

In a Decree, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei Appointed Former Iranian Acting Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani Bagheri Kani as a Member of Iran's Strategic Council on Foreign Relations

IRAN NEWS

On the Occasion of the 79th Anniversary of the National Day of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, President Masoud Pezeshkian Hoped That the Relations Between Iran and Vietnam Will Expand in All Fields

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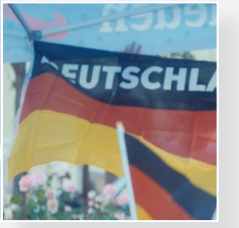
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Bad Weather, Thick Fog Blamed for Late President Raisi's Helicopter Crash



TEHRAN (PressTV) - The final investigation by the Iranian Armed Forces into the helicopter crash that claimed the lives of President Ebrahim Raisi and his companions in May says the incident was caused by weather conditions that included thick fog.

The helicopter carrying 63-year-old Raisi, former foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and six others came down on May 19 on a fog-shrouded mountainside in northwestern Iran. Their bodies were found the following day after a massive search operation.

The report, published by the General Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces on Sunday, ruled out sabotage or tampering as the reason behind the tragic incident, saying the "complex climatic and atmospheric conditions of the region in the spring was the main cause of the crash."

It added that "the sudden emergence of a thick mass of dense and rising fog" caused the helicopter to crash into the mountainside.

According to the report, all documents related to the helicopter's repairs and maintenance since its purchase and use before the incident were thoroughly reviewed by military and civilian experts, who announced that all the measures had been conducted under standard regulations.

It noted that experts also examined the helicopter's flight path and confirmed that it adhered to its predetermined route and had no deviation during the flight.

Experts have also recovered the pilot's iPad which proved the correctness of information on the helicopter's flight path throughout the flight, the report said.

It added that Iran's Defense Ministry's experts precisely examined the remaining parts and systems from the crashed helicopter—including engines, power transmission systems, fuel systems, and electronic equipment—and found no defects that could have caused the crash.

It explained that the reports of Iran's Meteorological Organization from the day before and the day of the accident have been examined by experts.

The report further said a forensic committee conducted toxicological and pathological tests on the remains of the victims and found no suspicious case.

Iran Calls on Int'l Community to Hold Israeli Criminal Leaders' Accountable



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman has called for the Israeli regime's "criminal leaders" to be held accountable for their crimes against Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip, as the genocidal war against the besieged territory continues unabated.

Nasser Kananani made the appeal in a post on his X account on Sunday, urging the international community to take immediate action to prevent Israel from committing more crimes against innocent Palestinians.

He further compared Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to Adolf Hitler, while decrying the inaction of the international community that has led to the continuation of the Israeli regime's brutal war on Gaza.

"About eight decades after the Nuremberg trials, history is once again witnesses to the emergence of another Hitler: A criminal that continues the merciless genocide and killing of innocent Palestinian women and children in the shadow of the international community's inaction," Kan'ani said.

"If those claiming to be defenders of human rights value humanity and human lives, now is the time to act; tomorrow is too late. The human society is thirsty for humanity and justice more than ever and demands the trial of the Zionist regime's criminal leaders," he added.

His remarks come two days after Asadullah Eshraq Jahromi, the director general for International Peace and Security at the Iranian Foreign Ministry, underlined the need for holding Israel to account for the crimes it is perpetrating in the occupied Palestinian territories and elsewhere in the region.

On Friday, Eshraq Jahromi expressed deep concern over the ongoing Israeli atrocities against the oppressed Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip over the past eleven months during an address to the 50th session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in the Cameroonian capital of Yaounde.

He called on the international community and the OIC to adopt a decisive measure aimed at the immediate cessation of Israeli actions, which amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

Unity Best Way to Tackle Economic Problems

TEHRAN - President Masoud Pezeshkian delivered a live speech to the people on Saturday during which he stressed the need to preserve national unity among different political groups to serve the people best.

The speech was the first of its kind since President Pezeshkian assumed office after being sworn in as the ninth Iran's president almost a month ago.

At the start of his speech, the new Iranian president said that people's satisfaction with his administration's policies and performance matters a lot to him.

Pezeshkian reiterated his call on the different political groups in Iran to set aside their differences to serve the people in the best way. "So far, we have made out utmost efforts to form a national unity government," he said. He said that his national consensus cabinet consists of individuals from the former government of Martyr Ebrahim Raisi, his predecessor Hassan Rouhani and the Reformists.

In response to a question about curbing the inflation rate in Iran's economy, Pezeshkian said that his economic team is working coordinately to tackle people's economic problems through proper planning. He further stressed the need for maintaining national consensus to address people's concerns in the economic sphere as the best possible way.

The president also linked the economy to foreign policy and said that engagement and trade with the neighboring countries and the entire world is a way to solve the economic problems, saying that planning needs to be made to attract foreign investment.

He noted that in order to achieve 8% economic growth, \$100 billion needs to be attracted both from inside and outside the country.

President said that he will hold his first press conference with journalists next week.

He called for equal opportunities for students in the university entrance exams, saying that justice must be observed in dealing with average marks of students who come from developed and underdeveloped areas.

He promised that his administration would work to solve the problems faced by farmers, teachers, nurses and medical care personnel in the country.

In response to a question about his foreign trips to other countries, he said that Iraq would be his first destination, followed by his trip to New York to attend the UN General Assembly meeting in September.

As regards social space and social media, Pezeshkian said that his cabinet will prepare a comprehensive program about cyberspace.

The president said his administration would devise a "supervisory mechanism" monitoring various ministries' commitment to existing regulations and plans.

He underscored endeavor towards enhancement of gender, ethnic, healthcare, and educational equality throughout the country.

Pezeshkian also stressed that appointment of officials to various positions across the country had to take place based on their "deservedness and [standing] regulations."

The president said his administration would try to reduce differences of opinion concerning the components of the country's foreign policy.

His administration's foreign policy envisioned resolution of the standing issues between Iran and other countries, including the Islamic Republic's neighbors, he said, asserting, "Muslims are brothers with one another and should be united in the face of the enemies."

"We have engaged in negotiations with around 40 countries, and are in the process of concluding agreements with them," Pezeshkian noted.

Concluding his remarks, Pezeshkian expressed gratitude towards Ayatollah Khamenei for the support that had been provided by the Leader towards resolution of the country's economic issues and thanked the Iranian nation for the trust that they had invested in him.

Iran Army Receives Optimized Main Battle Tank



TEHRAN (PressTV) - The Iranian Army has taken delivery of an optimized main battle tank after deploying advanced technology towards enhancing the vehicle's entire combat features.

Optimized M60 tanks joined the force during a ceremony on Sunday, with Commander of the Army's Ground Force Brigadier General Kioumars Heydari in attendance.

"The M60 tank is on par with the world's state-of-the-art tanks in the areas of armored protection and armored capability," he said, noting that the vehicles had been "optimized in line with cutting-edge technology."

The commander said the optimization process had enhanced the vehicle's entire 13-strong features, including reactive armor, daytime and nighttime maneuverability, optical sights that provide its operators with all-encompassing field vision, formidable cannons, and engines that had rendered the tanks into highly-maneuverable vehicles.

He, meanwhile, said the vehicles could enter the mass-production stage in the future if need be. Heydari praised the country's Martyr Zarharan Production, Optimization, and Renovation Center, where the vehicles had undergone their enhancement process.

The facility, he said, had increased the Ground Force's mobilization capacity to the level that it had now become capable of "powerful and speedy" transfer of its various armored units throughout military drills and on other necessary occasions.

Citing some other contributions that had been made by the center to the force, Heydari enumerated its optimization of Chiefain tanks and BMP-1 armored personnel carriers as well as its smartization of the force's artillery systems.

The commander said the Ground Force had, in line with a directive issued by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, engaged in effecting "profound changes in the identity and quality of its [various] units."

Iran's Formidable Blow Awaits Enemies' Miscalculations



TEHRAN (PressTV) - The commander of the Islamic Republic of Iran Air Defense Force (IRIADF), a branch of the country's Army, has vowed that the force would deal with enemies' potential miscalculations with utmost decisiveness.

"The enemies know this that they will not have the capability to confront the power of the Air Defense Force," Brigadier General Alireza Sabahifard, the IRIADF's commander, said on Sunday.

"We have warned them repeatedly against making mistakes in their calculations [concerning the country] since such miscalculations will be met with the force's formidable blow," he added.

"We have produced our required [defensive] equipment based on existing threats and even ahead of the threats, which have been evaluated rigorously, so we can use them precisely if need be," Sabahifard noted.

The commander said the enemies were well aware that the country's combat capability had been considerably enhanced compared to the previous years.

He considered the Islamic Republic's current defensive systems to be incomparable in quality to its past equipment as well as being in a "more modern and advanced" state than the most sophisticated equipment across the world.

He hailed that the Air Defense Force's equipment were "at the cutting edge of the world's state-of-the-art technology," adding that the entire equipment had been produced indigenously without dependence on any other country.

"This is the power of the Air Defense Force," Sabahifard asserted.

The country has been relying on domestic endeavors and know-how to make significant advances in the direction of enhancing the self-sufficiency of its Armed Forces.

Heeding the directives of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, Iranian officials have repeatedly underscored that the country would not hesitate to strengthen its military capabilities, which are entirely meant for defensive purposes and are, therefore, never subject to negotiation.

At Least 11 Killed in Israeli Strike on Gaza City School

GAZA (Dispatches) - The Israeli military has killed at least 11 Palestinians in an airstrike on a school sheltering displaced people in Gaza City as school carnage in the war-wracked territory continues apace.

The attack struck the Safad school in the Zeitoun neighborhood in Gaza City on Sunday, a medical source said.

The source added that the number of Gazans killed in the Israeli bombing of the school has increased from six to 11, noting that those who sustained injuries have been taken to the al-Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza City.

The bodies of the killed people "were torn apart and scattered due to the intensity of the Israeli bombing," witnesses told Anadolu news agency.

They added that one of the school's buildings, where hundreds of displaced people have sheltered, was destroyed.

The Palestinian Civil Defense Agency said that the school has been evacuated after Israeli threats to attack its premises.

Since the beginning of Israel's genocidal war in Gaza on October 7, 2023, the regime has systematically attacked civic infrastructure, including schools housing displaced people, hospitals and places of worship, often claiming without evidence they are linked to Hamas, to evade international criticism.

More than 100 citizens were killed and dozens more injured on August 10 after the Israeli occupation forces bombed the al-Tabi' in school in the al-Daraj neighborhood in Gaza City, sheltering over 6,000 displaced people.

At least 40,738 Palestinians, mostly children and women, have been killed and 94,154 people wounded in the war that Israel began in early October last year following a retaliatory operation by the Palestinian territory's resistance movements.

Concomitantly with the war, the regime has been enforcing a near-total siege on the coastal territory, which has reduced the flow of foodstuffs, medicine, electricity, and water into the Palestinian territory into a trickle.

Meanwhile Israeli military forces have once again stormed cities and towns in the



West Bank as part of their stepped-up raids on Palestinian neighborhoods across the occupied territory, sparking confrontation with local residents.

The official Palestinian news agency Wafa, citing eyewitnesses and local authorities, reported that Israeli troops raided At-Tira village, located 8.3 kilometers (5.2 miles) southwest of Ramallah, as well as the cities of Ramallah and al-Bireh besides the nearby towns of Burqa and Silwad late on Sunday.

The agency reported clashes in Deir Jarir, located northeast of Ramallah, as Israeli soldiers forced their way into the

town. Israeli forces also stormed the city of Nablus and the town of Odala, where they clashed with Palestinians and fired live rounds and rubber-coated bullets to disperse the protesting crowd.

The raids come as Israeli forces continue a deadly and destructive siege on the Jenin refugee camp in the north of the occupied West Bank.

Two Palestinian youths killed by Israeli forces near Jenin

Meanwhile, two young Palestinian men were shot dead by Israeli soldiers during a raid on Kafr Dan village, located 8 kilometers (4.9 miles) northwest of Jenin.

The Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) said that it transferred the dead bodies to a nearby hospital.

According to Wafa, Israeli forces shot the two young men after opening fire on their vehicle at the entrance to Kafr Dan, prevented Palestinian paramedics from providing them with first aid and left them bleeding to death.

Earlier in the day, a young Palestinian man was killed by Israeli forces' fire in the city of al-Khalil, according to security sources.

The sources said Israeli forces surrounded a house in the southern West Bank city, and targeted it with a barrage of live bullets and a missile, killing a youth inside.

Israeli soldiers also took away the body of the young man whose identity remains unknown.

IRAN NEWS



Iranian MPs Attend SCO Parliament Members Meeting in Baku

TEHRAN (MNA) – Two members of the National Security and Foreign Policy Commission of Iran Parliament attended the meeting of parliament members of the member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Baku.

A member of the National Security and Foreign Policy Commission of Iran Parliament Ali Khezrian wrote on his X social account that at the meeting of parliament members of the member countries of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in the city of Baku, Iran's potential and capabilities in the field of energy, defense and its unique geography as a transit crossroads were emphasized and the role of the parliaments to boost cooperation were highlighted.

In the meeting which was held in the city of Baku, Azerbaijan, the Parliament members of SCO member states discussed and reviewed the parliamentary capacities for the initiative of public development, emphasizing the impartial monitoring of the election mechanism on the first of September.

Reports by Int'l Organizations on Iran's Economy Not Biased



TEHRAN – Deputy Head of Center for Statistics of Iran Sepideh Salehi, in an interview, discussed the quality of statistics and forecasts regarding Iran's economic indicators as reported by international organizations like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

She addressed concerns about the data and information used in these calculations, such as the use of a 42,000 IRR per dollar exchange rate at one point, which only applied to essential goods and was later abolished. Salehi stated that indicators like growth rates are announced by institutions like the World Bank and IMF, which are required by their laws and principles to collect necessary data from relevant organizations within the countries they assess, including Iran. For example, if Iran reports its growth rate, these international organizations obtain the required data from the responsible institution.

Salehi clarified that the Center for Statistics is not the intermediary for gathering data in Iran; rather, the World Bank and IMF interact specifically with the Ministry of Economy and the Central Bank. Historically, since these indicators and statistics were released by the Central Bank, it remains the main contact for these international organizations in Iran, though legal access to these data falls under the Ministry of Economy.

In response to why the Center for Statistics is not the intermediary for international organizations despite being the primary source of statistics, Salehi explained that the role of the Center for Statistics as the main producer of data has not been fully established in the country. Additionally, international organizations do not have laws requiring them to accept fluctuations in data, leading them to maintain their contacts through the Ministry of Economy.

Salehi added that it is possible to change the channel through which data is provided to international organizations. The Central Bank and the Center for Statistics could both offer their data models to these organizations, allowing them to choose which source to use.

She emphasized that there have been times when neither the Central Bank nor the Center for Statistics provided a rate, prompting international organizations to make forecasts based on standard principles and scientific methods. These forecasts cannot be dismissed as inaccurate and are regarded as legitimate research practices globally. Therefore, it is incorrect to label these predictive reports as biased, as they are prepared for all countries.

Non-Oil Exports Reach \$21.9b



TEHRAN - Mohammad Rezvani-Far announced that the volume of non-oil exports in the first five months of this year reached 60.5 million tons, showing a 7% increase compared to the same period last year.

Rezvani-Far stated that during this period, \$19.5 billion worth of crude oil and fuel oil were exported.

The Deputy Minister of Economy and the Head of Iran Customs Administration announced that the total exports, including crude oil, fuel oil, technical engineering services, and exports through suitcase trade, amounted to \$41.7 billion in the first five months of this year.

He highlighted that the three major exported goods during this period were liquefied natural gas (worth \$2.2 billion), liquefied propane (\$1.4 billion), and methanol (\$1.1 billion). The average value per ton of exported goods during this period increased by 2.56%, reaching \$362.

Rezvani-Far noted that the main destinations for Iran's exported goods in the first five months of this year were China, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India. These seven countries accounted for 81% of the weight and 82% of the total value of the country's exports.

According to this report, in the first five months of this year, petrochemical exports amounted to 24.5 million tons, worth \$9.8 billion, representing a 12.5% increase in volume and a 12.8% increase in value.

He mentioned that among the top ten exported items, liquefied petroleum gases and hydrocarbon gases, polyethylene film grade, and liquefied natural gas saw the highest value increases, while iron and steel billets, liquefied butane, and liquefied propane saw the highest decreases in value.

Regarding imports, Rezvani-Far added that in the first five months of this year, 15.7 million tons of goods worth \$26.3 billion were imported into the country, reflecting a 7.93% increase in weight and a 5.53% increase in value.

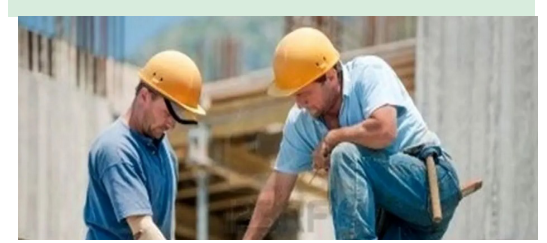
He mentioned that the three main imported items during this period were raw gold (\$1.6 billion), corn for animal feed (\$1.4 billion), and smartphones (\$893 million).

Rezvani-Far stated that among the top ten imported items, soybean meal, raw gold, and beef saw the highest increases in value, while sunflower oil, soybeans, and rice saw the largest decreases in value.

The average customs value per ton of imported goods in the first five months of this year was \$1,678, a 2% decrease compared to the same period last year.

He concluded by stating that the top seven trading partners with Iran in the first five months of this year were the United Arab Emirates, China, Turkey, Germany, India, Russia, and Hong Kong, collectively accounting for 76% of the weight and 82% of the total value of the country's imports.

Sanctions Prevent Iran From Entering the Iraqi Market



TEHRAN - Iraj Rahbar, regarding the Iranian Cooperative Chamber's readiness to build 150,000 housing units in Iraq, he stated: "We are ready to enter the Iraqi market and have no technical issues. Iranian companies are capable of constructing housing in Iraq, and we had previously expressed our readiness to enter the Iraqi market."

He continued: "This readiness also existed for Syria. In fact, during the ninth and tenth governments, we signed a protocol to cooperate with Syria in building housing, but the Syrians did not commit to it and ultimately showed no interest in cooperating with Iran and Iranian companies."

The head of the Tehran Association of Mass Builders stated that there is a strong desire among Iranian companies to enter the Iraqi housing construction market. He added: "Given that we share a border with Iraq, the movement for implementing projects and exporting engineering services would be easier. However, we are facing challenges in exporting engineering services to Iraq."

Rahbar pointed out the obstacles that sanctions have created for Iranian companies entering Iraq, stating: "We have suffered greatly in this area due to sanctions, and we are facing problems in both money transfers and guarantees. Therefore, agreements between the two countries and their governments are necessary."

He emphasized: "In the past years, we used the Islamic Development Bank for guarantees and money transfers between the two countries. Iran is one of the largest shareholders of the Islamic Development Bank, which supported Iran, and Iraq was also a member of this bank. For this reason, we could use this opportunity and capacity to overcome these issues, but now this opportunity no longer exists, and possibly due to the sanctions, the Islamic Development Bank's support has also been cut off."

The head of the Tehran Association of Mass Builders said: "One of our problems is the issuance of guarantees, which we need to participate in tenders, and the maximum time for this is 10 days. However, we do not have the ability to issue such guarantees within this time frame. Even if a guarantee is issued, Iraq does not accept it. This issue is not limited to Iraq; in fact, other countries do not accept Iranian guarantees either."

Rahbar continued: "The governments of Iran and Iraq need to make firm agreements on this matter and provide mutual guarantees so that Iranian companies can enter the Iraqi market without or with reduced risks."

Role of Iran's Construction Industry in Economic Growth



TEHRAN - A conference on investment opportunities and cooperation in Iraq's construction industry was held on the sidelines of the 24th International Construction Industry Exhibition. The goal was to introduce the capabilities and strengths of Iran's construction industry to Iraqi companies.

The conference on investment opportunities and cooperation in Iraq's construction industry was attended by Abdolamir Rabihi, Director-General of the West Asia Office of the Iran Trade Promotion Organization, Davood Goodarzi, head of the Iraq desk, Ali Motei, a board member and deputy of support and planning at the Iran Chamber of Cooperatives, and a group of prominent construction sector figures from both Iran and Iraq.

During the conference, the export potential of Iranian producers in building materials, construction equipment, technical and engineering services, and investment in Iraq's construction projects were discussed. There was also an emphasis on Iraq's extensive market needs, especially in the areas of rebuilding damaged regions, implementing infrastructure projects, and transferring technology.

In his opening remarks, Rabihi introduced Iran as one of the leading countries in the construction sector, stating that the role of the construction industry in Iran's economy is well-established. He highlighted that this industry is one of the key and influential sectors, comprising 78 different subgroups, and holds a significant position globally in areas such as cement and steel production.

According to Rabihi, last year Iran ranked 8th globally in cement production, producing around 64 million tons, placing it among major producers like the United States, China, and Russia. Iran also holds the 8th position globally in steel production.

Rabihi emphasized Iraq's need for infrastructure reconstruction after years of war and internal and external conflicts, noting that Iran, as a neighboring country with strong industrial capacities, can play a significant role in this process. This could not only assist in Iraq's reconstruction but also create new opportunities for expanding economic cooperation between the two countries.

He further stated that 95% of Iraq's needs are met through imports, highlighting Iraq's high potential for developing economic cooperation with neighboring countries, including Iran. Given Iraq's goal of achieving self-sufficiency in many areas, he announced Iran's readiness to cooperate in meeting Iraq's needs.

The Director-General of the West Asia Office of the Iran Trade Promotion Organization continued by stating that Iran-Iraq cooperation could involve exporting goods, transferring technology, and establishing joint production lines. He expressed his belief that by leveraging shared capabilities, sustainable and comprehensive development of economic relations between the two countries could be achieved.

In conclusion, Rabihi pointed out the need for careful planning to ensure the success of Iranian companies in the Iraqi market. He suggested that Iranian companies should develop strategies tailored to the specific conditions of each Iraqi province. For example, specific planning is needed to facilitate and expand trade cooperation in Nineveh province, which is why the Iran Trade Promotion Organization has established a trade center in Mosul.

It is noteworthy that the Iran Trade Promotion Organization had previously granted permission for holding the 24th International Construction Industry Exhibition.

Iran, Bulgaria Weigh Plans to Broaden Ties



TEHRAN (Tasnim) – The foreign ministers of Iran and Bulgaria discussed ways to expand relations between the two countries.

In a telephone conversation on Sunday, Foreign Minister of Bulgaria Ivan Kondov congratulated his Iranian counterpart Abbas Araqchi on taking office.

Kondov referred to the strong relations between Bulgaria and Iran and expressed his country's readiness to advance issues on the bilateral agenda and further expand relations with Iran.

Araqchi, for his part, expressed Tehran's desire to continue political dialogue and enhance cooperation with Sofia, particularly in the economic field.

He also highlighted the dire situation in Gaza and the urgent need for humanitarian aid for Palestinians in the besieged enclave.

Araqchi emphasized that Iran supports any agreement endorsed by the Palestinians and the Hamas movement aimed at achieving a ceasefire in Gaza and facilitating the delivery of humanitarian aid to the territory.

The two foreign ministers also discussed several consular issues.

Iran, Syria Coordinate Efforts to Counter Israel



TEHRAN (Tasnim) – The defense ministers of Iran and Syria emphasized the need for constant and close cooperation between Tehran and Damascus in the battle against the Zionist regime amid the international community's muted response to the Israeli atrocities.

In a telephone conversation with his Syrian counterpart on Sunday, Iranian Defense Minister Brigadier General Aziz Nasirzadeh reaffirmed Tehran's support for Syria's territorial integrity and establishment of security in the Arab country.

Highlighting the mutual interests of Iran and Syria and their backing for the resistance axis, the Iranian minister deplored international organizations' improper reaction to the Zionist regime's crimes in Gaza.

Brigadier General Nasirzadeh stressed the need for continued cooperation between Iran and Syria, noting that such interaction will definitely result in the defeat of the Zionist regime.

For his part, Syrian Defense Minister General Ali Mahmoud Abbas expressed his country's determination to maintain close relations with Iran.

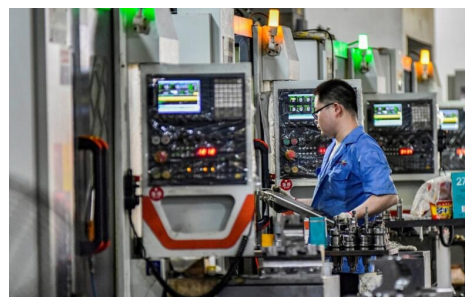
Lauding the support provided by Iran and the other resistance axis countries for Syria and its security, he noted that the security of Syria and Iran is interconnected.

All resistance front forces are struggling with the occupying regime of Israel which commits countless anti-human crimes in Gaza, Syria and Yemen in the shadow of the international organizations' inaction and negligence, the Syrian defense minister said.

He also expressed confidence that cooperation between Syria and Iran will make them stronger against the bullying axis and allow them to counter the evil forces.

One Dead as Storms Hit Australia's Southeast

MELBOURNE (Dispatches) - One woman has died, schools have been shuttered and tens of thousands of people were without power Monday, as wild storms lashed Australia. Police said a 63-year-old woman died after a tree fell on a cabin in the country's southeast. "Destructive" winds of more than 110 kilometres (68 miles) per hour are lashing the region, leaving about 150,000 people without power. Victorian state premier Jacinta Allan warned power outages could take up to three days to fix. "There are some areas where the conditions remain too dangerous to make repairs," she said. Meanwhile, coastal areas have been hit by high tides - in some cases swallowing up sand dunes. People have been warned to avoid unnecessary travel, while some schools have closed. Authorities in New South Wales were concerned the damaging winds would increase fire danger on Monday, with many areas on high alert.



IRAN NEWS

Taiwan Military Says China Lacks Ability to Invade



TAIPEI (Dispatches) - China lacks the ability to "fully" invade Taiwan as it does not have the equipment, but is bringing on line advanced new weapons and has other options to threaten Taiwan, such as inspecting foreign cargo ships, the island's defense ministry said. China, which views democratically-governed Taiwan as its own territory, has ramped up military and political pressure over the past five years to assert its claims, which Taipei strongly rejects. China has never renounced the use of force to bring Taiwan under its control. The government of the defeated Republic of China fled to Taiwan in 1949 after losing a civil war with Mao Zedong's communists, and no peace treaty or armistice has ever been signed. In an annual threat assessment of China sent to lawmakers on Friday, a copy of which was reviewed by Reuters, Taiwan's defense ministry said Beijing continues to hone skills such as joint command operations. "However, the use of tactics and strategies against Taiwan is still limited by the natural geographical environment of the Taiwan Strait and insufficient landing equipment and logistic capabilities," it said. China "is not yet fully possessed of the formal combat capabilities for a comprehensive invasion of Taiwan". But China is speeding up development of a slew of new weapons, such as the H-20 bomber and hypersonic missiles and beefing up the number of nuclear warheads, while trialling new tactics, the ministry said. The report said that in May, when China staged war games around Taiwan shortly after Lai Ching-te took office as the new president, Chinese coast guard ships were sent for the first time on interception and inspection drills off the east coast.



Landmark Victory for Far-Right AfD Party in German State Election

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Germany's far-right AfD won a landmark first regional vote on Sunday in the former East German state of Thuringia, exit polls showed, in a blow to Chancellor Olaf Scholz ahead of national elections in 2025. The AfD took between 30.5 and 33.5 percent of the vote in Thuringia, according to exit polls, with the conservative CDU in second place at around 24.5 percent. The AfD was also neck-and-neck with the CDU for first place in the neighbouring state of Saxony, which also held a regional election on Sunday, the polls showed. The AfD is unlikely to come to power in either state because other parties have ruled out working with the far right to form a government. But the result is still a political earthquake as it would represent the first time in Germany's post-World War II history that a far-right party has won a state election. If confirmed, it would also be a huge blow for Scholz's Social Democrats and the other parties in his fractious coalition government, the Greens and the liberal FDP. The SPD looked to have scored between 6.5 and 7 percent in Thuringia, and between 7.5 and 8.5 percent in Saxony. Alice Weidel, the co-leader of the AfD, hailed the result as a "historic success", while the party's other co-leader, Tino Chrupalla, said the party had a "clear mandate for government" in Thuringia. Chrupalla said both states had sent the message that "there should be a change of politics" and the AfD was "ready and willing to talk to all parties". Bjoern Hoecke, the controversial head of the AfD in Thuringia, told the ARD broadcaster his party was the "people's party in Thuringia". "We need change and change will only come with the AfD," he said, hailing the "historic result". Hoecke is one of Germany's most controversial far-right politicians and was fined twice this year for deliberately using a banned Nazi slogan. The exit polls also showed a good night for BSW, a new party founded by the firebrand politician Sahra Wagenknecht after she quit the far-left Die Linke. BSW scored between 14.5 and 16 percent in Thuringia and between 11.5 and 12 percent in Saxony, according to the polls.

Wagenknecht's party has appealed to voters in eastern Germany with a dovish stance towards Russia and calls for a radical crackdown on immigration. The party scored an immediate success in June's European elections, hauling in around six percent of the German vote. Other parties' refusal to work with the AfD potentially leaves BSW as the kingmaker in Thuringia and Saxony, despite serious policy disagreements with potential partners, especially on Ukraine. Scholz's coalition partners, the Greens and the FDP, had a dismal night in both states, scoring even less than the SPD. The contests in Thuringia and Saxony come just over a week after three people were killed in a suspected Islamist knife attack in the western city of Solingen, which has fuelled a bitter debate over immigration in Germany. The alleged attacker, a 26-year-old Syrian man with suspected links to the Islamic State group, was slated for deportation but evaded attempts by authorities to remove him. The government has sought to respond to the alarm by announcing stricter knife controls and rules for migrants in Germany illegally. Saxony is the most populous of the former East German states and has been a conservative stronghold since reunification. Thuringia meanwhile is more rural and the only state currently led by the far-left Die Linke, a successor of East Germany's ruling communist party. The state was an early centre of support for the Nazi party, which first came to power there in 1930 as part of a coalition government. A third former East German state, Brandenburg, is also due to hold an election later in September, where polls have the AfD ahead on around 24 percent. Created in 2013 as an anti-euro group before morphing into an anti-immigration party, the AfD has capitalised on the fractious three-way coalition in Berlin to rise in opinion polls. In June's EU parliament elections, the party scored a record 15.9 percent overall and did especially well in eastern Germany, where it emerged as the biggest force.

Judge Orders Shutdown of Musk's X in Brazil

BRASILIA (Dispatches) - A Brazilian Supreme Court justice ordered on Friday the "immediate suspension" of social media platform X in the country, after a court-imposed deadline expired for the company to identify a legal representative in Brazil. The move is the latest chapter in an ongoing feud between a Brazilian Supreme Court justice and Elon Musk, which also included the freezing of the satellite internet provider Starlink's financial accounts in Brazil. In the decision, Moraes ordered the full and immediate suspension of X in the country until all related court orders on X were complied with, including the payment of fines amounting 18.5 million reais (\$3.28 million) and the nomination of a legal representative in Brazil. Moraes ordered telecommunications regulator Anatel to implement the suspension order, and to confirm to the court within 24 hours that it has carried it out. In a bid to avoid the use of virtual private networks (VPNs) to circumvent the blockage, Moraes said that individuals or companies who tried to keep access to the social network that way could be fined up to 50,000 reais a day. X said late on Thursday that it expected Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes to order a shutdown "soon," after a court-imposed deadline expired for the company to identify a legal representative in Brazil. Earlier this year, Moraes ordered X to block certain accounts implicated in probes of so-called digital militias accused of spreading distorted news and hate. Musk, denouncing the order as censorship, responded by closing the platform's offices in Brazil. X, formerly known as Twitter, said at the time that its services would still be available in Brazil. Amid the underlying feud over X, Brazil's Supreme Court also blocked the local bank accounts of the Starlink satellite internet firm, which is 40% owned by Musk, leading the company on Friday to ask the court to suspend that decision.

Massive Protests Hit Israel After Six Hostages Killed in Gaza

LONDON (Dispatches) - Massive protests swept Israel on Sunday following the death of six hostages in Gaza as frustration mounted over the failure of the country's leadership to secure a ceasefire deal that would free Israeli captives. Crowds estimated by Israeli media to number up to 500,000 strong demonstrated in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and other cities, demanding that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu do more to bring home the remaining 101 hostages, about a third of whom Israeli officials estimate have died. In Jerusalem, protesters blocked streets and demonstrated outside the prime minister's residence. Aerial footage showed Tel Aviv's main highway filled with protesters holding flags with pictures of the slain hostages. Israeli television footage showed police directing water canons at demonstrators who had blocked roads. Local media reported 29 arrests. Labour leaders called a one-day general strike on Monday. The Israeli military announced the recovery of the bodies from a tunnel in the southern Gaza city of Rafah, as a polio vaccination campaign began in the war-shattered Palestinian territory and violence flared in the occupied West Bank. The bodies of hostages Carmel Gat, Hersh Goldberg-Polin, Eden Yerushalmi, Alexander Lobanov, Almog Sarusi and Ori Danino were returned to Israel, military spokesperson Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari told reporters. A forensic examination determined they were "murdered by Hamas terrorists in a number of shots at close range" 48-72 hours previously, an Israeli health ministry spokesperson said. Netanyahu, who faces growing calls to end nearly 11 months of war with a deal for a ceasefire and the release of remaining hostages, said Israel would not rest until it caught those responsible. "Whoever murders hostages - does not want a deal," he said. Senior Hamas officials said that Israel, in its refusal to sign a ceasefire agreement, was to blame for the deaths. "Netanyahu is responsible for the killing of Israeli prisoners," senior Hamas official Sami Abu Zuhri told Reuters. "The Israelis should choose between Netanyahu and the deal." Israel's assault on Gaza began after Hamas and other militants killed about 1,200 people and took about 250 hostages in attacks on Oct. 7, according to Israeli tallies. Since then, Israel's offensive has levelled much of the enclave of 2.3 million people, and the Gaza health ministry says at least 40,738 Palestinians have been killed. Displaced people are living in dire conditions with inadequate



shelter and a hunger crisis. Amid mounting public anger, the head of Israel's trades union federation, Arnon Bar-David, on Sunday called for a general strike on Monday to pressure the government into signing a deal, and said Ben Gurion airport, Israel's main air transport hub, would be closed from 8 a.m. (0500 GMT). Defence Minister Yoav Gallant, who has clashed frequently with Netanyahu, also called for an agreement, and opposition leader and former Prime Minister Yair Lapid urged people to join the demonstration in Tel Aviv. In a last-ditch bid to stop the demonstrations, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, a hardline member of Israel's security cabinet, asked the attorney general to prohibit the strike. The Hostage Families Forum called on Netanyahu to take responsibility and explain what was holding up an agreement. The six hostages brought home on Sunday "were all murdered in the last few days, after surviving almost 11 months of abuse, torture, and starvation in Hamas captivity. The delay in signing the deal has led to their deaths and those of many other hostages," it said. Netanyahu's office said he had spoken to the family of Lobanov, whose body was among those recovered, apologising and expressing "deep sorrow". But the family of Gat said they refused to speak to the prime minister and instead called on Israelis to join protests. "Take to the streets and shut down the country until everyone returns. They can still be saved," Gat's cousin, Gil Dickmann, wrote on X. U.S. President Joe Biden said he was "devastated and outraged" by the death of 23-year-old Israeli American Goldberg-Polin and the other hostages. Speaking to reporters in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, he said he was "still optimistic" about a ceasefire deal. Months of stop-start negotiations mediated by the United States, Qatar and Egypt have so far failed to secure a deal, despite increased U.S. pressure and repeated trips by top officials to the region. Speaking to Al-Jazeera television, chief Hamas negotiator Khalil Al-Hayya, based in Qatar, on Sunday reaffirmed the group would not sign an agreement unless Israel fully withdrew from Gaza Strip, including the Philadelphia and Netzarim corridors, issues that have been sticking points in the talks.

Kharkiv Struck by Missiles After Ukraine's Mass Drone Attack on Russia



KYIV (Dispatches) - At least 47 people, including five children, were injured on Sunday after Russian missiles struck a shopping mall and events complex in Ukraine's northeastern city of Kharkiv, officials said. Earlier in the day, Russia said Kyiv had launched one of the biggest drone attacks against it since the full-scale war began, targeting power plants and an oil refinery, while Moscow's forces made further gains towards a key town in eastern Ukraine. The Kharkiv attack prompted Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to renew calls on allies to allow Kyiv to fire Western-supplied missiles deeper into enemy territory and reduce the military threat posed by Russia. The fighting comes at a critical

juncture in the two-and-a-half year conflict. Russia is pressing an offensive in eastern Ukraine while trying to expel Ukrainian forces that broke through its western border in a surprise incursion on Aug. 6. Last week, Russia pounded Ukraine with its heaviest airstrikes of the war, hitting targets including energy facilities. Moscow, which denies targeting civilians, says damaging Ukraine's energy system is a legitimate military goal. Its drone and missile barrages have killed thousands of civilians since the conflict began in February 2022. Ukraine, with a rapidly expanding domestic drone industry, has stepped up its own attacks on Russian energy, military and transport infrastructure. Kyiv is also pressing the United States and other allies for permission to use more powerful Western-supplied weapons to inflict greater damage inside Russia and hit Moscow's abilities to attack Ukraine. In Kharkiv, rescue workers and volunteers carried injured civilians to ambulances outside the shopping complex. Shattered glass and debris were strewn across the ground and people fled to a metro station for safety. Earlier, Russian officials said air defence units had destroyed 158 drones launched by Ukraine overnight, and that debris caused fires at the Moscow Oil Refinery and at the Konakovo Power Station in the neighbouring Tver region. Kyiv has yet to comment on the drone barrage. Russia rarely discloses the full extent of damage inflicted by Ukraine's air attacks. Kyiv's allies are wary of how Russian President Vladimir Putin would respond

if their weapons were used against targets far inside Russian territory. Russia's TASS state news agency cited Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov as saying Moscow would change its nuclear doctrine in response to the West's actions over the conflict. He did not specify what the changes would entail. Russia's existing nuclear doctrine, set out in a decree by President Vladimir Putin in 2020, says it may use nuclear weapons in the event of a nuclear attack by an enemy or a conventional attack that threatens the existence of the state. Meanwhile Russia pounded Ukraine's capital of Kyiv with missiles early on Monday, while falling debris from the downed weapons injured at least two people, sparking fires and damaging homes and infrastructure, officials said. Ukraine's air defence units destroyed more than 10 cruise missiles and nearly 10 ballistic missiles, the city's military administration said on the Telegram messaging app. Air raid alerts went out across Ukraine for nearly two hours before the air force declared the skies clear at 0330 GMT. Neighbouring NATO member Poland activated Polish and allied aircraft to keep its airspace safe during the attacks. A boiler house at a Kyiv water plant was partially damaged as was the entrance to a metro station doubling as a bomb shelter in the Svyatoshynskiy district, Kyiv's Mayor Vitali Klitschko said on Telegram, though the station still operates. The district is home to a cluster of universities and schools.

Switchboard: (+98) (21) 44253448
 Public Relations Tel: (+98)(21) 44253450
 Editorial Board: 44253449
 Public Relations Fax: (+98)(21) 44253395
 Advertising Department:

Tel/Fax: (+98) (21) 44253335-9/44253234
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Leclerc Wins Italian Grand Prix



MONZA (Dispatches) - Charles Leclerc won the Italian Grand Prix on Sunday to delight Ferrari's massed ranks of fans as Lando Norris again chipped away at struggling champion Max Verstappen's lead in the Formula One drivers' standings.

Monegasque Leclerc claimed victory at Monza for the second time after winning in 2019, holding off McLaren pair Oscar Piastri and Norris in a thrilling race in which Verstappen finished nearly 38 seconds off the pace in sixth.

Huge roars engulfed the stands as Leclerc took the chequered flag for his second win over the season, after his own home Monaco GP, after holding out on a set of hard tyres he had changed during his one and only pit stop on the 16th lap.

"I thought that the first time would feel like this and the second time wouldn't feel as special," said Leclerc as he basked in the cheers of fans who made the track a joyous, noisy sea of red after the race. "But my god the emotions in the last few laps; Monaco and Monza are the two races I want to win every year and I've managed to win them this year. It is so, so special."

All of Leclerc's major rivals, apart from teammate Carlos Sainz who ended up finishing fourth ahead of his Ferrari replacement Lewis Hamilton, pitted twice and McLaren were hoping that the Ferrari pair would do the same.

Instead Leclerc managed to keep his tyres in good enough condition to stay ahead and in the end finish the race comfortably in front of Piastri, who had taken the race lead early on after an overtake manoeuvre on Norris which was as daring as it was tactically questionable.

"Not going to lie it hurts a lot. I did a lot of things right today," said Australian Piastri. "Happy with the race, the pace I achieved but when you finish second it hurts."

Briton Norris -- who clocked the fastest lap right at the end -- will be disappointed by his finish after starting on pole but he managed to chop Verstappen's championship lead to 62 points with eight races remaining as his Dutch rival's barren run continued.

"We considered (pitting once) the whole race but it was impossible with our graining. Just disappointed. Ferrari did a better job, so hats off to them," said Norris.

Verstappen has now failed to win any of the last six GPs after claiming the honours in seven of the first 10, and his and Red Bull's dominance of F1 looks increasingly in question.

A fourth straight world title looked a near certainty when Verstappen won in Spain back in June, but since then he has only finished on the podium twice.

And his teammate Sergio Perez finishing in eighth meant that McLaren are now only eight points behind Red Bull in the constructor's standings and look favourites to win it for the first time since 1998.

Argentine rookie Franco Colapinto, who replaced axed Logan Sargeant for Williams following his disastrous showing at the Dutch Grand Prix last weekend, finish in 12th in his F1 debut.

Earlier Leonardo Fornaroli became the first Italian to win the F3 title, the 19-year-old doing so without winning a single race in this year's championship.

Trident driver Fornaroli overtook Australian Christian Mansell on the final corner of the 10-race season to grab third place and snatch the title from Gabriele Mini by two points.

Gabriel Bortoletto won the F2 race in dramatic fashion after starting last on the grid, cutting Isack Hadjar's lead at the top of the stands to just 10.5 points with three races remaining in the season.

Mbappe Scores First La Liga Goals for Real Madrid



MADRID (Dispatches) - Kylian Mbappe answered his critics in style as he netted his first La Liga goals to give Real Madrid a 2-0 win over Real Betis at the Santiago Bernabeu on Sunday which sends them second in the table.

Since scoring in the UEFA Super Cup against Atalanta, new signing Mbappe had failed to find the back of the net in Madrid's opening three games in La Liga, prompting criticism in the Spanish press.

Mbappe was made to wait for his goals as he squandered a series of chances, finally finding the back of the net in the 67th minute, sweeping the ball past the Betis goalkeeper with his left foot after a well-timed back-heel from Fede Valverde.

Eight minutes later the France captain added a second from the penalty spot and was cheered off the field when he was replaced by Luka Modric in the 84th minute.

"It's a great moment," Mbappe told Spanish television after the match.

"I was really hoping to score at the Bernabeu, in this mythical stadium, the best in the world. But the most important thing was to win.

"After the match against Las Palmas, we knew we had to win. And that's what we did today, in a difficult match. But we're Real, and in the end we win, and with style."

The smile on Mbappe's face was in contrast to the concern that had been shown since scoring his first goal and winning his first trophy in Warsaw on August 14.

On Saturday, coach Carlo Ancelotti had hit back at the criticism, insisting that his star recruit was settling in well and he reassured at the press conference after the match that "we never put Mbappe under pressure to score goals".

Zverev Sets up Fritz Rematch at US Open

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Former runner-up Alexander Zverev reached the US Open quarter-finals for a fourth time on Sunday to set-up a rematch of his tense Wimbledon clash against Taylor Fritz.

German fourth seed Zverev defeated Brandon Nakashima of the United States 3-6, 6-1, 6-2, 6-2 to record the 450th win of his career.

Zverev, who lost the 2020 New York final to Dominic Thiem from two sets up, served up 14 aces and clubbed 51 winners past the 50th-ranked Nakashima while facing just a single break point.

Up next is a last-eight clash with US 12th seed Fritz who came back from two sets down to triumph in the pair's dramatic fourth round clash at Wimbledon in July.

Zverev had suffered a knee injury in that match and claimed he ended the tie "on one leg".

"Well, the difference now is that I'm healthy," said Zverev on Sunday.

"That was an amazing match. I expect a tough battle - it always is when I face Taylor."

As well as the 2020 US Open final, Zverev lost this year's French Open title match to Carlos Alcaraz, also in five sets.

"I'm doing everything I can, everything else is out of my power," he said.

"I'm trying my best and hopefully it will be enough at some stage in my career."



Meanwhile Grigor Dimitrov returned to the US Open quarter-finals for the first time since 2019 with a five-set triumph over Andrey Rublev on Sunday.

Ninth seed Dimitrov came through 6-3, 7-6 (7/3), 1-6, 3-6, 6-3 to set up a clash with either Frances Tiafoe of the United States or Alexei Popyrin, the conqueror of Novak Djokovic, for a place in the semi-finals.

The 33-year-old Dimitrov made the semi-finals in 2019 where he was defeated by Daniil Medvedev having stunned five-time champion Roger Federer in the quarter-finals.

"I was playing fairly good," said Dimitrov, the oldest player left in the men's draw.

"But for some reason my body got tired a little bit and he wasn't going to give up the match. I had stay patient. I think the biggest thing today was my experience."

Dimitrov saved 13 of 18 break points in the match and credited long-time friend and six-time women's champion Serena Williams for a helping hand.

"She gave me a good pep talk yesterday," he said of the US tennis legend who was watching the match in Arthur Ashe Stadium.

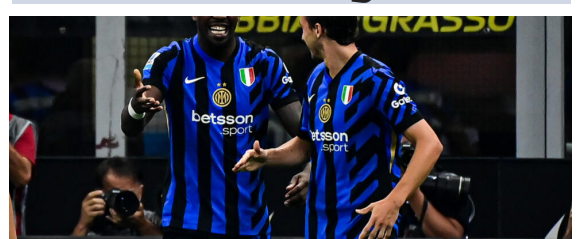
Meanwhile in the women's event, defending champion Coco Gauff was knocked out of the US Open in the fourth round on Sunday by American compatriot Emma Navarro after a serving horror show.

The 13th-seeded Navarro took advantage of third-ranked Gauff's 19 double faults and 60 unforced errors to win 6-3, 4-6, 6-3 and set up a quarter-final against Spain's Paula Badosa.

"It's not the summer that I want," said Gauff who exited Wimbledon in the fourth round and suffered early losses at the Olympics, Toronto and Cincinnati.

"But I feel like there's 70 other players in the draw that would love to have the summer that I had even though it's probably my least well done during this time of the year."

Record-Breaker Mueller Scores as Bayern Beat Freiburg



MUNICH (Dispatches) - Bayern Munich veteran Thomas Mueller scored on the day he became the German giants' all-time record appearance maker in a 2-0 Bundesliga home win over Freiburg on Sunday.

Mueller, in his 710th match for Bayern, came off the bench in the 59th minute with the hosts leading 1-0 thanks to a first-half penalty from Harry Kane.

With 12 minutes remaining, Mueller collected a Serge Gnabry pass on the turn and blasted in, the ball skipping off the ground and past Freiburg goalkeeper Florian Mueller.

Mueller, who played his first game for the club in 2008, moved past former goalkeeper Sepp Maier to outright first on the appearance list in all competitions.

"Records don't matter that much to me... more important is that today I could score a pretty nice goal -- one which was technically outstanding," the veteran said with a smile.

Kane had converted a 38th-minute penalty to give Bayern the lead after a VAR review showed the ball hit the arm of an unsighted Freiburg captain Christian Guenter.

Guenter told DAZN his side were brought down by "an insane penalty, really an insane penalty".

"When you jump, of course your arms go up -- if that's handball, I'll stop playing because it's nonsense. Maybe the German FA can start teaching us to jump without our arms."

Kane's goal was his first so far this league season, with the England captain receiving an award for topping the Bundesliga goalscoring charts with 36 last season.

In the fifth minute of stoppage time, Joao Palhinha gave away a penalty for handball on his Bundesliga debut for Bayern, but Freiburg's Lucas Hoeler fired the spot-kick over the crossbar.

After the match, Mueller climbed into the stands to celebrate with the club's ultras, giving away both his boots.

"I told them they need to work hard this year because they'll need extra vacation days -- we've got a lot ahead of us this year," Mueller said.

The win continued Vincent Kompany's perfect record in charge of Bayern, having won three from three in all competitions to start the season.

Liverpool Demolish Man Utd to Maintain Perfect Slot Start

MANCHESTER (Dispatches) -Arone Slot passed his first major examination as Liverpool manager with a statement 3-0 win at Manchester United thanks to Luis Diaz's double and a Mohamed Salah strike on Sunday.

Slot has the unenviable task of succeeding Jurgen Klopp but has made a perfect start with a 100 percent record from three Premier League games to sit alongside Manchester City at the top of the table.

"I think everything you want to see as a manager you saw in this game," said Slot.

A second consecutive defeat leaves United boss Erik ten Hag already under pressure just three games into the new season.

The Dutchman survived an internal review at the end of last season after overseeing the club's worst ever Premier League finish of eighth.

A shock FA Cup final win over Manchester City saved Ten Hag's job and offered hope for a fresh start, particularly after being backed with a £200 million (\$262 million) spend in the transfer market.

But all the hallmarks of United's failings last season were exposed by the impressive visitors.

"It's not like I'm Harry Potter," said Ten Hag."We just had a third game in the season and again we have to build a new team.

"We will be fine. It's clear we have to improve but at the end of the season I'm quite confident that we will have a big chance to lift another trophy."

Casemiro was the fall guy for the home side as the Brazilian was at fault for both Diaz's goals and hooked off at half-time in



favour of youngster Toby Collyer. United paraded new £42 million signing Manuel Ugarte before kick-off and must now hope the Uruguayan can have a transformational impact to shore up the midfield. Liverpool, by contrast, did not delve into the market for a defensive midfielder and Slot's decision to move Ryan Gravenberch into that role has proved an inspired early decision. Despite Liverpool's ascendancy over United during Klopp's

reign, the German managed to win only two of his 11 away games against United.

This time Liverpool were ruthless and could easily have matched their record 5-0 victory away to United in 2021.

United had been handed an early reprieve when Trent Alexander-Arnold fired in Diaz's deflected cross but the ball had struck Salah, who was in an offside position, on its way through to the right-back.

Casemiro had looked more like his old self in the opening matches of the campaign after struggling badly last season.

But the five-time Champions League winner had another afternoon that suggested his time at this level may now be over.

The former Real Madrid midfielder's slack pass was pounced on by Gravenberch who fed Salah and his dinked cross was headed in by Diaz at the back post.

Ten Hag's men collapsed once the second goal went in three minutes before half-time.

Casemiro was caught in possession by Diaz, who then raced into the box to sweep home Salah's cross.

Salah got his customary goal against United on 56 minutes to rub salt in the home side's wounds.

The Egyptian's stunning finish from Dominik Szoboszlai's pass was his 15th goal in 16 meetings against the Red Devils, including at least one in each of his last seven appearances at Old Trafford.

However, he again hinted this season could be his last for Liverpool with less than 12 months left to run on his contract.