

Iran Has Resumed Exports of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) to Pakistan Through the Mirjaveh Border Crossing, Mohammad Ali Khashi, the Customs Supervisor for Sistan and Baluchestan Province, Said

IRAN NEWS

Iraqi Gov't Has Vowed to Facilitate the Repayment of Some \$0.9b Worth of Debts to Iranian Companies That Were Involved in Various Business and Construction Projects in the Arab Country Before the 2013 Rise of the Daesh

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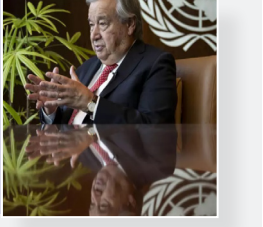
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Allegations of Weapon Transfers by Iran an Insult to Yemenis



TEHRAN - Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi has once again dismissed claims that the country has supplied weapons to Yemen, saying Sana'a is capable of meeting its military requirements.

"Accusing Iran of sending weapons to Yemen is an insult to the people of Yemen," Araqchi said in an interview with Yemen's al-Masirah television channel on Monday.

He added that Yemen possesses the military technology and has become capable of strengthening its arsenal.

The top Iranian diplomat emphasized that Yemen has become one of the key pillars in the Axis of Resistance and plays an exceptional role in supporting the Gaza Strip, which has been under brutal attacks of the Israeli regime over the past 11 months.

Araqchi noted that Yemen makes its own decisions about using its weapons in a way it deems suitable.

Earlier in the day, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian dismissed claims that Iran has provided Yemen with hypersonic missiles or the technology to manufacture the weaponry.

He said, "We have the missile power but we do not give missiles to Yemen. Before the war [in Gaza], Yemen had acquired the technology to manufacture missiles and was producing them."

Meanwhile Araqchi has reiterated the Islamic Republic's unwavering policy to back resistance forces in their struggle against the occupying Israeli regime.

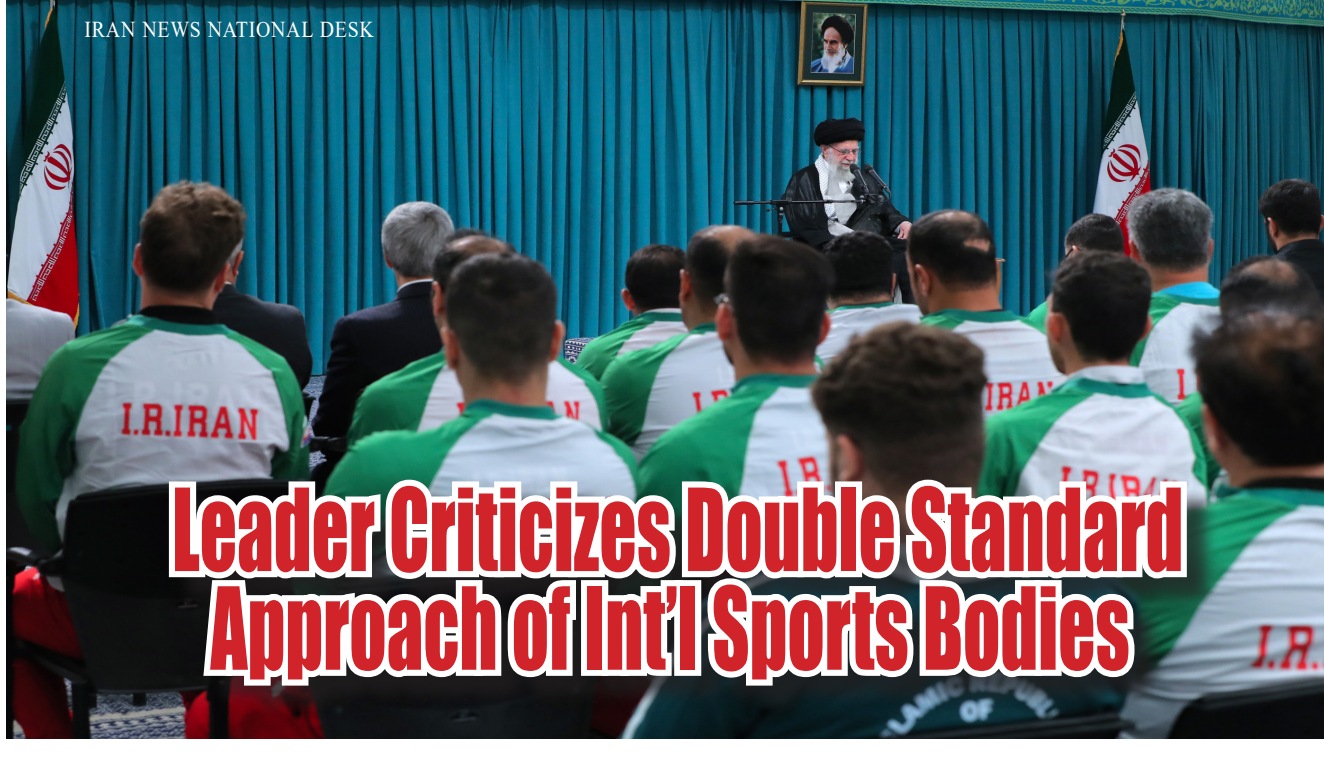
Araqchi made the pledge during a meeting with Salah Fahs, the representative of the Lebanese Amal Movement in Tehran, on Monday evening.

In the meeting, Fahs conveyed congratulations of the speaker of Lebanon's parliament and chairman of the Amal Movement, Nabih Berri, to Araqchi on his appointment as the foreign minister of Iran.

For his part, the Iranian foreign minister praised his measures in support of the resistance front as well as sacrifices made by fighters of his Amal Movement alongside Hezbollah members in the battle against Israeli aggression against Lebanon and the occupied Palestinian territories.

The top Iranian diplomat also reaffirmed Iran's principled policy of supporting resistance forces in their legitimate struggle against the Zionist regime's occupation.

Araqchi and Fahs also discussed the latest regional developments, including the status of the anti-Israeli resistance front in Lebanon, the state of affairs in Palestinian territories and the ongoing Israeli genocidal war on Gaza.



Leader Criticizes Double Standard Approach of Int'l Sports Bodies

TEHRAN - The Supreme Leader of the Revolution emphasized that the double standard policies of countries governing international sports issues were evident in the recent games.

Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, expressed gratitude to the medalists, athletes, coaches, and those involved with Iran's delegations to the 2024 Paris Olympics and Paralympics during a meeting with them.

He stated: "I am very happy to have the opportunity once again to meet with a group of the country's most beloved children. Our dear young athletes—who are a source of pride—are undoubtedly a cause of dignity and honor for Iran."

The Leader of the Revolution emphasized: "This year, a special brilliance was observed in the Olympics and Paralympics. While I cannot follow the details of sports and news closely, I am generally aware of the events, as much as time allows me to see or hear. This year was very remarkable and very good."

He continued: "You made the nation happy and created a sense of pride in the Iranian people. I sincerely thank all the medalists, all the athletes, all the coaches, all those involved, the Ministry of Sports, the Olympic Committee, and all others involved, including the heads of federations. I am sincerely grateful to all of them. You took sports seriously, and that's exactly how it should be."

He remarked: "Another thing that was noticeable this year in the Olympics was the dual policies of countries governing international sports issues. They really showed that dual and biased policies dominate their behavior. They deprive certain countries because of conflicts they have started; yet, they do not exclude the Zionist regime, which has killed thousands of children and over 41,000 people in about a year. They are not excluded from the games."

He added: "Well, this is dual policy; this is biased. This is what we always say, and some people accuse us of exaggeration. It is not exaggeration. They say sports are not political, while they demonstrate the most political bias in sports."

Ayatollah Khamenei further said: In international sports, global arenas showcase not only physical strength and athletic skill but also the mental fortitude and self-confidence of the Iranian nation. This is very important. For instance, when our dear athlete dedicates her medal to the children of Gaza or Palestine, it holds significant meaning worldwide. Similarly, naming the delegation "Khadam al-Reza" (Servants of Reza) also carries profound significance."

He added: "The adherence to hijab by these female athletes and the fact that our male athlete, our champion, does not shake hands with foreign women when presenting his award is very meaningful. It demonstrates self-confidence and reflects that Iranians value their identity, both national and religious."

Ayatollah Khamenei noted: "This was clearly evident this year. The Palestinian flag was displayed, and our athlete, along with her companions, held up the Palestinian flag and took selfies with it. These actions are very valuable and significant. I do not overlook these matters lightly; I emphasize and interpret each of them in my mind and in my words for the people."

He reiterated the recent games highlighted the brilliance of national, political, and Islamic identity alongside professional skills of Iranian athletes.

Tehran Pursuing Foreign Finance for Renewable Power Plants



TEHRAN - Mohsen Tarzali, the new head of the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA), expressed appreciation for Mahmoud Khamenei's efforts in setting a solid foundation for the development of renewable energy in Iran. He emphasized that under the Seventh Development Plan and with the cooperation of the government, the people, and SATBA members, they will strive to achieve results.

He stressed the need for a better balance between renewable energy development and energy consumption optimization, noting that significant resources have been allocated to quickly establish the area of energy consumption optimization.

Tarzali emphasized the importance of focusing more on the Green Electricity Board and stated that the financial models designed by SATBA rely heavily on government resources, which should be reduced, and efforts should be made to deepen the Green Electricity Board on the energy exchange market.

The Deputy Minister of Energy mentioned that special conditions have been created for SATBA because the country's electricity demand is high, and due to the current national conditions, investing in solar panels and wind turbines can lead to quicker results. It requires maximum effort from SATBA members and support from relevant agencies such as the Ministry of Interior, National Development Fund, Central Bank, Ministry of Industry, Mines, and Trade, and the Ministry of Energy to achieve results sooner.

Mahmoud Khamenei, the former head of SATBA, described the achievements during his three-year tenure at SATBA, including obtaining numerous permits and establishing attractive models for the development of renewable power plants in Iran. He mentioned that the Article 12 model of the Production Obstacles Removal Law is one such model, leading to the investment packages for 4,500 and 4,000 megawatts of solar power plants and 3,000 megawatts of wind power plants, which are at various stages of progress and implementation. Some have already been commissioned, and others are at different stages of development.

Iran's Response to Israeli Assassination in Tehran Definitive



TEHRAN (MNA) - Chief of Staff and Deputy Commander of the Iranian Army Force for Coordination Affairs Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari recently visited Beijing to attend the 11th Xiangshan Forum, a high-level security and defense forum that took place from Sept. 12 to 14 in the Chinese capital.

In an interview with CMG, Sayyari said that after the victory of the Islamic Revolution, the Iranian military forces are trained inside the country.

"Before the Islamic Revolution, the equipment of our army, navy, and air force came mainly from the West, but today the situation is completely different," he added.

Referring to the issue of regional security, the Iranian military official stressed that the countries in the region can maintain security and there is no need for the presence of extra-regional countries in West Asia.

"Those who have been present in the region needlessly, should know that their presence only causes disorder and does not establish security," he emphasized.

Referring to the Israeli assassination of former Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran, Sayyari cited that Iran's response to the martyrdom of Ismail Haniyeh is certain, but this time, it will not be announced.

Iran Should Not Be Only Party Living Up to JCPOA Commitments

TEHRAN - The head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) says "political and psychological pressures" on Tehran to be the sole party living up to its obligations under the 2015 Iran deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), will not work.

Addressing the 68th General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in the Austrian capital Vienna on Monday, Mohammad Eslami stated that Tehran's voluntary implementation of nuclear-related measures under the agreement was in exchange for the removal of cruel sanctions against the Iranian nation.

"The ongoing political and psychological pressures are being exerted with the intention to force Iran into implementing JCPOA obligations, regardless of the commitments related to the lifting of sanctions. JCPOA should not be implemented at the expense of only one party," Eslami noted.

He highlighted Iran's full cooperation with the IAEA, pointing out that while nuclear installations in the country make up only 3 percent of the world's total, more than one-fifth of the world agency's inspections in 2023 took place in Iran.

Iran's nuclear chief stressed that Tehran's suspension of its commitments under the JCPOA, including halting the international oversight of non-nuclear production, followed the illegal US withdrawal from the deal and the failure of the European parties to the JCPOA and the European Union to uphold their obligations.

Eslami also pointed to the assassination of Iranian nuclear scientists and acts of sabotage and terrorism against Iran by Israel, stating that the regime is spearheading propaganda against Iran's peaceful nuclear program in a bid to divert the world public opinion away from its atrocities.

The AEOI chief went on to say that nuclear disarmament is the main priority of the international community, stressing that nuclear-weapon states are required to fulfill their obligations under Article 6 of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).



Eslami also underscored the importance of the creation of a Middle East free of nuclear munitions, adding that Israeli authorities, over the past year, have frequently threatened the Iranian nations and Palestinians in the Gaza Strip with nuclear bombardment while continuing to refuse to join the NPT.

Iran's continued refusal to join the NPT and subject its nuclear facilities to the International Atomic Energy Agency's safeguards pose a serious threat to international peace and security, he said.

Eslami stated that Iran is determined to increase its generation capacity of nuclear electricity to 20,000 megawatts by the year 2040.

The IAEA, under its charter, is therefore obliged to and support all member states and facilitate their access to necessary technology and equipment without any discrimination, the AEOI chief said.

Meanwhile Eslami has held meetings with counterparts and senior officials from Russia, Hungary and Norway during his stay in Vienna where he is taking part in the 68th General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Eslami said in a post on his X page on Tuesday that he had discussed peaceful nuclear energy cooperation between Iran and Russia during a meeting with the Director General of Rosatom Alexey Likhachev, including issues related to the construction of second and third units at Iran's Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant.

He said that he had discussed issues like training, nuclear regulation, and safety standards with the Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto.

Eslami said he and Norway's Deputy Foreign Minister Andreas Motzfeldt Kravik had agreed in their meeting that the Western parties to a 2015 nuclear agreement between Iran and world powers should comply with their commitments under the deal.

The Iranian nuclear chief said he would hold further talks with officials of other countries during his stay in Vienna.

Yemen Ready to Send 1000s of Trained Fighters to Hezbollah



SANAA (Dispatches) - Yemen's Ansarullah resistance movement says the country is prepared to send "thousands of trained fighters" to Lebanon's Hezbollah resistance movement if necessary.

Vice President of Ansarullah's Media Authority, Nasr El-Din Amer made the remarks to the Palestinian Shehab news agency on Monday.

"We will support them (Hezbollah) in the same way that we support our brothers in the resistance in Palestine," he added.

Yemen's Armed Forces have been carrying out numerous strikes against the occupied Palestinian territories since October 7, when the Israeli regime began waging a genocidal war on the Gaza Strip.

Hezbollah too has been staging hundreds of strikes both in support of the war-hit Gazans and in retaliation to the regime's intensified attacks against the Lebanese soil.

The Ansarullah official's remarks came amid Tel Aviv's repeated threats to expand the attacks into a wholesale war on Lebanon.

He also asserted, "We aim to expand our capability to strike any target across the entire territory of occupied Palestine and we are working on this at a fast pace."

Amer also commented on a July strike by the Yemeni forces against Tel Aviv that saw them firing an unmanned aerial vehicle, dubbed the "Yafa drone," past the regime's interception systems towards the city.

"The Yaffa drone will not be used for isolated strikes in response only; Rather, it will be part of ongoing operations until the aggression on Gaza stops," he said.

His remarks echoed those that have been made repeatedly by the Yemeni forces, in which they have vowed to keep up their pro-Palestinian strikes until the regime ceases the genocide that has so far claimed the lives of at least 41,206 people, mostly women and children.

The forces have also pledged to sustain their strikes until the regime lifted a crippling siege that it has been simultaneously imposing on Gaza.

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President to Travel to New York on Sunday

TEHRAN (ISNA) - The President will travel to New York next Sunday to attend and speak at the United Nations General Assembly. Masoud Pezeshkian will travel to New York on Sunday, October 1, 2024, to participate in the UN General Assembly and will deliver a speech at the Assembly on Tuesday, October 3.

This trip is an annual event that usually takes place in late September or early October. Presidents of our country have historically traveled to New York to address the General Assembly and discuss various issues.

Possible activities for the President during the New York visit include a speech at a side event of the General Assembly called "Leaders for the Future," meetings with Iranian expatriates in the U.S., dialogues with religious leaders, discussions with media executives, think tanks, and other bilateral meetings with leaders from European, Asian, and Islamic countries.

\$20 Billion in Exports to Iraq is Within Reach



TEHRAN - President of the Iran Chamber of Commerce Samad Hassanzadeh stated: "Dr. Pezeshkian's trip to Iraq, as his first trip after the presidency, aligns with his election campaign statements regarding the importance of friendly relations and increased economic exchanges with neighboring countries."

He added: "The government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, based on the recommendations of the Supreme Leader, must develop its first economic program, particularly with neighboring countries. During his trip to Iraq, he held meetings with Iraqi officials, and in many areas of economy, society, security, and communication, agreements were signed between the ministers and officials of the two countries."

Hassan Zadeh stated: "Considering the excellent capacities of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the needs in Iraq, there is a very good opportunity for our economic actors to increase the presence in Iraq's markets, provide engineering services, participate in Iraq's projects, and expand the country's export capabilities to Iraq."

The president of the Iran Chamber of Commerce said: "One-third of Iran's non-oil exports, amounting to approximately \$10 to \$12 billion, go to Iraq. In the first six months of this year, around \$6 billion has been exported to this country. Products exported to Iraq include food industries, petrochemicals, plastic and rubber, construction materials, engineering services, and more."

He emphasized: "We believe that if a bit more legal and supportive infrastructure is provided, we have the potential to export up to \$20 billion to this country."



Iran Expects Serious Support from Russia for the North-South Corridor

TEHRAN - In his meeting this morning with Igor Levitin, the senior assistant to the President of the Russian Federation, Iran's Economy Minister Abdolnaser Hemmati emphasized the swift implementation of the North-South Corridor project as an appropriate transit route to strengthen cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Iran, Russia, India, and Gulf countries.

Hemmati stated: "We expect Russia to seriously support the large-scale North-South Corridor project."

He emphasized that the Iranian government supports investments from other countries in this route and is ready to facilitate the participation of other countries in this project by offering specific investment incentives.

The Minister expressed hope that Russia's investments in Iran, particularly in oil and logistical and transit infrastructure projects, would expand.

According to the report, Igor Levitin, the senior assistant to the Russian President, also congratulated Dr. Hemmati on his appointment as the Minister of Economy in this morning's meeting at the Ministry of Economy. He announced that the Russian President has allocated a budget for the implementation of the Rasht-Astara project, stating that the volume of cargo that can be transported through this project amounts to over 15 million tons, with the potential to increase to 30 to 50 million tons.

Levitin also revealed a special directive from the President of the Russian Federation for the swift implementation of the North-South Corridor project, stating: "In line with the directive, this project has commenced, and Russia's VTB Bank is handling its execution."

Levitin added: "The first phase of the North-South Corridor, specifically its technical section, has been completed, and we now require coordination with the Ministry of Economy to move into the implementation phase."

Developing Iran-Guinea Trade Relations Requires Removal of Monetary and Banking Barriers



TEHRAN - The President of the Ahvaz Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture stated that during a visit to Khuzestan Province, the Omani economic delegation emphasized increasing cooperation between the private sectors of both countries through several signed cooperation agreements aimed at expanding trade exchanges.

At the 85th meeting of the Khuzestan Province Government-Private Sector Dialogue Council, which was attended by the Omani trade delegation, Mohammad Javad Amani added that the Omani delegation visited the special economic zone at Imam Khomeini Port. During the visit, they focused on port capacities related to goods supply, transit, potential for re-export of goods, and opportunities for joint investment in this region.

Amani noted that the Omani economic delegation comprised two deputy ministers, the president and vice president of the Chamber of Commerce of Oman's Northeastern Province, and a group of businessmen and investors who had been invited by the Ahvaz Chamber to explore the economic potential of Khuzestan.

The Governor of Khuzestan, also present at the meeting, emphasized the need to establish a joint chamber of commerce and cooperation between Oman's Northeastern Province and Khuzestan. He highlighted that this Omani province could become a hub for exporting Khuzestan's products to other regions of Oman.

Ali Akbar Hosseini Mehrab added that Oman has close cultural, ideological, and political ties with Iran, a relationship that can be leveraged to strengthen trade between Khuzestan and Oman. He also mentioned that Khuzestan has significant capabilities that could contribute to Oman's growth and progress. The province's knowledge-based companies are at the highest scientific levels in Iran, and Oman could benefit from these resources.

He mentioned that last year, more than \$6 billion worth of goods were exported from Khuzestan to various countries and that Omani investors would generate good income by investing in any sector of the province.

The Governor emphasized that Khuzestan's governorate is committed to facilitating interactions between Oman's private sector and Khuzestan and supports these efforts.

In the Arvand Free Zone of Khuzestan, all barriers and regulations hindering investment have been removed, and Omani traders are fully free to organize joint conferences and exhibitions in this region.

He added that the political and security agreements between Iran and Oman are such that trade relations between Khuzestan and Oman can easily proceed.

Hosseini Mehrab also pointed out that Iran and Oman collaborate extensively on many issues, including political ones, which has laid the groundwork for economic exchanges between Oman and Khuzestan.

The President of the Chamber of Commerce of Oman's Northeastern Province expressed hope that the doors to investment in Khuzestan would open to Omani businessmen.

Mohammad bin Nasser Al-Maskari mentioned that during their recent visit to Khuzestan, several cooperation agreements were signed between the two regions, and their positive outcomes will be seen in the future.

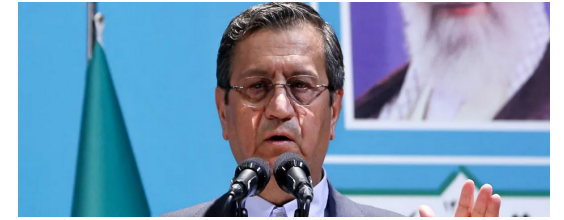
He remarked that during their visits to Ahvaz and Khorramshahr, they found them to be beautiful cities with high economic and tourism potential.

Despite the extremely high temperatures in Ahvaz, the warm hospitality of its residents made them forget the heat.

The president of the Northeastern Province Chamber of Commerce emphasized the importance of supporting the private sector, as it drives economic growth. He added that Khuzestan has abundant industrial and tourism facilities, which need to be introduced to investors.

Al-Maskari noted that the private sector always requires the support and backing of government agencies, and this cooperation will lead to economic development.

Economic Growth Will Not Reach 4% by Yearend



TEHRAN - Economy Minister Abdolnaser Hemmati, during the farewell and introduction ceremony of the head of the Stock Exchange Organization, stated: "I have been told to speak positively in my speeches. However, the Supreme Leader named this year's slogan 'Production Leap with Public Participation,' but the Central Bank's three-month statistics indicate that significant growth will not be achieved by year-end. It's unlikely that the growth rate will even reach 4% by the end of the year. What matters is that this growth is of quality and leads to the well-being of the people."

He emphasized: "Even if I write a thousand regulations, if inflation remains high and economic growth stays low, it will be pointless. While other countries are growing rapidly, we are losing in international competition. Countries that have achieved growth have done so by relying on financial markets, and when they boast, it's because of their strong financial power. But in Iran, we are still talking about coordination between various organizations and who is to blame. I believe we are all to blame because the country's economic governance is flawed."

The Minister stated: "The head of the Stock Exchange Organization must roll up his sleeves to accomplish the assigned tasks. The key issue is the country's financing, and right now we are facing a capital shortage. The stock market must be the focal point of public trust to attract small investments. Today, the public's trust in the stock market has been lost, and this trust must be restored, making the capital market transparent. While the government should support the stock market, if everything is left for the Minister of Economy to handle, I would have taken over as head of the Stock Exchange Organization myself. I ask Mr. Seydi to use reputable individuals in this organization and roll up his sleeves for the job. And by that, I don't mean to take off his jacket because it's hot, but to take it off to get things done."

Literary Identity of the Capital to Be Revived



TEHRAN - In line with the organization of the Global City of Poetry Award Festival, an evening of poetry was held on Tuesday at the Ain al-Dawlah Mansion.

The event was attended by a group of poets, the Mayor of Tehran, the Chairman of the Tehran City Council, the CEO of the Tehran Beautification Organization, the head of the Cultural and Artistic Organization of the Tehran Municipality, and the Mayor of District 4.

Tehran's Mayor, Alireza Zakani, congratulated the attendees on Unity Week and stated: "Tehran has been the capital of the country for 238 years, and the Ain al-Dawlah building we are in serves as a reminder, alert, and awakening for us. There was a time when decisions were made in this building not for us but for the world, and the king of this country was kept unaware of these decisions and was not given any respect. However, thanks to the Islamic Revolution, freedom, dignity, and value have been bestowed upon us."

He added: "Tehran, in various aspects, needs transformation. Tehran is an ecosystem whose body and spirit need change and transformation. A city that lacks any secondary identity besides its capital identity. Tehran, which should be a model for the world in advancing toward a new Islamic civilization, requires transformation in both its body and spirit."

Zakani continued: "A desirable city needs to provide peace and comfort for its citizens and serve as a place for them to live well. The spirit of the city, which pertains to lifestyle, requires transformation and must be based on its existing assets. Therefore, to breathe life into the city's body, we need a literary identity and attention to poetry and poetic creation."

He expressed gratitude to everyone who contributed to organizing this global gathering and added: "This event allows us to benefit from the assets of others and also share and preserve our own assets. It will illuminate this historical period, which is influenced by the past, and pave the way for a new generation of poets. We need you in urban management, and poetry can convey our message from generation to generation through its content."

He concluded: "I hope that this city, which has been home to great poets and scholars in recent centuries and has left us with enduring works, continues to do so for future generations. One of Tehran's shining identities that will be recognized globally should be its literary and poetic identity."



Iran and China's Gas Consumption Are Equal

TEHRAN - Seyed Hamid Pourmohammadi, the head of the Planning and Budget Organization, said in the 16th session of the 10th term of the Iranian Chamber of Commerce Representatives: "I hold great respect for the country's economic activists, merchants, industrialists, farmers, and miners because no group has contributed more to the expansion of Iranian culture throughout history than merchants. The message of Iranian civilization has reached the farthest lands through our merchants."

He added: "The role of merchants did not start with the establishment of the Chamber of Commerce in 1921, but dates back to the long history of civilization. Now, both merchants and the government are under pressure due to sanctions and challenges."

Pourmohammadi further stated: "The government provides \$35 billion annually in energy to the electricity sector and pays 70 trillion tomans annually for fuel subsidies. However, it is still unable to fully supply electricity and gas to industries, and production suffers. We cannot cut off people's electricity."

He pointed out that "the government produces more than 230 billion cubic meters of gas and exports about 50 billion cubic meters, meaning it only exports around 5% of the country's gas. The rest is consumed domestically, equivalent to the consumption of 25 European countries, 50% of Europe's gas consumption, and all of China's gas consumption, despite China's population and economic growth being much larger than ours. Therefore, if we achieve a 10% reduction in gas consumption in the country, we will significantly preserve the country's foreign exchange resources."

The head of the Planning and Budget Organization stated: "We are facing challenges where both producers and the government are losing, and we have no choice but for producers and the Planning and Budget Organization to unite. It is true that we have challenges, but our country has never bowed down to challenges."

He added: "We have great intellectual capacities. No country has as many well-educated and affordable professionals as Iran. Our land is rich with various mines, oil, and gas, surrounded by water and connected to international waters. We have the pristine land of Makran, significant copper and iron reserves."

Pourmohammadi said: "The first step the Planning and Budget Organization has taken to resolve issues with the private sector is to assign a dedicated deputy and delegate important matters to this deputy. Resolving private sector issues has been prioritized, and Mr. Dr. Ghasemi, the former head of the Chamber of Commerce's Research Center, has been appointed to head this deputy role."

Myanmar Flooding Death Toll Jumps to 226

YANGON (Dispatches) - The death toll from massive flooding in Myanmar in the wake of Typhoon Yagi has doubled to 226, as the UN warned as many as 630,000 people could be in need of help. Yagi swept across northern Vietnam, Laos, Thailand and Myanmar more than a week ago with powerful winds and an enormous amount of rain, triggering floods and landslides that have killed more than 500 people, according to official figures. State TV in junta-ruled Myanmar confirmed 226 fatalities late on Monday, with 77 people still missing, doubling the previous toll of 113. The broadcaster also said that nearly 260,000 hectares (640,000 acres) of rice paddies and other crops had been destroyed by floods. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) disaster response agency said an estimated 631,000 people had been affected by flooding across Myanmar.



Trump Blames Biden and Harris for Rhetoric After Second Assassination Attempt



WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Donald Trump yesterday blamed his election rival Kamala Harris and U.S. President Joe Biden after he was targeted in a second apparent assassination attempt, saying their "rhetoric" about him endangering democracy is to blame. Trump's rapid politicization of Sunday's incident, in which a man allegedly planned to fire on the Republican while he played golf in Florida, guaranteed that tensions ahead of the presidential election in seven weeks would continue to boil. Both Biden and Harris have denounced the apparent assassination bid, with the president saying: "I've always condemned political violence. I always will." The suspect, identified by police as 58-year-old Ryan Wesley Routh, was arrested soon after being spotted while hiding with an assault-style rifle at the edge of Trump's golf course in West Palm Beach. US Secret Service agents opened fire, and he fled before surrendering without a struggle. On Monday, Routh appeared in court where he was informed he was being charged with illegal firearms possession. He appeared calm and did not speak, other than to say "yes" to questions from the judge. More charges are expected at a later date, with the FBI probing what it said "appears to be an attempted assassination." According to an FBI criminal complaint, Routh seems to have spent nearly 12 hours on the perimeter of the Trump golf course, based on cell phone records.

India Set to Resume Direct Flights to China After Four-Year Suspension

MUMBAI (Dispatches) - India is preparing to restart direct passenger flights to China after a four-year break, a move signalling improved relations between the two nations. South China Morning Post (SCMP) reported that the development comes as tensions at the border ease and industry leaders push for greater economic collaboration. Flights between the countries were halted in 2020 due to the pandemic and have not resumed despite both India and China lifting their Covid-19 travel restrictions. According to the report India's Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Rammoohan Naidu recently met with Chinese aviation authorities at the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Civil Aviation in Delhi. He later mentioned on social media platform X that the talks aimed to "promote the early resumption of scheduled passenger flights." SCMP said aviation experts have called for the restoration of direct flights to both Beijing and other Chinese provinces. "There is so much lost trade between the two countries," Mark D Martin, CEO of Martin Consulting was quoted saying. He highlighted that resuming flights would benefit both nations' economies, as they are part of the BRICS bloc and key emerging markets. The Indian tourism sector is cautiously optimistic, though no firm date for flight resumption has been set. Subhash Goyal, chairman of the Indian Chamber of Commerce's aviation and tourism committee was reported saying that direct flights would reduce the need for passengers to transit via other countries. Before the suspension, flights between India and China were near full capacity, with Chinese airlines operating a significant number.

UN Chief Condemns Collective Punishment of Palestinians

UNITED NATIONS (Dispatches) - Nothing justifies Israel's collective punishment of the people of Gaza as they endure "unimaginable" suffering, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told AFP on Monday. Guterres lashed out at Israel's handling of its war in the devastated Palestinian territory, now almost in its second year, as the UN prepares to host world leaders starting next week. "It is unimaginable, the level of suffering in Gaza, the level of deaths and destruction have no parallel in everything I've witnessed since (becoming) secretary-general," said Guterres, who has led the embattled international organization since 2017. "We all condemn the terror attacks made by Hamas, as well as the taking of the hostages, that is an absolute violation of international humanitarian law," he said. "But the truth is that nothing justifies the collective punishment of the Palestinian people, and that is what we are witnessing in a dramatic way in Gaza," he added, decrying the widespread carnage and hunger blighting Gaza. On October 7, Hamas fighters infiltrated from Gaza into southern Israel, unleashing unprecedented violence which killed 1,205 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP toll including hostages killed in captivity. In response, Israel vowed to destroy Hamas, in power in Gaza since 2007, and its land and air offensive has claimed 41,226 lives according to the health ministry of the Hamas government. More than 200 humanitarian workers, mostly UN staff, have also been killed. "Accountability should be a must" for all civilian deaths, Guterres said acknowledging "serious violations" had been perpetrated by both Israel and Hamas. Against that backdrop the UN leader has repeatedly called for an immediate ceasefire, but talks overseen by the United States, Egypt and Qatar remain deadlocked, with Israel and Hamas accusing each other of resisting a deal. "They are endless," Guterres said of the talks, saying it would be "very difficult" to reach a compromise but that he remained hopeful. With Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu refusing to return his calls since October, Guterres is not counting on a breakthrough during the General Assembly's high-level week from Sunday when he would typically receive all visiting heads of state and government.

"As far as I understand, it was already said publicly that it is not his intention to ask for any meeting with me. So of course, the meeting will very probably not take place," Guterres said, brushing off the apparent snub. "What matters is not the question of a phone call or no phone call, a meeting or no meeting -- what matters is what happens on the ground. What matters is the suffering of people. "What matters is the constant denial of the two-state solution and the undermining of that two-state solution by the different actions that are taking place on the grounds. The Security Council as well as international financial institutions are 'outdated, are dysfunctional and are unfair,' Guterres said "With grabbing of land, with evictions, with the new settlements being built -- all illegally and in the context of an occupation that now, according to the International Court of Justice's opinion, is in itself also illegal." He also said a proposed surveillance mission he backed to oversee any future ceasefire looked "improbable", with all sides unlikely to sign up. UN missions require the agreement of the host countries. It was partly for this reason that almost a year ago, the Security Council mandated a multinational mission, led by Kenya, not the UN, to help police in gang-plagued Haiti where blue helmets are reviled. But with only a few hundred police officers deployed and the mission lacking funds, Washington has raised the specter of transforming it into a UN mission -- something that the Security Council could only do at Haiti's request. "I find it very strange that it's so difficult to fund a relatively small police operation in Haiti," he said. "I find it absolutely unacceptable." Responding to accusations the UN is powerless to curb conflicts in Gaza, Ukraine and elsewhere, he blamed member states -- particularly the Security Council and its 15 members -- for the decisions taken or not taken. The Security Council as well as international financial institutions are "outdated, are dysfunctional and are unfair," he said. "We have been trying to solve the wars, the problem is that we have not the power, sometimes we don't even have the resources, to be able to do so."

Washington, Madrid, Prague Seek Information on Nationals Held in Venezuela

CARACAS (Dispatches) - The United States, Spain and the Czech Republic on Monday demanded information from Venezuela about six of their citizens detained in the South American country over an alleged plot to assassinate President Nicolas Maduro. The government in Caracas on Saturday announced the arrests of three Americans, two Spaniards and a Czech it claimed had ties with US and Spanish intelligence agencies and the Venezuelan opposition. Venezuelan Interior Minister Diosdado Cabello said 400 rifles were confiscated as the alleged plot was dismantled -- not the first time Maduro has claimed to have been the target of US-led attempts to unseat him. The arrests came amid heightened tensions between Caracas and both Washington and Madrid over July 28 presidential elections the Venezuelan opposition accuses Maduro of having stolen. The United States and Spain have vehemently denied claims of involvement in any plot. On Monday, US State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said he could confirm the detention of a US "military member," and said there were "reports of two additional US citizens detained in Venezuela." "We are seeking additional information and monitoring the situation," he said. Caracas and Washington broke off diplomatic ties in 2019. Spain's foreign ministry said it "continues to demand from the



Venezuelan authorities official and verified information on the arrest of two Spaniards, as well as a clarification of the charges they are accused of." Spain said its two detained citizens were not part of the CNI intelligence service. In Prague, a foreign ministry spokeswoman said the Czech embassy in Bogota had sent a note to Caracas demanding "detailed information" about its citizen as well as "consular contact." It was not known if the six have been charged or brought before a court. Dozens of countries have rejected Maduro's claim to a third six-year term after elections the opposition says it can prove its candidate Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia won with a landslide. On September 8, Gonzalez Urrutia arrived in Spain, which granted him asylum after a month in hiding in Venezuela. Tensions have since risen between Caracas and Madrid. Last week, Venezuela recalled its ambassador to Madrid for consultations and summoned Spain's envoy to Venezuela for talks after a Spanish minister accused Maduro of running a "dictatorship." Top EU diplomat Josep Borrell, in an interview broadcast in Spain on Sunday, also labeled Maduro's government "dictatorial," pointing to more than 2,000 people "arbitrarily detained" in the election aftermath. The six are not the first foreigners to be arrested in Venezuela on conspiracy charges.

Kazakh Leader Urges Scholz to Support China's Peace Plan for Ukraine



ASTANA (Reuters) - Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev urged visiting German Chancellor Olaf Scholz on Monday to give up on the idea that Russia can be defeated on the battlefield and to support China's peace plan for Ukraine, a suggestion Scholz rejected. Scholz is on his first official tour of Central Asia as Berlin looks for new sources of energy and minerals in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Kazakhstan remains a close ally of its former Soviet overlord Russia,

though the Astana government has not taken sides in the conflict or supported Moscow's claims to some Ukrainian territories. "It is a fact that Russia cannot be defeated in the military sense," Tokayev told Scholz in Astana. "A further escalation of war will lead to irreparable consequences for the whole of humanity and above all for the countries involved in the Russia-Ukraine conflict," he added. Scholz diplomatically disagreed, saying Germany was supporting Ukraine because Russia had invaded it. "That is the case and will remain so, so that the country can defend itself and protect its integrity and sovereignty," he said. "It is also clear to us that, at the same time, it remains necessary to continue to explore opportunities to open up peaceful development." Scholz said the Western-backed peace conference in Switzerland needed to be followed up by another one which would include Russia. "And it is clear to me that it will not work the way Russia is currently pushing ahead with everything, pushing ahead with the war, continuing to attack Ukraine with great aggression," he said. "And that is why this is something that must never be ignored in everything we discuss. It is Russia that has not only started the war, but is continuing it and could contribute to ending it at any time by stopping its aggression."

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SPORTS

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 18, 2024



Cousins Helps Falcons to Beat Eagles

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Kirk Cousins needed a big moment on Monday night. So did the Atlanta Falcons.

The Falcons' offense had just two touchdowns for the season when Cousins took over with 1:39 left in the game, needing a touchdown and having to go 70 yards to get it for the win. Suddenly Cousins came alive.

Cousins moved the team quickly downfield. Cousins completed 5 of 6 passes on a quick drive and hit Drake London for a 7-yard touchdown with 34 seconds left. The extra point was harder after London got a 15-yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty, but Youngbue Koo hit it and the Falcons led 22-21. Jalen Hurts threw an interception under pressure after that and the game was over.

The Eagles were in position to win. But on a third-and-3, Saquon Barkley dropped a wide-open pass that would have resulted in either a touchdown or a first down that would have ended the game. That drop allowed Cousins to have his first big moment for the Falcons.

Up until that point, the Falcons had to be a little worried about their \$180 million quarterback and where the season was headed. All he's heard through his career is that he's not clutch and that he shrinks in prime time. Then he came up with a drive that might change the trajectory of the early portion of Atlanta's season.

Neither team was sharp early on. The Eagles moved it a bit in the first quarter, but on fourth-and-4 from the Falcons' 9-yard line Philadelphia passed on a field-goal try, went for it and threw incomplete. The Falcons didn't move it much, but at least Cousins was lining up under center, unlike Week 1. Last week, the Falcons were almost exclusively in pistol and shotgun, and it seemed like the play-calling was limited because Cousins couldn't move.

In the second quarter, the Eagles finally got it going a little bit on offense. The two big plays came when, somehow, the Falcons' defense let Hurts run and he picked up conversions on fourth-and-3 and third-and-11. DeVonta Smith got a touchdown catch in the back of the end zone and with 5:15 left in the second quarter the game had its first touchdown. Philly led 7-3.

The Falcons had a good drive late in the first half before it stalled inside the 5-yard line. On third down, Cousins threw it away to avoid taking a sack because the Falcons had no timeouts left and wouldn't have had time to get the field-goal team on the field. At that point, everything seemed to be difficult for the Falcons' offense. Cousins missed some potentially big plays because he either wasn't seeing things well or was slow to react. Cousins had just 75 yards passing in the first half and Atlanta didn't get in the end zone before halftime.

The Eagles led 7-6 at halftime and a Monday night audience was unimpressed. Through six quarters, the Falcons had just one touchdown. There wasn't much hope that it would suddenly click when it mattered most.

Finally there was a breakthrough for the Falcons' offense in the second half. Darnell Mooney got past Eagles safety C.J. Gardner-Johnson to the empty middle of the field, Cousins saw him and hit him. Mooney shook free of Gardner-Johnson near the goal line and scored a 42-yard touchdown. That gave the Falcons a 15-10 lead.

For an offense that had labored to do practically everything since the season started, seeing Mooney get To that point, the Falcons and Cousins hadn't done much. But he came up with a surgical drive to win it. That's what the Falcons paid \$180 million for.

League Cup Still Significant for Man Utd Boss Ten Hag



LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester United manager Erik ten Hag insisted Monday he still believed English football's League Cup remained a "significant" competition.

Ten Hag steered United to the trophy during his first season at Old Trafford in 2022/23 before adding the FA Cup last term, defeating Manchester City in the final following a disappointing campaign in the Premier League where United finished eighth -- a mammoth 31 points adrift of local rivals and champions City.

Many leading English clubs have come to regard the League Cup as an inconvenience that hampers their quest for more prestigious domestic and European honours.

United face third-tier Barnsley in the third round of the League Cup on Tuesday and Ten Hag was asked during a pre-match press conference if the club now needed to win something more significant now their football operations were under the control of British billionaire part-owner Jim Ratcliffe's Ineos group.

"I would say it's significant," said Ten Hag. "FA Cup, Carabao (League) Cup, it's significant. I see all the attention from all the teams, from all the owners, from all the managers when they win a trophy, like Liverpool last year did, winning the Carabao Cup."

"I saw that final. I saw all the teams battling for it. We want the same. So it's very important in football to win trophies. You have five opportunities, and our aim is always to win all the games, so win all the trophies if possible."

The Dutchman added: "No doubt we are aiming for a trophy, this is one opportunity, so we take it (Tuesday's game at home to Barnsley) seriously."

United are currently 10th in the early season Premier League table with six points from four matches.

They bounced back from consecutive losses at Brighton (2-1) and at home to Liverpool (3-0) to win 3-0 at Southampton on Saturday.

Ronaldo Misses Al Nassr Draw in Asian Champions League Opener

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) - Al Nassr struggled in Cristiano Ronaldo's absence on Monday, when the Saudi club kicked off the revamped Asian Champions League with a 1-1 draw against Al Shorta in Iraq.

Al Nassr captain Ronaldo did not travel with the squad for the match in Baghdad, with the club issuing a statement a day before stating that the Portuguese superstar had been diagnosed with a viral infection.

Al Nassr, who were knocked out of last season's Asian Champions League in the quarter-finals by eventual champions Al Ain, were given a dream start in the Iraqi capital, when full-back Sultan Al Ghannam met Otavio's astute, first-time pass on 14 minutes to rifling low past Al Shorta goalkeeper Ahmed Basil.

However, the hosts drew level 10 minutes later.

A mix-up at the back between new signings Salem Al Najdi and former RB Leipzig defender Mohammed Simakan allowed Al Shorta forward Mohammed Dawood to steal in and send a superb effort high past Bento in the Al Nassr goal.

Meanwhile, fellow Saudi side Al Ahli eked to a 1-0 victory at home to Iran's Persepolis in Jeddah, with new recruit Ivan Toney making his Asian football debut.

Ivory Coast international Franck Kessie set the home side on their way in the second minute, rifling home from Riyadh Mahrez's assist.



Persepolis were awarded a penalty four minutes before half-time, when Merih Demiral was deemed to have committed a foul inside the area, however the decision was overturned following a VAR review.

In the second half, Toney won Al Ahli a spot-kick of their own -- he was felled by rival defender Hossein Kanani -- only for Mahrez's penalty to be saved well by Persepolis goalkeeper Alexis Guendouz.

England international Toney, a high-profile signing late last month from Premier League club Brentford, missed a golden opportunity to open his account five minutes from time, but dragged his shot wide.

He had made his debut for Al Ahli last Friday.

Elsewhere, Al Ain began their title defence with a 1-1 draw at home to Qatar's Al Sadd.

Akram Afif, 2019 Asian Football of the Year and player of the tournament at the Asian Cup earlier this year, opened the scoring at Hazza bin Zayed Stadium on the hour.

But Al Ain earned a point 10 minutes from time, through Argentine Matias Palacios.

In Monday's other match, Iran's Esteghlal saw off Qatari side Al Gharafa 3-0.

The new format features 24 teams -- 12 from West Asia and 12 from East Asia.

With each club playing four matches at home and four away, the top eight in each side of the draw progress to the knockout stages early next year.

Ferrari More of a Threat Than Red Bull



LONDON (Reuters) - Lando Norris pointed to Ferrari as a bigger threat than Red Bull after his McLaren team roared to the top of the Formula One constructors' standings for the first time in more than a decade.

Oscar Piastri's impressive victory and Norris' fine fourth place with fastest lap, from 15th on the grid, in Azerbaijan on Sunday catapulted McLaren 20 points clear of faltering champions Red Bull.

Ferrari, who had Carlos Sainz crash out with Red Bull's Sergio Perez on the penultimate lap while fighting for third, were the second highest scorers with Charles Leclerc runner-up from pole.

The Italian team, whose last constructors' title was in 2008, are third overall and now only 31 points adrift of the reigning champions.

"Coming into these three races we've got now -- Monza, here and Singapore -- we knew our main contenders would be Ferrari," said Norris, second overall and now 59 points behind Red Bull's Max Verstappen with seven races remaining.

"They've been our strongest competition lately... between Carlos and Charles, they've been two guys who've been performing well and putting us under pressure."

Leclerc won in Monza, after McLaren had locked out the front row of the grid, and then secured pole position in Baku for the fourth year in a row.

Singapore is next up and Sainz won there last year, with Norris second.

"They are performing well and they seem like our closest competition at the minute. So from a constructors' point of view, we're probably more worried about Ferrari than we are about Red Bull," the Briton told Sky Sports television.

McLaren's return to the top of a championship they last won in 1998 marked another major milestone in an already surprising season.

Red Bull had led the standings for 55 races, dating back to early 2022.

The transformation from the start of the year, let alone 2023 which already seems another age, has been astonishing and sent statisticians thumbing through the record books for comparisons.

Players Ignored in Loaded Football Season

MILAN (Dispatches) - Liverpool goalkeeper Alisson said on Monday players are being ignored as more matches are played during seasons, ahead of the start of the extended Champions League this week.

Liverpool head to AC Milan in the revamped competition, which includes an eight-game league phase and a possible two-legged play-off before the last 16.

Earlier this month, global footballers' union FIFPro called for safeguards to be introduced for players who already face excessive workloads amid a constantly growing calendar.

"Sometimes nobody asks the players what they think about adding more games," Alisson told reporters.

"Maybe our opinion doesn't matter, but everybody knows what we think about having more games. Everybody's tired of that."

Liverpool could play more than 60 matches this season having played 58 last term.

"We understand we have the side of the media and TV, we have the side from UEFA, from FIFA, from the Premier League and other domestic competitions," Brazil's Alisson said.



"We are not stupid.

"We understand that people want more games, but the reasonable thing would be for all these sides that I mention and the people who are responsible for making the calendar to sit together and to listen to all the parts, including the players."

Alisson played more than 40 times last season for club and country.

"If you are tired you cannot compete at a high level. What I want is to give my best in all the games I play," Alisson said.

"At the moment it doesn't look like we are close to a solution for football's sake and for the players' sake."

Liverpool coach Arne Slot said he could only judge the new Champions League format at the end of the season.

"The only thing I like about it just as someone who loves to see football is that on every night there is a nice fixture," he said.

"But how is it going to be with two extra games for the players?"

"That's something we have to find out but I don't think anyone has the answer at the moment."