury. The US Open tuneup event is already missing Olympic champion Novak Djokovic and silver medalist Carlos Alcaraz, who both withdrew. Nishikori, aged 34 and ranked 576, earned a second-round match with eighth seed Stefanos Tsitsipas, a former Grand Slam finalist like his Asian opponent.

"It has been a long time. This means a lot, especially the way I played in the third set," Nishikori said.

"The first two sets were a bit up and down but in the third I was playing pretty good tennis."

"I had good movement when I needed it and I played aggressive. Things were working really well."

Nishikori and Tsitsipas stand 1-1, with their last meeting in 2021 at the Miami Masters.

The winner said that his fitness was not optimal during the match. "I

was not feeling 100% and I didn't have much confidence," Nishikori said. "But when I won the second set I was happy with how I was playing."

Nishikori let go of a 3-1, 40-15 lead in the first set, losing it before starting to turn the tide.

He ended after two and a half hours with four breaks of serve and 30 winners to the 14 of his 19-year-old opponent.

Raonic, the 2016 Wimbledon runner-up, has struggled with medical problems that have allowed him to compete in only three Grand Slams since May 2021.

He was to have begun his home campaign against 13th seed Holger Rune but the 33-year-old was unable to make his start and now faces more uncertainty about his tennis future after a five-year absence from Montreal. "A lot has happened in the last 48 hours and I've not had a chance to think," said Raonic, who lost in the Paris Olympic first round. "I was just trying to be ready for today and have a chance to play. But I had been doubting it was possible after having to cancel some practices. I tried to warm up for my match and it was difficult to serve. I would not have been competitive by any means."

"Without serving it would have been a tough day with the pain in my shoulder. I'm nowhere close to where I need to be."

Italy's Lorenzo Sonego put out Tallon Griekspoor 7-6 (9/7), 5-7,

6-4. Argentine Tomas Martin Etcheverry won a South American struggle over Chile's Nicolas Jarry 7-6 (7/5), 6-7 (5/7), 6-2. Karen Khachanov beat Canada's Gabriel Diallo 6-4, 6-4.



Lopez Puts Lewis, Phelps in Shade With Fifth Successive Olympic Gold

PARIS (Dispatches) - Cuban wrestler Mijain Lopez made Olympic history on Tuesday when he became the first athlete to win five consecutive individual golds in the same event, bettering the records of Games icons such as Carl Lewis and Michael Phelps.

Lopez, who turns 42 in two weeks' time, defeated fellow Cuban Yasmani Acosta, representing Chile, in the final of the 130kg Greco-Roman event.

With his victory, Lopez broke a tie for four successive individual Olympic golds he shared with Carl Lewis (athletics/long jump), Michael Phelps (swimming/200m medley), Katie Ledecky (swimming/800m freestyle), Al Oerter (athletics/discus), Paul Elvstrom (sailing) and Kaori Icho (wrestling).

When asked to describe each Games success, he said: "Beijing - youth; London - transcendence, Rio - effort; Tokyo - sacrifice; Paris - joy." "To achieve all of these results, one has to love their sport, love their job, and demonstrate to the world that with so little you can achieve great things," he added. A legend of wrestling, Lopez had retired after the 2021 Tokyo Games before returning to the sport to achieve his landmark triumph.

Despite a three-year absence -- and having suffered four herniated discs -- Lopez stunned world champion Amin Mirzazadeh of Iran in the quarter-finals in Paris.

Victory in the final on Tuesday was bittersweet as it came against close friend Acosta.

In six Olympic appearances, Lopez now has 22 victories against just one defeat which came in the quarter-finals of the 2004 Athens Games. "He is not very interested in glory. He does this for the love of his sport, for his pleasure. If God gave him the opportunity to be the greatest in history, why not take advantage of it?" his coach Raul Trujillo told



AFP. Lopez received a standing ovation from the crowd on Tuesday before the legend placed his shoes in the middle of the mat, a tradition for retiring wrestlers.

"We have to make room for the young people who are coming through to ensure continuity," he had said Monday after qualifying for the final.

"Wrestling has been the love of my life, for all of my life." His record could be equalled in four years' time if Ledecky, 27, decides to keep swimming at the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics. Acosta, 36, who recently switched allegiance to Chile as federation rules allow just one wrestler per nation to enter each category at the Olympics, described Lopez as a "legend worldwide".

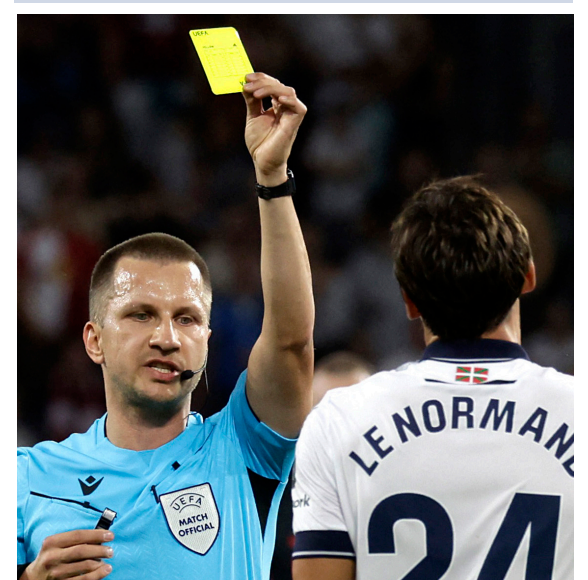
"He's a rival, but also a friend. We have known each other for a long time now. We did the trials together for this year's Olympic Games," said Acosta.

"He has been giving me advice in every phase, so he's everything, a rival, a friend, he's a brother."

The two men found time for a friendly chat just before the final got underway.

"I asked him, as a joke, if he had any advice to give me before the final. He responded, 'What do you mean? The final is against me.' But at the end, he just wished me a good match."

Two Polish Referees Removed From Champions League Duty



LONDON (Dispatches) - Two Polish referees will not be involved in the Champions League game between Dynamo Kyiv and Rangers after the Polish FA (PZPN) said on Tuesday that it was investigating reports of improper behaviour.

Bartosz Frankowski was appointed as the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) for the third qualifying round first-leg game in Lublin, Poland on Tuesday, with compatriot Tomasz Musial acting as assistant, but they have been replaced by UEFA.

"The College of Referees of the Polish FA will carry out a detailed analysis of the situation in connection with reports of improper behaviour of two Ekstraklasa referees who were supposed to work on the Champions League qualifying match between Dynamo Kiev and Rangers FC," a PZPN statement said.

Polish media reported that the two officials were seen carrying a road sign down a street in Lublin, and after police checked their alcohol levels they were taken to a sobering-up room in the early hours of Tuesday morning.

Both officials have apologised.

"I would like to express my regret for the events that took place on the night of 5 to 6 August. I am extremely sorry that I have damaged your trust with one irresponsible behaviour," Frankowski said.

"I would like to note that during the incident I was not aggressive, I cooperated with police officers, and in the end I was fined."

The pair have been replaced by two other Polish referees for the game which is taking place in Poland due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine.