

IRAN NEWS

Three Iranian Border Guards, Including One Officer and Two Conscript Soldiers, Were Killed in a Terrorist Attack in Mirjaveh, Sistan and Baluchestan Province, an Official Has Confirmed

Iran Denounced a Terrorist Attack Carried Out by Daesh (ISIS-K) in Afghanistan, Urging Authorities to Punish Those Responsible for the Deaths of 14 People in Ghor Province

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DOMESTIC

Iran Is Kazakhstan's Good Partner in Mideast

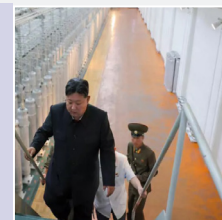
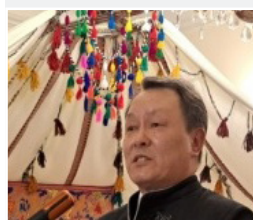
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INTERNATIONAL

North Korea Reveals Images of Uranium Enrichment Facility for First Time

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E3, Dutch Envoys Summoned Over Unconstructive Remarks



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iran Foreign Ministry has separately summoned heads of the British, French, Dutch and German embassies to Tehran to protest "unconstructive remarks" by European officials, accusing Iran of interfering in the Ukraine war and imposing sanctions on Tehran.

Director General of the Western Europe Department at the Iranian Ministry of Affairs Majid Nili Ahmadabadi "strongly condemned the psychological warfare and destructive remarks and actions of certain European parties", the ministry said Thursday.

"The insistence on adopting such positions and measures is viewed in line with the continuation of the West's hostile policy against the Iranian nation, which of course will be met with the Islamic Republic of Iran's appropriate response," Nili Ahmadabadi stated.

On Tuesday, the foreign ministers of the United Kingdom, France and Germany - known as the E3 - issued a statement against what they alleged "Iran's export and Russia's procurement of Iranian ballistic missiles."

They also decided to "cancel bilateral air services agreements with Iran" and announced that they would work towards imposing sanctions against Ira Air, the country's national airliner.

Ahmadabadi reiterated Iran's clear stance officially declared regarding the Ukraine war, saying "as previously emphasized, any claim that the Islamic Republic of Iran has sold ballistic missiles to Russia is completely baseless and false".

"America and a number of European allies mention security and peace while they themselves are the source of tension and escalation of crisis in the world by selling deadly weapons, including to the Zionist regime," he said.

"It is natural that they should answer the consequences of their wrong policies."

Putin Lauds Strategic Russia-Iran Relations



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Russian President Vladimir Putin has praised "strategic" relations between his country and Iran, stating that friendly ties between the two neighboring states have dynamically improved in recent years.

Putin made the remarks in a Thursday meeting with Secretary General of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Ali Akbar Ahmadian on the sidelines of a meeting of BRICS security officials in Russia's port city of St. Petersburg.

The Russian leader said Tehran-Moscow relations have developed, thanks to the support of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, calling on Iran's security chief to convey his best and kindest wishes to the Leader.

Putin said Russia's western city of Kazan is set to host the 16th BRICS Summit from October 22 to 24, stating that he plans to meet and hold talks with his Iranian counterpart Masoud Pezeshkian on the fringes of the event.

The Russian president noted that his country is determined to cooperate with Iran in all fields, stating that the volume of trade exchanges between Moscow and Tehran has increased by almost 10 percent in the first six months of the current year.

Putin also said the development of the North-South Corridor is among the projects that the two countries attach great attention to.

For his part, the top Iranian security official underscored that the new administration of the Islamic Republic will continue promotion of relations with Russia.



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

Iran's Proposal to BRICS for Breaking Western Monopoly on the Internet

TEHRAN - The Representative of the Supreme Leader and Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council of Iran has proposed cooperation among independent countries to replace American internet infrastructure, hardware, systems, and platforms with new, sanction-proof alternatives.

On Thursday, Ali Akbar Ahmadian, speaking to senior security officials from BRICS countries in St. Petersburg, criticized the U.S. and its allies for undermining the sovereignty of independent nations using technologies like cyber communication and social media. He called for practical action from BRICS members to counter this trend.

Ahmadian emphasized that one of the key challenges in the field of technology and cyber security is the monopoly of critical internet hardware and certain Western, particularly American, software, hardware, systems, and platforms, which needs to be addressed. He also noted that cooperation on artificial intelligence is a promising area for collaboration between BRICS countries and other independent nations.

He further highlighted the digital divide and the lack of technological infrastructure links among BRICS nations, stressing the importance of these countries working together to create shared platforms.

Ahmadian, head of the Iranian delegation at the BRICS high-level officials' meeting, pointed out that one of the most significant contemporary international security threats is information security, particularly in cyberspace. He warned that terrorist groups could exploit this domain.

He stated, "We caution that cyber terrorism will be a future threat for all of us, and addressing it will require the collective cooperation of BRICS members and other countries. The psychological impact of cyber terrorism can be even more damaging than terrorism in the physical world, as it threatens individual, social, economic, cultural, and even national security."

Ahmadian added that terrorists use social media to recruit and coordinate operations, and financial transfers via cryptocurrencies and blockchain technology facilitate their activities

without needing physical presence at crime scenes. He noted that the line between battlefields and everyday civilian life has blurred, complicating the balance between community security and privacy protection.

Ahmadian also highlighted how U.S. and its allies threaten global economic and food security, despite promoting free global trade. He called for accelerating the formation of an "anti-sanctions club" and developing coordinated mechanisms to counter the use of economic and legal threats as political weapons.

He further suggested that the process of implementing agreed-upon security measures in the financial sector should be expedited. In particular, he emphasized the need for BRICS nations to reduce their dependence on the U.S. dollar, conduct banking transactions in national currencies, rapidly develop shared banking platforms, and establish a joint banking network based on blockchain and cryptocurrencies.

Additionally, Ahmadian advocated for the creation of independent, non-political financial oversight bodies to combat money laundering in independent countries, including BRICS.

During the meeting, Ahmadian proposed forming a joint BRICS security commission, outlining mechanisms for cooperation in international peace and security to counter common global threats.

At the same time, he voiced support for any peace initiative between Russia and Ukraine, such as those led by China and Brazil, and urged BRICS countries to take action to end the crimes and oppression of the Israeli regime.

The three-day meeting of senior security officials from BRICS countries took place in St. Petersburg, Russia, with representatives from Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, the UAE, and Ethiopia. Ahmadian also held bilateral talks with officials from Russia, Serbia, South Africa, Brazil, and India to enhance international cooperation. The meeting concluded on Thursday, September 12, 2024.

Embassy Refutes Israeli Lies of Capturing Iranians in Syria



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iran's embassy in Damascus has rejected as "lies" the Israeli claims of capturing Iranian advisors during a recent attack on Syria.

"After 11 months of failure, the Zionist entity is so frustrated that it sees no other way to save itself but to kill children and spread lies," the embassy said in a post on social media platform X on Thursday.

The embassy condemned the recent Israeli bombing of Syria's Masyaf, stressing that it "didn't affect any of the Iranian advisors."

The statement came as some media outlets claimed that Israeli forces carried out a raid on "an Iranian weapons facility" and captured Iranian "two to four" nationals during the attack on Syria late Sunday.

"The entity's allegations are lies, and are only published by unknown media outlets, which are mouthpieces of the entity," the embassy said.

A series of Israeli airstrikes hit multiple military installations and buildings near Masyaf in the central province of Hama late on Sunday, killing at least 14 people and injuring dozens of others.

Condemning the "criminal attack" in Syria, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kan'ani on Monday said, "We do not confirm what was reported by media outlets linked to the Zionist regime about an attack on an Iranian center or a center under Iran's protection."

Israel frequently targets military positions inside Syria, especially those of the Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah which has played a key role in helping the Syrian army in its fight against foreign-backed terrorists.

The Tel Aviv regime rarely comments on its attacks on Syrian territories, which many see as a knee-jerk reaction to the Syrian government's phenomenal success in confronting and decimating terrorism.

Sunday's attack comes amid Israel's genocidal war against Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip which has killed 41,118 Palestinians and injured nearly 95,125 others since October 7.

Iran Rejects Allegation of Attempts to Eliminate Critics Abroad



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's permanent mission to the United Nations in New York has categorically rejected allegations of attempts to eliminate critics abroad as "fabrications."

"The Islamic Republic of Iran does neither harbor any intention nor any plan to carry out targeted killing or abduction operations, whether in the West or any other country," the diplomatic mission said in a statement on Thursday.

It added, "These fabrications have been made and spread by the Zionist regime, the Albania-based Mujahedin-e Khalq terror cult, and certain Western intelligence services - including those of the United States - to divert attention from the atrocities being perpetrated by the Israeli regime."

The statement comes as the US Justice Department and prosecutors said Wednesday that a Pakistani man has been charged for allegedly plotting to assassinate a US official in retaliation for the targeted killing of Iran's top anti-terror commander, General Qassem Soleimani outside Baghdad International Airport in January 2020.

Saudi Arabia Occupies Special Place in Iran's Neighborhood Policy

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi says Saudi Arabia, like Iraq, occupies a special place in Iran's neighborhood policy.

"Iranian-Saudi relations have been on a very positive trajectory and progressing well for several years," he told Saudi Arabia's Asharq News television on Thursday.

Iran and Saudi Arabia resumed relations following a seven-year hiatus under a China-brokered deal in 2023, which saw the two sides re-open diplomatic missions.

"We had issues in the past, but thanks to the assistance of Iraq and later China, we resumed bilateral relations. In recent years, these relations have been expanding rapidly," Araghchi added.

He highlighted that the foreign policy of Iran's new administration under President Masoud Pezeshkian aims to enhance and deepen ties with neighboring countries.

"The policy of Iran's fourteenth administration is based on further strengthening relations with its neighbors, and just as Iraq holds a special place in the neighborhood policy, Saudi Arabia also holds a special position," Araghchi stressed.

Presidents of Iran, Iraq's Kurdistan Discuss Key Bilateral Issues

ERBIL (Dispatches) - Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and President of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq Nechirvan Barzani have held talks in Erbil on key bilateral issues.

Heading a high-ranking delegation, Pezeshkian arrived in the Kurdistan's capital on Thursday on the second day of his three-day visit to Iraq and was welcomed by Barzani upon his arrival.

During his meeting with Barzani, Pezeshkian expressed Iran's keenness to boost economic and trade cooperation with the Kurdistan Region.

He stressed the need for steps to be taken to reach further agreements aimed at consolidating relations and achieving progress and development.

"It is essential to improve cooperation (in order to) prepare the necessary security ground for enhanced economic and commercial relations and interactions, especially in the border areas," the Iranian president emphasized.

Barzani, for his part, said Kurdistan imported more than 50 percent of its required commodities from Iran, expressing hope that the two sides will accelerate the expansion of their interaction.

He hailed the "historical and important" visit by the Iranian president to the Kurdistan Region and said Erbil is keen to expand relations with Tehran.

He emphasized that the Kurdistan Region is committed to a security pact between Iran and Iraq and will never allow any sides to use it as a threat against the Islamic Republic.

Pezeshkian also had a meeting with Masoud Barzani, the leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the former KRG president.

This is the first official visit to Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdistan region by an Iranian president since the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979.



Pezeshkian has earlier hailed good relations between Tehran and the Kurdistan Region and vowed to make efforts to further improve mutual ties.

Earlier Iran and Iraq agreed to set up a taskforce to discuss a comprehensive agreement that could further boost economic and trade relations between the two allied countries.

Pezeshkian said during a state visit to Iraq that he and Iraqi officials had agreed to start negotiations on a major economic and trade agreement between the two countries.

Pezeshkian made the comments in a meeting in Baghdad with businesses and economic figures from Iran and Iraq.

He said a main objective of his visit to Iraq, which is a first foreign trip since he took office last month, is to facilitate the activities of Iranian businesses and manufacturing companies in the Arab country.

The Iranian president said better economic and trade relations between Iran and Iraq would positively impact the security situation in the region.

Annual trade between Iran and Iraq is estimated at \$12 billion while Iran is a major supplier of natural gas and electricity to its western neighbor.

The Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPO) said last week that Iranian exports to Iraq had reached nearly \$4.5 billion in the five months to August 21, up 21% compared to the same period last year.

The TPO said exports to Iraq could hit a multi-year record this year as he estimated that shipments could reach well beyond \$10 billion in the year to March.

Iraq has been the second largest importer of Iranian goods and products after China in recent years. Iranian exports to Iraq mainly include natural gas, steel, petrochemical products, construction material and food.

IRAN NEWS



Consultation With Iraq to Complete the Strategic Shalamchekh-Basra Railway Project

TEHRAN (ILNA) - Farzaneh Sadegh, the Minister of Roads and Urban Development, stated: "Today, consultations and negotiations with Iraqi officials are scheduled to focus on completing the Shalamchekh-Basra railway project and strengthening the road network."

Sadegh added that this is the first foreign trip of President Pezeshkian, which is being made to the friendly and neighboring country of Iraq. She emphasized that, given the strategic positions of Iran and Iraq, rail, road, and transit sectors will be the focus of discussions between the two countries.

She continued: "Due to Iraq's connections with its neighboring countries, including Syria, and considering Iran's strategic position and its links to China and India, the relationship between the two countries is of great significance."

The Minister also stated: "In the road and rail sectors, critical topics, such as the Shalamchekh-Basra railway and the Basra to Khosravi border route, will be emphasized, and memorandums of understanding will be signed in this regard. Additionally, agreements in the aviation and transit sectors will also be signed today."

71-Fold Growth in Iran's Exports to Iraq Over 20 Years



TEHRAN - Seyed Rouhollah Latifi, spokesperson for the Commission on International Relations and Trade Development of Iran's House of Industry, Mines, and Trade, stated during the president's visit to Iraq: "Iraq holds a special position in our cultural, religious, political, social, and economic relations. It is the only country that shares the most land border with us, neighboring five Iranian provinces. Iraq is the second-largest destination for Iran's non-oil exports and the top destination for Iranian pilgrims. The two countries share many religious, ethnic, and cultural ties, making the bonds between the two nations inseparable."

He added, "Trade with Iraq began to rise in 2005 and saw significant jumps in 2009, 2012, and 2017. By 2019, Iran's non-oil exports to Iraq approached \$9 billion, and in 2022, it hit a record of \$10.238 billion. Although there was a slight decline in 2023, exports have surged again in the first five months of this year, reaching \$4.6 billion."

Latifi emphasized Iraq's importance as an export destination: "With \$100 billion in oil exports, Iraq is considered a wealthy country. However, due to the devastation caused by three wars, the U.S. and Western occupation, and terrorism and ISIS crises, Iraq now imports many of its essential needs. Iran, sharing a 1,500-kilometer border and various commonalities, has become one of Iraq's key trading partners, particularly due to our support during its crises and our ability to supply and produce needed goods."

He explained that most Iranian goods exported to Iraq are consumer products for end-users, which distinguishes Iraq from China, Iran's top export destination, where most exports are raw or semi-processed materials. Iranian exports to Iraq involve complete supply chains, boosting job creation and adding value to production.

The spokesperson further highlighted that around 20% of Iran's total exports are destined for Iraq, including nearly 30% of its food and agricultural products. Over 60% of Iran's tile and ceramics exports, as well as major exports of bags, shoes, household appliances, kitchenware, and industrial goods, are shipped to Iraq.

Regarding the future of the Iraqi market, Latifi mentioned, "Our competitors are making concerted efforts to increase their market share in Iraq, offering high-quality products with modern technology, attractive packaging, and after-sales services. If no action is taken, they could claim a larger portion of the market."

Iran Is Kazakhstan's Good Partner in Mideast

By: F. Taherpoor

TEHRAN - Kazakhstan Ambassador to Tehran Ontalap Onalbayev says the Islamic Republic of Iran is his country's good partner in the Middle East and Nur-Sultan (Astana) is keen to boost its good relation with Tehran in all spheres.

In an interview with IRAN NEWS, Mr. Onalbayev highlighted the significance of ties between Kazakhstan and Iran and sad that in 2022, Kazakhstan President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev had his first official visit to Tehran where both countries signed many agreements and MoUs for cooperation. He added that President Tokayev in person attended Iran's Embassy to sign memorial book commemorating for the demise of President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian. He reiterated the relation of Kazakhstan and Iran has always been good and amicable.

He added that at that during President Tokayev's visit to Tehran, an economic forum between the two countries was held and some 10 agreements were signed between Iranian and Kazakh companies.

He went on to say that the joint economic commission of both countries was held in 2023 and the roadmap for cooperation between the two states was signed where both countries decided to increase bilateral trade to \$3b.

Onalbayev then reiterated that the agreement signed between Iran and Eurasian Economic Union is very important for economic relation between Tehran and Nur-Sultan. He added that the approval of this law and agreement in the parliaments of the EAEU member states will have great impact on the bilateral trade.

He further said that the next joint economic commission of Iran and Kazakhstan is to be held by the end of 2024 in Astana, capital of Kazakhstan.

The Ambassador further said that both countries have some plans for cooperation in cultural fields and both countries are to implement some joint cultural programs and Kazakhstan is to launch a cultural center.

He added that exchange of students between the two countries is one of



the cultural programs which is on the agenda.

The Ambassador then pointed to good relation between the two countries and said over 500 Iranian companies have been set up in Kazakhstan and there are 131 Iranian-Kazakh companies in Kazakhstan.

Onalbayev then admitted that despite good relation, the trade volume between the two countries has decreased due to different reasons like sanctions. He said the trade volume was over \$500m in 2022 as it declined to \$300m in 2023.

He further said Kazakhstan is studying for the launch of a logistic center in Iran's Bandar Abbas for transit of its goods to the Persian Gulf states.

Iran and Kazakhstan share strong economic ties, bolstered by their geographical proximity and mutual interest in regional cooperation. Both countries are key players in the Caspian Sea region and have worked together to enhance trade, energy cooperation, and transport connectivity.

Trade between Iran and Kazakhstan has seen steady growth in recent years despite recent decline. Kazakhstan exports commodities such as grain, oil, and metals to Iran, while Iran supplies goods like agricultural products, construction materials, and pharmaceuticals. Both nations aim to increase their trade volume.

One of the most significant initiatives is the development of the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), a multimodal network connecting India, Iran, Central Asia, and Russia. This project aims to enhance regional trade by reducing transit time and costs. Kazakhstan sees Iran as a vital transit hub for its goods, allowing better access to markets in the Middle East and beyond.

Both governments have encouraged mutual investment, particularly in the fields of energy, agriculture, and infrastructure. Kazakhstan's investment in Iranian sectors like agriculture and mining has grown, while Iranian companies are interested in Kazakhstan's infrastructure and manufacturing industries.

Facilitating Foreign Investor Participation



TEHRAN - The Deputy for International Business Development at the Iran Trade Promotion Organization raised the issue of facilitating foreign investor participation.

The Deputy for International Business Development at the Iran Trade Promotion Organization, while emphasizing the importance of holding the International Investment Opportunities Exhibition in Iran, highlighted the specific nature of the event's audience.

A webinar introducing the International Investment Opportunities Exhibition (Investment Expo) was held, attended by Seyed Mohammad Sadegh Ghanadzadeh, Deputy for International Business Development at the Iran Trade Promotion Organization, along with several directors of the organization and Iran's commercial attachés.

Ghanadzadeh first noted that last year, the Iran Trade Promotion Organization issued a permit for holding the exhibition to introduce Iran's investment opportunities. He added that the Investment Expo is Iran's first comprehensive event for attracting investment, scheduled to be held from October 5 to 7 this year at the Tehran International Exhibition Center.

He stressed that initial steps for the successful organization of this exhibition have been taken, with the goal of identifying potential errors in the first edition and ensuring that the event will be even more successful and grand next year through precise planning.

According to Ghanadzadeh, the attendees of the Investment Expo will be traders and businessmen, and the exhibition will not be open to the general public.

In continuation, Mohammad Reza Qadiri, the organizer of the exhibition, pointed out the differences between the first Investment Opportunities Exhibition and the Export Expo event. He stated that this exhibition will not invite traders, but rather focus on hosting investors.

He highlighted the services offered at the Investment Expo, saying that luxury hotels, legal advisors, tour guides, and translators will be provided for the event's visitors.

Qadiri emphasized that the nature of the Investment Expo requires more negotiations than trade, and dedicated halls for B2B meetings will be available. The negotiations will focus on countries with which Iran has more commercial relations.

The exhibition organizer also mentioned that investment in production and export of surplus production can contribute to the country's economy.

Oman Seeks to Increase Trade Exchanges With Iran

AHVAZ - The head of the Chamber of Commerce of Northeast Oman said: "The annual trade exchange between Iran and Oman is 2 billion dollars, and for this reason, we seek to increase trade and investment exchanges with Iran."

Sheikh Mohammad bin Nasser Al-Maskari said at the first comprehensive conference on the approach to international economic cooperation between Iran and Oman at the Ahvaz Chamber of Commerce: "Iran, as a neighboring country to Oman, is very advanced and has cutting-edge technology and major global industries. Trade exchange with this wealthy country represents a very significant capacity."

He added: "Due to its strategic location, Oman serves as a gateway for trade and political relations with Eastern countries, and many countries are utilizing this opportunity."

The head of the Chamber of Commerce of Northeast Oman further stated: "The government of Oman views all social strata equally and strives to ensure that all communities benefit from equal opportunities."

Al-Maskari also highlighted that familiarity with the laws and investment organizations is the most important tool for investing in Oman.

Continuing in the same conference, the head of the Committee for the Development of Mines and Properties of the Chamber of Commerce of Northeast Oman added: "Iran and Oman produce similar mineral materials, which is a very important point of commonality for the development of trade between these two countries in the mining industries sector."

Jamal bin Nasser Al-Muslihi stated: "In Oman, metals, minerals, nickel, chrome, lime, and marble are extracted and produced."

He added: "Copper extraction is one of the oldest discovered mineral resources in Oman."

The head of the Committee for the Development of Mines and Properties at the Chamber of Commerce of Northeast Oman



emphasized: "We welcome and support the establishment of factories in the field of mining industries by Iranian investors in Oman."

The head of the Committee for Food Security of the Chamber of Commerce of Northeast Oman also said during the conference: "There are very good commercial and political relations between Iran and Oman."

Rashid bin Saeed Al-Sadiri stated: "During our three-day trip to Khuzestan, we became acquainted with the vast investment and economic potential in the region. The purpose of this trip is to strengthen trade relations between Oman, Iran, and Khuzestan."

He emphasized: "The government of Oman offers excellent and valuable facilities to investors, and the country is a safe and secure place for investment."

Al-Sadiri noted that achieving food security requires the use of technology in agriculture and added: "Iran is one of the world's major agricultural producers and exports many products to Oman."

The head of the Committee for Food Security of the Chamber of Commerce of Northeast Oman said: "Khuzestan also has great potential in producing agricultural products, and with cooperation, many agricultural factories can be established in Oman."

He further stated: "In the Northeast province of Oman, we are in need of modern agriculture. Large plots of land have been allocated for agriculture, with wheat being one of the most important crops."

Al-Sadiri added: "There are many similarities between Iran and Oman in terms of water, soil, and climate resources, which is why we welcome cooperation with Iran in the agricultural sector."

A trade delegation from Northeast Oman visited Khuzestan for one week to familiarize themselves with the region's commercial and economic potential.

Red Sea One of the Safest Waterways in the World

TEHRAN - The Red Sea is one of the safest waterways in the world / Iran's military forces will respond decisively to any aggression

The Deputy of Maritime Affairs at the Ports and Maritime Organization stated that the Red Sea is one of the safest waterways in the world. He mentioned that while piracy in the Gulf of Aden had been an issue, incidents of piracy have somewhat decreased. He emphasized that Iran's brave military forces will undoubtedly respond decisively to any aggression against Iranian ships or waters.

Ali Akbar Marzban, a member of the Board of Directors of the Ports and Maritime Organization, in an interview with ILNA, was asked if the safety of Iranian sailors has been affected by regional developments in the Red Sea. He responded, "The Red Sea is one of the safest waterways in the world. While piracy in the Gulf of Aden had been an issue, piracy incidents have significantly reduced compared to the early 21st century, when they were more severe. However, piracy has not been completely eliminated."

He continued, "In the Red Sea, where ships enter from the Bab el-Mandeb Strait to the Suez Canal, this route is considered one of the safest waterways in the world. The current concerns raised about the Red Sea are unrelated to the safety of navigation. Ships and their crews passing through this route do not face safety issues. The issue at hand today is maritime security, and the concepts of safety and security must be considered separately."

The Deputy of Maritime Affairs emphasized, "In the matter of maritime safety, external factors such as military threats do not play a role. Factors affecting ships and their crews are more relevant. However, in terms of maritime security, which can also impact safety, external factors come into play. Today, due to developments in the region caused by the inhumane crimes of the Zionist regime, supported by some Western governments, and Yemen's resistance against this regime, we are witnessing a specific situation in the Red Sea."

Export of Aquatic Products to 45 Countries



TEHRAN (IRNA) - The head of Iran's Fisheries Organization announced the export of fishery products to 45 countries during the first five months of this year, stating that various marine fish, prepared aquatic feed, and shrimp are the top export products.

Seyed Hossein Hosseini referred to the export of fishery products to 45 countries in the first five months of the current year, noting that different marine fish, prepared aquatic feed, and shrimp are leading the list of export items.

The head of Iran's Fisheries Organization stated: "According to customs, the export of fishery products in the first five months of 1403 (Iranian calendar year) has seen a 32% increase in terms of weight and a 24% increase in value."

He added: "The weight of exported fishery products in the first five months of this year was 68,000 tons, showing a 32% increase compared to the same period last year."

He emphasized that last year, with the export of 210,000 tons of fishery products to more than 50 target countries, the record of \$650 million in exports was broken, highlighting the country's commitment to international standards.

Hosseini mentioned ongoing efforts such as the identification of fishery farms and the tagging of fishery products. He noted that the Sajak system is capable of tracking fishery products before, during, and after production.

He stated that achieving the export of 300,000 tons of aquatic products valued at around \$700 million by the end of this year is a foreseeable goal.

The Deputy Minister in the Fisheries Organization pointed out that fishery production continues throughout all seasons and mentioned the low water consumption, healthiness of aquatic foods, and their popularity in both domestic and international markets as some of the advantages of aquatic products. He added that they aim to increase the added value of tuna by producing special products like "Sashimi."

Trump Claims Victory Despite Thumping by Harris

CHARLOTTE (Dispatches) - Donald Trump said he would not take part in another debate with Kamala Harris, as the White House rivals headed back to battleground states that are set to decide a nail-bitingly close US presidential election.

The Republican former president lashed out two days after his first televised clash with the Democratic vice president, when Harris put Trump on the defensive and got under his skin with a series of barbs.

"THERE WILL BE NO THIRD DEBATE!" the 78-year-old wrote on his Truth Social platform, including in his tally the earlier debate with Joe Biden in June that drove the incumbent out of the race, and his Tuesday showdown with Harris.

Trump claimed that "polls clearly show that I won the Debate against Comrade Kamala Harris" — despite several snap surveys that showed Harris came out well on top in the clash viewed by more than 67 million Americans.



Ukraine Says Russia Hit Grain Vessel Near NATO Member Romania



KYIV (Dispatches) - Ukraine accused Russia of using strategic bombers to strike a civilian grain vessel in a missile attack in Black Sea waters near NATO member Romania, escalating tensions between Moscow and the military alliance.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the vessel carrying Ukrainian grain to Egypt had been hit overnight by a Russian missile just after it left Ukrainian territorial waters. There were no casualties, he said.

The U.S. ambassador to Ukraine "strongly condemned" the attack and said Russia was responsible. A United Nations spokesperson said the incident was a "stark reminder" of the threats still faced in the Black Sea by civilian vessels.

There was no immediate comment from Russia.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybaha said the strike was "a brazen attack on freedom of navigation and global food security". Ukraine's navy said Russian Tupolev Tu-22 bombers had fired a number of cruise missiles at 11:02 p.m. local time (2002 GMT) on Wednesday.

It was the first time a missile has struck a civilian vessel transporting grains at sea since the start of Moscow's invasion in February 2022. Some vessels have been damaged during Russian attacks on Ukrainian ports where they were moored.

The incident comes as Zelenskyy has been trying to court the Global South, including countries such as Egypt - the destination of the grain according to Ukraine - and convince them to join the West in supporting Ukraine in the war.

U.S. Imposes Sanctions on 16 Venezuelan Officials Linked to Maduro

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The Biden administration said it was imposing U.S. sanctions on 16 allies of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro in response to voter fraud in the country's election and his government's ensuing crackdown on the political opposition.

The move came just days after Edmundo Gonzalez, recognized by the U.S. and other countries as winner of the July 28 presidential election, fled to Spain after Maduro's government issued a warrant for the opposition leader's arrest. Among those targeted for sanctions were Supreme Court President Carysilia Rodriguez, electoral council director Rosalba Gil and National Assembly Vice President Pedro Infante. The list includes others linked to the election as well as military and intelligence officials accused of post-election repression.

As part of the first punitive U.S. measures in response to Maduro's disputed reelection claim, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Washington was also imposing visa restrictions on an unspecified number of "Maduro-aligned" officials.

But the U.S. stopped short of announcing any new actions against the OPEC member's vital energy sector, which is already under heavy U.S. sanctions, an omission that raises questions about the potential impact of the new measures.

President Joe Biden's administration is seeking to punish Maduro and his loyalists for what the U.S. sees as renegeing on the promise of a competitive democratic vote while also pressuring him into negotiations with the opposition.

"The Treasury Department is targeting key officials involved in Maduro's fraudulent and illegitimate claims of victory and his brutal crackdown on free expression following the election, as the overwhelming majority of Venezuelans call for change," Deputy Treasury Secretary Wally Adeyemo said in a statement.

North Korea Reveals Images of Uranium Enrichment Facility for First Time

SEOUL (Dispatches) - North Korea released images of its uranium enrichment facility for the first time on Friday, showing leader Kim Jong Un touring it as he called for more centrifuges to boost his nuclear arsenal.

The country, which conducted its first nuclear test in 2006 and is under rafts of UN sanctions for its banned weapons programs, has never publicly disclosed details of its uranium enrichment facility.

Such facilities produce highly enriched uranium -- which is needed to produce nuclear warheads -- by spinning the original material in centrifuges at high speeds.

Kim toured the Nuclear Weapons Institute and the "production base of weapon-grade nuclear materials," the official Korean Central News Agency reported, without giving the location of the facility or the date of the visit.

Kim "stressed the need to further augment the number of centrifuges in order to exponentially increase the nuclear weapons for self-defense," state media reported, publishing images of Kim inspecting rows of centrifuges.

Kim "acquainted himself with the production of nuclear warheads and current nuclear materials," the report said.

The North Korean leader was briefed about the facility "dynamically producing nuclear materials by studying, developing and introducing all the system elements including centrifugal separators," KCNA said.

Kim urged the facility to "push forward the introduction of a new-type centrifuge... so as to further strengthen the foundation for producing weapon-grade nuclear materials".

Kim also "stressed the need to set a higher long-term goal in producing nuclear materials necessary", added KCNA.

North Korea's nuclear weapons programs are banned by UN sanctions, but the country has long flouted the restrictions, thanks in part to support from allies Russia and China.

Experts said the sudden public disclosure of the North's uranium enrichment facility could be intended to impact the US

presidential election in November.

The images are "a message to the next administration that it will be impossible to denuclearise North Korea", Hong Min, a senior analyst at the Korea Institute for National Unification, told AFP.

"It is also a message demanding other countries to acknowledge North Korea as a nuclear state," he added.

It is unlikely that the disclosure will be quickly followed by another nuclear test, he said.

Pyeongyang last month said a record downpour in late July had killed an unspecified number of people, flooded dwellings and submerged swathes of farmland in its northern regions near China.

38 North, a North Korean analysis program run by the Stimson Centre think-tank, reported on Wednesday that North Korea's main nuclear test site had been damaged by floodwaters.

North Korea's main nuclear test site "is in very bad condition. All roads and railways have been lost due to rain damage, and the ground is very weakened," Hong added.

Relations between North and South Korea are at one of their lowest points in years, with the North recently announcing the deployment of 250 ballistic missile launchers to its southern border.

The North has also been bombarding the South with trash-carrying balloons, including a five-day straight blitz last week.

On Thursday, Seoul said the North had fired multiple short range ballistic missiles into waters east of the Korean peninsula.

But KCNA said in a separate dispatch Friday that this had been a test of a "new-type 600mm multiple rocket launcher" which was overseen by Kim.

Putin Warns West Over Giving Long-Range Missiles to Kyiv

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - President Vladimir Putin said that the West would be directly fighting with Russia if it allowed Ukraine to strike Russian territory with Western-made long-range missiles, a move he said would alter the nature and scope of the conflict.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has been pleading with Kyiv's allies for months to let Ukraine fire Western missiles including long-range U.S. ATACMS and British Storm Shadows deep into Russian territory to limit Moscow's ability to launch attacks.

In some of his most hawkish comments on the subject yet, Putin said such a move would drag the countries supplying Kyiv with long-range missiles directly into the war since satellite targeting data and the actual programming of the missiles' flight paths would have to be done by NATO military personnel because Kyiv did not have the capabilities itself.

"So this is not a question of allowing the Ukrainian regime to strike Russia with these weapons or not. It is a question of deciding whether or not NATO countries are directly involved in a military conflict," Putin told Russian state TV.

"If this decision is taken, it will mean nothing less than the direct involvement of NATO countries, the United States and European countries in the war in Ukraine. This will be their direct participation, and this, of course, will significantly change the very essence, the very nature of the conflict."

Russia would be forced to take what Putin called "appropriate decisions" based on the new threats.

He did not spell out what those measures could be, but he has spoken in the past of the

option of arming the West's enemies with Russian weapons to strike Western targets abroad and in June spoke of deploying conventional missiles within striking distance of the United States and its European allies.

Russia, the world's largest nuclear power, is also in the process of revising its nuclear doctrine - the circumstances in which Moscow would use nuclear weapons - and Putin is being pressed by an influential foreign policy hawk to change it to state Russia's willingness to use nuclear arms against countries that "support NATO aggression in Ukraine."

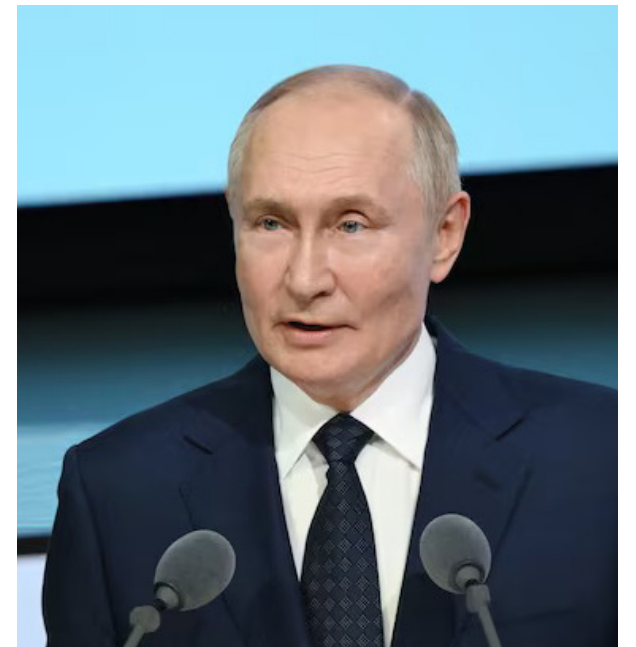
Russia is also currently holding major naval exercises with China and considering curbs on major commodity exports.

The West casts its discussion around whether it should allow Kyiv to use its long-range weapons to strike Russia as part of an answer to what it says is an escalation of the war by Moscow, which it says has received ballistic missiles from Iran. Tehran said the claims were "ugly propaganda".

Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022 with tens of thousands of troops, triggering the biggest confrontation between Russia and the West since the depths of the Cold War.

Putin casts the conflict as part of an existential battle with a declining and decadent West which he says humiliated Russia after the Berlin Wall fell in 1989 by encroaching on what he considers Moscow's sphere of influence, including Ukraine.

The West and Ukraine describe the invasion as an imperial-style land grab and have vowed to defeat Russia on the battlefield. Russia controls over 18% of Ukrainian territory.



China Defense Minister Calls for Negotiation to End Ukraine, Gaza Wars



BEIJING (Dispatches) - Chinese Defense Minister Dong Jun said Friday that "negotiation" was the only solution to conflicts such as the wars in Gaza and Ukraine, as he addressed a global gathering of military officials in Beijing.

Scores of delegates are in Beijing for the Xiangshan Forum, dubbed China's answer to the annual Shangri-La meeting in Singapore.

It is hosting more than 500 representatives from over 90 countries and organisations across three days, according to state media.

Dong told the opening ceremony: "To resolve hotspot issues such as the crisis in Ukraine and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, promoting peace and negotiation is the only way out."

"There is no winner in war and conflict, and confrontation leads nowhere," Dong said.

"The more acute the conflict, the more we cannot give up dialogue and consultation. The end of any conflict is reconciliation," he added, calling on all countries to promote "peaceful development and inclusive governance".

More official speeches are expected on Friday, and top military representatives from Russia, Pakistan, Singapore, Iran, Germany and others will participate in roundtable talks.

Topics for discussion at the forum include US-China relations, security in Europe and Asia, and the challenges of defence in a multipolar world.

Dong in his speech urged against "the proliferation of national security concepts" to ensure "new technologies can better benefit the whole mankind" -- a likely reference to the United States' efforts to block Beijing's access to advanced technology.

"At a time of high global security risks and increased instability and unpredictability, the responsibility for building the defence and security capacity of all countries is enormous," Dong said.

Beijing, he added, "is willing to work with all parties to strengthen strategic alignment, deepen defence consultations, discuss the signing of bilateral and multilateral agreements on defence cooperation".

US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Michael Chase is attending the forum, just a few days after top Washington and Beijing commanders held their first talks.

Washington and Beijing remain at odds on issues from trade to the status of self-ruled Taiwan and China's increasingly assertive approach in disputed maritime regions.

But they have sought to re-establish regular military-to-military talks in a bid to prevent flashpoint disputes from spinning out of control.

A key flashpoint is the South China Sea, where Chinese vessels have engaged in a series of high-profile confrontations with Philippine ships in recent months.



Canada Edge Closer to Davis Cup Final Eight

VALENCIA (Dispatches) - Canada are close to securing a place in the Davis Cup final Eight after a commanding 3-0 victory over Finland in Group D with Denis Shapovalov and Felix Auger-Aliassime winning their singles matches before teaming up for the doubles. Shapovalov beat Eero Vasa 7-6(2) 6-2 in Manchester, while Auger-Aliassime eased past Otto Virtanen 6-2 6-3. Shapovalov and Auger-Aliassime then teamed up to defeat Virtanen and Harri Heliövaara 6-2 7-5 in the doubles to wrap up the tie and avenge last year's defeat to Finland. "Everybody's in good spirits, so it's very good," Auger-Aliassime said. "Any motivation is good but I think it's a different year, a different time, and (last year's loss) was behind us," Auger-Aliassime said. The 2022 champions could advance to the next stage without playing another match, depending on the outcome of other showdowns over the next two days before their clash with Britain on Sunday. Australia cruised to a 3-0 victory over the Czech Republic in Valencia as Thanasi Kokkinakis started the day with a 6-2 6-7(2) 6-3 win against Jakub Mensik. Australia extended their lead to 2-0 when Tomas Machac withdrew just six minutes into the match against Alex Popyrin due to an injury. Machac had previously been forced to retire during his loss to Carlos Alcaraz

earlier in the week. Machac, wearing a bandage on his right leg, played only nine points before calling for a medical timeout and then signalled that he could no longer continue. "We saw him last night, and he didn't look too good last night, so we wish him a speedy recovery and hopefully he's back on tour quickly," Popyrin said. Matthew Ebden and Max Purcell defeated Mensik and Adam Pavlasek 6-4 6-2 in the doubles. Germany defeated Chile 3-0 in their Group C clash in Zhuhai, China, earlier thanks to straight-set victories by Maximilian Marterer and Yannick Hanfmann, and a win in the doubles match by Tim Puetz and Kevin Krawietz. Germany are now above U.S, Slovakia and Chile in the standings. In Bologna, the Netherlands edged out Brazil 2-1 after Wesley Koolhof and Botić Van de Zandschulp won the doubles 6-4 7-6(5) in Group A. Sixteen nations are competing in four groups in Manchester, Bologna, Valencia and Zhuhai with the top two from each group moving through to the Davis Cup Final Eight Knockout Stage which will be held in Malaga, Spain in November.

Mbappe Refuses French League Mediation Proposal



PARIS (Dispatches) - Kylian Mbappe's entourage said yesterday they had refused the French football league's (LFP) offer to act as a mediator between the France captain and Paris Saint-Germain in their dispute over unpaid wages and bonuses for the striker. Mbappe claims PSG owe him 55 million euros which the Parisians say the 25-year-old had agreed to waive in August 2023. The Real Madrid forward has demanded the sum, which includes a signing bonus he was expecting to receive in February, the three final months of his salary, as well as an "ethical bonus" covering the period. Lawyers representing the two parties met early on Wednesday after Mbappe, who joined Madrid this summer, had referred his case to the LFP's legal committee. The league then offered to mediate. "The eventuality of a mediation was mentioned this morning," Mbappe's entourage told AFP in a statement. "This possibility was rejected during the meeting by the player's representative. "A mediation would be useless to establish a lack of payment that can be seen from a simple analysis of the player's payslip." The LFP told AFP it would notify Mbappe and PSG of its decision in the case on Friday. Earlier in the day, PSG had welcomed the proposition. "Paris Saint-Germain is very pleased with today's two-hour hearing before the commission," PSG said.

Tagovailoa's Concussion Troubles Return as Dolphins Fall to Bills

MIAMI (Dispatches) - Miami Dolphins quarterback Tua Tagovailoa's concussion problems returned on Thursday as he was taken out of his team's 31-10 home loss to divisional rivals Buffalo. Tagovailoa, who had endured a miserable night throwing three interceptions, was hurt with 4:24 remaining in the third quarter and with his team already 31-10 down. Running with the ball on a fourth down, Tagovailoa lowered his head into the body of Bills defensive back Damar Hamlin. After receiving on-field treatment, the quarterback left the field under his own power and peaking to Dolphins staff. Miami later confirmed he had been taken out and replaced by Skylar Thompson due to a concussion. Tagovailoa endured a series of injuries during the 2022 season, including two documented concussions which raised questions over his long-term future in the game but he stayed injury-free last season. The injury came after Buffalo had emphatically shown they have no intention of giving up their domination of the AFC East, looking far superior to their rivals in all areas. The Bills, led by quarterback Josh Allen, have won the last four AFC East divisional titles and Allen now has an 11-2 record against the Dolphins. Miami's night to forget began with Tagovailoa throwing an interception on their first drive and with the Bill in Allen's hands, he led them to an early touchdown



ending with a 17-yard pass to James Cook. The Dolphins responded with a 10-play, 70-yard drive which concluded with a five-yard touchdown pass from Tagovailoa to De'Von Achane. The Miami quarterback then threw another interception when he was well off-target with a pass intended for receiver Robbie Chosen but which was easily picked off by Christian Benford. A 43-yard field goal from Tyler Bass on the resulting possession put Buffalo 10-7 ahead but any hopes the home crowd had of a shoot-out in the heat soon dissipated as Buffalo took control. Allen found Taron Johnson with a superb 33-yard pass and James Cook finished off the drive with a one-yard run for the touchdown. The Bills extended their lead to 24-7 with Cook rushing 49 yards on the opening play of the drive and Miami's only response was a field goal which sent them 14 points down at the interval. Tagovailoa's third interception of the night came in the third quarter and was a 'pick six' with Ja'Marcus Ingram returning it 31-yards into the end-zone. Then came Tagovailoa's injury, adding fresh concerns over his durability on a night when Buffalo showed they remain a cut above their closest divisional rivals in recent seasons. Allen finished with 139 yards on 13/19 passing and one touchdown.

Ten Hag Shrugs Off Ex-Star Ronaldo's Dig Over Man United's



MANCHESTER (Dispatches) - Manchester United are in a transition period, as well as dealing with injuries, but this cannot be used as an excuse, manager Erik ten Hag said. Ten Hag's side, who are still without the injured Rasmus Hojlund and Luke Shaw, have lost their two most recent Premier League games, including a 3-0 defeat at home to Liverpool, but the manager is ignoring the criticism. "It doesn't impact me, I know in the process where we are and what we have to do, where we are going," Ten Hag told a press conference ahead of tomorrow's game at Southampton. "We are still in a transition period, we have to integrate a lot of young players, we are still dealing with injuries. "Before anyone thinks about excuses, no, we have to win every game. I know that, the team knows this and it doesn't matter who is available and we will focus on every game and have in every game, the mindset we have to win." Despite the poor results, the manager says that the team is going in the right direction. "Of course, when you see the scores no-one is happy and also the players have a very good sense of the quality of the process," Ten Hag said. "Also, when you analyse the games, all the games so far, we are in a good direction. When you are in a transition period and have to build the team we have to improve and step up. "We will see where we are in May next year, it's very early in the season." Ten Hag was asked about recent comments made by former United player Cristiano Ronaldo that a Manchester United manager cannot say they are not going to fight to win the league title or the Champions League. The Dutchman preferred to focus on Ronaldo's other comments where he said the club needs time to rebuild. "He said that Manchester United can't win the Premier League. He said this, if you read the article very well," Ten Hag said. "He is far away in Saudi, far away from Manchester. Everyone can have an opinion."

Man United Record Financial Loss for Fifth Year Straight

LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester United yesterday posted net losses of £113.2 million for 2023/24 despite earning record revenues — their fifth straight year of losses. In the year to June 30, 2024 the Premier League club recorded record revenues of £661.8 million — up 2.1 per cent — driven by record commercial and matchday revenues. United incurred costs of £47.8 million in "exceptional items", mostly related to Jim Ratcliffe's purchase of a minority stake in the club, which was completed in February. United finished eighth in the Premier League in the 2023/24 season — their lowest finish since 1990 — and exited at the group stage of the Champions League. But Erik Ten Hag's men won the FA Cup — beating Manchester City in the final at Wembley for a second trophy in two years. United have embarked on a major backroom shake-up in recent months, including bringing in a new chief executive, Omar Berrada, poached from Premier League champions Manchester City. "As I embark on my new role as chief



executive officer of this historic club, we are all extremely focused on working collectively to create a bright future with football success at the heart of it," said Berrada. "We are working towards greater financial sustainability and making changes to our operations to make them more efficient, to ensure we are directing our resources to enhancing on-pitch performance." The Premier League's profitability and sustainability rules allow a maximum loss of £105 million over a three-season period, but within that certain losses are deemed "allowable" such as infrastructure, youth team and women's team spending. Everton and Nottingham Forest both incurred points deductions last season after being found to be in breach of PSR. United, who have started the new Premier League season with two defeats in three matches, return to action at South