

Seyyed Mehdi Tabatabai, Deputy for Communications and Information at the President's Office, announced President Massoud Pezeshkian Will Hold His First Press Conference With Local and International News Media on Monday

IRAN NEWS

Foreign Minister of Iran Abbas Araqchi Expressed Tehran's Support for Stability in the Balkans and Reaffirmed the Iranian Administration's Backing for the Territorial Integrity of Serbia

VOL. XXIX, No. 8074 TEHRAN Price 50,000 Rials

www.irannewsdaily.com

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 8, 2024 SHAHRIVAR 18, 1403

2

DOMESTIC



Afghans Threaten Iran's Job Market

> SEE PAGE 2

3

INTERNATIONAL

Pakistanis in Tehran Mark Defense Day in Style

> SEE PAGE 3



Iran Rejects Western Allegations of Supplying Ballistic Missiles to Russia



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has rejected allegations of supplying ballistic missiles to Russia as baseless and misleading. The allegations are leveled against Tehran by the US and its Western allies.

The mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations said on Friday that the country regards as inhuman any military assistance to parties of the Ukraine conflict that would increase damage to lives and infrastructure in Ukraine.

Therefore, not only does it not do so, but also invites other countries to stop sending weapons to the parties involved in the conflict, the mission said.

"The position of the Islamic Republic of Iran regarding the conflict in Ukraine has not changed," the mission said after American, British and French envoys leveled coordinated accusations at Tehran concerning the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict during a UN Security Council meeting on August 30

The mission also called on other countries to follow suit and end the supply of weapons to the warring sides.

Iran's permanent representative to the United Nations Amir Saeid Iravani previously also rejected the "baseless and misleading" accusations of the United States, England and France regarding Tehran's role in Russia's military campaign in Ukraine.

"The United States and its allies cannot deny the undeniable fact that sending advanced Western weapons, especially from the United States, has prolonged the war in Ukraine and harmed civilians and civilian infrastructure," Iravani said.

He made the remarks in a letter sent to the UN chief and the Security Council's president on Wednesday.

He said Iran "categorically rejects" any allegations suggesting its involvement in the sale, export, or transfer of arms in violation of its international commitments to Russia as "misleading, completely unfounded."

Tehran has repeatedly dismissed Western allegations of its involvement in the Russia-Ukraine war.

Iran has called for a ceasefire, blaming the lingering conflict on Western arms supplies to Kiev.

Any Change in Zangezur Corridor Will Face Iran's Painstaking Response



TEHRAN (IP) - Following recent discussions between Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev and Russian President Vladimir Putin regarding the establishment of a transport corridor, the head of Iran's Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee warned that any baseless claims would elicit a strong response.

Ebrahim Azizi stated, "The geopolitical developments in the Zangezur Corridor are against the interests of regional countries, and Iran strongly opposes them."

The official referred to the misguided thoughts and mentalities behind the formation of the Great Turan project, asserting that Zangezur is a fictitious corridor. He expressed concern that there are plots aimed at weakening Iran's military and political influence in the region under the guise of this corridor.

Azizi reiterated, "We warn those who pursue such illusions that the consequences of these decisions will be heavy and costly."

He emphasized, "Iran never seeks to create tension in the region, but it stands firmly against any threat to its territorial integrity."

Azizi noted that Iran closely monitors developments in the South Caucasus, as the region plays a significant role in the Eurasian axis. He highlighted its importance to Iran's civilization and its role in energy transfer, promoting peace, and maintaining regional stability.

"We have repeatedly communicated to regional countries that the corridor is considered Iran's red line. Any changes to it will face a strong response from Iranians," added the lawmaker.

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi has also expressed strong opposition to Russia's support for opening the Zangezur Corridor in the South Caucasus, deeming any border adjustments a "red line" for Iran.

The Zangezur Corridor is a proposed transport route that would connect Azerbaijan to its Nakhchivan Autonomous Region, which is separated from the rest of Azerbaijan by Armenian territory. This corridor is seen by Iran as a potential threat to its access to Armenia and, by extension, to Europe.

Iranian Vessels Sailing in Safest Shipping Lanes

TEHRAN - The chief commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has said that Iranian vessels sail in the safest shipping lanes.

Today, the safest shipping lanes belong to those vessels carrying the Iranian flags, Major General Hossein Salami said on Saturday during the visit of President Masoud Pezeshkian to the IRGC's Khatam al-Anbiya Construction Headquarters.

The Commander-in-Chief of the IRGC (Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps), while stating that the Zionist regime targeted 14 of our ships to prevent us from exporting oil, and in response, 12 of their ships were hit, said: "When we hit the fifth Israeli ship, they raised their hands and said they would stop the naval battle."

Salami during the President's visit to the Khatam al-Anbiya Construction Headquarters, said: "We have gone through very difficult years, almost six years, where our enemy placed us under sanctions, the phenomenon of COVID-19, and Trump, who was no less harmful than the virus, with threats of military operations and pressure to isolate us politically."

He added: "They targeted 14 of our ships to prevent our oil from being exported. At first, we did not understand who was doing it, as they acted very mysteriously; finally, we realized it was the Zionist regime. We hit 12 of their ships; when we hit the fifth one, they raised their hands and said they would stop the naval battle. The British seized our ship in Gibraltar, so we seized the Stena Impero, and they surrendered. Two of our ships were seized in Greece, so we seized two of theirs, and they eventually surrendered."

Salami continued: "We managed to shoot down their advanced drone. We were in very tough circumstances. Martyr Soleimani had been killed, COVID-19 was rampant, and the worst economic sanctions were imposed on us, and they tried to isolate us politically. We had to establish deterrence against these threats in various directions. First, we had to

secure our shipping lines. When the Americans tried to steal one of our ships, our forces did not allow it, and the Americans returned in shame. When that happened, the sanctions, in terms of enforcement, were broken."

The Commander-in-Chief of the IRGC said: "But this was not the end of the story; we had to manage the people during COVID-19. We brought all of the IRGC's capacities into action, produced vaccines, and implemented the Martyr Soleimani Plan. The Basij Reconstruction Organization made sure that no family impoverished by COVID-19 was harmed, which is why we launched the Faithful Assistance Movement. None of the 350 national projects were slowed down, and we did not allow sanctions to affect our work. On the other hand, we had to confront the takfiri phenomenon abroad because, if it continued, its central point would have been our country."

He said: "We succeeded in closing all the paths the enemy had opened against us, and today the safest shipping lines belong to the ships flying the Iranian flag. When our two oil tankers were headed to Venezuela, the Americans threatened to seize them. I personally, along with Commander Tangsiri, simulated the operation of seizing an American tanker and announced it over the radio; when the Americans saw this, our tankers safely reached their destination."

Commander Salami emphasized: "All the capabilities and capacities of the IRGC and the vast, endless potential of the Basij are at the service of the government. We are solely focused on your success (referring to Pezeshkian) and your government's success. Our work with governments is based on trust and honesty, and to the extent that you use our capacities, we are at your service."

We Can Address the Shortage of Schools With the Help of the Basij

TEHRAN - President Masoud Pezeshkian who visited the Khatam al-Anbiya Construction Headquarters on Saturday morning, said in a gathering of IRGC commanders: "I thank you for your efforts. We are part of you, and we were, are, and will remain Basij members. This true Basiji outlook can save the country. God willing, we will work together so that our people are proud of you, of all of us, and of the generation that gave their lives for our independence and freedom."

He continued: "Our government is your government, and we are part of each other. We should hold a meeting with the Basij to build schools. We have experience in Tabriz, where we built 600 health centers in 6 months through Basij collaboration."

The president emphasized that if a joint meeting is held, all issues regarding underprivileged schools could be resolved within a year. He added: "We can provide materials, and for the construction and design, we could even use standard blueprints, without needing contractors. We can also seek help from students."

Pezeshkian said, "I believe that within a year, we can resolve all school shortages with the help of the Basij. When the construction of health centers required a budget of 8 billion and two years of time, the same work was completed with the help of the Basij in six months with a budget of just 1.5 billion."

He added: "Building multi-classroom schools in underprivileged areas could even be done in three to four months, and we can use all available resources. My point is that without using contractors, we can solve the school problems in deprived areas."

The president also mentioned that he believes the problems of Tehran are unsolvable, saying: "Any development efforts in Tehran are a waste of time given the water shortage."

Earlier the president visited an exhibition of the infrastructure activities of the Khatam al-Anbiya Construction Headquarters and, through separate video communications, was informed of the latest status of 15 important projects being executed by this headquarters in various parts of the country.

Pezeshkian visited part of the infrastructure and construction activities of the Khatam



al-Anbiya Construction Headquarters.

Pezeshkian, by attending the Khatam al-Anbiya Construction Headquarters, visited an exhibition showcasing the activities and achievements of this organization in the country's infrastructure sectors.

During this visit, the president reviewed the activities of the Khatam al-Anbiya Construction Headquarters in the fields of knowledge and research, industry, mining, roads, railways and metro systems, road and urban development, water and energy, ports and coastal structures, oil, gas and petrochemicals, marine and offshore operations, information and communication technology, agriculture and aquaculture (food security), social responsibilities, poverty alleviation, and overseas infrastructure projects. The president was briefed on the details of the projects and actions currently being carried out by this organization through explanations from experts and officials from various sectors.

Additionally, a direct video connection was established with the execution sites of 15 major infrastructure projects at the headquarters' command and monitoring center, where the project managers and personnel explained the latest status of these projects.

The 15 projects, out of a total of 370 projects being executed by the Khatam al-Anbiya Construction Headquarters, included: the Mehr Persian Gulf Refinery, the water supply project to Zahedan from the Teblab Plain, the Chabahar to Zahedan railway project, the South Pars A13 platform, shipbuilding and marine facility projects on Sadra Island in Bushehr, Baft 2 Steel, the Kani Sib water transfer tunnel, Tabriz Metro Line 2, the NGL3200 refinery, the Aras water project, the Narmab Dam, the Jolfa-Aqband road, Imam Khomeini's Mosalla in Tehran, the Ahvaz sewage project, and Mashhad Metro Line 3. Reports on the latest status of these projects were presented to the president during the event.

The Khatam al-Anbiya Construction Headquarters has 7 holdings, which correspond to the country's ministries, and are engaged in executing infrastructure, foundational, and construction projects across 46 specialized fields.

Global Arrogance Fears Power of Iran's Nuclear Industry Capacity



TEHRAN (PressTV) - The head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) has described sanctions as "common tool" used by the global imperialist system to force independent nations into submission.

"The entire policy led by the imperialist system rests on using threats and supporting aggressive attitudes," Mohammad Eslami said in the northern Iranian province of Mazandaran on Thursday.

"And their common and ostentatious tool [to realize this purpose is to use] sanctions for [bringing about] submission so they can cripple a nation, bring it to its knees, and neutralize it so they can achieve apparent victory," he added.

The United States and its allies have brought Iran under the most extensive array of sanctions, accusing the country of deviation in its nuclear energy program towards, what they allege, military purposes.

The Islamic Republic has routinely rejected the accusations, saying it does not and will never pursue acquiring nuclear weapons in line with moral and religious standards.

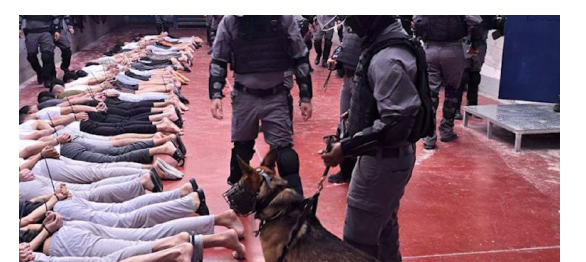
Inspections carried out by the International Atomic Energy Agency have also verified the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear activities.

Washington removed some of the sanctions following conclusion of nuclear agreement between Tehran and world countries in 2015, but returned the bans three years later after ditching the deal in a unilateral and unlawful move.

The global arrogance, including the US, has announced that it has chosen to wage an economic war against Iran so the Islamic Republic's currency is devaluated and the Iranian people come under pressure, he added.

"[Through these measures,] the United States seeks to say that its dominance is mandatory and that it rules the world," Eslami said.

Hamas Blasts Israeli Sadism as Video Emerges of Palestinians Tortured in Jail



GAZA (Dispatches) - Hamas has condemned Israel's torture and humiliation of Palestinian detainees in Megiddo Prison, calling on the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to document such crimes.

"The humiliation of the Palestinian prisoners in Megiddo Prison by the occupying forces and their Nazi prison service shows the hatred and sadism of the prison guards towards the Palestinians," Hamas said in a statement.

"These crimes are part of the occupying Israeli regime's ongoing brutal treatment of Palestinian prisoners, which includes torture, mistreatment, starvation, deliberate medical negligence and deprivation of fundamental human rights. As a result, the number of Palestinians who have lost their lives as a result of negligence and torture has surpassed 60," it added.

Leaked footage from Megiddo Prison has showed Israeli forces abusing Palestinian prisoners and terrorizing them with sniffer dogs.

The video shows dozens of prisoners lying on the ground with their hands tied behind their backs on their stomachs, some of them without clothes, while Israeli security personnel terrorized them with dogs.

In its statement, Hamas called on international human rights organizations and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to document such abuses and other horrific crimes against Palestinian detainees.

It also asked world bodies to take immediate action to pressure Israel and its prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu to stop their blatant violations of international law and standards concerning prisoners, and to hold Israeli leaders accountable for their continuous crimes.

The ministry of detainees' and ex-detainees' affairs in Gaza said, "The occupying Zionist entity, under the supervision of extremist and terrorist minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, has turned prisons and detention centers into death chambers."

IRAN NEWS



Pezeshkian and Putin to Meet on the Sidelines of Upcoming BRICS Summit

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Russia's state news agency TASS, citing Iran's ambassador to Russia, reported today that Masoud Pezeshkian will participate in the upcoming BRICS leaders' summit in Russia, where he is expected to meet with Vladimir Putin and other heads of state.

Kazem Jalali told TASS: "Pezeshkian, the President of Iran, will attend the BRICS summit in Kazan and plans to meet with the Russian President."

The Iranian ambassador added: "I believe the President of Iran will attend the BRICS summit in Kazan. We are currently preparing for this trip to ensure it will be beneficial and successful for bilateral relations."

Jalali emphasized: "Regarding bilateral relations, a meeting with Vladimir Putin and bilateral talks with other leaders, as well as engagements with the Iranian community and delivering a speech at the summit, have been planned."

Draft of MoU on Qatar's Participation in the Development of Dayyer Port Finalized



TEHRAN - A joint meeting between Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization and Qatar Ports Management Company (Mwani) was held with the goal of finalizing the draft of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for Qatar's participation in the development of Dayyer Port in Bushehr.

The joint meeting between Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization and Qatar's Ports Management Company (Mwani) was held to finalize the draft of the MoU regarding Qatar's participation in the development of Dayyer Port in Bushehr.

The technical meeting, attended by representatives from Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization, led by Taymour Bashir Gonbadi, the head of the organization's International Agreements Department, and the Qatari side, led by Jaber Al-Sulaiti, the Commercial Director of Qatar Ports Management, was conducted via videoconference. After thorough discussions, the parties finalized the clauses of the draft MoU, which will soon be signed by relevant authorities from both countries.

Previously, the governor of Bushehr had stated that due to the proximity of Dayyer Port to Al-Ruwais Port in Qatar and the longstanding economic interactions between Bushehr province and Qatar, there is a strong desire and need on both sides to expand economic relations in the region.

The governor emphasized that Qataris are particularly familiar with and interested in Dayyer Port on the Persian Gulf coast, highlighting the importance of enhancing economic interactions between Dayyer and Qatar, with one of the key actions being the development of the port.

Afghans Threaten Iran's Job Market



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Rasoul Shajari, head of the Tehran Handmade Shoe Manufacturers Union, spoke with an ILNA reporter about the presence of Afghan nationals in various trades in Iran.

He explained that the employment of Afghans across different sectors has become a social issue in Iran. Their presence in many trades has sparked concerns that the abundance of Afghan labor in the Iranian job market is taking employment opportunities away from Iranians, potentially leading to a national unemployment crisis.

He added that Afghan workers are not equally represented in all trades. For instance, in sectors related to clothing, the number of Afghan workers among leather workers is so high that the head of the union is working to find ways to gradually reduce their presence and encourage their return to Afghanistan. However, in the shoe industry, their presence is minimal due to the specialized skills required for shoe production compared to making bags and clothing. Additionally, industry veterans prioritize hiring Iranians for jobs and training, especially when it comes to skill development and granting business licenses. This commitment has allowed the shoe industry to fiercely combat shoe imports over the past three decades.

Shajari emphasized that to address this issue and remove Afghans from the country's production cycle, the Ministry of Labor needs to coordinate more closely with trade unions.

He also noted that, in his experience, Afghan workers in Iranian production units are highly committed to their jobs. Not all of them should be viewed as a source of insecurity in society. However, the large number of Afghans living and working in Iran has reached a point where it threatens the national interests of Iranians.

When asked whether hiring committed Afghan workers, who are paid lower wages and aren't necessarily required to receive insurance, makes more economic sense for Iranian employers, Shajari responded: "It's a matter of national versus individual interests. National interests cannot be sacrificed for individual gains. Regarding insurance, in some cases, Afghan workers and employers can agree to provide insurance coverage."

In response to whether Afghans can be granted permits to start businesses in Iran, Shajari explained that the Ministry of Labor only grants permits to Afghan nationals under specific circumstances, and even then, they must operate within the ministry's regulations.

Cooperatives' Share of the Economy Is 5%



TEHRAN - The Minister of Cooperatives, Labor, and Social Welfare stated that the share of cooperatives in the economy should be 25%, while currently, they only account for 5%.

Ahmad Meydari, in a speech before Friday prayers in Tehran, referred to the recent National Cooperative Day (September 4th) and discussed the role of cooperatives in the economy. He noted that cooperatives have existed in both the modern world and in Iran's history, with the goal of pooling small economic powers to create significant changes.

He said that the upcoming year has been designated globally as the "Year of Cooperatives," and emphasized that the world recognizes that combating poverty, unemployment, inequality, and achieving fair development requires the expansion of the cooperative sector—an issue also recognized in the country's constitution.

Meydari continued, explaining that Ayatollah Beheshti, who had a deep understanding of both global and Iranian history, incorporated clear principles about cooperatives into the constitution during the Assembly of Experts. Beheshti's vision of cooperatives is what we see today: for example, one of the world's top ten banks is a cooperative.

He also pointed out that the second-largest chain store in the world operates as a cooperative and highlighted how China has created 10 million jobs annually by linking cooperatives with large companies.

The Minister of Cooperatives, Labor, and Social Welfare added that Ayatollah Beheshti demonstrated in his book on cooperative economics that Iran's development path is through cooperatives. He stressed that cooperatives not only expand social networks but also address major economic issues. Despite the constitution and various directives from the Supreme Leader, there is still a long way to go to reach the goals set for cooperatives.

He asked why, in a country where people have historically been pioneers in cooperative development, cooperatives currently hold less than 5% of the economy instead of the mandated 25%.

Referring to the history of cooperatives, he pointed to the construction of qanats (traditional underground canals) and said

that while qanats were built under the rulers' orders, they were managed by completely grassroots networks. These qanats, which were created through cooperatives, represent some of the greatest water engineering achievements in human history.

Citing the famous historian Will Durant, he noted that the ancient Persians had agricultural cooperatives mentioned in the Avesta (a text from 3,000 years ago). Unlike Europeans, Iranians did not have large agricultural lands, and farming, from planting to harvesting, was managed through cooperatives.

Meydari gave another example from rural society, where shepherding functions as a form of cooperative. Several families would pool their livestock under the care of one person, creating the foundation for the country's livestock industry. This cooperation, essential for both livestock and agriculture, emerged from cooperatives.

He asked why the country is now in this situation, where cooperatives have not expanded, stressing that cooperatives can reduce exploitation, minimize capital dominance, establish fair relationships among people, and foster social ties. However, despite these benefits, the country has failed to grow cooperatives.

The Minister emphasized that part of the responsibility lies with the government, and part with the people. Improper government interventions have weakened cooperatives. For example, the 1968 Water Nationalization Law disrupted the grassroots water management systems that people had previously organized. Government involvement in water distribution created problems, contributing to today's water crises.

Meydari continued by saying that cooperatives grow when people rely on their social networks, citing examples like Iran's successful potato farming cooperatives, which are leaders in technological advancements and increased agricultural productivity. In rural areas, farmers gather to create large cooperatives that drive transformation.

He also mentioned that, in the past, housing cooperatives for educators provided valuable services, and today, armed forces cooperatives help their members secure housing. However, in many cases, cooperatives are not playing the role they should.

Reviving Lake Urmia Is important for All of Iran



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Gholamreza Nouri Ghezleh said on Friday, during the inauguration of irrigation and drainage projects in northern West Azerbaijan, in an interview with reporters: "This issue is more important for the people of the northwest region, and restoration policies are being pursued accordingly."

He added: "Utilizing agricultural capacity and cultivating water-efficient crops are among our key policies that we are following."

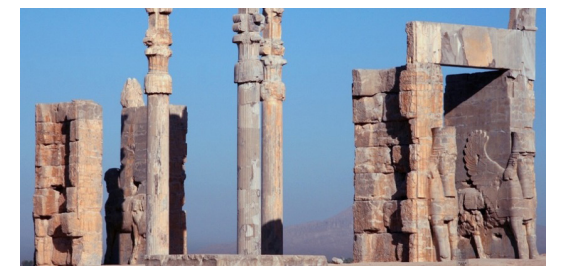
The Minister of Agriculture continued: "Our main solution is the efficient use of water, and in this regard, we are implementing crop pattern management, changing cultivation patterns, and using low-water-consuming products."

Nouri expressed satisfaction with the inauguration of the pressurized irrigation projects in northern West Azerbaijan, saying: "Efficient use of water is very important to us, and that's why today, during our second provincial trip to this region, we are here to emphasize the importance of optimal water usage."

He added: "Of the 62,000 hectares planned to be equipped with irrigation systems in West Azerbaijan, 46,500 hectares have been completed today, and the remaining 15,000 hectares will be inaugurated in collaboration with the Ministry of Energy within the next year."

He further noted: "Regarding other provinces in the northwest region, some parts have been completed in a similar manner, and some parts remain unfinished, which we are working to complete."

Persepolis is a Cultural Backbone of Iran and the Middle East



TEHRAN - Alireza Askari Chavardi, in the seminar titled "The Role of the Cultured People of Marvdasht in the Sustainable Development of the World Heritage of Persepolis," stated: "People who strive for sustainable development use resources in such a way that they remain available for future generations."

The director of the Persepolis World Heritage site said: "A region's people achieve development when they can create social wealth through awareness, and that wealth becomes capital, with culture being the highest form of wealth."

Askari Chavardi, speaking about the seminar on the role of the local community in the sustainable development of Persepolis in the Marvdasht district, said: "Some may ask why we have chosen this region as a model. The reason is that Persepolis is the most important historical site of Iran and the world, and the ancient history of Iran was born from this region. Although we experienced village and clan leadership systems 7,000 to 8,000 years before Persepolis, it was in the Marvdasht region where the first imperial organization was formed, and the place known as Persia was born."

He added: "Until a century ago, the entire world knew Iran as Persia, the land of Persia, which is why it's so important today to work towards the sustainable development of this ancient heritage and carry out cohesive planning."

The director also emphasized other goals of the seminar: "This is a scientific and cultural event where the role of people in sustainable development is being examined."

Askari Chavardi noted that significant work had been done by various community groups at the Persepolis World Heritage site over the past few months. He said: "We are witnessing a major transformation in Persepolis today. What matters most to us is the philosophy and culture behind this effort. It's significant that this community has reached a level of awareness where not only adults but even children are working to preserve and protect Persepolis."

He further added: "The collaboration currently taking place at Persepolis is guided by the philosophy that this heritage, representing our governing domain and historical identity, is preserved by and with the participation of the people. Not just the trees, but all the heritage of Persepolis and the many ancient artifacts discovered here need protection, and this responsibility is a heavy one."

Askari Chavardi also mentioned that the best specialists are being used for the restoration of Persepolis, saying: "Persepolis is of great importance to the entire world, and Iranians are committed to preserving it. We must also work to make use of all traditions that preserve our national culture as intangible heritage within the tourism sector."

Tehran Mayor Winds Up Syria Visit



TEHRAN - On Friday, Alireza Zakani, the Mayor of Tehran, leading a delegation of senior city officials to Damascus, the capital of Syria, wound up his two-day visit.

Upon arrival at Damascus airport on Wednesday, he was welcomed by the Special Governor of Damascus and Hossein Akbari, the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Zakani, who was invited by the government and the Special Governor of Damascus to explore investment mechanisms in development projects in Syria and participate in the Syria Expo and sign a sister city agreement, first met with the ambassador and senior officials of the Iranian embassy at the embassy.

The Mayor of Tehran believes that Syria, with the help of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Axis of Resistance, has passed the difficult period of war and enemy conspiracies and is now at a stage of communication, interaction, and reconstruction. He expects practical agreements in various fields, including transportation, technical and construction, and tourism promotion, to result from these meetings.

Zakani's itinerary also included meetings with Mohammad Samer al-Khalil, the Syrian Minister of Economy, Ahmad Ibrahim, the Governor of Rif Damascus, and Lamia Shakur, the Syrian Minister of Internal Affairs and Environment.

Later, accompanied by the Governors of Damascus and Rif Damascus, Zakani visited the Syria Expo and then paid respects at the shrine of Hazrat Zainab (S) and Hazrat Ruqayyah (S).

He also met with Tariq Krishati, the Special Governor of Damascus, where the sister city agreement between Tehran and Damascus was signed. This agreement aims to strengthen and deepen cooperation and exchange experiences in various fields, including services, economy, society, and tourism.

Judge Delays Trump Hush Money Sentencing Until After Election

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - A New York judge on Friday delayed former U.S. President Donald Trump's sentencing in his hush money criminal case until after the Nov. 5 election, writing that he wants to avoid the unwarranted perception of a political motive.

Trump, the Republican nominee for president, had previously been scheduled to be sentenced on Sept. 18. His lawyers in August asked Justice Juan Merchan to push back his sentencing date until after the vote, citing "naked election-interference objectives." Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg, who brought the charges against Trump, is a Democrat.

Merchan said on Friday he now planned to sentence Trump on Nov. 26, unless the case is dismissed before then.

"The imposition of sentence will be adjourned to avoid any appearance - however unwarranted - that the proceeding has been affected by or seeks to affect the approaching Presidential election in which the Defendant is a candidate," the judge wrote. "The Court is a fair, impartial and apolitical institution."



IRAN NEWS

Israeli Strikes Kill 27 Palestinians in Gaza as Polio Vaccination Resumes



CAIRO (Dispatches) - Israeli military strikes killed at least 27 Palestinians across the Gaza Strip on Friday, medics said, as health officials resumed vaccination of tens of thousands more children in the enclave against polio.

In Nuseirat, one of the territory's eight historic refugee camps, an Israeli airstrike killed two women and two children, while eight other people were killed in two other airstrikes in Gaza City, the medics said. The rest were killed in subsequent strikes across the enclave, they added.

Meanwhile, Israeli forces battled Hamas-led militants in the Zeitoun suburb of Gaza City, where residents said tanks have been operating for over a week, in eastern neighbourhoods of Khan Younis, and in Rafah, near the border with Egypt, where residents said Israeli forces blew up several houses.

Eleven months into the war, multiple rounds of diplomacy have so far failed to clinch a ceasefire deal to end the conflict and bring the release of Israeli and foreign hostages held in Gaza as well as many Palestinians jailed in Israel.

The two warring sides continued to blame one another for the fruitless efforts of mediators including Qatar, Egypt and the United States. The U.S. is preparing to present a new ceasefire proposal to hammer out differences, but prospects of a breakthrough remain dim as gaps between the sides remain wide.

On Thursday, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said that it was incumbent on both Israel and the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas to say yes on remaining issues to reach a Gaza ceasefire deal.

Nearly 90% of the Gaza ceasefire deal is agreed but critical issues remain where there are gaps, including the so-called Philadelphi corridor along Gaza's southern border with Egypt, Blinken told a press briefing. Israel has said it will not leave the corridor; Hamas says a deal isn't possible unless it does.

Algeria Votes as Tebboune Eyes Easy Re-Election

ALGIERS (Dispatches) - Algerians cast ballots on Saturday in a presidential election widely expected to see Abdelmadjid Tebboune secure a second term.

Tebboune, 78, is heavily favoured to see off moderate Islamist Abdelali Hassani and socialist candidate Youcef Aouchiche in the race to lead the North African country.

"The winner is known in advance," political commentator Mohamed Hennad posted on Facebook, referring to Tebboune.

Tebboune's opponents stood little chance due to low support and the "conditions in which the electoral campaign took place, which is nothing more than a farce", he wrote.

The incumbent's main challenge is to boost turnout, after winning in 2019 with 58 percent of the vote, amid a record abstention rate of more than 60 percent.

"The president is keen to have a significant turnout," Hasni Abidi, an analyst at the Geneva-based CERAM Study Center. "It's his main issue."

The low turnout in 2019 followed the Hirak pro-democracy protests, which toppled former president Abdelaziz Bouteflika before they were quashed with ramped-up policing and the jailing of hundreds.

Campaign rallies have struggled to generate enthusiasm in the nation of 45 million, partly due to the summer heat.

More than 800,000 Algerians living abroad have already started voting.

With young people making up over half the population, all candidates are targeting their vote with promises to improve living standards and reduce dependence on hydrocarbons.

By: F. Taherpoor



Pakistanis in Tehran Mark Defense Day in Style

TEHRAN - Pakistan Embassy in Tehran on Friday, September 6, and in a ceremony marked the Defense Day to commemorate the sacrifices made by Pakistani soldiers in defending its borders and protecting its sovereignty.

The ceremony was held at Pakistan House and was attended by distinguished guests comprising of high ranking civil and military officers from diplomatic community and diplomats.

Addressing the event, Pakistan Ambassador to Tehran H.E. Muhammad Mudassar Tipu welcomed the guests. He said it is the day when in 1965 defending our national dignity, honor, and sovereignty our armed forces and nation valiantly fought naked Indian aggression on our motherland and we defeated India. He then read message of Pakistan President on the occasion of the Defense Day. In some part of the message, Pakistan President said; "On this Defense and Martyrs' Day, we pay homage to our Ghazis and Shuhada, who rendered immense

sacrifices and bravely defended the country against external aggression. This day is a reminder of our Nation's unwavering commitment and determination to defend its sovereignty. I pay homage to the brave sons of the soil who shattered the enemy's dreams to harm Pakistan." The message also said: "In the face of these challenges, our Armed Forces and Law Enforcement Agencies are fully prepared to defeat terrorists. We stand behind our security forces to stamp out the menace of terrorism."

Then Ambassador Tipu touched upon the relation between Tehran and Pakistan and said: "Pakistan and Iran have historic, cultural, social, and ideological bonds. Just as our geography, our destiny is also intertwined. We will collectively endeavor to promote regional peace, stability, and development."

We have turned a new leaf in our relationship since the beginning of this year. The political, military, and security leadership of both countries has played a critical and sincere role in solidifying and expanding this vitally-important relationship."

He concluded his speech: "As Pakistan's Ambassador, it is my singular honor to serve Iran a great country with an eminent position. There is so much that I have learnt from Iran's great traditions and commitment to its ideals. I have great optimism and faith in the durability of this bilateral relationship and hope to explore its full potential for our great people, nations, and our institutions. Long live Pakistan-Iran friendship."

Meanwhile addressing the event, Defense and Army Attache of Pakistan Embassy Brigadier Muhammad Obaid Khan highlighted the significance of the Defense Day and underlined the immense courage and sacrifices by brave Pakistani soldiers.

He went on to say: "September 6 marks a pivotal moment in our history when the nation stood united to defeat the aggressive advancement of a numerically superior adversary. On this way, we must also remember the plight of people in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir who have endured decade of injustice and brutality."

Meanwhile in the event Brigadier General Muhammad Ahadi, Chief of Defense Diplomacy and International Relations of Iranian Armed Forces as the chief guest congratulated Pakistan on its Defense Day.

He went on to say: "In recent years effective and serious steps have been taken to establish security on both sides of the common border of Iran and Pakistan through the close relations and cooperation between the armed forces of both countries and both countries are determined to boost their cooperation for strong friendship and prosperity."



Ukraine Long-Range Strikes Into Russia Won't Be a Game Changer

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE (Dispatches) - U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin cautioned on Friday there was "no one capability" that would turn the war in Ukraine in Kyiv's favour after President Volodymyr Zelenskyy urged the West to let his forces use its long-range weapons to strike Russia.

At a regular meeting of Ukraine's allies at Ramstein U.S. Air Base in Germany, Zelenskyy repeated his plea for Western nations to supply more long-range missiles and lift restrictions on using them to hit targets such as airfields inside Russia.

Austin said Washington and its allies would continue to give strong support to Ukraine in fighting Russia's invasion, announcing another \$250 million in U.S. security assistance.

But, questioned by reporters, the Pentagon chief pushed back on the idea that allowing deep strikes inside Russia with Western weapons would be a game-changer.

He said Russia had already moved aircraft that launch glide bombs into Ukraine beyond the range of U.S.-supplied ATACM missiles.

"There's no one capability that will in and of itself be decisive in this campaign," Austin told reporters at the end of the meeting.

He also said Ukraine had capabilities of its own - such as drones - to hit targets inside Russia that were beyond the reach of ATACM and British-supplied Storm Shadow missiles.

"There are a lot of targets in Russia - big country, obviously," Austin said. "And there's a lot of capability that Ukraine has in terms of UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles) and other things to address those targets."

Among other donations, Germany pledged to supply an additional 12 self-propelled howitzers to Kyiv, while Canada said it planned to send 80,840 surplus small unarmored air-to-surface rockets as well as 1,300 warheads in the coming months.

Zelenskyy made his first appearance at a Ramstein meeting at an important moment in the 2-1/2-year-old war. Ukrainian forces have made a surprise offensive into Russia's Kursk region even as Russian forces focus on seizing



the city of Pokrovsk in eastern Ukraine, a logistics hub for Kyiv's war effort.

"We need to have this long-range capability not only on the occupied territory of Ukraine, but also on Russian territory, yes, so that Russia is motivated to seek peace," Zelenskyy said, in remarks that drew support from countries including Baltic nations Lithuania and Estonia.

Zelenskyy has long pushed back against allies who have supplied long-range weapons but told Kyiv they cannot use them deep inside Russia for fear of instigating a direct conflict between the West and Russia's President Vladimir Putin.

In his remarks on Friday at Ramstein, Zelenskyy said: "Russia's attempts to draw red lines simply do not work."

The talks in Germany came as Americans prepare for a November presidential election that could have major implications for Ukraine. Vice President Kamala Harris, the

Democratic candidate, has promised to stand with Ukraine.

Former President Donald Trump, the Republican candidate, has vowed to resolve the Ukraine war immediately on taking office with possible peace talks that might require Kyiv to cede territory. Trump and many of his supporters are skeptical of the billions of dollars in aid Biden's administration has poured into Ukraine's war effort.

At Ramstein, Austin gave statistics on the toll the war has taken on Russian forces, estimating more than 350,000 Russian troops have been killed or wounded. He said Ukrainian forces have sunk, destroyed, or damaged 32 Russian Navy vessels and pushed Russia's Black Sea Fleet further east.

Zelenskyy said that about 6,000 Russian soldiers had been killed or wounded in Ukraine's Kursk offensive.

"Today we control an area of more than 1,300 square kilometres in the Kursk region and this includes 100 settlements," Zelenskyy said, adding that a large part of that territory was abandoned by Russian troops.

But Moscow has also been pounding cities across Ukraine with missiles and drones in some of its largest attacks since its invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

"The number of air defence systems that have not yet been delivered is significant," Zelenskyy said.

French PM Barnier to Defend Key Macron Policies



PARIS (dispatches) - New French Prime Minister Michel Barnier on Friday pledged he would work independently from President Emmanuel Macron but signalled he would defend some of the president's key policies while toughening the government's stance on immigration.

Giving his first interview as government chief following his nomination on Thursday, Barnier said his government, which lacks a clear majority in a hung lower house of parliament, will include conservatives as well as members of Macron's camp.

Members from other groupings, including the left, were also welcome to back the new government. "There is no red line", Barnier said, adding: "We need to open the door ... to all those who want it."

Macron named 73-year-old Barnier, a conservative and a former Brexit negotiator, as prime minister on Thursday, capping a two-month-long search following his ill-fated decision to call a legislative election that delivered an unruly hung parliament.

Barnier faces the daunting task of trying to drive reforms and the 2025 budget through a hung parliament, as France is under pressure from the European Commission and bond markets to reduce its deficit.

Signalling his readiness to hold up some of Macron's widely unpopular reform policies, which likely includes taking political risks, Barnier said he was not prepared to repeal the rise of the retirement age to 64 from 62.

"We must not call into question this law which was adopted in very difficult circumstances," Barnier said, but added he was prepared to adjust the policy to better protect what he called "the most vulnerable."

The left-wing New Popular Front and the far-right National Rally (RN), who together have a majority and could oust the prime minister through a

no-confidence vote should they decide to collaborate, both massively campaigned against the reform.

In a sign he would take a rightward shift on some issues, Barnier said he would pursue tougher policies to curb immigration. "There still is a feeling that our borders are sieves and that migration flows aren't being controlled", he said, adding: "I don't have much in common with the ideologies of the National Rally, but I respect it."

Macron's political rivals earlier said Marine Le Pen's movement was exerting outside power over the president, who nominated Barnier with the tacit support of the far right after spending weeks looking for a candidate who would not immediately be toppled by a majority of lawmakers.

The RN gave tentative support to Barnier's nomination by saying it would not immediately try to vote it down, but made clear it could withdraw support at any point if its concerns on immigration, security and pocketbook issues were not met.

"Today, we have a prime minister who is completely dependent on the RN," said Lucie Castets, the prime ministerial pick of the leftist alliance that came top in the July vote, but who was overlooked by Macron after it failed to secure an absolute majority.

"It's now the far right that makes the kings or queens," Socialist Party chief Olivier Faure said on France Inter radio.

Fritz to Meet Sinner in US Open Final



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Taylor Fritz fought back to defeat compatriot Frances Tiafoe at the US Open on Friday, becoming the first American man to reach a Grand Slam final in 15 years.

Fritz, the world number 12, won 4-6, 7-5, 4-6, 6-4, 6-1 and will take on top-ranked Jannik Sinner for the title.

"He overwhelmed me at the start and I was freaking out a little," said 26-year-old Fritz after securing victory with a 16th ace.

"I just told myself to stay in it, hold serve and apply scoreboard pressure.

"I did all I could to stay in it. If I hadn't have done that I'd regret it forever. In the final, I will come out and give it everything."

Australian Open champion Sinner earlier became the first Italian man to make the New York final with a 7-5, 7-6 (7/3), 6-2 win over Britain's Jack Draper.

Andy Roddick was the last American to make a men's singles final at the Slams at Wimbledon in 2009. He was also the last man from the country to capture a Slam title when he won the 2003 US Open.

Tiafoe went into Friday's match trailing 6-1 in his head-to-head record against his compatriot.

However, he boasted the more impressive Grand Slam credentials, playing in his second US Open semi-final in his last three appearances.

Fritz was in unknown territory, having fallen at the quarter-final stage at the Slams on four occasions.

Tiafoe used that greater experience to hit back from 3-0 in the first set to clinch the opener.

Fritz, who had reached the semi-final by defeating fourth-ranked Alexander Zverev in the previous round,

was unable to convert a set point in the 10th game of the second set.

He succeeded at the next time of asking to level the match before handing the initiative straight back when Tiafoe broke for 1-0 in the third and held the advantage to retake the lead.

In a match where there were few rallies and little real drama, Fritz levelled again in the 10th game of the fourth set when Tiafoe dumped a lazy drop shot into the net.

That suddenly drained the spirit from Tiafoe as Fritz raced to victory in a brutally one-sided decider in which his opponent managed just nine points.

Earlier, in a gruelling three-hour match, Draper, the first British man in the semi-finals since Andy Murray won the title in 2012, was undone by 10 double faults and 43 unforced errors in match with Sinner.

He also vomited on the court, blaming anxiety for the illness.

"Jack and I know each other very well, we are great friends off court," said Sinner, who unleashed 43 winners in the match where he also injured his wrist in a nasty fall.

"It was a very physical match. He's so tough to beat so I'm excited to be in the final."

The 23-year-old Sinner added: "In the final, it will be a very tough challenge. I'm happy to be in that position because if you are in the final it means you are doing an amazing job."

World number 25 Draper vowed to work on overcoming his anxiety which sabotaged his hopes on Friday.

"When you play the top players, the intensity is different. It's a step up. It was a big occasion for me. I definitely felt more nerves around," he said.

Eagles Emerge With Win Over Packers in Wild Brazil Opener



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Saquon Barkley scored three touchdowns in his Philadelphia debut and the Eagles opened the season with a back-and-forth 34-29 victory over the Green Bay Packers on Friday night in Sao Paulo.

Barkley rushed for 109 yards and two scores and added a touchdown catch in the first NFL game ever played in South America. Jalen Hurts completed 20 of 34 passes for 278 yards, two touchdowns and two interceptions, and A.J. Brown had five catches for 119 yards and one TD.

Jordan Love and Jayden Reed powered the Packers in a game that featured seven lead changes. Love threw for 260 yards, two TDs and one pick on 17-of-34 passing. Reed had 171 yards from scrimmage with two scores. Josh Jacobs added 84 yards on 16 carries in his first game for Green Bay.

Trailing by five, the Packers took possession with 22 seconds left. Love got Green Bay to midfield with a 33-yard pass to Reed, but the QB had to be helped off the field on the following play with an apparent leg injury. Backup Malik Willis came on in relief but threw an incompletion and took a sack to end the game.

The Packers led 6-0 after the first quarter but left points on the table. The Eagles turned it over deep in their own end on their first two drives but limited Green Bay to two field goals by Brayden Narveson. The Packers also had an opening-drive TD catch by Reed nullified by a penalty.

The lead changed hands four times in the second quarter as Barkley and Reed both scored TDs rushing and receiving, the first time in NFL history two players did that in the same quarter.

After Hurts' 18-yard pass to Barkley put the Eagles up 7-6, Reed's 33-yard end-around scamper made it 12-7 for Green Bay.

Inglis's Century Sets-Up Australia's T20 Series Win Over Scotland



EDINBURGH (Dispatches) - Josh Inglis's record-breaking century laid the platform for Australia's 70 run-hammering of Scotland in Edinburgh on Friday as they took an unassailable 2-0 lead in a three-match Twenty20 series.

Travis Head, fresh from his hundred in Wednesday's opener, was out for a first-ball duck after Scotland won the toss at the Grange.

But his exit brought Leeds-born wicketkeeper Inglis to the crease, with the number three smashing seven fours and as many sixes as he raced to three figures in just 43 balls, the fastest hundred for Australia in men's T20s.

Inglis's innings was the cornerstone of Australia's 196-4, with Scotland managing just 126 all out in reply.

"It's pretty special to be honest," the 29-year-old Inglis said after stumps. "To hold that record is really nice."

"There was a bit happening (on the pitch) early doors," he said. "Once the new ball wore off, it got easier. I was just looking to play some good shots and show some intent."

"It's a good opportunity for me to get some game time and try cement my spot. There's a lot of good players but to put some performances on the board is pretty key."

Opening batsman Head was bowled for a golden duck by Brad Currie, the paceman leading Scotland's attack with 3-37.

But there was no stopping Inglis as he powered his way to a century before he was caught in the covers off Chris Sole.

Scotland's chase never got going, with Brandon McMullen playing a lone hand of 59 as Australia all-rounder Marcus Stoinis took 4-23.

Brazil Down Ecuador, Suarez Farewell Ends in Stalemate

CURITIBA (Dispatches) - Real Madrid forward Rodrygo scored the only goal as Brazil boosted their lackluster 2026 World Cup qualifying campaign with a 1-0 victory over Ecuador on Friday.

Rodrygo's deflected 30th-minute strike was enough to secure all three points for Brazil, who were languishing in sixth place in the South American qualifying standings before Friday's result in Curitiba.

The five-time World Cup winners moved up to fourth place with 10 points from seven games after their third win of the qualifying campaign, but remain eight points adrift of leaders Argentina.

With the 2026 World Cup in the United States, Canada and Mexico expanded to include 48 teams, the top six finishers in South American qualifying will be guaranteed a place at the tournament. The seventh placed South American team enters an inter-confederation play-off.

Brazil have struggled in recent international tournaments, losing in the quarter-finals of the 2022 World Cup and failing to progress past the last eight at this year's Copa America.

The lack of fluency that has characterised their recent form was back in evidence against Ecuador on Friday, where despite dominating possession for long periods they created little in the



way of clear-cut scoring chances, with only three shots on goal.

The breakthrough came on the half-hour mark, when Rodrygo collected the ball on the edge of the area, took a touch and then shot from 25 yards. The Real Madrid attacker's strike appeared to clip Ecuador defender Willian Pacho before flying in off the post.

In other South American qualifiers on Friday, Luis Suarez bade a frustrating farewell to international football as Uruguay were held to a 0-0 draw by Paraguay in Montevideo.

Suarez, 37, announced on Monday he was stepping down from

international duty after a glittering 17-year career for Uruguay that saw him finish as the country's top scorer with 69 goals from 143 appearances.

Suarez was feted in a pre-game ceremony which saw him gathered on the field with his family to receive tributes from fans, as well as a video message of congratulations from close friend Lionel Messi.

"Uruguay is bigger than any player. Starting tomorrow I will be another fan," an emotional Suarez told fans in an address to the stadium.

But the former Barcelona and Liverpool star, who now plays in Major League Soccer with Inter Miami, was unable to add a 70th goal to his international tally in Friday's farewell game at the Estadio Centenario in Montevideo.

Despite enjoying 65% possession, Uruguay were unable to find a way through a dogged Paraguay defence in a disjointed match littered with some 24 fouls.

Suarez, whose career at international and club level was dogged by controversies such as his ban for biting Italy's Giorgio Chiellini at the 2014 World Cup, was one of four Uruguay players to be shown a yellow card in a fractious encounter.

The result left Uruguay in second place in the standings with 14 points from seven games, four points behind leaders Argentina.

Italy Beat France, Belgium Win

PARIS (Dispatches) - Italy recovered from conceding inside 13 seconds to fight back and beat France 3-1 in their UEFA Nations League clash in Paris on Friday, while Belgium beat Israel and Wales drew with Turkey.

Bradley Barcola had opened the scoring at the Parc des Princes with the fastest ever goal by a France player, but the home side failed to build on that stunning start and Italy ran out deserved winners with Federico Dimarco, Davide Frattesi and Giacomo Raspadori all on target.

The result is a boost for Luciano Spalletti's Italy team after their poor showing at Euro 2024, when their defence of the title was ended limply by Switzerland in the last 16.

"Italians love football and they have been very sad recently," Spalletti said.

"I am happy tonight because we are relieved to see a better performance."

"Now we can continue on this road because we saw how much potential we have."

France, for whom captain Kylian Mbappe struggled to make an impact, picked up where they left off at the Euros, when they never found their best form despite reaching the semi-finals.

"It hurts for all of us," admitted their coach, Didier Deschamps.

He gave a full international debut to London-born Bayern Munich right-winger Michael Olise, but he was upstaged by Barcola.

The Paris Saint-Germain winger robbed Italy's Giovanni



Di Lorenzo to run through and score, in the process beating the previous quickest French goal, scored after 38 seconds by Bernard Lacombe, also against Italy at the 1978 World Cup.

Italy saw Frattesi hit the bar soon after, but they drew level on the half-hour via a stunning goal, as Dimarco laid the ball off for Sandro Tonali and then met the latter's first-time return with a sweet volley that flew into the far corner.

Frattesi turned in a Mateo Retegui cross to put Italy ahead

early in the second half, and substitute Raspadori got their third goal on 74 minutes.

The winning start in this edition of the Nations League leaves Italy level at the top of Group A2 with Belgium, who beat Israel 3-1 on Friday.

Kevin De Bruyne scored twice for Belgium, including a penalty, either side of a Youri Tielemans goal and a Timothy Castagne own goal in a game played in Hungary after Belgian authorities decided the fixture was too high-risk to host.

Italy face Israel next on Monday, with that match taking place in Budapest due to the security situation in the Middle East. France play Belgium in Lyon.

Elsewhere on Friday, new Wales coach Craig Bellamy saw his side draw 0-0 with Turkey in Cardiff in Group 4 of the second-tier League B.

Turkey left with a point despite having Baris Yilmaz sent off in the second half.

"I am not a master at this after one game, trust me. But I enjoyed it. It was a great country to play against in your first game and I am really happy," Bellamy told the BBC.

Wales next go to Montenegro, who lost 2-0 in Iceland on Friday.

Erling Haaland drew a blank as Norway were held to a 0-0 draw on their long trip to Kazakhstan in Group B3, while Benjamin Sesko scored a penalty in Slovenia's 1-1 draw with Austria in the same section.