

Jordan's Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi was to Arrive in Tehran Yesterday to Hold Talks With His Iranian Counterpart Regarding the Recent Developments in the Region and Bilateral Relations

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Haniyeh Assassination Designed, Executed by Israel, Supported by U.S.



TEHRAN (PressTV) - The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) says the assassination of the head of the political bureau of the Hamas resistance movement, Ismail Haniyeh, in the Iranian capital Tehran, was designed and executed by Israel, with support from the U.S. administration. In a statement released on Saturday, the IRGC reported that the attack involved the use of a short-range projectile armed with a warhead weighing approximately seven kilograms, which subsequently caused a massive explosion. It further noted that the projectile was launched from an area outside the late Hamas leader's residence. The IRGC also vowed that it would avenge the blood of Haniyeh, noting that the terrorist Zionist regime would face severe punishment at "the appropriate time, place and manner." Haniyeh, who was in Tehran to attend the swearing-in ceremony of Iran's newly-elected President Masoud Pezeshkian, alongside other Axis of Resistance leaders, was martyred along with his bodyguard, in an attack early on July 31. Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has warned the Israeli regime of a "harsh response" for Haniyeh's assassination, saying it was the Islamic Republic's duty to avenge the Palestinian resistance leader's blood. Israel is on edge fearing widely-expected retaliatory moves from Iran and the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement following the assassinations of Haniyeh and top Hezbollah commander Fuad Shukur. On July 30, Israel killed Shukur in an airstrike in southern Beirut. A day later, the head of Hamas' politburo was killed in Tehran. Over the past two days, Air India, Germany's Lufthansa Group, US carriers United Airlines and Delta Air, and Italy's ITA Airways said they had suspended flights to Tel Aviv in the 1948 Israeli-occupied territories. On Friday, Washington announced it would send navy cruisers, destroyers and fighter jets to West Asia to bolster support for its main regional ally Israel. Iran's interim Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani has said that the Islamic Republic will use its legitimate and inherent right to punish the Israeli regime for the assassination of senior Palestinian resistance leader Ismail Haniyeh on Iranian soil.

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK



MOSCOW (IRNA) - The Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Moscow believes the mega project of transferring Russian gas to Iran is a win-win equation with numerous mutual benefits for both countries and their peoples.

Kazem Jalali, in an interview, stated: "Previously, there was a discussion that Iran and Russia were competitors in the energy sector, and some even suggested that the relationship between Iran and Russia could not be stable due to this competition. However, current global conditions have pushed Iran and Russia towards a form of cooperation in the energy sector."

He mentioned that part of the cooperation between the two countries involves pricing and policymaking in the energy sector. For example, in OPEC+, Iran and Russia collaborate. Additionally, part of the Tehran-Moscow cooperation in the energy field is related to investment in oil fields. Russians made the largest investment in Iran in 2023, securing the top position in foreign investment in the country.

Jalali noted that the third aspect of energy cooperation between the two countries pertains to the gas industry. Iran has previously discussed Russian investment in some of its gas fields, a topic that remains open.

He further pointed to the signing of the gas transfer memorandum between the two countries, highlighting that it is the result of extensive negotiations between the two governments, leading to an agreement that can be considered a mega project in their relations.

Jalali addressed concerns about the sustainability of these relations, emphasizing that both sides must recognize mutual benefits to foster more stable relations. The recent developments

in bilateral relations can stabilize them for years to come, with the gas transfer from Russia to Iran being a win-win equation. This project brings significant benefits to both the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Russian Federation, without causing harm to any party.

The Iranian Ambassador in Moscow indicated that a major initiative in the energy sector, encompassing both oil and gas, has been launched, which promises substantial mutual benefits for both nations and their peoples.

According to IRNA, a bilateral cooperation agreement for the transfer of Russian natural gas to Iran was signed on June 27, 2024, between the National Iranian Gas Company and Gazprom Sport, in the presence of the then acting President of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Special Representative of the Russian President and the head of Gazprom. The Russian Federal City analytical base previously reported that the signed agreement envisages the construction of the largest gas pipeline through the Caspian Sea with a maximum capacity of 300 million cubic meters of gas per day.

The report noted that the construction of this gas pipeline would enable the pumping of 110 billion cubic meters of gas annually.

Federal City further stated that even if the pipeline designed to transfer 110 billion cubic meters of gas does not operate at full capacity, having a substantial reserve in the gas structure of the Russian Federation and Iran is a serious investment for the future. The world is changing, and the fragmentation of the global economy into large regional clusters is becoming more of a reality day by day.

Iran Voices Serious Resolve to Bring Israel to Account for Crimes



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Interim Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani has expressed Iran's "serious resolve" to bring Israel to account for its crimes and adventures that put the region at risk.

In posts on his X account early on Sunday, Bagheri Kani said that he had discussed regional developments with top Jordanian and Egyptian diplomats during his second telephone conversation with the pair in the past 48 hours. "The situation in West Asia is particularly critical due to continued crimes and dangerous adventures of the ruling criminal gang in Tel Aviv," he said. "The regional Muslim countries should adopt a unified and decisive position and take coordinated measures to prevent the continuation of the genocide in Gaza and the expansion of the Zionist regime's aggression in the region," he added, stressing that "Iran's resolve to hold the regime to account is serious." The remarks came four days after Ismail Haniyeh, the head of the political bureau of the Palestinian Hamas resistance group, was assassinated in an Israeli attack on his residence in the Iranian capital Tehran. The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) said in a statement that the terrorist attack involved the use of a short-range projectile armed with a warhead weighing approximately seven kilograms. The crime was planned and executed by Israel with the support of the US government, the IRGC added, warning that the Zionist regime would receive "a severe punishment at the appropriate time, place and manner." Hours before the act of terror in Tehran, Israel assassinated Fuad Shukur, a senior commander of the Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah, in Beirut. The dual-targeted killings come at a time when the occupying regime is waging a genocidal war on the Gaza Strip, which has killed 39,550 Palestinians, mostly women and children, in the past 10 months.

IRGC Official Blasts Western Human Rights



TEHRAN - Brigadier General Mohammadreza Naghdi, the Deputy Coordinator of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), addressed the National Assembly of Defenders of Human Rights of the Islamic Revolution and the commemoration of the Day of Basij Jurists. He honored the memory of martyrs who were jurists and stated: "Today is the time for a great legal revolution. The legal system based on Western civilization has proven its failure." He added: "A system in which killing thousands of innocent children, creating torture chambers, and depriving a nation of its rightful rights are deemed legitimate, but a system that is based on the will of the people and has been managed according to public opinion for 44 years is labeled as a dictatorship." Naghdi stated: "Western legal standards dictate that if 14,000 innocent women are martyred, it is legal, but if a woman dies due to illness after being summoned to a police station for a disciplinary issue, the whole world must rise in protest." He emphasized: "It is necessary for all true human rights lawyers and free people of the world to unite and create a movement against the malevolent rule of Western civilization. This issue is not resolved in conference rooms but in the field." Naghdi noted: "Rights are not given but must be seized through action. Unfortunately, we had a major oversight, thinking that only issuing statements and shouting slogans in the streets could make an impact. Meanwhile, our enemies have both committed injustices and been proactive in creating false cases, with over 500 cases fabricated against the Islamic Republic." He added: "Among these fabrications are issues like the Twin Towers and the depression of the American soldier's dog, for which they imposed fines and issued verdicts against us, yet we overlooked this extensive injustice." He reiterated: "Where is the case for the 14,000 children who were martyred in recent months? The August 28 coup that led to Bahrain's separation from Iran, the oil resources that were stolen, and our wealth that was plundered."

Regional Developments Have Limited Chinese Tourists in Iran



TEHRAN - Moslem Shojaei, Head of the Office of Marketing and Foreign Tourism Development at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, confirmed the decrease in tourists arriving from China to Iran. He stated that attracting a large number of tourists from China to Iran requires increasing flights and a serious entry of airlines to transfer more tourists from China to Iran. Referring to the good relations between Iran and China and the organization of at least four tourism events annually between the two countries, Shojaei noted that the level of tourism interactions between Iran and China is higher than with other countries in this field. Shojaei added that after the start of the al-Aqsa Storm and recent events in the region, the Chinese embassy issued a yellow travel warning for its citizens traveling to Iran, advising them to be cautious but not banning travel altogether. This warning was issued when other countries were evacuating their citizens from Iran. Emphasizing the strong relationships between Iran and China in various fields including tourism, Shojaei stated that in March 2022, post-COVID, China reopened for travel to other countries, and Iran was among the 40 countries Chinese tourists could visit. Even the USA was not on the list. Previously, for four years, Chinese citizens were not allowed to travel. He explained that travel warnings are typically issued in yellow, orange, and red levels worldwide. In April and May of this year, due to the start of the al-Aqsa Storm, China issued a yellow travel warning for its citizens traveling to Iran. With the intensification of regional tensions and events in Palestine and Lebanon, the number of Chinese tourists entering Iran also decreased.

Shojaei recalled that in the first six months of 2023, the number of Chinese tourists entering Iran increased significantly. However, with recent events, the number has declined. Regarding the impact of the decrease in Chinese tourists on Iran's tourism industry, Shojaei mentioned that most tourists come from neighboring countries, and the number of Chinese tourists is not significant

compared to those from Iraq, Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Oman, Kuwait, and Armenia. This trend is not unique to Iran; in the USA, most tourists come from Mexico rather than China. Discussing Iran's activities in the Chinese tourism market, Shojaei noted that Iran-China tourism interactions are very positive, with private sectors in both countries knowing each other well. Iran is recognized in cities like Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, and Xi'an, where Iranian content has been created using Chinese influencers. Thus, the Chinese tourism market is somewhat familiar with Iran. He pointed out that the main need in the Chinese tourism market is the low accessibility of Iran for Chinese tourists. Direct flights between Iran and China should be established and the number of flights increased to allow more tourists to travel to Iran, as Chinese tourists cannot travel to Iran by land or sea. Currently, there are only four weekly flights to China, which is insufficient. Regarding priorities for attracting large numbers of Chinese tourists to Iran, Shojaei stated: "The first step in any market is raising awareness about the destination. Chinese tourists need to know what Iran has to offer and why they should visit. The second step is increasing accessibility from China to Iran by establishing more flights. The third step is improving the quality of tourism services in Iran according to Chinese tourists' preferences and tastes."

On why mass tourism to Iran has not yet occurred, Shojaei said that attracting tourists takes time and Iran is on the right path. "We brought 21 Chinese influencers to Iran, whose content received 140 million views online, and this number is increasing. This is part of raising general awareness in the target tourism market."

Emphasizing that the number of Chinese tourists entering Iran is still very low, Shojaei said that increasing flights is crucial to make travel to Iran easier for Chinese tourists. Foreign airlines' capacity should also be utilized to increase air travel capacity and bring more Chinese tourists to Iran.

\$300,000 Investment by Afghans for Residency



TEHRAN - Hussein Salimi, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Iranian and Foreign Joint Investment Association (IFJIA), discussed the increase in Iran's foreign investment value to over \$5.5 billion during the 13th administration. He noted: "The growth in Iran's foreign investment has reached this figure, and we have also experienced this surge in the Iranian Chamber of Commerce. However, this value has been achieved while Turkey, our neighboring country, has attracted \$40 billion in foreign investment despite having a population similar to Iran's 80 million and lacking Iran's oil, gas, and mineral resources." He added: "The total global foreign investment is \$3 trillion, and Iran has not obtained the share it deserves. Iran has the capacity to attract \$50 billion in foreign investment, which is why the new administration emphasizes enhancing international relations and attracting foreign investment." Salimi continued: "Attracting foreign investors leads to wealth and technology acquisition, but the first step in maximizing foreign investment is Iran's removal from the FATF blacklist. The IFJIA Chairman stated: "The current foreign investment, valued at over \$5.5 billion, primarily results from increased Chinese investments in Iran. Under the 13th administration, the number of Chinese companies investing in Iran grew from two to about 40, whereas previously, most foreign investment in Iran was made by Afghans. He highlighted: "Afghan immigrants to Iran must invest at least \$300,000 to obtain a five-year residency. Some have even received permits to buy shares on the stock market and have done so. However, Afghan investments generally involve small businesses, often not exceeding \$1 million in value. Salimi also mentioned the investment by Australians and Canadians in Iran, noting that recently, investments by Iranians with foreign residencies have increased within the country. He reminded that the law on attracting foreign investors does not consider the investor's nationality but prioritizes the capital they bring into the country."

IRAN NEWS



Pakistan Supports Iran's Call

TEHRAN (MNA) – Pakistan's Foreign Minister said that Pakistan fully supported Iran's call for an "extraordinary meeting" of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation after the killing of Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh in a strike in Tehran. Ismail Haniyeh and one of his bodyguards were martyred after their residence was targeted in Tehran on Wednesday, according to a statement released by the IRGC. In a telephonic conversation with Ishaq Dar, Acting Foreign Minister of Iran Ali Bagehri Kani shared his country's deep anguish on the assassination of Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran, Dawn reported. FM Dar conveyed to his Iranian counterpart that Pakistan shared his sentiments, adding that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had condemned the developments in Gaza and the atrocious assassination of Ismail Haniyeh in the "strongest possible terms". Moreover, the National Assembly unanimously condemned the killing, which it said was against "international law, established diplomatic norms and acceptable behavior amongst the comity of nations". Bagehri Kani requested Dar to participate in the "extraordinary meeting" of the OIC being convened on this matter at the "foreign ministers level". Dar fully supported the call for an extraordinary meeting and confirmed that Pakistan would "actively participate" in the "important meeting".

\$200m in Engineering Services Exports



TEHRAN (IRNA) – The Director General of the Office of Knowledge-Based Products and Engineering Services of the Iran Trade Promotion Organization announced an 18% growth in the export of the country's engineering services in the first four months of the current year compared to the same period last year. Mohammad Reza Karimzadeh mentioned the review of the files of engineering services exporters abroad, adding: "In the first four months of the year, 18 certificates for the export of engineering services abroad were approved. Additionally, since the beginning of the year, 16 temporary export certificates for machinery to support engineering services exporters have been issued. The official continued: The value of the engineering services exports reviewed during the mentioned period is over \$200 million, which indicates an 18% growth compared to the same period last year. According to him, the executed projects are related to the fields of oil and gas, industry, energy transmission lines, information and communication technology, and the completion of water and sewage lines in neighboring and African countries. Karimzadeh, referring to the support provided to engineering services and other services exporters, added: According to the recent resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers, companies exporting services in countries where government guarantees are accepted for participating in tenders can submit their requests to the Iran Trade Promotion Organization (Office of Knowledge-Based Products and Engineering Services). After review and approval in the Article 19 Working Group, a government guarantee will be issued by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance for presentation to the foreign employer. He elaborated on the subsets of the country's services exports and said: The fields of engineering services include sectors such as tourism, health tourism, creative industries, road, sea, rail, and air transit, as well as knowledge-based companies. Last year, the country's services exports reached \$13.6 billion.



Continuation of Inflation Reduction Trend in the Coming Months

TEHRAN – The Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance, predicting a trend of reduced inflation in the coming months, stated: The economic growth outlook under the fourteenth administration is positive, and conditions have been set for this trend.

Seyed Ehsan Khandouzi said during the sixth session of the School of Economics in a gathering of journalists: Inflation is on a very good declining path, and the drivers of inflation, from government financial mismanagement to banking and monetary issues, are under control. He added: The new Central Bank law has provided excellent powers for the Central Bank in terms of currency control and bank supervision, which does not require specific and temporary resolutions, facilitating banking oversight on insolvent banks.

The Minister of Economy continued: With the current conditions, it is expected that the fourteenth administration will continue the trend of reducing inflation in the coming months and maintain this path.

Khandouzi, noting that various production sectors in industry, agriculture, and energy have moved past and emerged from the stagnation of the 2010s, said: Good grounds, contracts, and agreements have been made to continue this path.

He expressed hope that the high economic growth rate of over 5% achieved last year will continue this year, as plans for energy cooperation with foreign sectors and policies in commerce and agriculture have been implemented. The Minister of Economy highlighted: A program was approved by the Cabinet in May, coinciding with the government transition, which we hope the next administration will continue, foreseeing economic growth under the fourteenth administration. Khandouzi noted that the second half of the 2010s was a period of unprecedented inflation, which had reduced production incentives in the country; now, foreign policies with Asian partner countries of Iran, along with the activation of domestic capacities and domestic and foreign investments, have been realized in 2023. He stated: Efforts to improve business with the national licensing portal, increase employment, and other programs have led to continued growth prospects in production and improvement in macroeconomic conditions as part of the seventh plan. He added: "We have implemented some ideas that previously had no opportunity for design and execution under the umbrella of the Policy School. This

approach of linking theory and practice is like grafting. By merging these expert and theoretical perspectives with practical implementation, a new entity with a unique spirit and essence is formed, which we have pursued in the Policy School over the past three years." He continued: "Policymakers in the country are faced with serious, neglected, and accumulated demands, leaving them no time for long-term projects and immersing them in daily referrals. Therefore, besides planting basil and carrots, we should also plant trees to reap the benefits in the future. We need to utilize graduates from various universities and involve them in policymaking."

Khandouzi noted: "Just as officials should look towards research centers and think tanks to solve problems, these research centers should pay attention to what is on the government's agenda instead of repeating past statements in new formats."

He pointed out the necessity of involving these individuals in executive roles, stating: "We need managers capable of innovative planning, and these managers should not come from the ranks of those who have only read books but should enter the executive bodies of the country. We should not replace managers with party affiliates and political allies but select managers from these individuals. Think tanks are essential for problem-solving, and the best investment is in training these forces." Khandouzi continued: "Some said that without negotiations with the U.S., things would not progress. Although the previous administration did not lack in this area, despite Iran's goodwill, the U.S. was unwilling to continue the JCPOA. However, this administration managed to lift the economy out of isolation, and we must continue this path, which is emphasized by the leadership, to further remove the economy from isolation. This requires an agency motivated to pursue outward-oriented strategies and break the borders of the Iranian economy abroad." He mentioned that during this period, foreign investment reached its highest level, stating: "If this path continues, the country can achieve good economic growth rates in the next ten years, provided that internal sanctions are removed and internal reforms are carried out. We need to design a long-term economic structure, and now that the Seventh Development Plan has begun and coincides with the start of the Fourteenth Administration, it is an excellent opportunity for this harmony."

Economic Exchanges With Iraq's Kurdistan Can Increase Several Fold



TEHRAN – The Vice President of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture stated that Iran and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq have a long history of commercial interactions. Given the established groundwork, the volume of economic exchanges between Iran and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq can increase several fold. At the opening ceremony of the Qazvin Province Export Capabilities Exhibition in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Peyman Bagheri added: "The special focus of the Qazvin Chamber on identifying target markets in the Kurdistan Region is commendable. Relying on the rich cultural heritage present in both Qazvin Province and the Kurdistan Region, undoubtedly, the development of relations between these two areas can yield significant benefits for both parties." Bagheri continued: "Despite having common borders and the basis for cooperation, the current export volume between the two sides is still very low and must definitely be expanded." Bagheri pointed out: "We are witnessing the opening of a dedicated export exhibition which can be extended to other sectors, and we are ready to set up similar exhibitions in other industries in this region." He stated: "There is good potential in the Kurdistan Region, including cities like Erbil and Sulaymaniyah, and due to the high demand, we can respond to it." According to Bagheri, the key point is to match supply and demand, and the Kurdistan Region, as an international gateway, can play an important role in this regard. The Vice President of the Iran Chamber emphasized: "One of the foundations for developing relations is holding exhibitions to establish connections between traders and create an extensive network." He expressed: "Iranian economic activists must note that the Kurdistan Region is a competitive market where the quality and price of the product are crucial for sustaining trade. To succeed in this field, we must offer high-quality goods at reasonable prices."

Start of Gas Storage Projects in 6 Fields



TEHRAN – CEO of the Iranian Gas Engineering and Development Company Reza Noshadi touched upon the impact of gas storage on addressing the gas imbalance in the country.

He stated that both consumer and producer countries like the USA and Russia have high storage percentages, meaning they meet part of their winter consumption through storage. This management of consumption is a global practice. For instance, the Netherlands meets over 40%, Russia 17%, the USA 19%, and the European Union about 22% of their winter needs through gas storage. However, in Iran, the gas storage rate is only about 3 to 4%.

He continued: Currently, we only have the Shurijeh and Sarajeh storage facilities, and their storage volumes are low. In our country, from November 6 to March 5 is considered the cold season, and 70 to 80 percent of production capacity is consumed by the residential and commercial sectors. In recent years, we have seen significant development in the gas industry. From the beginning of the gas industry development in Iran until the start of sanctions in 2010, the production, refining, and transmission capacity increased from 400 million cubic meters to about 1000 million cubic meters, and production reached approximately 800 million cubic meters.

He stated that storage helps manage peak consumption, strengthens network security, and addresses energy crises during high consumption periods, except in extraordinary events like floods, earthquakes, or sabotage as occurred in the winter of 2023. All these factors highlight the importance of storage. We need storage to manage peak consumption. Previously, two storage projects were implemented but then forgotten. Now, the issue has again become a priority. Besides reactivating storage projects, the national discourse has shifted in this direction, with provisions made in the budget, the foreign exchange reserve fund, and the seventh development plan.

Noshadi added that all legislative infrastructures and higher-level documents have aligned to implement storage programs. Even the Ministry of Oil has formed a high coordination council to make decisions. In this context, seven fields were studied; one was deemed unsuitable for storage, and we activated six fields. Contractors are active in five fields, and in one field, evaluation wells have been drilled, and basic studies are complete, pending implementation permits.

He said stated that their upstream goal is to achieve 10% storage by 2028. They predict that the first storage project will be inaugurated next year, provided all technical and executive infrastructures, as well as higher-level cooperation, can be coordinated effectively.

Infrastructure Weakness at Iran-Pakistan Crossings



TEHRAN – According to members of the Iran-Pakistan Joint Chamber of Commerce, the ban on the import of Pakistani rice was announced to importers while their cargo was already en route. This ill-timed announcement resulted in the trucks being delayed at the Taftan border. Amanullah Kehrazehi, a board member of the Iran-Pakistan Chamber of Commerce, told ILNA that the long delays for trucks carrying rice at the border between the two countries are recurring. He stated that the import of Pakistani rice to Iran was banned while a significant volume of rice had not yet crossed the Taftan border, leaving numerous rice-carrying trucks stuck at the border, unable to enter Iran until the ban is lifted at the beginning of December. This situation has caused the transportation cost from the Taftan border to Zahedan to skyrocket from 25 million tomans to 90 million tomans. This rice was purchased at prices ranging from \$840 to \$1150 per ton from the factory in Lahore to be delivered at the Taftan border. He added that the reason for the delay in the passage of rice at the border is poor performance at the customs. If the speed of cargo passage at the three border crossings were stable, unforeseen delays in goods transit would not occur, and traders would not suffer such losses.

Kehrazehi noted that there are three land crossings, and if goods are imported through ports, the customs tariffs are so high that it is not economically viable. He stated that the problem of weak infrastructure and its impact on the slow import of goods is not limited to rice. Recently, at the beginning of the mango import season, the same problem occurred at the border crossings. Due to these issues, Iranian and Pakistani traders have complained about customs performance in the joint chamber, demanding infrastructure upgrades for cargo passage at border crossings and 24-hour customs operations. Mohammad Tohidast, another board member of the Iran-Pakistan Joint Chamber of Commerce, also confirmed

the infrastructure weaknesses at the Iran-Pakistan border crossings and said that to solve the problem of truck delays at the borders, warehouses and cold storage facilities could be set up at the crossings so that at least the cargo could be offloaded from the trucks, preventing delays. He explained that the current rice cargo delay at the Iran-Pakistan border was caused by a sudden directive that disrupted rice imports. Although this directive was later revoked, it prevented timely rice imports. Tohidast continued, stating that to manage the entry of foreign rice, at least one month's notice should be given before any ban, not suddenly when the cargo is already en route or queued at customs. He added that all these issues stem from poor overall management in the country, compounded by the infrastructure weaknesses at border crossings. This member of the Iranian Chamber of Commerce reminded that last year, following a flood, a large volume of imported rice stored in the open at customs was submerged, leading to a loss of national assets. He emphasized that the longstanding poor management and infrastructure weaknesses at the border crossings between Iran and Pakistan continue to cause delays and losses, which will persist until these weaknesses are addressed. Tohidast pointed out that infrastructure weaknesses include power outages, system failures, and similar issues. He noted that previously, when clearances were non-systematic, the situation was better. To improve the transit of goods on this route, several thousand trucks and round-the-clock customs operations are needed. Although the governor of Sistan and Baluchestan has ordered 24-hour customs operations, this has yet to be implemented. He concluded that currently, in addition to the three border crossings, there are 15 border markets along the Iran-Pakistan border. These crossings are also used as transit routes for goods to Turkey and Russia.

Iran's Housing Construction Technology Progress Surprises Chinese



TEHRAN (ISNA) – The Deputy Minister of Roads and Urban Development said: After establishing connections with Chinese construction companies, during their visit to Iran and new cities, especially Pardis, they were astonished by the technological advancements in Iranian construction.

Saeed Ghafoori, in a specialized meeting of technology and knowledge-based industrial housing consortia, stated: In line with the directives of the Supreme Leader to leverage a knowledge-based economy in construction, several initiatives have been undertaken.

He added: According to the law, we have a 15% share in housing construction within the framework of the national housing movement and collaborative construction. However, what is important is that our structure must shift from bureaucracy to a network-based system.

The Deputy Minister of Roads and Urban Development emphasized: If a contract in the housing construction sector is to be signed, the presence of knowledge-based companies must first be facilitated; because in the construction industry, we expect reduced construction time, higher quality, and improved resilience. Therefore, the presence of knowledge-based companies in industrialization is essential.

Referring to Iran's cooperation with China in the field of housing and construction, Ghafoori said: After establishing connections with Chinese construction companies, during their visit to Iran and new cities, especially Pardis, they were astonished by the technological advancements in Iranian construction.

The CEO of the New Cities Development Company continued: In the new city of Parand, we are utilizing building materials produced by domestic knowledge-based companies.

Putin Vows Support to North Korea After Devastating Floods

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russian President Vladimir Putin has offered condolences to North Korean counterpart Kim Jong Un over devastating floods that caused untold casualties and damaged thousands of homes, the Kremlin said.

The North, in turn, said Sunday that Putin had also offered "immediate humanitarian support" to aid its recovery efforts, to which Kim responded that he "could deeply feel the special emotion towards a genuine friend".

Pyongyang said this week it had seen a record downpour on July 27 which killed an unspecified number of people, flooded dwellings and submerged swathes of farmland in the north near China.

"I ask you to convey words of sympathy and support to all those who lost their loved ones as a result of the storm," Putin said in a telegram to Kim.

"You can always count on our help and support."



Israel Continues Genocide by Killing 15 More Palestinians in Gaza School



RAMALLAH (Dispatches) - An Israeli airstrike on a school sheltering displaced persons in Gaza City killed at least 15 Palestinians on Saturday, hours after two strikes in the occupied West Bank killed nine militants including a local Hamas commander, Hamas said. The Israeli military said the first of two West Bank airstrikes hit a vehicle in a town near the city of Tulkarm, targeting a militant cell it said was on its way to carry out an attack. A Hamas statement said one of those killed was a commander of its Tulkarm brigades, while its ally Islamic Jihad claimed the other four men who died in the strike as its fighters. Hours later, a second airstrike in the area targeted another group of militants who had fired on troops, Israel's military said, during what it described as a counterterrorism operation in Tulkarm. Palestinian news agency Wafa said four people had died in that strike, and Hamas said all nine of those killed in the two Israeli attacks in the West Bank were fighters. Violence in the West Bank was on the rise before the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza and has risen since, with frequent Israeli raids in the territory, which is among those that the Palestinians seek for a state. There has also been an increase in anti-Israeli street attacks by Palestinians. The latest strikes in the Palestinian territories came amid Israel's growing tensions with Iran and Lebanon's Hezbollah group that have fanned fears of a widened conflict in the Middle East. The U.S. and international partners including France, Britain, Italy and Egypt, continued diplomatic contacts on Saturday seeking to prevent further regional escalation. Hamas said it had begun a "broad consultation process" to choose a new leader three days after the assassination in Tehran of Ismail Haniyeh, who was the face of the group's international diplomacy. Iran and Hamas have blamed Israel and vowed to retaliate. Israel has not claimed or denied responsibility.



Thousands Rally in Venezuela to Protest Maduro's Win

CARACAS (Dispatches) - Thousands of Venezuelans gathered Saturday to protest against President Nicolas Maduro, who has been handed a third term in office after winning a widely contested vote last Sunday. Earlier protests this week were met with a massive clampdown resulting in 11 deaths while hundreds were arrested. Thousands of people rallied in the streets of Venezuela's capital Saturday, waving the national flag and singing the national anthem in support of an opposition candidate they believe won the presidential election by a landslide. Authorities have declared President Nicolás Maduro the winner of last Sunday's election but have yet to produce voting tallies to prove he won. Instead, the government arrested hundreds of opposition supporters who took to the streets in the days after the disputed poll, and the president and his cadres have threatened to also lock up opposition leader, María Corina Machado, and her hand-picked presidential candidate, Edmundo González. On Saturday, supporters chanted and sang as Machado arrived at the rally in Caracas. Machado, who has been barred by Maduro's government from running for office for 15 years, had been in hiding since Tuesday, saying her life and freedom are at risk. Masked assailants ransacked the opposition's headquarters on Friday, taking documents and vandalizing the space. Machado held aloft a Venezuelan flag and promised that the regime that has forced millions of Venezuelans to leave their country was finally coming to an end. "We have overcome all the barriers! We have knocked them all down," Machado said. "Never has the regime been so weak." Carmen Elena García, a 57-year-old street vendor joined the rally, even though she said she feared the government might attack. "They have to respect me and they have to respect all the Venezuelans who voted against this government," García said. "We will not accept them stealing our votes. They have to respect our votes." On Friday, Maduro alleged during a news conference that members of the opposition were planning an attack in a Caracas neighborhood near where the Machado rally was taking place Saturday. He said he had ordered the armed forces to guard the neighborhood, and also urged his supporters to attend "the mother of all marches" Saturday elsewhere in Caracas. The Organization of American States on Saturday called for "reconciliation and justice" in Venezuela. "Let all

Venezuelans who express themselves in the streets find only an echo of peace, a peace that reflects the spirit of democracy," the OAS said in a statement. Machado and González, a 74-year-old former diplomat, said tally sheets they obtained from polling centers nationwide show Maduro lost his bid for a third six-year term by a landslide. An Associated Press analysis Friday of vote tally sheets released by Venezuela's main opposition indicates that Gonzalez won significantly more votes in the election than the government has claimed, casting serious doubt on the official declaration that Maduro won. Late Friday, the country's high court, the Supreme Justice Tribunal, ordered the Maduro-controlled National Electoral Council to hand over the precinct vote count sheets in three days. There have been calls from multiple governments, including Maduro's close regional allies, for Venezuela's electoral authorities to release the precinct-level tallies, as it has after previous elections. The AP processed almost 24,000 images of tally sheets, representing the results from 79% of voting machines. Each sheet encoded vote counts in QR codes, which the AP programmatically decoded and analyzed, resulting in tabulations of 10.26 million votes. According to the calculations, the González received 6.89 million votes, nearly half a million more than the government says Maduro won. The tabulations also show Maduro received 3.13 million votes from the tally sheets released. By comparison, the National Electoral Council said Friday that based on 96.87% of tally sheets, Maduro had won 6.4 million votes and Gonzalez had 5.3 million. National Electoral Council President Elvis Amoroso attributed the delay in updating results to "massive attacks" on the "technological infrastructure." The tally sheets, known in Spanish as "actas," are lengthy printouts that resemble shopping receipts. They have long been considered the ultimate proof of election results in Venezuela. The AP could not independently verify the authenticity of the 24,532 tally sheets provided by the opposition. The AP successfully extracted data from 96% of the provided vote tallies, with the remaining 4% of images too poor to parse.

The Biden administration has thrown its support firmly behind the opposition, recognizing González as the victor and discrediting the National Electoral Council's official results.



Bangladeshi Students Call for Nationwide Civil Disobedience

DHAKA (Dispatches) - Student leaders rallied Bangladeshis for a nationwide civil disobedience campaign as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government weathered a worsening backlash over a deadly police crackdown on protesters. Rallies against civil service job quotas sparked days of mayhem last month that killed more than 200 people in some of the worst unrest of Hasina's 15-year tenure. Troop deployments briefly restored order but crowds hit the streets in huge numbers after Friday prayers in the Muslim-majority nation, heeding a call by student leaders to press the government for more concessions. Students Against Discrimination, the group responsible for organizing the initial protests, urged their compatriots to launch an all-out non-cooperation movement from Sunday. "This includes non-payment of taxes and utility bills, strikes by government workers and a halt to overseas remittance payments through banks," the group's Asif Mahmud told AFP. Mahmud's fellow student leaders also said another round of nationwide rallies would be staged on Saturday. "Please don't stay at home. Join your nearest protest march," Mahmud wrote on Facebook. Students are demanding a public apology from Hasina for last month's violence and the dismissal of several of her ministers. They have also insisted that the government reopens schools and universities around the country, all of which were shuttered at the height of the unrest. Crowds on the street have gone further, chanting demands for Hasina to leave office.

Hundreds March for Palestinians Held in Israeli Jails

RAMALLAH (Dispatches) - Hundreds of Palestinians marched to protest the treatment of prisoners held in Israeli jails on Saturday, following reports of abuse and even torture.

Relatives held up pictures of prisoners and waved Palestinian flags during separate demonstrations in Ramallah and Nablus in the occupied West Bank.

"Even if the whole world submits, we will not recognise Israel," chanted the protesters in Ramallah.

Thousands of Palestinians have been detained in Gaza, the West Bank and Israel since the start of the Israel-Hamas war in October, the United Nations human rights office said this week.

They have mostly been held in secret and in some cases subjected to treatment that may amount to torture, the OHCHR said in a report.

"For 10 months, we haven't known anything about our sons," Latifa Abu Hamid, a mother of four prisoners, all sentenced to life, told AFP.

"We want to check on them and see them. We want to know their situation... We want our sons."



"usually shackled and blindfolded".

"They have generally been held in secret, without being given a reason for their detention, access to a lawyer or effective judicial review," this week's OHCHR report said.

Testimonies for the report suggested that Israel had subjected prisoners to "a range of appalling acts, such as waterboarding and the release of dogs on detainees", UN rights chief Volker Turk said.

Israel did not comment but it has rejected previous critical reports, saying its prisons are run according to international law.

The UN report was released the day after Israeli military police questioned soldiers arrested on suspicion of sexually abusing a Palestinian detainee.

At the Ramallah demonstration, Umm Abdullah Hamed detailed how her brother, son and nephew had all been given multi-decade sentences.

"We feel like any family of a prisoner," Umm Abdullah Hamed, whose brother, son and nephew have all been sentenced

to decades in prison, said at the Ramallah protest. "We ask God Almighty to hasten their relief and freedom, God willing," she added. The October 7 Hamas attack on southern Israel resulted in the deaths of 1,197 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on Israeli official figures. Israel's retaliatory military campaign in Gaza has killed more than 39,550 people, according to the Hamas-run territory's health ministry, which does not provide details on civilian and militant deaths.

According to the Prisoners Club, a Palestinian watchdog, about 9,700 Palestinians are currently in Israeli jails, including hundreds under administrative detention.

The NGO estimates that arrests have doubled since October 7 compared to the same period last year.

The OHCHR report said that since the October 7 Hamas attacks, thousands of Palestinians -- including medics, patients, residents and captured fighters -- have been taken from Gaza to Israel,

Trump Proposes Election Debate on Fox News, Harris Says No

ATLANTA (Dispatches) - Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump proposed to debate Democratic US Vice President Kamala Harris on Fox News on September 4, but the Harris campaign countered that Trump was trying to back out of a debate that had been set to run on ABC. The rules would be similar to the first debate with President Joe Biden, who has since dropped his re-election bid, Trump said in a post on Truth Social late on Friday. But this time it would have a "full arena audience" and take place in the battleground state of Pennsylvania, Trump said. Trump and Biden had agreed to a second debate on September 10 on ABC News which the former president had suggested should be moved to Fox, the most popular network with his followers. Harris, who on Friday secured the delegate votes needed to clinch the Democratic nomination for the November 5 election, said yesterday that she plans to participate in the originally planned debate. "It's interesting how 'any time, any place' becomes 'one specific time, one specific safe space,'" she wrote on social media platform X. "I'll be there on September 10, like he agreed to. I hope to see him there." Harris spokesperson Michael Tyler said Trump is "running scared" and that her campaign is happy to discuss further debates after the September 10 one that "both campaigns have already agreed to." On Saturday, Trump said on Truth Social that Harris is "afraid to do it" and that he will see her on September

4, "or, I won't see her at all." At a rally in Atlanta, Georgia, last night, Trump again appeared to attack Harris' racial identity. On Thursday, Trump falsely suggested to the country's largest annual gathering of Black journalists that Harris had downplayed her Black heritage. Harris, who is of Indian and Jamaican heritage, has long self-identified as both Black and Asian. In Atlanta on Saturday, Trump said there were "19 different ways" of pronouncing Harris' first name, while also calling her a "lunatic." On Friday he said that the ABC debate had been "terminated" in that Biden would no longer be in it and because he himself was in litigation with ABC. ABC on July 26 outlined qualification requirements for the debate but did not mention any candidates by name. Requirements include proving polling support and state ballot access by Sept. 3. Recent polls show a tight contest between Harris and Trump, who had enjoyed a bigger lead over Biden after the first debate. ABC News had no comment about whether Trump had dropped out of the debate, a spokesperson said. Fox News did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Trump's proposal for the debate on Fox came right after the Democratic National Committee launched an advertising campaign on Friday taunting him by saying "the convicted felon is afraid to debate" and questioning whether that is due to his stance on abortion.





Zheng Beats Vekic to Win Historic Gold for China

PARIS (Dispatches) - Zheng Qinwen became the first Chinese player to win an Olympic tennis singles gold medal when she held off Croatia's Donna Vekic for a 6-2 6-3 win in a tense final on Saturday.

The 21-year-old sixth seed was given enthusiastic backing by a sizeable Chinese contingent inside Roland Garros's Court Philippe Chatrier and responded with a composed performance.

Vekic, herself bidding to become Croatia's first Olympic singles champion, battled hard to try to turn around the match but failed to capitalize on her opportunities.

Zheng was not at her sparkling best but raised her game when required to come through several lengthy games to land the biggest prize of her career.

Serving for the match at 5-3, Zheng reached match points as Vekic drove a backhand wide and finished it off with a well-placed forehand winner before falling to her back with joy.

China's only other gold medal in Olympic tennis came in 2004 when Li Ting and Sun Tian-Tian won the women's doubles in Athens while the best previous singles performance was Li Na's run to the semi-finals in 2008, although she missed out on a medal.

Zheng, runner-up at the Australian Open this year, now looks capable of scaling the same heights

as Li Na who claimed two Grand Slam titles during her illustrious career.

"This Olympic journey has not been easy, I had a lot of tough fights and some matches I nearly lost," Zheng told reporters. "But there is a strength holding me. I never give up.

"For the final today the atmosphere was incredible, all the Chinese fans yelling for me. Two years ago that would have been pressure but today I kept calm and handled it well."

Her victory completed a memorable week for China on the Parisian clay after Wang Xinyu and Zhang Zhizhen claimed the silver medal in the mixed doubles the previous evening.

Zheng, who men's finalist Novak Djokovic describes as his favourite female player, began the week in devastating fashion, beating former French Open runner-up Sara Errani 6-6 6-0.

She had to dig deep in long three-set epics against Emma Navarro and Germany's Angelique Kerber before stunning hot favourite Iga Swiatek to give herself a shot at gold.

The vastly-experienced Vekic presented a formidable obstacle in the final but Zheng started quickly to lead 3-0 and managed to stay in control by coming through some edgy games.

"I fought every single match, I feel like I had special energy and lots of support. My country will be proud and my family who I knew were screaming at home by the TV," she said.

Haaland Hat-Trick Powers Manchester City Over Chelsea 4-2

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Erling Haaland's hat trick, including two goals in the first five minutes, led Manchester City over Chelsea 4-2 on Saturday in an English club football friendly at Columbus, Ohio. Reigning Premier League champion City scored goals 54 seconds apart in the first half and 71 seconds apart in the second half to dominate the fixture, part of a US pre-season tour for both clubs.

Haaland wore the captain's armband and showed a crowd of 71,280 why he is considered among the world's best players.

The 24-year-old Norwegian striker scored on a penalty kick in the fourth minute and, after a Moises Caicedo give away in the Chelsea half, smashed a right-footed shot into the right corner for a 2-0 City lead in the fifth minute -- only 17 seconds after the restart.

Oscar Bobb boosted the lead to three in the 55th minute, taking the ball down the right wing and cutting inside to fire a left-footed shot past a defender and just inside the near post.

Haaland then completed his hat trick in the 56th minute after City forced a turnover in Chelsea territory.

Haaland took a pass at the top of the box between two defenders and

flicked in a left-footed shot for a 4-0 City edge only 25 seconds after the restart.

Raheem Sterling answered for Chelsea in the 59th minute and Noni Madueke added a final goal in the 89th but it was too little and too late.

The game was a preview of the start to the 2024-25 Premier League campaign for both clubs. Manchester City will open the season against Chelsea on August 18.

In another pre-season US showdown of English giants, Liverpool blanked Manchester United 3-0 before 77,559 spectators at Columbia, South Carolina.

Fabio Carvalho, a 21-year-old Portuguese striker, opened the scoring for Liverpool in the 10th minute.

In the 36th minute, Egyptian striker Mo Saleh got to the backline and fired a perfect centering pass to onrushing Curtis Jones, who tapped in with his left foot for a 2-0 Liverpool lead.

Greek standout Kostas Tsimikas gave the Merseysiders a 3-0 edge in the 61st minute, knocking in a rebound off the left post.



USA Stroll Past Puerto Rico to Stay Unbeaten at Olympics



LILLE (Dispatches) - Anthony Edwards scored a team-high 26 points as the United States cruised to a 104-83 win over Puerto Rico on Saturday to complete the group stage unbeaten at the Olympics.

Team USA are hunting a fifth straight gold at the Games and will discover their quarter-final opponents once the draw is made after the game between Serbia and South Sudan.

The U.S. found themselves in a close game midway through the second quarter but pulled away to lead by 19 at half-time in Lille.

The gap increased in the third period with Joel Embiid making a confident return to the line-up after being left on the bench for the win over South Sudan.

He finished with 15 points as coach Steve Kerr rotated his players. Six hit double digits in points, including Kevin Durant (11) and LeBron James (10).

"We're here for one goal and only goal only, and that's to win gold," said James.

"We know it's going to be very difficult but... we look forward to the challenge."

Serbia beat South Sudan 96-85 to bring the curtain down on the group stage with Atlanta Hawks guard Bogdan Bogdanovic top-scoring with 30 points.

Biles Claims Seventh Olympic Gold in Vault Final



PARIS (Dispatches) - U.S. gymnastics star Simone Biles claimed her seventh Olympic gold medal on Saturday by winning the women's vault final at the Paris Summer Games. Biles will go on to compete in the balance beam and floor exercise finals on Monday. The 27-year-old Biles averaged 15.300 for her signature Yurchenko double pike and Cheng vaults to claim a second gold on the event eight years after she triumphed in Rio de Janeiro. Rebeca Andrade of Brazil, who finished runner-up to Biles in the all-around final on Thursday, took silver, just ahead of American Jade Carey, who captured the bronze. Biles is the second woman to win vault twice, joining Vera Caslavka of Czechoslovakia as a two-time gold medalist on the vault. Caslavka went back to back in 1964 and 1968. Biles now has 10 Olympic medals in her career, tied for the third most by a female gymnast. She also boosted her medal count at major international competitions to 40, the most by any gymnast. The crowd inside a packed Bercy Arena roared when Biles was introduced. Wearing a sequined red leotard, she delivered another show-stopping performance in what could be the last vault competition of her life. She drilled her Yurchenko double pike, exploding off the block and then flipping backward twice with her hands clasped behind her knees. She landed with a big bounce -- a nod to the energy she generates -- with her right foot on the out-of-bounds line.

The judges dinged her a tenth of a point for that. It hardly mattered. Her score of 15.700 meant she merely needed to avoid disaster on her second vault to win. Instead, she almost stuck her Cheng, which requires a roundoff onto the springboard, then a half twist onto the block followed by 1 1/2 twists while doing a forward somersault. The ensuing 14.900 meant the rest of the eight-woman field was going for second. Andrade, the vault champion in Tokyo, put together two excellent vaults to claim silver and her third medal of the Games after a silver in the all-around and a bronze in the team final. Andrade's average of 14.966 was well clear of everyone else. Carey, who slipped during the women's vault final in Tokyo and finished eighth, earned her third Olympic medal to go with the floor exercise gold she won in Tokyo and the team gold she captured with Biles on Tuesday.

Biles will have two more chances to boost her medal haul in Paris. She will compete in the balance beam and floor exercise finals.

Record Third Olympic Title the Sweetest



PARIS (Dispatches) - World record-holder Ryan Crouser said his unprecedented third consecutive Olympic title in the men's shot put on Saturday "definitely means the most" of the trio.

The 31-year-old American, who previously won at the 2016 Rio Games and in Tokyo in 2021, managed a season's best of 22.90 metres with his third effort for victory at the Stade de France. Crouser's US teammate Joe Kovacs snatched silver with his sixth and last attempt of 22.15m -- the third time he has finished runner-up to his compatriot -- and Jamaican Rajindra Campbell took bronze despite registering the same distance. Other athletes to have won two consecutive shot put golds are the American pair of Ralph Rose (1904, 1908), Parry O'Brien (1952, 1956), and Poland's Tomasz Majewski (2008, 2012) But Crouser's victory -- the 20th time an American has won the event in 30 Olympics -- puts him in a different class.

"It definitely, I think, means the most out of all of them," said Crouser. "I mean, kind of how Tokyo felt, fresh off a world record, felt like it was mine to lose. Tonight, I'm number three coming in on the performance list, and so it let me play a little bit more fast and loose. In Rio I was the new guy on the block, first year professional, so that one, I don't want to say it was lucky, but it was definitely the least appreciated for me. So

this one it's definitely the sweetest victory out of all of them, overcoming the questions of if I would be able to get to this point again." Crouser's victory is all the more remarkable given his injury woes this season. He won the world indoor title in Glasgow in March, but since then has suffered two debilitating elbow injuries either side of tearing a pectoral muscle. However, Crouser had shown before that injuries hardly affect his ability as he had won last year's world title only weeks after being diagnosed with deep vein thrombosis. "So there's just the injuries this year, with the ulnar nerve entrapment, and the torn pec, and then the nerve issue again, made it kind of all the sweeter, made me appreciate it more." Crouser, who will celebrate by going out with his family who are in Paris to share his victory, said he would probably wrap up his career by going for a fourth title in Los Angeles in 2028.

"The perfect end cap for me would be LA 2028, as an American athlete, retiring and hanging up the shoes on home soil," said Crouser, who was yet to don his trademark stetson in celebration. LA, he said, "would be the first and only Olympic Games of my career in the US." As for Kovacs, at 35 it is probably the two-time world champion's final tilt at the Olympic gold medal but he had few regrets. "It's a great rivalry and I don't think I pushed him today, but I think that with that last throw I kind of made sure I didn't let these other guys sneak in there."