

In a Message to the King of Saudi Arabia Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian Called for Developing the Bilateral Relations Between Tehran and Riyadh

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Leader Offers Condolences Over Death of Workers in Coal Mine Explosion



TEHRAN - Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has offered his condolences over the death of dozens of workers in a coal mine explosion in Iran's eastern province of South Khorasan.

At least 34 people lost their lives and 17 others sustained injuries in a huge explosion caused by a leak of methane gas in two blocks of Madanjoo mine in the vicinity of Tabas on Saturday night.

In a message on Sunday, the Leader extended his condolences to the families of the victims and people in the area over the bitter coal mine incident.

Ayatollah Khamenei urged the authorities, who have been dispatched to the area, to do everything they could to save those trapped and to take every necessary measure to reduce the aspect of the tragedy.

The Leader stressed the importance of immediately serving the injured. Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni said search and rescue operations were underway in the mine, where 17 workers still remained trapped.

He added that the miners are trapped 1,000 meters away from the entrance of the tunnel and the rescue teams are 400 meters away from them.

It is very likely that they sustained serious injuries, he noted.

Iran's Deputy Parliament Speaker Ali Nikzad said the causes of the Tabas mine explosion will not be overlooked.

He added that Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf issued a decree calling for determination of the exact reasons behind the sad incident.

Officials from the government and parliament are in the location of the blast to save those who remained trapped, he noted.

Iranian, Saudi FMs Meet in New York, Discuss Ties



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi and his Saudi counterpart Prince Faisal bin Farhan have discussed ways to improve mutual relations in various fields and the need to hold constant coordination and consultation to monitor the progress of their ties.

Araqchi and bin Farhan met on Sunday on the sidelines of the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

The top Iranian and Saudi diplomats exchanged views about leading regional and international developments, particularly Israel's nearly year-long genocidal war on the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip.

At least 41,431 Palestinians, mostly children and women, have been killed and 95,818 people wounded in the war that Israel began on October 7, 2023, following a retaliatory operation by the Palestinian territory's resistance movements.

In a message, the Iranian foreign minister extended his congratulations to bin Farhan over Saudi National Day.

In a post on his X account, Iran's Ambassador to Riyadh Ali Reza Enayati said Araqchi stressed the importance of enhancing mutual ties.

In March last year, Iran and Saudi Arabia agreed under a Chinese-brokered deal to restore diplomatic relations severed in 2016.

As part of a joint statement issued by the two sides, Iran and Saudi Arabia agreed to implement a security cooperation agreement signed in April 2001 and another accord reached in May 1998 to boost ties in various sectors.

Budget Performance and Mismanagement Must Be Transparently Reported to the Public



TEHRAN - Majlis Speaker emphasized that budget performance and financial mismanagement must be transparently and clearly reported to the public, stating that such reports play a deterrent role.

Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf at the 28th General Meeting of the Court of Audit, offered condolences for the victims of the Tabas mine disaster and commemorated Sacred Defense Week. He said, "The imposed war for us was a sacred defense because we never started the war and defended against a ruthless invasion based on divine values and traditions."

The Speaker continued, "Today, if we want to apply the values and experiences of Sacred Defense in political, social, security, environmental, and economic fields, we must uphold those values. These values, rooted in the teachings of the Quran and the Ahl al-Bayt, can help solve problems."

Highlighting the significance of Sacred Defense Week as a time to reflect on the true values of that period, Qalibaf noted that the scarf (chafiyeh) worn as a symbol during this week once served over 20 functions, including providing protection, comfort, and safety for warriors.

He added, "During the imposed war, our maximum firepower had a range of 15 kilometers, which was practically nothing. Even our fire was rationed, with only 70 bullets allocated for each weapon at the start of operations. But today, we have achieved missile capabilities with a range of 2,000 kilometers and precision-guided missiles. These advancements result from the values we upheld then, and today, we are obligated to apply the same mindset, especially in economic matters."

Qalibaf also underscored the importance of the Court of Audit, stating that while the annual budget is called the government's budget, it is truly the people's budget. Every decision made by officials and representatives affects people's lives, and the Court of Audit is the eye and mind that guides governance, allowing for the identification of strengths and weaknesses to improve.

The Speaker acknowledged the challenging responsibilities of both the Parliament and the Court

of Audit, pointing out that transparency in financial matters is lacking. He stressed the need for the public to be informed about budget deviations, which plays a critical role in preventing other issues. He also noted the importance of ensuring that legislation is enforceable within government agencies.

Qalibaf further remarked that analytical reports based on figures, prepared by the Court of Audit, influence national decision-making and guide decisions in such a way that avoids the need for issuing financial bonds.

He asserted that correct decision-making leads to justice, and prioritization is crucial given limited resources. Misusing resources leads to waste, and the government, Parliament, and Court of Audit must play key roles in preventing the waste of public assets.

Referring to the importance of the Seventh Development Plan, Qalibaf added, "The country's 20-year plan will end next year, and the only present document is the Seventh Development Plan, which was developed with the consensus of the government, Parliament, and the intellectual elite. We must work hard to implement this plan, and the Court of Audit plays a very important and key role in this."

He also emphasized that the budget submitted by the government must be based on priorities and that the Court of Audit must prepare its reports according to this plan in the first year of its implementation. Furthermore, resources in sectors like mining, oil, and others must be controlled, and the Court of Audit should not stifle the courage of honest and capable managers.

Lastly, Qalibaf noted that sometimes, instead of supporting managers, there is an overemphasis on fault-finding. He emphasized the need to support strong and trustworthy managers while taking action against those who waste public resources.

He concluded by stating that the Court of Audit must introduce and support hardworking, trustworthy, and courageous managers, and provide the necessary guidance during their work.

President Slams West's Double Standards as Root Causes of Wars, Massacres



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - President Masoud Pezeshkian has denounced the double standards adopted by the West that have resulted in the spread of bloodshed and warfare across the world.

The chief executive made the remarks on Monday upon arriving at the John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York, where he is expected to address the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

"Instead of bloodshed, war, and massacres, we should build a world, in which all humans can live comfortably, notwithstanding their color, race, ethnicity, and the region where they live," he said.

"And unfortunately, the world we are currently living in is not like that. There are some double standards," the president noted.

"The opportunity that we have for living on this earthen planet should be equal for all those living [on it]."

The remarks come amid the all-out political and military support by the United States and many other Western countries for Israel amid the regime ongoing genocidal war on the Gaza Strip and daily instances of deadly aggression against the occupied West Bank, Lebanon, and other locations across the region.

Pezeshkian said he was going to relay the country's "message regarding peace and security" during his stay in New York.

The message, he said, was synonymous with "the slogan that has been adopted by the United Nations this year too."

The president was referring to the theme that has been adopted for this year's General Assembly summit, namely, "Leaving no one behind: Acting together for the advancement of peace, sustainable development, and human dignity for present and future generations."

Besides addressing the assembly, Pezeshkian will be delivering a speech at the Summit of the Future, which gathers world leaders and is to precede the UNGA session, and hold various bilateral meetings with foreign officials.

Launch of Up to 7 New Homegrown Satellites Into Orbit by Yearend



TEHRAN - The head of the Iranian Space Agency (ISA) says the Islamic Republic plans to send between five to seven domestically-developed satellites into space by the end of the current Iranian calendar year ending on March 20, 2025.

Hassan Salariyeh stated on Monday that his agency aims to have several satellite launches this year, just like the previous year, noting they will be carried out by the Aerospace Force of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), the Ministry of Defense, the Aerospace Industries Organization (AIO), and a number of foreign space companies.

Salariyeh noted that the ISA would have two foreign launches this year, adding that homegrown Tolo-3 (Sunrise-3) and Zafar-2 (Victory-2) satellites will be sent into orbit with foreign space launch vehicles (SLVs) in upcoming months.

He added that the Iranian Space Agency is planning sub-orbital launches in cooperation with the IRGC Aerospace Force.

Homegrown Kowsar satellite, designed and manufactured by the private sector, will also be put into space this year, Salariyeh said.

On September 14, Iran successfully sent into orbit the domestically-developed Chamran 1 research satellite, registering another impressive stride in the country's space program.

The satellite was put into orbit at an altitude of 550 kilometers (341 miles) above the Earth's surface onboard a homegrown Qaem-100 space launch vehicle (SLV).

Several hours into the launch, the Iranian research satellite sent its first signals.

Resistance Enters New Phase of Battle With Israel

BEIRUT (Dispatches) - Hezbollah Deputy Secretary General Sheikh Naim Qassem says Lebanon's resistance movement is now in a "new phase" of battle against the Israeli regime.

Addressing a large crowd of mourners who gathered Sunday for the funerals of two senior commanders of Hezbollah in southern Beirut, the deputy chief said the resistance has "entered a new phase, namely 'open-ended battle of reckoning' with Israel."

"Threats will not stop us... We are ready to face all military possibilities," he said.

Sheikh Qassem said that the regime "sought in vain to paralyze the resistance," as Hezbollah fighters have "foiled Israel's plots."

The deputy chief pointed to the duplicity of the United States and its complicity in Tel Aviv's genocidal war in the Gaza Strip, saying that Washington "is itself from head to toe immersed in Israel's aggression."

He warned that the regime of Israel would "die in a state of terror, your economy will be shattered, and you will not attain your objectives."

Sheikh Qassem described the regime's military actions as "the highest level of barbaric criminality" unseen in decades.

Israel assassinated senior commanders of Hezbollah, Ibrahim Aqil, and Mahmoud Yassin Hamad in southern Beirut, in an airstrike which also claimed the lives of 43 people, according to Lebanon's health officials.

In response to the regime's deadly airstrike, Hezbollah targeted areas in northern occupied territories on Saturday and Sunday.

Hamas, the Palestinian resistance movement, praised Hezbollah after the Lebanese group launched overnight rocket strikes at northern Israel amid escalating cross-border exchanges that have raised fears of an all-out war.



complexes of the Rafael Company, located in the Zevulun area north of Haifa, with dozens of Fadi 1, Fadi 2, and Katyusha rockets.

Meanwhile fighters from the Iraqi anti-terror resistance groups have launched a drone strike against a strategic military target in the 1948 Israeli-occupied territories in response to the Tel Aviv regime's devastating war on Gaza.

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq, an umbrella group of anti-terror fighters, in a statement published on its Telegram channel on Monday morning, said that it had carried out an attack on the Israeli army's "Golani Brigade observation base in occupied Palestine with drones."

It said the drone strike was carried out in continuation of resistance against the occupying Israeli regime, in support of Palestinians in Gaza, and in retaliation for the massacres that the usurping Zionist entity is perpetrating against unarmed Palestinian civilians.

The coalition noted that it will continue to target and destroy important installations across the occupied lands.

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq has been conducting numerous such operations against sensitive targets lying across the occupied territories since October 7 last year, when the Israeli regime waged a genocidal war in the Gaza Strip. At least 41,431 Palestinians, most of them women and children, have been killed in the brutal Israeli military onslaught so far.

On Sunday, the Iraqi anti-terror resistance groups separately launched drone and missile strikes against strategic targets in the 1948 Israeli-occupied territories in retaliation for the brutal aggression against the Gaza Strip.

The coalition has also carried out retaliatory attacks against the US occupation bases across Iraq and neighboring Syria due to Washington's unbridled political, military, and intelligence support for Israel's atrocities in Gaza.

IRAN NEWS



IRGC Captures 12 Israel-Linked Elements in Iran

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps Intelligence Organization arrested 12 members of a network affiliated with the Zionist regime who were planning acts of sabotage in Iran.

The IRGC announced on Sunday that its intelligence forces have arrested a network of 12 Israel-linked individuals in six provinces of Iran. The mercenary elements were cooperating with the Zionist regime and had plotted to carry out operations to upset the security of the Iranian people, the statement said. The IRGC said the Israeli regime's criminal leaders had planned a chain of "anti-security measures" in Iran as part of attempts to stir up a crisis inside the country in the wake of the dismal failure of the Zionist regime and its Western and European sponsors, particularly the US, to achieve their sinister objectives against Gaza and Lebanon.

Number of Flights Increased by 24%



TEHRAN - Today, the necessity of using statistics and data as a prerequisite for decision-making, policymaking, and planning in any country is of great importance. All officials emphasize the need for accurate, transparent, and consistent statistics in managing the country. The importance of statistical information in all matters, including policymaking, goal-setting, guiding executive affairs, and ultimately evaluating success, is so vital that creating an efficient and effective system for producing and providing statistics is considered a primary requirement in planning.

Given the diversity and scope of activities in the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development in the fields of transportation, housing, and urban development, the Office of Statistics, Information, and Program Monitoring, under the Planning and Resource Management Deputy, consistently provides reports on key performance indicators (KPIs) monthly. This report covers the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development's five-month performance in air transportation, specifically the performance of Iran Airports and Air Navigation Company and Imam Khomeini Airport City Company.

In the first five months of 1403 (Iranian calendar year), the number of take-offs and landings reached 119,144 flights, showing an 8% and 24% increase compared to the same period last year (domestic: 110,000, international: 116,000). A 10-year review of flight trends shows that the highest number of domestic and international flights occurred in the first five months of 1396 and 1393, with 154,000 and 12,000 flights, respectively.

The highest number of take-offs and landings occurred at Mehrabad and Mashhad airports, with 48,000 and 29,000 flights, respectively. The lowest was at Shahroud and Semnan airports, with 2 and 4 flights, respectively.

Over 57% of take-offs and landings (77,000 flights out of 133,000) were conducted at Mehrabad and Mashhad airports out of the 50 airports under the ownership and supervision of Iran Airports. In other words, 43% (56,000 flights) took place at the remaining 48 airports, and 90% of flights were conducted at 11 airports.



Indian Envoy Terms Iran Safest, Most Economical Route for Trade

RASHT (IRNA) - India's ambassador to Iran, Rudra Gaurav Shresth, has described Iran as the safest and most economical route for trade and connectivity with the Eurasian region.

During a meeting with Iranian provincial officials in Iran's northern Gilan Province on Sunday, Rudra Gaurav Shresth emphasized the significance of connecting Bandar Anzali to Bandar Abbas through the railway line for trade development.

He highlighted the potential for cooperation in ports, logistics, and customs support to boost economic activities between India and the Islamic Republic.

Additionally, he expressed India's readiness to expand collaboration with Iran in agriculture, economy, culture, and tourism.

Shresth also pointed out that Gilan Province has significant potential for enhancing trade relations, stressing the importance of completing the Rasht-Astara and Chabahar-Zahedan railways to facilitate trade relations between Iran and India.

Moreover, Shresth mentioned that while the primary trade between Iran and India has traditionally been in oil and petrochemicals, India is interested in expanding trade ties in food, agriculture, and pharmaceutical products.

Furthermore, the Indian ambassador highlighted the potential for tourism cooperation and suggested holding tourism events in Gilan province to enhance cooperation in this area.



Iran, Russia Emphasize Expanding Cooperation in the North-South Corridor

TEHRAN - In a meeting between "Alexey Dedov," the Russian ambassador to Iran, and "Jabbarali Zakeri," the CEO of Iranian Railways, both sides highlighted the importance of past agreements and emphasized the expansion of future cooperation, particularly in the North-South Corridor.

According to the public relations office of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways, Zakeri expressed hope during the meeting that, given the high volume of demand originating from India, there would be an increase in transit through the North-South Corridor.

The CEO also proposed holding a joint technical meeting between Iranian and Russian railway experts in Tehran and stressed the need to address border issues, capacities, and Russia's investment opportunities in Iran's railway projects. This suggestion was welcomed by the Russian ambassador.

The Russian ambassador congratulated Zakeri on his appointment and conveyed the warm greetings of the head of Russian Railways, along with an invitation for Zakeri to visit Russia.

The Russian ambassador also suggested that Iran host an international conference with countries along the North-South Corridor.

According to IRNA, this mega project is one of the country's largest rail projects, connecting us to Russia and European countries through Azerbaijan.

Last week Iran said it expected Russia to provide substantial support for the International North-South Corridor, Azerevents reports citing foreign media.

The Economy Minister of Iran, Abdolnaser Hemmati, made this statement during a meeting with Igor Levitin, assistant to the Russian President.

Hemmati noted that the imminent activation of the International North-South Corridor as a key transit route could strengthen cooperation between Iran, Russia, India, and countries around the Persian Gulf.

He added that Iran supports foreign investment in the corridor's

development and is prepared to facilitate participation by offering special investment incentives for projects like the Rasht-Astara railway.

"We hope to see an increase in Russian investments in Iran, particularly in oil, logistics, and transit projects," Hemmati said.

Levitin emphasized that Russia aims to expedite the International North-South Corridor project. Following instructions from the Russian President, the project is underway, with VTB Bank of Russia overseeing the work.

"The first part of the North-South Corridor project, the Rasht-Astara railway, has completed technical works and is now entering the construction phase with the Ministry of Economy's coordination," he said.

It is noteworthy that on May 17, 2023, Russia and Iran signed an agreement for the Rasht-Astara railway construction in Gilan province, northern Iran. The 163 km railway line will include 9 stations. Upon completion, the railway will enhance the North-South Corridor and connect Iran's railway network to the Caucasus, Russia, and Northern Europe. The construction is expected to cost 1.6 billion euros and be completed within 48 months.

During the meeting, Igor Levitin confirmed that Russia has allocated a budget for the construction of the Rasht-Astara railway. This railway is expected to handle 15 million tons of cargo, with the potential to increase capacity to 30-50 million tons.

The North-South Corridor, established by an agreement signed on September 12, 2000, between the governments of Iran, Russia, and India, has now been ratified by 13 countries: Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Armenia, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Oman, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkey, and Ukraine. It links Northern and Western Europe, the Russian Federation, the Caucasus, the Persian Gulf (Western Route), Central Asia, the Persian Gulf (Eastern Route), and the Caspian Sea with Iran and the Persian Gulf (Central Route).

Agricultural Pesticides From Iran to Be Exported to Armenia

TEHRAN - At a ceremony attended by Iran's Economic Counselor in Armenia, the National Agricultural Chemicals Company of Iran and Agroprof of Armenia signed a cooperation agreement. According to this agreement, the first batch of National Agricultural Chemicals products, including pesticides and oil emulsions, will be exported to Armenia in November this year.

Siavash Afzali, CEO of the National Agricultural Chemicals Company, stated during the event: "As one of the most experienced companies in Iran, with four decades of activity, National Agricultural Chemicals is focusing its new strategy on expanding its market both domestically and internationally."

Afzali added: "We aim to engage and agree with business partners who have the potential and capacity to help us develop the market for National Agricultural Chemicals products and establish sustainable relationships with them."

He expressed gratitude to the Iranian ambassador and economic and commercial advisors in Armenia for facilitating the agreement between the two companies in a short time. Afzali mentioned that based on successful negotiations and agreements between National Agricultural Chemicals and Agroprof, he is confident that these two companies will be good business partners.

The CEO emphasized that the quality and pricing of National Agricultural Chemicals will provide Agroprof with a competitive edge over other rivals. He expressed hope that Agroprof would work towards expanding the market for National Agricultural Chemicals by properly marketing and introducing these products in Armenia, aiming to capture a significant share of the market in the short term.

Afzali stressed that they are committed to protecting the Iranian brand in Armenia and ensuring that National Agricultural Chemicals, as a representative of Iran, maintains a strong presence in the country.

He added that the company does not see this agreement as merely a sales contract but views Agroprof as a valuable business partner. Afzali believes that true business partners protect each other's interests.

The CEO of National Agricultural Chemicals expressed hope that

the company's products would be well-received and appropriately represent Iran's industrial name in Armenia. He reaffirmed his commitment to sustained interaction and ongoing agreements, aiming to ensure that National Agricultural Chemicals becomes a worthy representative for Iran. He also expressed confidence that Agroprof can effectively fulfill this role.

Agroprof's CEO, in turn, thanked the Iranian delegation for visiting Armenia and described Agroprof as a reputable, hardworking, and capable company that has gained a solid position in Armenia over the years.

He acknowledged the significant responsibility they have undertaken and promised to elevate the status of National Agricultural Chemicals' products in Armenia in a short time.

The CEO of Agroprof assured that the cooperation between Agroprof and National Agricultural Chemicals will be a prime example of commercial interaction between Iran and Armenia.

He revealed that they made a strategic decision to sign the agreement with National Agricultural Chemicals and are committed to distributing and selling its products throughout all provinces of Armenia.

Agroprof's CEO expressed hope that this collaboration would continue for many years and shared that they have prepared extensive plans for the distribution and sale of National Agricultural Chemicals products in Armenia, ensuring their success.

Following the signing of the contract, both parties held a meeting with Mehdi Souhani, Iran's ambassador to Yerevan. Souhani highlighted the importance of the agreement, saying, "I am pleased this agreement has been reached, and the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran will provide any necessary assistance."

Iran's ambassador in Yerevan added that this contract could serve as a stepping stone for entering other international markets. He advised National Agricultural Chemicals to consider Armenia as a regional hub, noting that Armenia has a strong fruit and orchard industry, and continued cooperation could benefit both companies in expanding their commercial activities.

Need for Investment to Reduce Mining Accidents



TEHRAN - The head of the Iranian Mining House, referencing the Tabas coal mine accident, emphasized the urgency of addressing the country's poor coal mine safety standards, which are far below accepted norms.

In an interview with IRNA, Mohammad Reza Bahraman expressed condolences to the families of those affected by the accident at the Madanjo Company coal mine. He stated: "Last night, a tragic incident occurred at the 'Parvadeh 5' coal mine in Tabas. During coal extraction, 69 hardworking miners in Blocks B and C were suddenly struck by a massive methane gas release, causing an accumulation of gas in Block C, leading to this unfortunate accident."

Bahraman added that the Iranian Mining House's coal committee has concluded that the safety conditions in the country's coal mines are severely lacking and fall far below typical standards. "The safety and health conditions of coal mine workers are at their worst. Since 2017, we've officially warned the media about the dire state of coal mine safety."

He continued by saying that repeated warnings have been given about the weak safety standards and outdated equipment in the mines. He noted that every mining accident risks the lives of workers, technicians, and engineers while causing irreversible financial damage to both government and private sector investments.

Bahraman stressed the importance of modernizing mining equipment and machinery. He explained that the outdated and worn-out condition of coal mine equipment has caused significant issues, while safety equipment like gas detectors, anti-spark systems, proper ventilation, and infrastructure for maintaining mine walls and ceilings are highly ineffective. "There's always the risk of a catastrophic explosion or collapse, threatening the lives of miners."

He further noted that mines are currently operating with minimal efficiency. This not only wastes the time and expertise of the country's skilled workforce but also significantly reduces coal mining productivity.

"Mine safety is a critical issue, and we need a strategic plan to address it. Without using the necessary resources, we should expect more accidents, especially in coal mines," Bahraman said.

He also highlighted the importance of investment in equipment, training, and access to modern technology, which is increasingly difficult due to sanctions. This investment, he emphasized, is crucial for reducing mining accidents.

The lack of sufficient investment in both equipment and training in underground mines, especially coal mines, has led to tragic accidents, including the Alborz Sharghi, Zemestan Yurt, and Tabas coal mine incidents. With better oversight and support from the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO), these accidents could have been prevented.

Bahraman concluded by calling for a specialized engineering focus on the country's coal mines. These mines provide essential feedstock for the steel industry and should not be compared to other industries like hospitality or tourism when it comes to support and equipment.

Iran Proposes Quranic Parliament to Be Set Up to Support Peace



MOSCOW (IRNA) - Iran has suggested that the Quranic parliament of the Islamic countries be established to support peace in the world, according to the head of the Iranian Islamic Culture and Relations Organization.

Mohammad Mehdi Imanipour made the remarks at the 20th International Islamic Forum in Moscow.

Since our sacred book, the Quran, is a harbinger of peace and friendship, I propose that the Quranic parliament of the Islamic countries be formed to back peace, he said.

The official added that religious teachings state that all human beings have been created by God and enjoy dignity and their rights should be respected.

The first and foremost step in the path of human rights and peace between humans is dialogue, consultation, interaction, and cooperation for peaceful coexistence, he said.

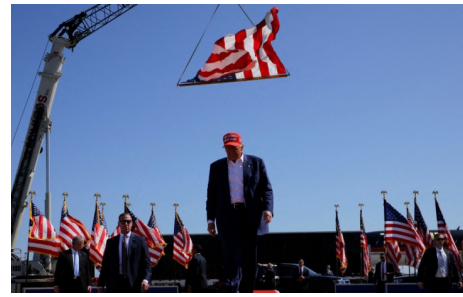
Floods Kill at Least six in Central Japan Region

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Heavy rain that triggered floods and landslides on a Japanese peninsula recovering from an earthquake this year killed at least six people, local media reported Monday.

Public broadcaster NHK and other outlets said six were dead, while a fire department official told AFP that one had died and five were "in a state of cardio-respiratory arrest", a term used in Japan before a feared death can be confirmed by a doctor.

The regional government in Ishikawa on the Sea of Japan coast said two were missing and the status of eight people was unknown.

Heavy rain pounded Ishikawa from Saturday, with more than 540 millimetres (21 inches) recorded in the city of Wajima over 72 hours, the heaviest continuous rain since comparative data became available.



IRAN NEWS

UN Adopts Pact That Aims to Save Global Cooperation



UNITED NATIONS (Dispatches) - The United Nations General Assembly adopted a "Pact for the Future" on Sunday, which U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres described as a landmark agreement that is a "step-change towards more effective, inclusive, networked multilateralism."

The pact, which also includes an annex on working toward a responsible and sustainable digital future, was adopted without a vote at the start of a two-day Summit of the Future. The agreement came after some nine months of negotiations.

"We are here to bring multilateralism back from the brink," Guterres told the summit.

Guterres long-pushed for the summit and the pact, which covers themes including peace and security, global governance, sustainable development, climate change, digital cooperation, human rights, gender, youth and future generations. It lays out some 56 broad actions that countries pledged to achieve.

"We recognize that the multilateral system and its institutions, with the United Nations and its Charter at the centre, must be strengthened to keep pace with a changing world. They must be fit for the present and the future - effective and capable, prepared for the future, just, democratic, equitable and representative of today's world, inclusive, interconnected and financially stable.

"Today, we pledge a new beginning in multilateralism. The actions in this Pact aim to ensure that the United Nations and other key multilateral institutions can deliver a better future for people and planet, enabling us to fulfil our existing commitments while rising to new and emerging challenges and opportunities."

Global crises have spotlighted the need for U.N. reform and overhauling international financial systems. These challenges include ongoing wars in Ukraine, Gaza, and Sudan; lagging climate change mitigation efforts; widespread national debt issues; and concerns over technology advancing without governance Russia's Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Sergey Vershinin criticized the negotiations and adopting the pact.

Sri Lankan Leftist Leader Sworn In After Landslide Election Win

COLOMBO (Dispatches) - Sri Lanka's first leftist president was sworn into office Monday vowing to restore public faith in politics after anger over the island nation's unprecedented economic crisis propelled him to a landslide poll win.

Self-avowed Marxist Anura Kumara Dissanayaka of the People's Liberation Front (JVP) took his oath at the colonial-era Presidential Secretariat in Colombo after trouncing his nearest rivals in Saturday's vote.

The previously fringe politician - whose party led two failed uprisings that left tens of thousands dead - saw a surge of support after the country's 2022 economic meltdown forced painful hardships on ordinary Sri Lankans.

Dissanayaka, 55, was sworn in by the chief justice in a ceremony attended by lawmakers, members of the Buddhist clergy and the military who sang the national anthem after the ceremony.

"I will do my best to fully restore the people's confidence in politicians," Dissanayaka said after taking the oath.

"I am not a conjurer, I am not a magician," he added. "There are things I know and things I don't know, but I will seek the best advice and do my best. For that, I need the support of everyone."

Dissanayaka succeeds outgoing president Ranil Wickremesinghe, who took office at the peak of the financial crisis following the government's first-ever foreign debt default and months of punishing food, fuel and medicine shortages.

Wickremesinghe, 75, imposed steep tax hikes and other austerity measures per the terms of an International Monetary Fund bailout. His policies ended the shortages and returned the economy to growth but left millions struggling to make ends meet.

"I can confidently say that I did my best to stabilise the country during one of its darkest periods," he said in a statement after placing a distant third in Saturday's poll.

Shortly before the ceremony, Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena resigned, clearing the way for Dissanayaka to appoint his own cabinet.

Dissanayaka's party has said he wants to have his own cabinet until a fresh parliament is elected later this year. His JVP party has only three members in the 225-member parliament.

He has vowed to press ahead with the IMF rescue package negotiated by his predecessor last year but modify its terms in order to deliver tax cuts.

"It is a binding document, but there is a provision to renegotiate," Bimal Ratnayake, a senior member of Dissanayaka's party, told AFP.

Dissanayaka's party led two rebellions in the 1970s and 1980s that left more than 80,000 people dead before renouncing violence. It had been a peripheral player in Sri Lankan politics in the decades since, winning less than four percent of the vote during the most recent parliamentary elections in 2020.

But Sri Lanka's crisis proved an opportunity for Dissanayaka, who saw his popularity rise after pledging to change the island's "corrupt" political culture.

The 55-year-old labourer's son was a JVP student leader during the second insurrection and has described how one of his teachers sheltered him to save him from government-backed death squads that killed party activists.

He counts famous Marxist revolutionary Che Guevara among his heroes.

Since his rise to popularity, he has softened some policies, saying he believes in an open economy and is not totally opposed to privatisation.

Regional Victory Brings Germany's Scholz Brief Respite

BERLIN (Dispatches) - German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's Social Democrats (SPD) staved off the far-right in a regional election on Sunday, likely providing him only a brief reprieve from growing criticism of his leadership within his own party.

The centre-left SPD staged a last minute comeback in the eastern state of Brandenburg, where they have ruled since reunification in 1990 and Scholz has his own constituency, to win the election on 30.9% of the vote.

The far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD), which had topped polls for the past two years in the state, won 29.2%, according to provisional official results by the State Electoral Commissioner.

Still the AfD was up 5.7 percentage points since the last Brandenburg election five years ago, after it earlier this month became the first far-right party to win a state election in Germany since World War Two.

The AfD party continues to gain momentum as it capitalizes on worries about a cost-of-living crisis in Europe's largest economy, irregular immigration and a possible escalation of the war in Ukraine due to German weapons deliveries to Kyiv.

Moreover, three-quarters of those who voted for the SPD did not do so out of conviction but rather to fend off the AfD, according to the exit poll published by broadcaster ARD, in the election with a record turnout of 72.9%.

Brandenburg's SPD premier Dietmar Woidke avoided campaigning with Scholz, Germany's least popular chancellor on record, and even criticized the federal coalition's policies and constant bickering.

As such, the regional election results are unlikely to end the growing debate within the SPD over whether Scholz is the right person to lead the party into next year's federal election given what critics call his hesitant leadership and poor communication skills.

Asked on Sunday if the SPD federal leadership was the right one, Woidke said this was not the right time to answer that question.



German Chancellor Olaf Scholz addresses the "Summit of the Future" in the General Assembly Hall at United Nations Headquarters in New York City, U.S., September 22, 2024. REUTERS/David Dee Delgado/File Photo Purchase Licensing Rights, opens new tab

"But we must also learn the lessons from this election," he said, noting the SPD needed to get closer to the people. "Especially as the federal level is concerned, there is a lot of catching up to do in the coming months and years."

The SPD is polling just 15% at national level, down from 25.7% in the 2021 federal election. That is behind the AfD on around 20% and opposition conservatives on 32%.

Last week, the mayor of Munich, Germany's third largest city, was the latest SPD party politician to suggest it should consider fielding the popular Defence Minister Boris Pistorius, 64, as its candidate for the 2025 elections.

Party insiders say Scholz, 66, who already announced his intention to run for a second term, is unlikely to step aside and more senior officials remain loyal to him.

The junior partners in Scholz's ideologically heterogeneous coalition suffered dismal performances in Sunday's election which could further stoke tensions in Berlin.

The Greens fell below the 5% threshold to make it into the state parliament for the first time in two decades on 4.1%, while the pro-business Free Democrats (FDP) scraped less than 1% of the vote.

"Either the traffic light coalition shows that it can draw the necessary conclusions from these elections, or it will cease to exist," warned FDP Vice Wolfgang Kubicki. "This is a matter of a few weeks. We won't wait until Christmas. We can't put the country through that."

Last week, FDP leader and Finance Minister Christian Lindner had called for an "autumn of decisions", giving a cryptic answer when asked if his party would break up the coalition.

Still, analysts say the government is unlikely to fall apart given none of the three coalition parties would currently stand to gain from snap elections. Together they are currently polling at around 30% combined, less than the conservatives alone.

Zelenskiy Heads to U.S. With Victory Plan at Perilous Moment

KYIV (Dispatches) - President Volodymyr Zelenskiy travels to the United States to set out a "victory plan" to his closest ally this week, in an urgent attempt to influence White House policy on Ukraine's war with Russia no matter who wins the U.S. elections in November.

The Ukrainian leader has said he wants to present the plan to President Joe Biden and his two potential successors, Kamala Harris and Donald Trump, during the trip, which will see Zelenskiy addressing the U.N. General Assembly.

Zelenskiy has said that if the plan is backed by the West, it will have a broad impact on Moscow, including a psychological one that could help compel Russian President Vladimir Putin to end the war diplomatically.

"The Victory Plan envisages quick and concrete steps by our strategic partners - from now until the end of December," Zelenskiy told reporters on Friday.

He added that the plan would act as a "bridge" to a second Ukraine-led summit on peace that Kyiv wants to hold and invite Russia to later this year.

There is no alternative to peace, Zelenskiy has said, "no freezing of the war or any other manipulations that would simply postpone Russian aggression to another stage".

Yet the two sides remain far apart.

Zelenskiy wants Ukraine inside NATO and the European Union and Russia driven from all Ukrainian territory, though he says the latter aim can be achieved diplomatically. Putin says peace talks can only begin if Kyiv abandons swathes of eastern and southern Ukraine to Russia and drops its NATO membership plan.

Israeli Military Bombs Hezbollah Targets in Lebanon

BEIRUT (Dispatches) - The Israeli military launched its most widespread wave of air strikes against Hezbollah, simultaneously targeting Lebanon's south, eastern Bekaa valley and northern region near Syria in nearly a year of conflict.

Asked by reporters about a possible Israeli ground incursion into Lebanon, Israeli military spokesperson Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari said "we will do whatever is needed" in order to return evacuated residents of northern Israel to their homes safely, a war priority for the Israeli government.

The latest attacks came amid some of the heaviest cross-border exchanges of fire in a conflict raging alongside the war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza.

Hagari called on residents of south Lebanon to keep away from Hezbollah posts.

Hagari said that Hezbollah over the years has stashed weapons, including cruise missiles, in houses and buildings throughout southern Lebanon, and called on residents to stay away from these sites.

Hagari presented in a media briefing an aerial video of what he described as Hezbollah operatives trying to launch cruise missiles from a civilian house in Lebanon, and the subsequent Israeli strike moments before it was launched.

He said Israel began striking Hezbollah posts in Lebanon after identifying



an intention to fire on Israel.

Israeli warplanes carried out an intense wave of air strikes on towns along Lebanon's southern border and even further north on Monday morning, according to Reuters witnesses.

Reuters reporters in the southern port city of Tyre could hear warplanes flying low over southern Lebanon and hear a series of air strikes nearby.

Hezbollah's al-Manar television reported Israeli airstrikes targeting the outskirts of many towns and villages in the south and the Bekaa Valley in

eastern Lebanon. Footage showed columns of smoke rising over the south.

In addition to striking the Bekaa Valley region of eastern Lebanon, warplanes also carried out airstrikes on the Hermel area in northern Lebanon, Hezbollah's al-Manar reported.

Hezbollah and Israel exchanged heavy fire into Sunday, as the Lebanese militant group sent rockets deep into northern Israeli territory after facing intense bombardment.

Hezbollah deputy chief Naim Qassem told mourners at the funeral of one of the group's commanders killed last week in Beirut: "We have entered a new phase, the title of which is the open-ended battle of reckoning."

Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant said operations would continue until it was safe for evacuated people on his side of the border to return - also setting the stage for a long conflict as Iran-backed Hezbollah has vowed to fight on until a ceasefire in the parallel Gaza war.

Hezbollah has come under unprecedented pressure since thousands of pagers and walkie-talkies used by Hezbollah members exploded last week.

The attack, an unprecedented breach of security, was widely blamed on Israel, which has not confirmed or denied responsibility.

The conflict - which has escalated sharply in the past week - has raged since Hezbollah opened a second front against Israel, saying it was acting in support of Palestinians facing an Israeli offensive further south in Gaza.



Norris Cruises to Dominant Singapore F1 Victory

SINGAPORE (Dispatches) - McLaren's Lando Norris dominated the Singapore Grand Prix from start to finish to take another chunk out of Max Verstappen's Formula One championship lead. The 24-year-old Briton roared away from pole position at the floodlit Marina Bay circuit and, despite twice brushing the unforgiving walls, led every lap to the chequered flag. Verstappen started and finished second for Red Bull, a massive 20.945 seconds behind his main rival, and McLaren's Oscar Piastri was third from fifth on the grid in a sweltering night race run over 62 laps in exhausting heat and humidity. Verstappen's 59-point lead over Norris was cut to 52 with six rounds, including three sprints, remaining, while McLaren stretched their lead over Red Bull in the constructors' standings to 41 points. There are a maximum 180 points still to be won in the drivers' championship. "It was an amazing race. A few too many close calls, I had a couple of little moments in the middle, but it was well controlled. I think," said Norris after his third career victory and third of the season. McLaren's British driver Lando Norris celebrates after winning the Formula One Singapore Grand Prix night race at the Marina Bay Street Circuit in Singapore September 22, 2024. — AFP pic McLaren's British driver Lando Norris celebrates after winning the Formula One Singapore Grand Prix night race at the Marina Bay Street Circuit in Singapore September 22, 2024. — AFP pic "The car was mega. I could push, we were flying the whole race and at the end could just chill. So it was a nice race, still tough, I'm a bit out of breath, but a very fun one."

Norris could have also had a bonus point for fastest lap but RB's Daniel Ricciardo pitted for a third time for soft tyres and snatched it at the end of what many suspect could be the Australian's last race. Extraordinarily for Singapore, there was no safety car deployment in a largely incident-free race with only two retirements. "On a weekend when we knew that we were going to struggle, to be P2 is a good achievement," said Verstappen after what amounted to a lonely race. "Of course we are not happy with second. Now we just have to try and improve more and more and that's what we will try to do." George Russell took fourth place for Mercedes with Charles Leclerc a fighting fifth for Ferrari, after starting ninth, and seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton sixth for Mercedes. Last year's winner Carlos Sainz was seventh for Ferrari, ahead of fellow-Spaniard Fernando Alonso of Aston Martin and Haas's Nico Hulkenberg with Red Bull's Sergio Perez taking the final point. "Today was a total nightmare," declared Perez, who has scored only 144 points compared to Verstappen's 331 and has not been on the podium since China in April. Ricciardo was 18th and gained no benefit from the fastest lap, with the point going only to those in the top 10, but could at least add another achievement to his record and help his former team mate and friend Verstappen.



Alcaraz Delivers Laver Cup for Team Europe

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Carlos Alcaraz beat Taylor Fritz 6-2 7-5 to hand Team Europe a 13-11 victory over Team World in the Laver Cup in the last session of the tournament on Sunday. Four-time Grand Slam champion Alcaraz romped through a one-sided first set before finishing off U.S. Open finalist Fritz as Team Europe clinched their fifth Laver Cup title. "It's been great. Obviously, we came here as a group, all of us to win the Laver Cup. I'm pretty happy. I think everybody, for us, is," said Alcaraz. "I mean, it's been a really tough one... we almost lost." Team World looked in a commanding position on Saturday when Ben Shelton and Alejandro Tabilo defeated Stefanos Tsitsipas and Casper Ruud to put them 8-4 up. However, captain Bjorn Borg's Team Europe came into the final day of competition full of fight and Alcaraz teamed up with Ruud to defeat Americans Shelton and Frances Tiafoe 6-2 7-6(6) in the early doubles match to take three points and reduce the deficit to 8-7. Team World extended their lead when Shelton beat Daniil Medvedev 6-7(6) 7-5 10-7 putting the team captained by John McEnroe within touching distance of a third consecutive title. However, Alexander Zverev gave Team Europe hope when he overcame Tiafoe 6-7(5) 7-5 10-5 to send the competition into a thrilling final session where French Open and Wimbledon champion Alcaraz wrapped up victory. Next year's Laver Cup takes place in San Francisco.

Rams Fight Back to Upset 49ers, Cowboys Lose Again

MIAMI (Dispatches) - NFC champions San Francisco let a 14-point lead slip as they were upset by the Los Angeles Rams 27-24 on Sunday while the Dallas Cowboys fell to a second straight NFL home loss. The Rams produced a stirring fourth-quarter rally to hand the 49ers their first loss of the season with a 37-yard field goal from Joshua Karty with two seconds left clinching the victory. The Cowboys' woes continued as they fell 28-25 to the Baltimore Ravens, falling to 1-2 despite a late comeback attempt of their own. The 'Niners, cheered on by large traveling support at SoFi Stadium in Los Angeles, raced out of the blocks with two touchdowns in the opening quarter - both coming from Brock Purdy connecting with Jauan Jennings. The Rams kept in touch thanks to a 15-yard touchdown pass from Matthew Stafford to Kyren Williams, but Purdy found Jennings again, with a 31-yard pass midway through the third quarter to make it 21-7.



But then the Rams started their comeback with a three-yard rushing score from Williams. Still trailing by 10 points with 6:15 left in the game, a Karty field goal reduced the deficit before Stafford hurred a 50-yard pass to Tutu Atwell and Williams ran in from four yards to tie the game. Ronnie Bell failed to catch a long Purdy pass with just over a minute left, which would have put San Francisco in field goal range. The errors mounted up as the Rams were helped by a 25-yard pass interference penalty against De'Vondre Campbell that left Karty with a 37-yard field goal which he converted for the victory. In Dallas, Derrick Henry ran in two touchdowns and Baltimore quarterback Lamar Jackson had a passing and rushing score as the Ravens took a 28-6 lead into the fourth quarter. Dallas's Dak Prescott scored with a quarterback sneak at the start of the fourth and then threw two more touchdowns, but the Cowboys' late revival fell short.

Gabbia Ends AC Milan's Derby Pain With Late Winner Against Inter



MILAN (Dispatches) - Matteo Gabbia fired AC Milan to a stunning late derby win over Inter Milan on Sunday with a bullet header which earned his team a 2-1 win and local bragging rights, while Roma thumped Udinese 3-0 as fans protested the shock sacking of Daniele De Rossi. Defender Gabbia rose highest to thump home Tijjani Reijnders' free-kick in the 89th minute and give Milan a Serie A win which pulls them out of a miserable early season slump.

Paulo Fonseca's side join Inter on eight points in seventh place thanks to Gabbia's late winner, which came after Federico Dimarco had levelled Christian Pulisic's brilliant 10th-minute individual effort just before the half-hour mark. "They played with a lot of courage today and I think we deserved to win, I can't remember another team that have created so many problems for Inter like we did today," said Fonseca to DAZN. Milan's win snapped Inter's run of consecutive derby victories at six and stopped their rivals from taking top spot in Serie A on goal difference ahead of surprise early league leaders Torino. They will have renewed belief after a difficult start to the campaign, with the pressure relieved on new coach Fonseca whose team were worthy winners. "They were the better team tonight, we didn't play as a team and that's not something you can usually say about us," said Inzaghi. Milan were booed off the field after being thumped by Liverpool on Tuesday but fans were fully back on their side after a strong display as the nominal away side at a pulsating San Siro.

They deserved to win after creating the best chances to win the match in the second half and were nearly denied the three points by a fine performance from Inter goalkeeper Yann Sommer. The Swiss pulled off a sensational save to stop Rafael Leao heading Milan ahead seconds after the restart before diving low to keep out Reijnders 20 minutes later. Leao again cursed his luck in the 75th minute when at the end of a rapid counter-attack Sommer kept out his close range finish, and seconds later Tammy Abraham flashed a great chance just wide. But Gabbia sparked a wild party among the Milan fans who could finally celebrate ending their derby hoodoo in the most dramatic fashion.

Stones' Last-Gasp Equalizer Salvages Point for Man City

MANCHESTER (Dispatches) - John Stones' 98th-minute equaliser salvaged a 2-2 draw for Manchester City against 10-man Arsenal in a bad-tempered clash between the two favourites for the Premier League title. Arsenal played the entire second half a man down after Leandro Trossard was sent off but were seconds away from inflicting City's first home defeat since November 2022. "We have that belief we can win any game and never stop fighting," said Stones. A draw was enough for City to retake top spot, two points clear of Arsenal in fourth. Erling Haaland's 100th City goal had given Pep Guardiola's men the perfect start. Arsenal turned the game around thanks to Riccardo Calafiori's wonder strike and another set-piece header from Gabriel Magalhaes. The Gunners lost Trossard for a second booking just before half-time. However, Mikel Arteta's men produced a stunning rearguard action to hold out until the final seconds when Stones bundled in after Arsenal failed to clear a corner. "It is a miracle we played 56 minutes at the Etihad with 10 men (and didn't lose). It is unbelievable what we have done," said Arteta. "They have made another big step today as a team and individuals." The powder keg for an explosive encounter was lit within the first few seconds when Kai Havertz charged into Rodri to leave the Spaniard needing treatment. Guardiola said City had been handed an advantage by having an



extra day's rest and not travelling for their Champions League draw with Inter Milan on Wednesday. Arsenal, by contrast, were in Italy on Thursday for their 0-0 stalemate against Atalanta. City burst out of the traps to try and make their fresher legs count and got an early reward. Manchester City's Norwegian striker #09 Erling Haaland looks at Arsenal's Brazilian defender #06 Gabriel Magalhaes during the

English Premier League football match between Manchester City and Arsenal at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester September 22, 2024. — AFP pic Haaland had not even managed a single shot on target in the two league meetings between the sides last season as Arsenal kept two clean sheets against the champions. But the Norwegian is in unstoppable form and took just nine minutes to score his 10th goal of the season and bring up his century in 105 games for City. Savinho's through ball split the Arsenal defence and Haaland coolly prodded past the onrushing David Raya. But City's momentum was interrupted when Rodri was forced off in some distress with a knee injury. Just seconds after he was replaced by Mateo Kovacic, Arsenal levelled in stunning fashion. Calafiori was picked out by Gabriel Martinelli at the edge of the box and the Italian defender curled a brilliant effort beyond Ederson for his first Gunners goal. Gabriel scored the winner in Arsenal's 1-0 win at Tottenham in the north London derby last weekend. And City were also unable to cope with the Brazilian's power at set-pieces. Guardiola's men got away with a warning when Gabriel headed over his first big opportunity from a Bukayo Saka corner. The Arsenal centre-back was not so forgiving with his second chance as he shrugged off Kyle Walker to nod in another inviting delivery from Saka.