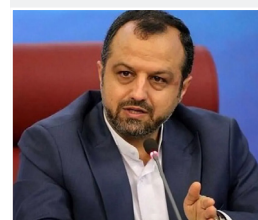


Deputy Chief of the Iranian Army for Coordination Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari Has Said That the Deterrence Power of the Islamic Republic Is Such That No Enemy Could Ever Encroach Upon Its Territory

# IRAN NEWS

High-Ranking Military Delegation of Iran, Headed by the Deputy Coordinator of the Khatam al-Anbiya Base, Brigadier General Ali Shadmani, Arrived in Moscow to Attend the International Military-Technical Forum ARMY-2024

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### Highest Record of Foreign Investment Achieved Last Year

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## 3 INTERNATIONAL

### World Pours Scorn on Israel for Horrifying and Barbaric Bombing of Gaza School



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### President Urges World Bodies to Prevent Israel's Crimes Against Humanity



TEHRAN (PressTV) - President Masoud Pezeshkian says international organizations, especially the UN Security Council, must fulfill their responsibility of protecting regional and world peace and security and preventing crimes against humanity.

Pezeshkian on Saturday "strongly condemned" the Israeli regime's brutal attack on a school sheltering displaced people in the east of the Gaza Strip, which killed more than 100 civilians.

The Gaza government media office said more than 100 citizens were killed and dozens injured on Saturday morning after the Israeli occupation forces bombed the al-Tabi school in the al-Daraj neighborhood in Gaza City.

Pezeshkian said, "With this crime, the Zionist regime once again revealed its true and brutal nature to the world."

He added that the Israeli regime is carrying out these genocidal acts with the support of self-proclaimed defenders of human rights—governments and institutions that advocate for peace negotiations and ceasefires while simultaneously providing unrestricted support to this brutal regime.

"Based on the teachings of human rights and Islamic culture and vision, they are definitely accomplices of the child-killing regime in all these bitter events through their double standard attitudes," the Iranian president emphasized.

He stated that these crimes stem from the humiliation and desperation felt by the criminal and brutal leaders of the Israeli regime in the face of resistance of the resilient people of Gaza.

Pezeshkian said the Tel Aviv regime commits such brutal crimes to "cover up internal crises and inefficiencies that have spread throughout the occupied territories and have put the criminal Zionist gang on the verge of collapse."

He emphasized that Israel's brutal strike on the al-Tabi school has left another "shameful stain" on the dark record of the regime and hurt the feelings of all the "awakened and free conscience" of the world.

### Preparations Made for Iran's Crushing Response to Israeli Aggression



TEHRAN (PressTV) - A political advisor to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei says groundwork has already been made for a "severe and crushing" response to Israel over its assassination of Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran.

"Legal, diplomatic & media processes laid the ground for severely punishing a regime that only understands language of force," Ali Shamkhani wrote in a post published on the social media platform X (formerly Twitter) on Saturday.

Haniyeh, who was in Tehran to attend the swearing-in ceremony of Iran's newly-elected President Masoud Pezeshkian, was martyred along with his bodyguard in an attack early on July 31.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution warned the Israeli regime of a "harsh response" for Haniyeh's assassination, calling it the Islamic Republic's duty to avenge the Palestinian resistance leader's blood.

"The criminal and terrorist Zionist regime martyred our dear guest in our homeland and left us bereaved, but it also set the ground for a harsh punishment for itself," Ayatollah Khamenei said.

Shamkhani also vehemently denounced the Israeli strike on a school sheltering displaced people in Gaza City that killed more than 100 Palestinians and wounded dozens of others early on Saturday.

"The only goal of Israel in killing worshippers at the al-Tabi School in Gaza and assassinating martyr Haniyeh in Iran is warmongering & derailing truce talks," the senior Iranian official argued.

Local media reports, citing witness accounts, said there were about 250 people inside the prayer hall at the school when it was struck by Israeli bombs while displaced people were performing the dawn prayer.

Witness accounts suggest many of the dead and injured are civilians, including women, children and the elderly.

Ismail al-Thawabta, head of Gaza's Government Media Office, said the Israeli military used three bombs weighing 2,000 pounds (907kg) each in its attack on the al-Tabi school in Gaza City's al-Daraj neighborhood.

Thawabta added that Israel was aware of the presence of displaced people inside the school.

Local sources said there is a huge influx of people pouring into the al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza City after the Israeli attack on the al-Tabi school. Many of those arriving are in critical condition.



### President Presents Proposed Cabinet to Majlis

TEHRAN - President Masoud Pezeshkian presented his proposed cabinet members for the 19 ministries to the parliament on Sunday for votes of confidence.

Former Central Bank governor Abdolnasser Hemmati has been proposed as the economic minister and former deputy foreign minister and top nuclear negotiator Abbas Araqchi is expected to take the helm of the foreign ministry.

Esmail Khatib will be reinstated as intelligence minister and former culture minister Abbas Salehi will be designated for the post once again, in case of getting the parliament's approval.

Mohsen Paknejad, with a history of developing gas fields as a senior advisor for the oil industry, is Pezeshkian's pick for the oil ministry.

Brigadier General Aziz Nasirzadeh, a former Deputy Chief of Staff for the Armed Forces and a veteran pilot has been introduced as the defense minister.

The only female candidate on the proposed list is Farzaneh Sadegh for the ministry of roads and urban development.

The other picks for the ministries are as follows:

Ministry of Education, Alireza Kazemi; Ministry of Communications Technology, Sattar Hashemi; Ministry of Health, Mohammadreza Zafarghandi; Ministry of Labor, Ahmad Meidari; Ministry of Agriculture, Gholamreza Nouri, Ministry of Justice, Amin Hossein Rahimi; Ministry of Industry, Mine, and Trade: Mohammad Atabak; Ministry of Science, Hossein Simaei; Ministry of Interior, Eskandar Momeni; Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Mohammadreza Salehi Amiri; Ministry of Energy, Abbas Aliabadi; Ministry of Sports, Ahmad Donyamali;

The parliament has a week to study the proposed cabinet members and will hold the public vote of confidence sessions from Saturday next week.

Addressing the Parliament, Vice-President Parliamentary Affairs Shahram Dabiri said: "We

will also make our efforts and ask all dear ones to work towards ensuring that we have good interaction and coordination. We aim to perform well in presenting bills, coordinate effectively, and provide proper explanations. Our goal is to handle the confidence vote in the best possible manner."

Dabiri emphasized: "Pezeshkian has made a completely non-partisan effort to form the cabinet, utilizing the views of various political factions. We hope that the parliament members will approach this matter with a fully positive outlook and that we can secure the confidence vote with strong support for the cabinet."

He said: "The issue is that we intend to work together for four years. It's not as if it ends with the initial stage; the parliament is young, and so is the government. We need to continue working together over these four years."

He added: "It's not that we secure the confidence vote today and declare the job done tomorrow. This work is ongoing, and we will strive to be alongside the representatives at every stage, keeping the parliament members in high regard."

Dabiri added: "I request that all parliamentary deputies and general directors become active in this regard. Personally, I am not partisan, and I invite all those who are interested in helping, who wish to assist the government and parliament and have the capability to do so, to cooperate with us."

He continued: "We do not have any particular partisan or political perspective. Whether they are friends who are with us now or those who will work with us in the future, our only basis for action is serving the people."

### Iran Will Decisively Make Israel Pay for Acts of Aggression

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's interim Foreign Minister says the Islamic Republic will "legitimately" and "decisively" make Israel pay for its crimes, including the assassination of Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran.

In a telephone conversation with Belgian Foreign Minister Hadja Lahbib on Saturday evening Ali Bagheri Kani said that the Israeli regime has destabilized West Asia with its strikes on Gaza and Lebanon and the "coward" assassination of Haniyeh on Iranian soil.

"In line with the defense of its national security, territorial integrity, and national sovereignty, the Islamic Republic of Iran will legitimately and decisively make the oppressive Israeli regime pay the price for its aggression under the international law and procedures as well as the UN Charter," he pointed out.

For her part, Lahbib voiced deep concern over the unfolding developments in West Asia, saying, "Brussels is worried about the deterioration of the situation in the region as lack of control over the state of affairs will result in a full-blown war."

She expressed support for the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and denounced the construction of illegal settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Lahbib added that Belgium supports the right of return of Palestinian refugees and at the same time seeks imposition of sanctions against extremist Israeli settlers.



The top Belgian diplomat underlined the need for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, stating that all parties should exercise maximum restraint in light of the worsening situation in West Asia and that continued consultation between Tehran and Brussels is highly required in this regard.

Bagheri Kani also held a similar phone conversation with Dutch Foreign Minister Caspar Veldkamp.

The two exchanged views over the Israeli assassination of Haniyeh and the Israeli strike on a school sheltering displaced people in Gaza City that killed more than 100 Palestinians and wounded dozens of others.

Bagheri Kani told Veldkamp that Western countries would have lectured others on the defense of human beings and human rights and employed all their capacities in case the attack on the al-Tabi school in Gaza City's al-Daraj neighborhood had been carried out by an entity other than the Zionist regime.

He pointed to the Israeli violation of Iran's national sovereignty and security following Haniyeh's targeted killing in Tehran, criticizing some European countries for remaining silent on Israel's terrorist acts which contravene international law.

"Unfortunately, some certain European states stay silent over the Zionist regime's terrorist actions which violate international laws and unjustifiably prevented the UN Security Council from investigating Israeli crimes."

"Such measures have resulted in continuation of the Zionist regime's brutalities and uptick in its atrocities," he noted.

### Gaza School Carnage Proves Israel Stain on Humanity



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf says Israel's recent massacre at a Gaza school sheltering displaced Palestinians shows once again that the regime is "a stain of shame on humanity."

Qalibaf made the remarks on Sunday, a day after more than 100 people were killed in the Israeli bombing of the al-Tabi school in Gaza City's al-Daraj neighborhood. The attack came at a time when people were performing dawn prayers and triggered a fire that ripped through the building.

"The crimes of the anti-human and criminal Zionist regime have no limits," he said during an open parliamentary session.

By the school carnage, he added, "the dishonorable regime proved once again that the Zionists are a stain of shame on humanity and that they do not understand a language other than force."

Qalibaf also said that the Islamic Republic strongly condemns Israel's latest atrocities which are "simultaneously crimes against humanity, genocide and war crimes".

He further urged Muslim governments to stop the occupying regime's killing machine by providing practical support for the Palestinian resistance movements.

Meanwhile, the top parliamentarian referred to Israel's assassination of Ismail Haniyeh, head of the political bureau of the Palestinian Hamas resistance group, in the Iranian capital Tehran on July 31.

"We regard avenging the blood of Martyr Ismail Haniyeh as our religious and national duty," he said, warning that "the Zionist regime must await a severe punishment from the Iranian nation."

On Saturday, Iran's first vice president Mohammad Reza Aref said in an X post that international organizations and the self-proclaimed advocates of human rights that are silent on Israeli atrocities in the Gaza Strip are actually "accomplices" to those crimes.

Israel unleashed a genocidal war on Gaza on October 7, 2023, after Hamas carried out its historic operation against the usurping entity in retaliation for the regime's intensified atrocities against the Palestinian people.

So far, the Tel Aviv regime has killed at least 39,790 Palestinians, mostly women and children, and injured 91,702 others.

### Iran Presents Report to UN Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination



TEHRAN (IRNA) - The Islamic Republic of Iran has provided the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination with a report on the improvement of the situation in the country in this regard.

The Iranian delegation, headed by Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Office in Geneva Ali Bahraini, attended the 113th session at the European headquarters of the United Nations and presented the fourth periodic report of Iran on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

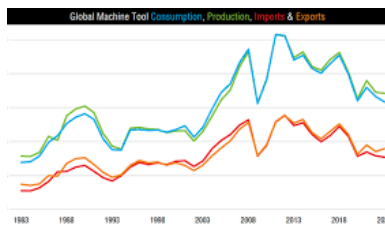
The delegation, consisting of representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Interior, the Human Rights Headquarters, the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, the Presidential Office, the Ministry of Education, and Parliament, took part in the session on August 7 and 8.

In the session, director-general of the Interior Ministry's political affairs office Abdollah Moradi referred to the policies of the Islamic Republic regarding ethnicities, religions, religious minorities, and foreign nationals, and presented a report on the measures taken by the ministry to promote human rights in Iran.

The 1969 International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination is a United Nations treaty that urges member states to eliminate racism and promote understanding between all races. All member states have to provide reports of their actions in line with the objectives and obligations of the convention.



# IRAN NEWS



## Allocation of \$1.3b for Imports in One Week

TEHRAN (ISNA) - According to a report from the Central Bank, from the beginning of the current year until today, \$25 billion has been allocated for the import of essential goods, medicine, commercial goods, and trade. During the past week alone, \$1.3 billion was provided for imports.

Based on the announcement from the Central Bank, from the beginning of the current year until August 7, 2024, a total of \$25.369 billion was allocated for the import of essential goods, medicine, commercial goods, trade, imports in exchange for exports, and services. This is an increase compared to the previous week's allocation and provision of \$24.081 billion, reflecting an additional \$1.3 billion provided for imports over the course of one week. According to this report, during this period, \$5.672 billion was allocated for essential goods and medicine, \$13.658 billion for commercial goods and trade, \$541 million for services, and \$5.498 billion for imports in exchange for exports.

## Record Low Unemployment Rate in Administration of Martyr Raisi



TEHRAN - Solat Mortazavi, the Minister of Cooperatives, Labor, and Social Welfare, in a meeting with the media, said: "These days, journalists are being martyred in Gaza in broad daylight, and not a single eyebrow is raised in the gatherings of global powers. Meanwhile, they applaud war criminals in their own Congress and Senate."

The Minister of Cooperatives, Labor, and Social Welfare emphasized: "Today, I thank all the members of the press, national media, newspaper journalists, and news agencies, regardless of their orientations and viewpoints, and I appreciate their diligent efforts."

He added: "Both the positive news of a hopeful journalist and their constructive criticism are effective. Sometimes when the public relations department complains about harsh media criticism, I invite them to be more patient. If we cannot tolerate media criticism, we will face problems in governance. Society must feel that the media voices the people's grievances."

Mortazavi acknowledged: "We also agree that the increase in workers' wages in recent years has not been sufficient, but inflation must be controlled for wage increases to be effective and not negated by rising prices."

This member of the 13th administration emphasized: "On Workers' Day, the Supreme Leader said that the way to improve the workers' situation is by creating jobs and preventing the closure of workshops. We have set a record in reducing the unemployment rate, as recognized by the World Bank. Nearly 10,000 dormant businesses have been reactivated during the three years of Martyr Raisi's administration, which is unprecedented."

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

## Highest Record of Foreign Investment Achieved Last Year

TEHRAN - The Minister of Economy stated: "In the area of credible foreign investment, we recorded the highest level in 16 years during the past Iranian calendar year (1402)."

Seyed Ehsan Khandouzi, in the first simulation meeting of BRICS Ministers of Economic Affairs and Finance and the second simulation meeting of Ministers of Economic Affairs and Finance of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), added: "Despite the pressures of sanctions, Iran was able to gain the trust of various countries."

He continued: "We also achieved the highest record in the volume and value of non-oil exports."

The Minister of Economy emphasized that the Ministry of Economy has implemented three key measures for economic diplomacy and outward economic orientation.

He stated that good news in this area will be announced soon, highlighting that Iran managed to surpass the record of previous years in terms of goods transit last year, with a registered figure of 18.5 million tons, marking the highest level of transit recorded.

Khandouzi added that in the first four months of the New Year, transit through the country increased by 58% compared to the same period last year.

He continued, noting that this demonstrates Iran's advantages in corridor and transit routes compared to neighboring and regional countries, which have been effectively utilized.

The Minister of Economy further pointed out that another piece of good news is that one of the highest records in terms of volume and value of non-oil exports in recent years was achieved.

Khandouzi mentioned that the third and most hopeful measure taken by the ministry is investing in human capital development for economic diplomacy.

He emphasized that today's meeting is, in his view, one of the best examples of efforts made to cooperate with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and BRICS in long-term investment for sustainable relationships and training the next generation, ensuring these countries are connected in terms of diplomacy and economy.

The Minister of Economy continued, stating that regardless of any sanctions or international pressures, as long-term and sustainable investments in economic diplomacy, you are the harbingers of more significant and long-term achievements.

Khandouzi noted that the most important and long-term investment is in the human resources of countries. He added that simulating the meetings of the Islamic Cooperation Organization and BRICS ministers, along with the agreement to establish a club, could be the beginning of a path that will foster the innovation and talents of young people.

He further stated that this could also link young talents with the achievements and experiences of the country's executive managers in the fields of diplomacy and economy.

The Minister of Economy expressed hope that in the coming years, among you, there will be trainers for future courses, and we will witness the emergence of skilled and highly qualified forces in the country's policy-making forums and in the fields of diplomacy, commercial interactions, and investment.

Khandouzi said he was proud that, despite all the negative propaganda, this meeting is being held in the stable and secure capital of Iran.

He continued by stating that meetings like today's are important actions and platforms, and those responsible should not neglect their continuity.

The Minister of Economy added that his suggestion is to institutionalize the outputs and achievements of this meeting, noting that the Ministry of Economy is ready to help turn this path into a sustainable institution, a strong and fruitful tree for the benefit of all the young members of BRICS, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and other like-minded and freedom-loving nations around the world.

Khandouzi emphasized his hope that the results of this simulated meeting will help transform the relationships between BRICS members into sustainable ones in the fields of economy, trade, investment, and financial institutions, leading to a bright future.

## Annually, Half a Million People Are Added to the Diabetic Population



TEHRAN - A World Health Organization (WHO) advisor stated that the number of diabetics in the country has doubled over the past 30 years. He mentioned that the Tehran Lipid and Glucose Study has shown that each year, the diabetic population increases by 1%, and the pre-diabetic population by 4%. If no change is made to people's lifestyles, about 500,000 new diabetics will be added annually.

Fereidoun Azizi, who has held numerous positions in the health sector, such as President of Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Deputy Research Minister of Health, and current WHO advisor since 1990, spoke on the issue. He is also the current President of the Research Institute for Endocrine Sciences at Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences.

Azizi said: According to the latest data, 14.2% of the adult population in the country has diabetes, and 24.8% have pre-diabetes. Therefore, the prevalence of diabetes in Iran is higher than the global average of 12.2%. It is estimated that around 6 million people in Iran have diabetes, and around 8 million have pre-diabetes. This means that one in every six adults has high blood sugar. In the metropolis of Tehran, one in every three people has above-normal blood sugar."

He added: "This data comes from studies conducted every 5 to 7 years over the past three decades in Iran, where blood sugar levels are measured. While other factors besides blood sugar were also considered, blood sugar was the most significant one. These studies show that between 30% and 50% of people with diabetes are unaware of their condition. However, this percentage is gradually decreasing, as blood sugar tests are now commonly recommended when people visit doctors."

Azizi noted: "The latest study shows that 20% to 25% of children in Tehran are overweight, which makes them more susceptible to type 2 diabetes during adolescence. Identifying these children requires a precise healthcare system, which we still lack."

He concluded: "In the past 30 years, the number of diabetics has doubled. The Tehran Lipid and Glucose Study has shown that each year, the diabetic population increases by 1%, and the pre-diabetic population by 4%. This increase is less pronounced in small towns and villages. Therefore, if no change is made to people's lifestyles and the trend of overweight and obesity continues, approximately 500,000 new diabetics will be added annually."

## New Gov't Plans to Transform Iran into a Health Tourism Hub in Mideast

TEHRAN - The Vice President for Parliamentary Affairs announced the Fourteenth Government's plan to make Iran one of the leading countries in the health tourism industry. He emphasized the importance of focusing on health tourism and maximizing the benefits from this industry, as Iran is among the top 10 countries globally in terms of tourism attractions.

Shahram Dabbiri Askoui, speaking at the Third International Conference and Exhibition of Hospitals and Medical Centers held at the IRIB International Conference Center, highlighted the significance of health tourism for the country. He stated that Iran has a strong medical education system, with graduates capable of obtaining European and American specialty board certifications.

He added that Iran is relatively well-equipped with medical facilities, and these resources should be leveraged in the health tourism industry.

Dabbiri pointed out that medical service costs in Iran are lower compared to other countries, making it a priority for the government to strengthen relations with other countries. Besides health tourism, Iran should utilize its potential in the broader tourism industry and legal capacities, planning effectively to capitalize on the advantages of this sector.

He noted that the quality of medical services in Iran is very high, comparable to advanced European countries, and that this capacity should be used to attract foreign patients, which would also contribute to the revenue of hospitals.

He continued, "In both government and parliament, we are working to use the planning, capacities, and efforts of the medical community and private sector to promote the health tourism industry, aiming to make Iran one of the leading countries in the region."

Continuing the discussion, the chairman of the Third International Conference and Exhibition of Hospitals and Medical Centers said, "The Seventh Development Plan includes targets of \$1 billion in medical equipment exports, \$1 billion in pharmaceutical revenue, and \$6 billion from health tourism. The Fourteenth Government is expected to collaborate with the private sector to achieve these goals."

Ali Chegini, Director-General of the Economic Diplomacy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said at the conference, "We must introduce Iran's health tourism capacities more than we have done so far; this industry is neglected."

## Severe Shortage of Nurses "Clear and Evident"



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - President of the Nursing System Organization Dr. Ahmad Nejatian, in a specialized consultation meeting on nursing issues, stated: "The Nursing System Organization was a blessing that originated from the university. Professors pursued it, and clinical nurses supported it, leading to the establishment of the Nursing System Organization."

He continued, "It seems that there has been a disconnect between academic discussions and the Nursing System Organization, which has primarily focused on nursing demands. However, according to the Nursing System Organization's law, out of its ten duties, five are clearly defined in the areas of education and research."

The President of the Nursing System Organization elaborated on its goals, saying: "Collaborating in developing educational programs and standards for nurses, determining the number and method of nursing student admissions, striving to enhance the quality of skills, aiding in expanding research in the field of nursing, and cooperating in scientific, research, and professional exchanges with national and international institutions to improve the quality of educational services are among the objectives of the Nursing System Organization."

He added, "Fortunately, at present, in 159 Nursing System Boards, we have at least two faculty members, meaning we are proud to have 300 faculty members on these boards. A group of nursing professors and veterans also participate and are active in the Nursing System Organization's Supreme Council. Therefore, the synergy between the Nursing System Organization's activities and the Nursing Board is in a very favorable state."

Nejatian further stated that the severe shortage of nurses in the country is clear and evident, noting: "In reality, we have only half

the nurses needed, and considering that most nurses work in hospitals, we use the nurse-to-bed ratio to assess the nursing situation in Iran. Currently, we have less than one nurse per hospital bed."

According to the Ministry of Health, he added, "We still do not have comprehensive and complete data on the number and variety of nurses in the country. Unfortunately, in some areas of the country, such as Ahvaz, the nurse-to-bed ratio is less than half, indicating poor management in recruiting nurses. The reasons for this shortage include migration and nurses leaving their jobs. Another reality is that we are not facing a phenomenon of unemployed nurses, and currently, there is no request for employment in the country."

The President of the Nursing System Organization added, "Statistics show that the average service tenure for nurses is 10 years, indicating the presence of young professionals in the nursing field. However, if no measures are taken for this field, given the aging population phenomenon that we will face in the coming years, we will encounter problems."

He concluded by saying, "Nurses and doctors must have an innovative and creative approach to health issues, and interdisciplinary education should be emphasized so that individuals are not trained in a one-dimensional manner."

Nejatian added, "The law on nursing service tariffs has been proposed for 15 years but needs analysis, critique, and examination in theses and articles, and the latest health system concepts should be included in educational programs."

## NPC Exporting 34m Tons of Petrochemicals This Year



TEHRAN (Shana) - Director of Planning and Development at the National Petrochemical Company (NPC) Hassan Abaszadeh has predicted that the country's actual petrochemical output will reach 83 million tons this Iranian calendar year up to 19 March 2025, of which 34 million tons will be exported to other countries.

He further noted that new petrochemical projects would come online during the period, increasing the total production capacity of the petrochemicals to 103 million tons.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he said that over the Seventh National Development Plan, about 60 petrochemical projects will be coming online, creating 35 million tons of extra capacity, some of which have more than 50 percent physical progress.

According to him, Iran's petrochemical production capacity will climb from 96 million tons to 132 million tons at the end of the 7th National Development Plan.

Last week, Deputy for Planning at the Petroleum Ministry, Houshang Felahatian said that the petrochemical industry was a fertile ground for realizing the Seventh National Development Plan targets even though success in the sector requires investment in completing the value chain.

He made the remarks during the closing day of the 15th Iran Petrochemical Forum here on August 5, expressing hope that dialogues and exchanging views offered in the forum sessions would result in finding ways to promote the place of the petrochemical industry.

Referring to the importance of the petrochemical sector in the country, he said that part of non-oil exports is derived from the petrochemical sector whose capacity and worth are on the rise by launching new projects.

By launching new projects, the petrochemical sector's annual production capacity will reach 103 million tons before the end of current Iranian calendar year of 1403, which ends on March 19, 2025, the official said.



### Belarus Boosts Troops at Border, Summons Diplomat

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Belarus sent more troops to reinforce its border with Ukraine on Saturday, saying Ukrainian drones had violated its airspace in the course of Kyiv's military incursion into Russia's Kursk region. Belarus' Foreign Ministry summoned Ukraine's charge d'affaires, demanded measures to ensure such incidents would not recur and suggested a repeat would prompt Belarus to consider whether Kyiv's diplomatic presence in Minsk was "appropriate".

President Alexander Lukashenko, addressing a meeting in eastern Belarus, said air defence forces on Friday destroyed several of "about a dozen" Ukrainian drones after they violated Belarusian airspace in the Mogilev region bordering Russia.

Lukashenko, one of Russian President Vladimir Putin's closest allies, said others were later destroyed near the Russian city of Yaroslavl.

"I don't understand why Ukraine had to do this. We have to look into it," the BelTA news agency quoted him as saying. "But we have...made ourselves clear and conveyed to them that any provocation will not go unanswered."



### Thousands Protest in Serbian Capital Against Lithium Mine



BELGRADE (Dispatches) - Thousands hit the streets in Serbia's capital Belgrade to protest the rebooting of a controversial lithium mine set to serve as a vital source to power Europe's green energy transition.

Ahead of the rally, two leading protest figures said security officials had briefly detained them, warning them that any moves to block roads during the protest would be considered illegal.

Thousands chanted "Rio Tinto get out of Serbia" and "You won't dig" as they rallied in downtown Belgrade before setting off on a march through the city.

Interior Ministry figures later estimated the crowd size at between 24,000 and 27,000 people. Protestors later entered Belgrade's main railway station where demonstrators blocked tracks, halting traffic.

"The organisers and leaders were warned by the police both before and during the protest that their actions were not in accordance with the law," Interior Minister Ivica Dacic said in a statement, vowing charges would be filed against "all perpetrators".

Serbia has vast lithium deposits near the western city of Loznica. A mining project being developed by the Anglo-Australian mining giant Rio Tinto has been a perennial political fault line in the Balkan country in recent years because of its potential environmental impacts.

The deposits were discovered in 2004, but weeks of mass protests forced the government to halt the project in 2022.

The government revived the project following a court decision last month that said the order to revoke the permits awarded to Rio Tinto was "not in line with the constitution and the law".

### World Pours Scorn on Israel for Horrifying and Barbaric Bombing of Gaza School



GAZA CITY (Dispatches) - Rescuers in Gaza said an Israeli air strike on a school housing displaced Palestinians killed 93 people on Saturday, sparking international condemnation despite Israel's insistence that it was targeting militants.

AFP could not independently verify the toll which, if confirmed, would be one of the largest from a single strike during 10 months of war between Israel and Palestinian militants since Hamas's October 7 attack.

The bombardment of Al-Tabieen religious school and mosque drew criticism from across the Middle East and beyond alongside calls for a ceasefire, after international mediators invited the warring sides to resume talks towards a long-sought truce and hostage-release deal.

Civil defense rescuers in the Hamas-ruled territory said three Israeli missiles hit the complex in Gaza City while people were performing dawn prayers. The military confirmed it had used "three precise munitions".

Mahmud Bassal, spokesman for the civil defense agency, said 11 children and six women were among the 93 who died at the school shelter, "and there are many unidentified body parts".

"They dropped a missile on them while they were just praying," said one woman, mourning over a dead child shrouded in a plastic body bag.

Israel's military said it had "precisely struck" Al-Tabieen, later adding that intelligence suggested "at least 19 Hamas and Islamic Jihad terrorists were eliminated".

Hamas denounced it as a "dangerous escalation", while the Palestinian group's Lebanese ally Hezbollah called it a "horrific massacre".

With nearly all of the Gaza Strip's 2.4 million people displaced at least once during the war, many have sought refuge in school buildings, which have been hit at least 14 times since July 6, according to an AFP tally.

Israel has made similar accusations of armed activities after strikes on school shelters, while Hamas has denied using civilian facilities for military aims.

US National Security Council spokesman Sean Savett said Hamas has been operating out of schools, "but we have also said repeatedly and consistently that Israel must take measures to minimise civilian harm".

Jordan's foreign ministry said the timing was an indication of Israel's efforts to "obstruct and thwart" the latest mediation effort.

One of the mediators, Qatar, called for an "urgent international investigation", while Turkey claimed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu wanted "to sabotage ceasefire negotiations".

The European Union's foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said the school strike left him "horrified".

France said "Israel must respect international humanitarian law".

### Zelenskiy Acknowledges Ukraine's Military Operation in Russia

KYIV (Dispatches) - President Volodymyr Zelenskiy acknowledged for the first time on Saturday that Ukrainian forces were fighting in the surprise offensive in Russia's Kursk, as the border region's authorities rushed to evacuate civilians from areas at risk.

Moscow's forces are in their sixth day of intense battles against Kyiv's largest incursion into Russian territory since the start of the war, which left southwestern parts of Russia vulnerable before reinforcement started arriving.

In a sign of the gravity of the situation, Russia imposed a sweeping security regime in three border regions on Saturday, while Belarus, a staunch ally of Moscow, sent more troops to its border with Ukraine, accusing Kyiv of violating its air space.

In his nightly video address, Zelenskiy said he had discussed the operation with top Ukrainian commander Oleksandr Syrskiy, vowing to restore justice after Russia launched a full-scale aggression on its smaller neighbour in February 2022.

"Today, I received several reports from commander-in-chief Syrskiy regarding the front lines and our actions to push the war onto the aggressor's territory," he said.

"Ukraine is proving that it can indeed restore justice and ensure the necessary pressure on the aggressor."

Russian President Vladimir Putin cast the Ukrainian attack - which military analysts say caught the Kremlin off-guard - as a major provocation.

Russia's top general, Valery Gerasimov, said on Wednesday the attacks had been halted, but Russia has thus far failed to push the Ukrainian forces back over the border.

Russian military bloggers say the situation had stabilised after Russia's reinforcements, though they said Ukraine was swiftly building up forces.



Early on Sunday, Kursk officials said that 13 people were injured in the city after debris from a destroyed Ukraine-launched missile fell onto a nine-storey residential building.

Alexei Smirnov, Kursk's acting governor, ordered local authorities to speed up the evacuation of civilians in areas at risk. On Saturday, Russia's TASS state news agency reported that more than 76,000 people had been evacuated.

Both Kyiv and Moscow deny targeting civilians in their attacks in the war, which has killed thousands of people and displaced millions of Ukrainians, and has no end in sight.

Russian military bloggers say that fighting is taking place as deep as 20 km (12 miles) inside the Kursk region, prompting some of them to question why Ukraine was able to pierce the Kursk region so easily.

Meanwhile Russia launched an air attack on Kyiv, with air defense systems engaged on the outskirts of the city in repelling the strikes, the mayor of the Ukrainian capital and military administration officials said early on Sunday.

"Air defence units operating, air raid alert continues," Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko wrote on the Telegram messaging app.

Reuters witnesses said they heard at least two explosions in what sounded like air defence units at work.

It was not immediately clear if the attack caused any damage or injuries.

Serhiy Popko, head of Kyiv's military administration, said on Telegram that the capital remained under the threat of Russia's ballistic missiles.

Kyiv, its surrounding region and all of eastern Ukraine were under air raid alerts, Ukraine's air force said on Telegram.

### Philippines, China Trade Accusations Over South China Sea

MANILA (Dispatches) - The Philippines and China traded accusations following an encounter between their aircraft over a contested area of the South China Sea.

The Philippine military strongly condemned "dangerous and provocative actions" by China's air force, while the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) said it acted in a professional and legal manner.

It is the first time the Philippines has complained of dangerous actions by Chinese aircraft, as opposed to navy or coast guard vessels, since President Ferdinand Marcos Jr took office in 2022.

Two Chinese Air Force aircraft executed a dangerous manoeuvre and dropped flares in the path of a Philippine air force aircraft conducting a routine patrol over the Scarborough Shoal on Thursday morning, the military said in a statement.

It "endangered the lives of our personnel undertaking maritime security operations recently within Philippine maritime zones", said Philippines armed forces chief Romeo Brawner, adding that the Chinese aircraft interfered with lawful flight operations and violated international law on aviation safety.

The Philippine aircraft, "despite repeated warnings from China, insisted on illegally intruding into the airspace of Huangyan Island", disrupting training activities, the Southern Theater Command of the Chinese PLA said on Saturday.

China's naval and air forces carried out identification, tracking, warning, and expulsion in accordance with the law, it added.

"The on-site operation was professional, abided by norms, legitimate and legal," the PLA said, urging the Philippines to stop what it called infringement and provocation.

### Harris Leads Trump in Three Key Swing States, New Poll Shows

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - US Vice President and Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris leads Republican former President Donald Trump in three battleground states - Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Michigan - by four points, according to polls by the New York Times and Siena College.

Harris is ahead of Trump by four percentage points in those three states, 50% to 46% among likely voters in each state, according to the surveys conducted from August 5-9.

The margin of sampling error among likely voters was plus or minus 4.8 percentage points in Michigan, plus or minus 4.2 points in Pennsylvania and plus or minus 4.3 points in Wisconsin, the report added. In total, 1,973 likely voters were interviewed for those polls.

Read more: Trump reverses course and agrees to debate Harris in September

Democratic US President Joe Biden ended his reelection bid on July 21 and endorsed Harris for the November 5 vote against Trump after a disastrous debate performance against Trump in late June.

Harris' takeover has reenergised a campaign that had faltered badly amid Democrats' doubts about Biden's chances of defeating Trump or his ability to continue to govern had he won.

US support for Israel's war in Gaza, which has killed tens of thousands and caused a humanitarian crisis after Palestinian Islamist group Hamas' October 7 attack on Israel, had led to large protests and opposition against the Biden administration in those states, especially in Michigan from some liberal, Muslim-American and Arab-American groups.

About 200,000 people from those three states were "uncommitted" to supporting Biden in the Democratic primaries, citing Gaza policy. Harris has made some forceful public comments on Palestinian human rights and expressed a tonal shift, even though she has displayed no substantive

policy differences from Biden on Gaza.

Polls showed that Trump had built a lead over Biden, including in battleground states, after Biden's debate performance, but Harris' entry to the race has changed the dynamic.

An Ipsos poll published on Thursday showed Harris led Trump nationally 42% to 37% in the race for the November 5 election.

That online nationwide poll of 2,045 US adults was conducted August 2-7 and had a margin of error of around 3 percentage points.







## USA Beat France 98-87 for Men's Basketball Olympic Gold

PARIS (Dispatches) - The United States won their fifth straight Olympic men's basketball crown on Saturday, holding off a battling France 98-87 to take their tally of Olympic golds to 17.

In a rematch of the Tokyo Olympics final three years ago, LeBron James and the US team stacked with NBA stars once again proved too much for France, despite the efforts of sensational NBA Rookie of the Year Victor Wembanyama.

France sliced a 14-point deficit to three with 3min 04sec to play on Wembanyama's put-back dunk, but Golden State Warriors star Stephen Curry drilled a three-pointer -- one of four from him with less than three minutes remaining -- and the United States relentlessly powered to the finish.

Curry finished with eight three-pointers -- including a rainbow over a leaping Wembanyama -- and led the US scoring with 24 points.

"You just simply marvel," James said of Curry. "Having him on your side, you just try to get stops and figure out other ways on the other end but keep finding him, keep getting him the ball." Curry said of his late-game heroics: "I was just trying to settle us down."

"All we wanted to do was get a good shot," Curry said. "It had been a while since we had a good possession."

"(Finally) the momentum was on our side. At that point, your mind goes blank. You don't really care about setting or the scenario or anything. It's just a shot."

Kevin Durant and Devin Booker added 15 points apiece and James scored 14 with six rebounds, 10 assists, a steal and a block.

For Durant it was a US men's record fourth Olympic gold. James earned his third and Curry, a four-time NBA champion, claimed his first in his first Olympic appearance.

"There's a lot of relief," Curry said. "It wasn't easy but, damn, I'm excited, man. This is everything that I wanted it to be and more, so I'm excited."

Wembanyama had his best offensive game of the Olympics, scoring 26 points. Guerschon Yabusele added 20.

France connected on just nine of 30 three-point attempts and the United States held a 31-9 advantage in fast-break points.

Both teams were locked in defensively in a tense first half that featured 10 lead changes. Wembanyama soared for a dunk that gave France an 11-10 lead and sent the Bercy Arena crowd into a frenzy.

The Americans were soon back in front when Booker made a layup off a behind-the-back pass from James and a steal from James set Jayson Tatum loose for a dunk.

Down by five after one quarter, France took a 25-24 lead on a Bilal Coulibaly dunk, but the US continued to capitalize in transition off of France's misses.

James drove through traffic for a layup, drawing a foul and flexing at the US bench before making the free throw to put the United States up 37-31, and they led 49-41 at halftime.

The dream final drew a raft of luminaries. French President Emmanuel Macron was in the house and so was sprint star Sha'Carri Richardson, a day after she anchored the US 4x100m relay to gold.

James signalled his intentions early, taking the court in golden shoes and opening the scoring with a dunk.

Curry, who scored 36 points in the come-from-behind semi-final victory over Serbia, heated up in the second half, giving the US their biggest lead of the game, 61-47, with a three-pointer early in the third.

France kept pressing and were only six down heading into the fourth quarter, but finally had to watch the US players celebrate at the end, draped in flags.

A downcast Wembanyama could only hug his teammates, but with the silver medal around his neck he called the experience "incredible" and said he'd try to return the favor at Los Angeles in 2028.

"I will be going for gold in four years' time," he said.

Earlier Saturday, Serbia won bronze with a dominant 93-83 victory over World Cup champions Germany.

Three-time NBA Most Valuable Player Nikola Jokic posted a triple double of 19 points, 12 rebounds and 11 assists to lead Serbia, who lost 95-91 to the United States in the semi-finals.

## Arian Salimi Clinches Gold in Taekwondo, Third for Iran



TEHRAN - Iran's Arian Salimi comes from behind to defeat his British opponent Caden Cunningham 2-1 in the men's taekwondo +80-kg final to clinch a gold medal, third for Iran at the Paris Olympics.

The 20-year-old lost the first round to Cunningham before trouncing his opponent in two breathtaking subsequent rounds. He qualified for the finals after winning against Carlos Sansores, the world's second-ranked from Mexico and Nikita Rafalovich an experienced and well-known national player of Uzbekistan.

Salimi's victory came after 16 years waiting since the last time Hadi Saie, who is now the head of the Taekwondo Federation, had won the gold medal in the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

The run-up match had seen Salimi defeating former taekwondo world champion Ivan Šapina from Croatia 2-1 to advance to the final.

President Masoud Pezeshkian felicitated Salimi on the occasion in a post on the X social media platform, praising his "powerfully-achieved" gold medal, and commending him for enlightening the hearts of the nation. Majlis (Parliament) Speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf also congratulated the athlete in a similar post, calling him an "indefatigable" sportsman.

Salimi's epic triumph came 16 years after Hadi Saei, former taekwondoka and the current head of the Iranian Taekwondo Federation, bagged a gold for the Islamic Republic in Beijing Olympics in 2008.

## Rublev Upsets Sinner in Rainy Montreal

MONTREAL (Dispatches) - Top-ranked Jannik Sinner suffered only his fifth loss of the season as Andrey Rublev knocked him out in the ATP Montreal Masters quarter-finals 6-3, 1-6, 6-2.

The match was interrupted for 30 minutes by rain at the end of the first set.

After dropping the first set but sweeping the second, Sinner often looked out of energy in the third, seemingly exhausted and often loosening his right hip.

Sinner had won a third-round match earlier in the day, his double duty caused by rain washing out all play on Friday.

The US Open tuneup event was the first for the world number one since losing a Wimbledon quarter-final a month ago while feeling ill and then missing the Olympics with tonsillitis.

He is due to travel to Cincinnati for next week's Masters, last big event before the US Open.

Meanwhile American Amanda Anisimova upset two-time reigning Australian Open champion Aryna Sabalenka 6-4, 6-2 to reach the semi-finals of the WTA Toronto Masters.

Anisimova, into her first Masters semi-final, advanced to a Sunday showdown against US eighth seed Emma Navarro, who eliminated fellow American lucky loser Taylor Townsend 6-3, 7-6 (7/5).

Anisimova, 22, will try to reach her fourth career WTA final and first

since winning at Melbourne in January 2022.

She also won at Bogota in 2019 after losing her first career WTA final at the 2018 Japan Open.

World number 15 Navarro, 23, won her only prior WTA final in January at Hobart.

"She's a player who is definitely on fire right now. She's playing some great tennis," Anisimova said of Navarro. "I'm sure it will be a tough match."

World number three Sabalenka was broken in the 10th game to drop the first set, netting a backhand to surrender to set then slamming her racquet to the court in frustration.

After an early exchange of breaks in the second set, Sabalenka netted a backhand to give 132nd-ranked Anisimova a break and a 4-2 edge.

Anisimova, who has not lost a set this week, then won the last eight points -- holding at love for a 5-2 lead and breaking at love to complete the upset after 86 minutes when Sabalenka double faulted.

"She's an amazing player, so it's always really tough playing against her," Anisimova said of Sabalenka.

Third-seeded defending champion Jessica Pegula advanced by eliminating fellow American Peyton Stearns 6-4, 7-5 in 89 minutes.

Pegula stormed back after falling behind 5-2 in the second set.

"I just reminded myself of what I needed to focus on," Pegula said.



"Even though it was 5-2, I knew there was always still a chance I could come back, especially having break points earlier on in the set as well and that seemed to work for me."

Pegula reached her fourth consecutive Canadian Masters semi-final, matching Gabriela Sabatini and Simona Halep one off the record held by Monica Seles.

## "Flying Kiwi" Kerr Win Olympic High Jump Gold



PARIS (Dispatches) - Hamish Kerr said he was "in shock" after winning the Olympic men's high jump on Saturday to take a rare athletics gold for New Zealand.

Both men managed bests of 2.36 metres in regular competition, but could not be separated on countback of missed jumps.

They opted for a jump-off, Kerr clearing 2.34m when the American failed after the bar was lowered from 2.38m to 2.36m.

"I was just in shock. Both me and Shelby were getting a little bit tired after all the jumps we took," said Kerr.

"I knew I had a good one in me, and I knew that if I could get it up sooner rather than later, then I could just finish the comp and start recovering."

There was a hint of déjà vu at the Stade de France as Qatar's Mutaz Essa Barshim, who finished third this time, had shared Olympic gold with Italian Gianmarco Tamperi in the Covid-hit Tokyo Games three years ago.

"That has such a special place in history for high jumps," Kerr said.

"To have an exact same scenario this time around, but to choose to do the jump-off, was putting at peace some of those people who wanted to jump-off, so we're both really happy to add to that history."

The discussion Kerr and McEwen shared with officials was short and to the point: both athletes wanted to continue, there was to be no shared gold.

"We're good buddies, good opponents, and good jumpers when we jump together," McEwen said of Kerr.

"He said he wanted to face off, and I was all for it.

"We faced off until the last battle and he came out on top, so salute, congratulations to him. I know I will be back, stronger and fit, better than ever.

"I'm just ready to celebrate this moment."

When McEwen missed his attempt at 2.34m in the jump-off, world indoor champion Kerr had his chance and took it with aplomb.

"High jump's always a rollercoaster, there's always guys who will miss and then clear, and then miss," Kerr said.

"The big thing that we've been working on personally, and me and my team, is it's not over until it's over."

## Man City Beat Man United on Penalties to Win Community Shield

LONDON (Dispatches) - Premier League champions Manchester City beat FA Cup winners Manchester United 7-6 on penalties to win the Community Shield at Wembley on Saturday after the traditional season curtain-raiser finished level at 1-1.

Erik ten Hag's side looked on course to repeat their shock victory over City in the FA Cup final when Alejandro Garnacho put United ahead after 82 minutes, but City midfielder Bernardo Silva netted a minute from time to send the match to penalties.

City defender Manuel Akanji scored the decisive spot-kick after Silva had earlier missed in the shootout. United centre back Jonny Evans and winger Jadon Sancho failed to convert their penalties in the shootout.

United thought they had taken the lead soon after halftime when captain Bruno Fernandes beat goalkeeper Ederson with a stunning finish from distance, but the effort was disallowed for offside.

Substitute Garnacho ran through the City defence to slide the ball into the bottom corner of the net before Silva converted Oscar Bobb's from close range to send the game to a shootout.

City won the trophy for the first time since 2019 to end a run of defeats in Community Shield matches, following losses to Arsenal last season, Liverpool in 2022 and Leicester City in 2021.

"I enjoyed the season against our rival in Manchester and to start the season with a title is good. We are really pleased," City manager Pep Guardiola told ITV.

"We lost a lot of balls, after transitions they are one of the best teams in the world. They are so dangerous to control. But in the end, we did it.

"It is nice to play this game because it means you won something in the previous season... The target now is not to win the Premier League, it is 'OK next game try and win it'. This is what we have to do."

City's England players Phil Foden, Kyle Walker and John Stones as well as Spain midfielder Rodri were unavailable for selection, leading Guardiola to field an unfamiliar line-up with four academy players starting.

Their young side dominated possession after a slow start, however, with United's sloppy play handing the first

chance of the game to youngster James McAtee who struck the post.

"Tough result to take. When the performance is right, when you lose everyone feels this. It hurts in your stomach. You have to feel pain and we have to hurt. We have to take this belief into the league," Ten Hag told ITV.

"We managed to be on an equal level with Man City... We created chances, we got pressure in the ball and in possession we had some very good chances from this so there are many positives we can take."

City begin their quest for a fifth consecutive Premier League title at Chelsea on Aug. 18, while United start their campaign at home to Fulham on Friday.

