

Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Stockholm Has Issued a Statement Rejecting the Accusations Against the Islamic Republic of Sending Text Messages to the Citizens of Sweden and Inciting Them to Take Revenge on Holy Quran-Burners

IRAN NEWS

Iran's Ambassador to Rome Mr. Mohammad Reza Sabouri Has Said That Iran Has Not Closed the Door of Negotiations and Is Prepared to Engage in Nuclear Negotiations Based on Mutual Respect

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Do Not Underestimate Hezbollah's Ability to Defend Lebanon



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi has hailed Lebanon's Hezbollah movement for its resistance against the Israeli regime.

Araqchi said that no one should underestimate Hezbollah's ability to defend the country against any Israeli aggression.

The top Iranian diplomat made the comments on Tuesday on the sidelines of the 2024 United Nations General Assembly in New York.

Araqchi said Hezbollah is "more than capable of flattening the bases and colonies of the Israeli regime."

He noted that Hezbollah's true power is rooted in its inner capacities and the popular support it enjoys among the Lebanese people.

Hezbollah's true power is rooted in its own capacities and popular support. It is more than capable of flattening the bases and colonies of the Israeli regime.

Araqchi called on the Arab and Islamic countries to fulfill their duty by standing up against Israel.

On Monday, the Israeli regime's military carried out over 330 raids in more than 117 Lebanese towns and cities, particularly in the south and Beqaa regions. At least 569 people -- including 50 children, and 94 women -- were killed while 5,000 were wounded.

Meanwhile Araqchi called on the European Union (EU) to adopt a unified position to stop Israel's aggression in the West Asia region.

Araqchi held a meeting with the European Union's foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, on the sidelines of the 2024 United Nations General Assembly in New York on Tuesday.

"Useful talks with EU High Rep Josep Borrell on a range of issues of mutual interest/concern—including nuclear talks, dangerous situation in the Middle East caused by Israeli aggression against Lebanon, Ukraine, and need to avoid double standard on human rights," Araqchi said in a post on X.

The Iranian foreign minister said he "urged the EU to stop certain members from supporting Israeli regime and instead adopt unified European position to stop Israel escalation in the region."

Gazprom CEO Meets Iran's Security Chief in Tehran



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Akbar Ahmadian (R) met with Gazprom CEO Alexey Miller in Tehran on September 24, 2024.

CEO of Russia's state gas company has traveled to Tehran to meet Iran's top security official some three months after the two countries signed a landmark gas supply agreement.

Gazprom CEO Alexey Miller met with Ali Akbar Ahmadian, who serves as the Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), on Tuesday, according to a report by the official IRNA news agency.

It said Miller had traveled to Tehran to follow up on negotiations earlier this month in St. Petersburg between Ahmadian and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Miller also briefed Ahmadian on agreements he had reached with senior Iranian energy sector officials, it said.

Ahmadian said in the meeting that leaders of Iran and Russia seek closer energy ties and that the SNSC will work toward the full implementation of contracts between the two countries.

Miller is the third senior Russian government official to visit Tehran after Ahmadian's visit to Russia in early September to attend a meeting of top security officials of the BRICS grouping of developing countries.

Putin's aide Igor Levitin and Russia's Security Council Secretary Sergei Shoigu were in Tehran last week to meet with Ahmadian and other senior Iranian government officials.

No One Dares to Attack Iran Thanks to Nation's Resistance



TEHRAN - Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei received a group of war veterans and activists of the eight years of the Sacred Defense era. The meeting was held on Wednesday morning during Sacred Defense Week.

"The voice of the Islamic Revolution and the Islamic Republic was a clear voice against the wrong world order," the Leader said, saying that the enemies use human rights and nuclear issues as an excuse for their enmity with Iran.

Referring to the developments in the region, Ayatollah Khamenei said, "Today, an event similar to our Sacred Defense is taking place in Lebanon and Palestine," likening the recent incidents in Lebanon and Palestine to the incidents of the imposed war on Iran.

"The definite ruling of Sharia is that it is obligatory for everyone to try and help to return Palestine and the Al-Aqsa Mosque to the Muslims and to its original owners," he emphasized. Describing the US words on not being aware of Israeli attacks in the region as lies, the Leader said that the Americans are aware of the Israeli crimes, are involved in them, and also need the victory of the Zionist regime.

For the upcoming elections, the current American government needs to show that it supported the Zionist regime to help it win, he said, adding, "Of course, they also need the votes of American Muslims, so they pretend that they are not involved."

"The Palestinian Resistance is victorious. Hezbollah is victorious. Until today, this victory has been for Hezbollah and the Resistance forces."

The Leader said Hezbollah and other resistance forces are so far the winners of the war, one reason of which is Israel's massacre of women and children in Palestine and Lebanon.

"Until today, the victory has been for Hezbollah and the resistance forces; One reason is

killing people," he told a group of veterans and activists in the field of Jihad and resistance in Tehran Wednesday.

The Leader likened the Israeli war on Palestine and Lebanon to former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's invasion of Iran.

"Today, an incident similar to the imposed war can be seen in Palestine and Lebanon," Ayatollah Khamenei said, referring to the 1980-1988 war.

"The people of Palestine and Gaza are fighting in the cause of Allah. Lebanon's Hezbollah is also waging jihad in the cause Allah."

Ayatollah Khamenei dismissed US claims of having no advance knowledge about pager and walkie-talkie attacks in Lebanon.

"The Americans say they are not involved and have no information, but they have both information and are involved. The current American government needs the victory of the Zionist regime in the upcoming elections," he said.

The Leader also said Iran is vociferously opposed to the US domination system and that the Islamic Republic will never submit to American bullying.

The Leader noted the reason for the enmity of the great powers with the Islamic revolution was the emergence of a unique people's revolution and a new way of thinking to govern the world.

He further said that the work of veterans and those who entered the holy defense field earlier is more valuable.

President Condemns Israeli Actions in Lebanon, Calls for Global Shift at UN

TEHRAN - In his address to the United Nations General Assembly, President Masoud Pezeshkian criticized Israel's military operations in Gaza and Lebanon, framing them as failed attempts to uphold a "myth of invincibility." Pezeshkian accused Israel of engaging in barbarism and genocide in a speech that also highlighted the humanitarian crises engulfing both territories.

Pezeshkian asserted that Israel's recent military campaigns in Gaza, followed by intensified aggression against Lebanon, reflect a desperate attempt to restore its image after a series of military setbacks. He condemned these actions as genocidal, warning of the potential for wider regional and global conflicts if Israel's aggressive tactics are not curtailed. "Israel's attempts to salvage its failing image through brutality will only serve to escalate tensions, not only in the Middle East but worldwide," he said.

The Iranian president also focused on the humanitarian toll, reporting over 41,000 Palestinian deaths since the conflict escalated in early October, including women and children. Pezeshkian denounced Israel's targeting of civilian infrastructure such as hospitals and schools, arguing that such actions, under the guise of self-defense, amount to war crimes. "The world's silence is deafening," he declared, criticizing countries that have historically claimed to uphold human rights but have not acted to stop the violence.

Pezeshkian also touched on the international outcry against Israel's military operations, which he stated should not be dismissed as anti-Semitic. Instead, he urged the global community to support these protests as part of the broader struggle for Palestinian self-determination. He accused Israel and its allies of mischaracterizing Palestinian resistance as terrorism.

Central to Pezeshkian's speech was the call for Palestinian self-determination. Reiterating a proposal by Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, Pezeshkian suggested that all residents and former inhabitants of Palestine—including Muslims, Jews, and Christians—should be allowed to participate in a referendum to decide the future of the region. According to Pezeshkian, this is the only viable solution for a peaceful coexistence without racism or apartheid.

While Iran is often viewed as an antagonist in the region, Pezeshkian positioned his country as a proponent of peace, asserting that Iran has never initiated a conflict but has only defended itself



against aggression. He highlighted Iran's efforts to broker peace in various regional disputes, including the war between Ukraine and Russia, as evidence of Iran's commitment to stability.

Pezeshkian contrasted Iran's peaceful stance with what he described as Israel's ongoing hostility, listing incidents such as the assassination of Iranian scientists and attacks on diplomatic facilities. He further accused Israel of supporting terrorist groups, including ISIS, to destabilize the region.

The Iranian president also addressed the U.S.'s "maximum pressure" policy and the economic sanctions imposed on Iran following the U.S.'s withdrawal from the nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Pezeshkian argued that despite Iran's compliance with the deal, as

verified by international monitors, the U.S. continues to pursue a hostile approach that threatens global security.

Addressing the American people, he said, "It is not Iran that has sanctioned your country and prevented you from engaging in commercial relations with the world. It is not Iran that has set up military bases near your borders."

The US's hostile approach towards Iran comes while, "in the current interconnected world, one country's security and interests can never be provided through destruction of others' security and interests," the president said.

"We need [to adopt] a new attitude towards resolution of international issues. Such attitude has to focus on opportunities instead of threats. Based on this very interaction-minded logic, new opportunities can be created for cooperation."

In his closing remarks, Pezeshkian called for a shift in global politics, urging nations to focus on cooperation and mutual prosperity instead of threats and military posturing. He emphasized that lasting security can only be achieved through dialogue and collaboration, rather than the destructive measures currently being employed.

President Pezeshkian's address to the UN presented a sharp critique of Israel's actions in Gaza and Lebanon, calling for global recognition of the Palestinian struggle and urging a new international approach to conflict resolution. He portrayed Iran as a defender of peace and stability in the region, standing against foreign intervention and aggressive military tactics.

100 Iranian Companies to Attend Iran-Eurasia Business Meeting



TEHRAN - The grand Iran-Eurasian Economic Union business meeting will be held from September 30 to October 1 in Armenia. Iran's Minister of Industry, Mines, and Trade, Seyyed Mohammad Atabak, along with Mohammad Ali Dehghan Dehnavi, Head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization, will participate in this meeting.

The meeting will take place in Yerevan, Armenia, with over 300 Iranian companies and five member countries of the Eurasian Economic Union (Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan) in attendance.

Akbar Godari, head of the Central Asia, Caucasus, and Russia office of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization, emphasized the importance of holding this grand Iran-Eurasia business meeting. He noted that the Eurasian Economic Union holds its annual assembly every year, and since Armenia is chairing the 2024 assembly, it will be held in Yerevan this year.

He added that last year, Iran signed a free trade agreement with the Eurasian Union, and it is likely to be ratified by all member countries' parliaments in the coming months. Therefore, the union invited Iran to participate in this year's meeting, allocating one day for a speech by Seyyed Mohammad Atabak, Iran's Minister of Industry, Mines, and Trade.

Regarding the delegation accompanying the minister to Armenia, Godari mentioned that in addition to Mohammad Ali Dehghan Dehnavi and a governmental delegation, over 100 private sector companies from Iran will accompany the minister. Additionally, 200 companies from Eurasian countries will participate in the meeting.

Godari also mentioned that alongside the governmental meetings, B2B sessions for private companies will be held. He highlighted four planned panels with representatives from Eurasian Economic Union companies and institutions, focusing on topics such as enhancing trade and mutual investment, logistics, transportation connectivity along the North-South Corridor, collaboration in industry and agriculture, food security, settlement issues, and both in-person and online B2B meetings for companies from Iran and Eurasian Union member countries.

Hezbollah Launches Ballistic Missile Strike at Tel Aviv for First Time



BEIRUT (Dispatches) - Hezbollah has launched a ballistic missile at Tel Aviv for the first time, triggering sirens in the city and elsewhere including Netanyahu, the Lebanese resistance group says.

Israel's Arrow anti-ballistic missile system was activated in Tel Aviv early Wednesday, sending residents in the city to shelters.

"In support of our steadfast Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, in backing its courageous and honorable resistance, and in defense of Lebanon and its people, the Islamic Resistance launched a 'Qader 1' ballistic missile on Wednesday, at 6:30 a.m., targeting the Mossad headquarters in the suburbs of Tel Aviv," Hezbollah said in a statement.

"This headquarters is responsible for the assassination of leaders and the detonation of pagers and radio devices," it added.

The Israeli military said that for the "first time ever" a missile fired by Hezbollah reached the Tel Aviv area. "It is the first time ever a Hezbollah missile reached Tel Aviv area."

Hezbollah and Israel have been exchanging deadly fire since early October last year, shortly after the regime launched a genocidal war against the Gaza Strip following a surprise operation by Hamas.

Earlier, Hezbollah targeted the Israeli Ilaniya military base at the northern side of the occupied territories with a salvo of Fadi-1 rockets.

The base is reportedly affiliated with the 146th Reserve Division of the Israeli military, which is part of the Northern Command.

The group announced in a brief statement that the operation was carried out in defense of Lebanon and its people.

Hezbollah also said it targeted a military base near Safad twice with salvos of rockets.

The group stated that it targeted "the Dado base near Safad - the headquarters of the Israeli military's Northern Command - with a total of 90 rockets in defense of Lebanon and its people."

Hezbollah said in a separate statement that it unleashed a squadron of attack drones on the headquarters of the Israeli army's Special Naval Task Force at the Alit Base

IRAN NEWS



Time for Entry of Iranian Urea Fertilizer, Petrochemical Products Into Brazil

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Brazil said: Fortunately, urea fertilizer has a notable market in Brazil, and the time has come for the entry of other petrochemical products produced by Iran into Brazil.

Abdollah Nakounam Ghadeiri, the ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Brasilia, the capital of Brazil, shared in a message on his personal social media account that during his attendance at the opening of the biennial Oil and Gas Exhibition in Rio de Janeiro, he discussed the large market for Iranian petrochemical products in Brazil with managers of Iranian petrochemical companies.

He added: I hope that with serious follow-ups from the petrochemical companies and their significant presence, we will see a deserving share of the large market for diverse petrochemical products from our country in Brazil.

Iran Announces Readiness for Presence of Its Private Sector in Communication Field in Cuba



TEHRAN - In a conversation with her Cuban counterpart, the Iranian Minister of Communications and Information Technology emphasized the development of mutual cooperation in various fields of communications and IT, stating that Iranian private companies active in equipment and services are ready to actively participate in Cuba.

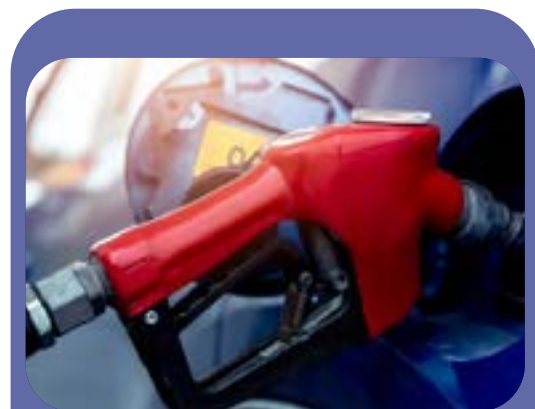
Seyed Sattar Hashemi spoke via video call with "Mayra Aruyich Marin," the Minister of Communications and Information Technology of Cuba. During the call, Hashemi underscored the need to review previous agreements and signed cooperation documents between the two countries, urging their implementation and transformation into a joint agreement.

He further highlighted that Iranian private companies in the communications and IT sector are prepared for active involvement in Cuba, expecting that necessary executive actions be expedited. The Minister also announced the readiness of Iranian companies to participate in the 40th Havana International Fair, noting that this presence could enhance cooperation in other areas between the two countries.

In response to the invitation from her Cuban counterpart, Hashemi reaffirmed Iran's readiness to develop joint cooperation and actively participate in the joint economic cooperation commission, emphasizing the need to explore collaboration opportunities closely, either through the commission or at the Havana International Fair.

The report also mentioned discussions on increasing cooperation between Iran and Cuba in areas such as artificial intelligence, digital economy, e-government, and postal collaborations.

Mayra Aruyich Marin, the Cuban Minister, congratulated Hashemi on his appointment and emphasized strengthening relations in various fields, particularly those relevant to both parties. She welcomed the involvement of Iranian private companies in Cuba's communications sector and formally invited her Iranian counterpart to visit Cuba for the 40th Havana International Fair or to participate in the 19th meeting of the Joint Economic Cooperation Commission between Iran and Cuba.



Country Facing Daily Imbalance of 10m Liters of Gasoline

TEHRAN - Ahmad Maroufkhani, in an interview ILNA, discussed the country's fuel imbalance situation and solutions to overcome it, stating that Iran is currently facing a package of imbalances, including currency, birth rates, marriage, and of course, gasoline, diesel, electricity, and gas, for which no long-term solutions have been devised.

He added that the root of the gasoline imbalance lies in the lack of proper management of consumption, which is increasing uncontrollably without any plans for management and control. Additionally, there has been insufficient attention and investment in the refining sector, leading to the current level of imbalance.

The head of the Union of Exporters of Oil, Gas, and Petrochemical Products stated that short-term adjustments through proper regulation and centralized management could partially compensate for the imbalance. He noted that many domestic petrochemical companies are exporting gasoline additives, and last week, there was an export of reformate to the UAE market, while this product could be converted into high-quality gasoline domestically through a combination process with naphtha.

He emphasized that the Ministry of Oil must regulate to prevent the export of additives and related products, as gasoline products and additives are currently being sent to countries like the UAE and then converted back to gasoline to be re-imported, suggesting a short-term solution is to halt these exports to assist with domestic fuel supply.

Maroufkhani noted that preventing the export of aromatic materials produced by petrochemicals and certain refineries could help address the imbalance in the short term. In the long term, increasing refining capacity and focusing on developing incentive policies for attracting public and private investment in this sector, along with consumption management, could resolve the imbalance.

He stated that by the end of next year, there will be a daily imbalance of 10 million liters of gasoline, and in the winter, a diesel imbalance will arise. The first project expected to help with this imbalance is the Persian Gulf Project, which is hoped to be operational by February 2026 and assist in alleviating the imbalance. However, if there are no consumption management plans, imbalances will recur in a few years.

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK



TEHRAN - Ahmad Pourfalah, the head of the Iran-Italy Chamber of Commerce, discussed the importance of attracting foreign investment for the economic development of the country in an interview with ILNA. He explained that even countries with strong economies prioritize attracting investment, despite not facing issues with capital supply and even investing in other lands.

He added that the benefits of attracting foreign investment extend beyond economic matters and can lead to political, social, welfare, and technological achievements for countries. Foreign investors bring not only capital but also technology, expertise, and experience.

Pourfalah continued, stating that attracting investment should focus on areas that are productive, impactful, secure, and have the potential for capital return. Investors should be able to convert their investments into cash at current rates whenever they desire. Unfortunately, he noted, none of these prerequisites are met in Iran. As someone who has managed production units in the private sector for five decades, he stated that industry and production in Iran are fraught with challenges, leading to potential bankruptcy for producers. These issues indicate that private investment in production and small to medium-sized industrial units is not profitable in Iran, except in a few industries that benefit from low-cost currency allocation or are not affected by sanctions.

The head of the Iran-Italy Chamber of Commerce emphasized that fluctuations in exchange rates reduce the value of investors' capital. As a result, foreign investment has not occurred in the country, and the figures claiming billions in foreign investment are only at the level of initial agreements.

He pointed out that he believes attracting investment is more effective than selling oil or non-oil exports because, in both cases, due to sanctions, Iran has to negotiate at prices lower than international rates, reducing profit

margins for Iranian traders.

Pourfalah added that policy should support the economy, whereas in many strong economies, it is the economy that drives policy. In Iran, the opposite is true, where politicians dictate economic outcomes.

He remarked that even transnational challenges in foreign trade and attracting foreign investors stem from domestic conditions. He argued that Iran must join the FATF (Financial Action Task Force); otherwise, there would be no reason to attract foreign investment, as no investor would want to cooperate with a country facing such challenges or get involved in international courts. Additionally, without joining the World Trade Organization, Iran would lose a significant parameter for attracting investors since access to foreign markets is crucial for them, and the severance of Iran's relations with the world would lead to investor bankruptcies.

Pourfalah noted that about 14 years ago, the trade value between Iran and Italy exceeded €7.5 billion, with Iran's exports surpassing its imports. However, due to increased sanctions, this figure has dropped to the current €1 billion, two-thirds of which consists of food and pharmaceutical products that Iran imports from Italy. Italy no longer purchases oil from Iran and has turned to African countries for its oil needs. Nevertheless, Italy remains eager to increase economic cooperation with Iran, but as a member of the European Union, it must comply with EU policies. The Iran-Italy Chamber of Commerce in Rome remains operational, and there are direct flights from Iran to Italy.

He added that Iran holds 10% of the world's underground natural resources while its population constitutes only 3% of the global population. Therefore, there is significant potential for development in this country, but realizing this potential requires creating the necessary conditions.

Tajik Minister Calls for Import of Iranian Electrical Equipment



TEHRAN - In a meeting attended by Daler Jumma, Minister of Energy and Water Resources of Tajikistan, and Iranian officials, the two sides discussed the economy of the electricity industry and mechanisms for its reform in Iran.

At the beginning of the meeting, Deputy of Iran's Electricity Market Behrouz Ahmadi provided an overview of the Iranian electricity market and the mechanisms for selling electricity. He noted that the Iranian electricity market is centrally managed and that significant reforms have been implemented in recent years to address financial issues, increase investment opportunities, enhance transparency, and allow informed purchasing by consumers.

The Deputy of the Iranian Electricity Market stated that there is currently the possibility for direct electricity sales from power plants to large consumers through the energy exchange. All consumers with a capacity of over one megawatt and distribution companies on behalf of smaller consumers and regional electricity companies can purchase electricity through the exchange directly from private and public power plants.

Ahmadi also mentioned the launch of three electricity trading boards in the exchange, explaining that there are currently three boards: Free Electricity, Primary Electricity, and Green Electricity. On the Free Electricity board, large and small thermal power plants newly established are allowed to sell electricity, and buyers on this board are consumers with a capacity of over one megawatt for usage beyond their quotas.

Regarding the Primary Electricity board, he stated that all power plants are required to supply electricity to all consumers, and consumers with a capacity over one megawatt and distribution companies are obligated to purchase electricity from this board within a set limit.

Ahmadi further elaborated on the Green Electricity board, noting that renewable power plants can operate as authorized suppliers, with the buyers on this board being industrial and administrative consumers with capacities over one megawatt for consumption exceeding their quotas.

Continuing the meeting, Ehsan Zabihzadeh discussed the tariff structure and types of electricity consumers in Iran, indicating that the general electricity tariff in Iran is below one cent per kilowatt-hour. The consumption pattern for residential consumers is determined based on five general areas: ordinary, hot zone 1, hot zone 2, hot zone 3, and hot zone 4.

The Director General of the Integrated Planning Office of Tavanir pointed out that electricity demand in Iran reached 80,000 megawatts during the hot season of this year, compared to around 50,000 megawatts in the hot season of 2014, indicating an increase of 30,000 megawatts over the past decade.

Zabihzadeh also highlighted the types of electricity consumers in Iran: industries account for 36.7%, residential 31%, agriculture 14%, public 9.2%, commercial 7.8%, and street lighting 1.4%

Presence of 170 Horticultural Companies at 7th Int'l Agriculture Exhibition iFarm



TEHRAN - The 7th International Agriculture Exhibition iFarm has commenced with the participation of 170 companies active in horticulture, greenhouses, inputs, modern irrigation systems, machinery, tools, equipment, and agricultural drones.

According to Zahra Khushru, the project manager of the iFarm exhibition in Tehran, 25 to 30 knowledge-based companies are also present in a special section of the Agricultural Science and Technology Park, showcasing their innovative achievements in agricultural sciences.

She mentioned that the exhibition aims to introduce innovations and the latest achievements in the greenhouse, horticulture, and agriculture industries.

The project manager added that representatives from Iraq, Pakistan, the Kurdistan region, Qatar, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and Georgia are expected to visit the exhibition to learn about the achievements of the Islamic Republic of Iran in agriculture and horticulture.

She announced the launch of a special section for "Certified Seedlings" at this exhibition for the first time and noted that over 20 workshops and several specialized sessions will be held by the Ministry of Jihad Agriculture on both domestic and international topics.

The 7th iFarm Agricultural Exhibition in Tehran, organized by the private sector and supported by the Ministry of Jihad Agriculture, will take place from September 24 to 27 at the International Exhibition Center of Shah-e-Aftab, open to visitors from 10 AM to 5 PM.

The exhibition features technologies for constructing and equipping greenhouses, inputs (fertilizers, pesticides, and seeds), modern irrigation systems, drones, gardening tools, and related industries.

An Opportunity to Strengthen the Cohesion of the National Maritime Community



TEHRAN - The 28th Coordination Conference of the Country's Maritime Organizations and the commemoration of World Maritime Day, with the slogan "Maritime Development in a Safe Environment with Public Participation," will be held on October 1 in Tehran.

This event is a display of the maritime community's strength and a means to foster coordination among stakeholders, providing a suitable opportunity for members of the national maritime community to collaborate.

According to IRNA from the Ports and Maritime Organization, "Deputy for Maritime Affairs of the Ports and Maritime Organization Ali Akbar Marzbani stated that this conference presents a valuable opportunity for members of the large national maritime community to gather together at all levels, promote cooperation, and enhance coordination by addressing their issues and finding appropriate solutions.

Argentina's Milei Criticizes Leviathan UN

UNITED NATIONS (Reuters) - Argentina's brash libertarian President Javier Milei, speaking at the United Nations General Assembly, criticized the organization as a "Leviathan" monster, rejected its 'Pact for the Future' and pledged instead an "agenda of freedom."

In a fiery speech where he also said the UN had become "powerless" in its key role to help prevent conflicts, Milei attacked the body's future pact adopted on Sunday calling it "socialist" and said the UN's remit had become "distorted".

"It has become a multi-tentacled Leviathan that seeks to decide what each nation state should do and how the citizens of the world should live," the right-wing economist and former pundit said, a reference to the giant mythological sea serpent.

"The same always happens with the ideas of the left. They design a model according to what human beings should do, and when things turn out differently, they repress, restrict and curtail their freedom."

Milei, who clashes regularly with political opponents, is battling to restore economic stability in Argentina after years of crises, with tough austerity measures that are helping to turn around a deep fiscal deficit, but aggravating a recession.



Sri Lanka's New President Dissolves Parliament, Calls for Election



COLOMBO (Dispatches) - Sri Lanka's new President Anura Kumara Dissanayake dissolved Parliament late Tuesday and called for a parliamentary election in less than two months in an effort to consolidate power after his weekend election victory.

A government notification said that Parliament was dissolved effective midnight Tuesday, and that the parliamentary election was set for Nov. 14, in an expected move that Dissanayake had vowed to take during his election campaign.

Dissanayake's party holds only three seats in the 225-member Parliament and the snap election could help him take control of the chamber while his approval ratings remain intact following his win in Saturday's polling.

The dissolution came hours after Dissanayake swore in a female lawmaker in his coalition as his prime minister, making her the country's first woman to head the government in 24 years.

Harini Amarasinghe, 54, a university lecturer and activist, comes from a similar background as Dissanayake and both are members of the Marxist-leaning National People's Power coalition, which remains in the opposition in Parliament.

His victory in Saturday's election over ex-President Ranil Wickremesinghe and opposition leader Sajith Premadasa came as Sri Lankans rejected the old political guard whom they blamed for pushing the country into an unprecedented economic crisis.

The last woman to serve as prime minister, the second most-powerful position after the president, was Sirimavo Bandaranaike. She was also the world's first female head of government when she took up the post in 1960, and served three terms until 2000.

Dissanayake's lack of a majority makes it difficult for him to appoint a fully fledged Cabinet, and he had vowed during the campaign to dissolve Parliament and call a snap election. The present Parliament's five-year term ends next August.

World Leaders at UN Warn Against Full-Scale War Over Lebanon



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - World leaders lined up at the United Nations on Tuesday to call on Israel to refrain from a full-scale war in Lebanon, with the organization's chief warning the situation was on the "brink."

The UN General Assembly, the high point of the international diplomatic calendar, comes after Lebanese authorities said Israeli strikes had killed 558 people -- 50 of them children.

"Full-scale war is not in anyone's interest. Even though the situation has escalated, a diplomatic solution is still possible," US President Joe Biden said in his farewell address to the global body.

"In fact, it remains the only path to lasting security to allow the residents from both countries to return to their homes on the border safely," Biden said ahead of an emergency UN Security Council session on Lebanon planned for Wednesday.

Biden's remarks drew disappointment from Lebanon's foreign minister Abdullah Bou Habib who said they were "not promising" and "would not solve the Lebanese problem," as he estimated that the number of people displaced by Israel's strikes has likely soared to reach half a million.

"We should all be alarmed by the escalation. Lebanon is at the brink," UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said when he opened the gathering.

Israel's ambassador to the UN Danny Danon said his country was "not eager" for a ground invasion of Lebanon.

"We don't want to send our boys to fight in a foreign country," he said.

It is unclear what progress can be made to defuse the situation in Lebanon, with efforts to broker a ceasefire in Gaza -- which Israel has relentlessly pounded since October 2023 -- coming to nothing.

Biden on Tuesday pushed again for an elusive ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, telling the global body it was time to "end this war."

Mediator Qatar accused Israel of obstructing Gaza ceasefire talks, with Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani saying "there is no Israeli partner for peace" under the government of Benjamin Netanyahu.

But he added: "We will continue our efforts of mediation to resolve the disputes through peaceful means."

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan accused Israel of dragging the entire region "into war."

"Not only children but also the UN system is dying in Gaza," Erdogan said in a scathing speech.

Guterres cautioned against "the possibility of transforming Lebanon (into) another Gaza," calling the situation in the Palestinian territory a "non-stop nightmare."

European Council President Charles Michel said that Israel had the right to exist and defend itself but without inflicting "collective punishment" on civilians living in areas targeted by its military.

British foreign minister David Lammy also sounded the alarm over the escalating violence in Lebanon.

"I am very worried about the risk of escalation, and this breaking into a wider regional conflict," he told AFP as Britain announced it was deploying military units to Cyprus to assist with any evacuation of its citizens from Lebanon.

Responding to criticism of Israel, Danon called the General Assembly debate an "annual charade of hypocrisy."

Since last year's annual gathering, when Sudan's civil war and Russia's Ukraine invasion dominated, the world has faced an explosion of crises.

The October 7 attack by Palestinian group Hamas on Israel resulted in the deaths of 1,205 people and prompted a military response in Gaza that authorities say has killed at least 41,467 people.

Violence has raged across multiple fronts in the Middle East since the crisis erupted, with the conflict exposing deep divisions at the UN.

Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas took his seat alongside the Palestinian delegation, placed in alphabetical order in the General Assembly for the first time on Tuesday after the delegation received upgraded privileges in May.

At the rostrum, Jordan's King Abdullah II on Tuesday ruled out the forced displacement by Israel of Palestinians to his country, which he said would be a "war crime."

Ukraine was also on the agenda Tuesday with President Volodymyr Zelensky addressing a UN Security Council meeting on the Russian invasion.

"Russia can only be forced into peace, and that is exactly what's needed -- forcing Russia into peace," Zelensky said.

Japan Ruling Party to Hold Toss-Up Vote for Next PM



TOKYO (Dispatches) - Japan could get its first woman or youngest-ever prime minister on Friday when the ruling party holds a leadership vote described as the most "unpredictable" in many years.

A record nine candidates are in the running after the long-powerful factions of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) disbanded earlier this year over a funding scandal.

Because the conservative LDP holds a parliamentary majority, the winner is certain to become prime minister, and will likely call a snap election to shore up their mandate.

Three frontrunners have emerged in polling: former defence minister Shigeru Ishiba, 43-year-old Shinjiro Koizumi -- the son of a popular ex-premier -- and nationalist hardliner Sanae Takaichi, who would be the first woman in the job.

Whoever wins must face down regional security threats, from an increasingly assertive China and its deepening defence ties with Russia to North Korea's banned missile tests.

At home the leader will be tasked with breathing life into the economy, as the central bank moves away from decades of monetary easing that has slashed the value of the yen.

In debates and campaigning, many candidates "have claimed that 'I'm the one who can handle Trump' or 'I'm the one who can stand up to China'", Jeffrey J. Hall, a lecturer at Kanda University of International Studies, told AFP.

Ukraine Claims Its Soldiers Recaptured a Russian Stronghold

KYIV (AP) — Ukrainian troops engaged in hand-to-hand combat as they drove Russian forces out of a huge processing plant in the town of Vovchansk in Ukraine's northeast that had been occupied for four months, officials said Tuesday.

The plant, a partly steel structure with some 30 buildings, had been a Russian stronghold in the Kharkiv border region since May when Russia sought to further stretch Ukraine's weary forces by launching a fresh push in the area.

Taking back the plant was likely intended to demonstrate that Ukraine is not giving up the fight despite being outmanned and outgunned by the Russian army. The accomplishment coincided with Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's trip to the United States where he is looking to ensure continuing foreign support for his country with the war deep into its third year.

Russian President Vladimir Putin is trying to grind down Ukraine's appetite for the fight and sap the West's support for Kyiv by drawing out the conflict. Russian forces have been creeping forward on the battlefield this year but the progress has been costly. The U.K. Defense Ministry estimates more than 1,000 Russian troops are being killed or wounded each day.

A statement from Ukrainian Military Intelligence said its units recaptured the Vovchansk plant after fierce fighting "in densely built-up conditions."



The Russian onslaught has reduced Vovchansk, and many other Ukrainian towns and villages, to smoking piles of rubble and bombed-out residential buildings.

Ukraine's daring incursion last month into Russia's Kursk region, where Ukrainian forces are holding ground, was launched in part to ease pressure in the northeast by forcing Russia to divert its forces.

Russia is waging a war of attrition, relentlessly bombing towns and cities while trying to tear holes in Ukrainian defenses at places along the 1,000-kilometer (600-mile) front line, especially in the eastern Donbas region.

In Kharkiv city, the region's capital, at least three people were killed and 28 were injured Tuesday in a Russian glide bomb attack, regional Gov. Oleh Syniehubov said.

"People are still trapped under the rubble. One of the multi-story buildings suffered a direct hit. The rescue operation continues," Syniehubov wrote on Telegram.

Ukrainian forces are also under severe pressure in the town of Vuhledar, one of a key belt of strongholds in the Donetsk region which along with Luhansk makes up the partly occupied Donbas.

Russian forces are obliterating Vuhledar with glide bombs while infantry units advance on the flanks in a bid to encircle the town, according to Andrii Kovalenko, head of Ukraine's Center for Combating Disinformation of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine.

China Launches Intercontinental Missile Into Pacific in Rare Test

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China said it test-launched an intercontinental ballistic missile on Wednesday, firing it into the Pacific Ocean in a rare trial run that flexed its military might.

Beijing has stepped up its nuclear development in recent years, with the Pentagon last October warning China was developing its arsenal more quickly than the United States had anticipated.

China held more than 500 operational nuclear warheads as of May 2023 and is likely to have more than 1,000 by 2030, it said.

On Wednesday, the Chinese military's "Rocket Force launched an ICBM... carrying a dummy warhead to the high seas in the Pacific Ocean at 08:44 on September 25, and the missile fell into expected sea areas", the defence ministry said in a statement.

An analyst told AFP that China has typically conducted such tests in its own airspace.

"This is extremely unusual and likely the first time in decades that we've seen a test like this," said Ankit Panda, Stanton Senior Fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

"(The test) likely speaks to China's ongoing nuclear modernisation manifesting in new requirements for testing," he added.

China's defence ministry, however, called the firing a "routine arrangement in our annual training plan".

"It is in line with international law and international practice and is not directed against any country or target," it said.

The United States and China in November held rare talks on nuclear arms control, part of a



bid to ease mistrust ahead of a summit between leaders Joe Biden and Xi Jinping.

But in July, Beijing said it had suspended negotiations with the United States on nuclear non-proliferation and arms control in response to Washington's weapons sales to Taiwan.

In an annual report, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) listed China as having the world's third-largest stockpile of nuclear warheads, after Russia and the United

States.

This year, Beijing announced it would boost its defence budget -- the world's second-largest -- by 7.2 percent.

The boost comes as China increasingly squares off with the United States and its regional partners from the South China Sea to Taiwan.

This month, senior military officials from China and the United States held "in-depth" talks as part of a bid by the powers to avoid wider tensions escalating into conflict.

Since its first nuclear test in 1964, China has been content to maintain a comparatively modest arsenal and has maintained that it will never be the first to use nuclear weapons in a conflict.

In recent years, under President Xi, it has begun a massive military modernisation drive that includes upgrading its nuclear weapons to not only deter foes but also be able to counter-attack.

But Beijing's secretive Rocket Force, which carried out Wednesday's test and oversees the country's nuclear arsenal, has also been the target of an aggressive, wide-ranging anti-graft campaign.

In July, Beijing announced that Sun Jinming, the former chief of staff of the force, had been placed under investigation for corruption.

Its head, Li Yuchao, was replaced last July.

And Li Shangfu was ousted last year after only seven months as defence minister following a lengthy absence from public view.

Other disgraced generals include Wei Fenghe, who once headed the Rocket Force and who later became China's defence minister from 2018 to 2023.



Chelsea, Man City Edge Into League Cup Last 16

MANCHESTER (Dispatches) - Christopher Nkunku scored a hat-trick as Chelsea thrashed fourth tier Barrow 5-0 to reach the last 16 of the League Cup yesterday as a much-changed Manchester City edged out Watford 2-1.

Nkunku now has six goals in seven appearances this season, but the Frenchman has still been unable to nail down a regular place in Enzo Maresca's side.

Maresca made 11 changes from the team that beat West Ham 3-0 on Saturday but could still start around £400 million (RM2.2 billion) worth of talent.

Joao Felix was another of the Blues' big money signings to shine. His scooped pass set up Nkunku for opener.

Nkunku then flicked home a second before Felix's free-kick hit the post and rebounded in off Barrow goalkeeper Paul Farman.

Pedro Neto tapped in Mykhailo Mudryk's cross for his first Chelsea goal. Nkunku sealed his first hat-trick for the club when he dispossessed Farman and rolled into an empty net.

City began what is likely to be many months without key midfielder Rodri after he suffered suspected knee ligament damage in a fiery 2-2 draw against Arsenal in the Premier League on Sunday.

Little over 48 hours from that top-of-the-table clash, City were in action again and Pep Guardiola made nine changes, including a debut for 16-year-old Kaden Braithwaite.

Jeremy Doku, one of the two to retain his place, fired in the opening goal from Jack Grealish's pass after five minutes.

Rodri's absence could mean a more prominent role for Matheus Nunes and the Portugal international blasted in his first goal since joining City for £53 million a year ago.

Meanwhile Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola said he had the responsibility to find a way of coping

without key midfielder Rodri, who could miss the rest of the season due to a serious knee injury.

The Spaniard limped off during City's 2-2 draw against Arsenal in the Premier League on Sunday with a suspected anterior cruciate ligament tear in his right knee.

"Rodri will be out for a long time, a while. There are some opinions that it will be less than we expect, but unfortunately he was injured and right now we're waiting for the final phone calls from him and the doctors to know exactly what he has and the type of surgery he has to get," Guardiola said after City's 2-1 win over Watford in the League Cup on Tuesday.

Guardiola accepted the absence is a huge blow, but believes a City side that have won a record four consecutive Premier League titles can remain competitive.

"We will have a good season, I trust a lot in my players. I have the duty to find a solution," he added.

"Rodri is irreplaceable. When a team doesn't play with the best midfielder in the world for a long, long time of course it is a big blow but my duty is to find a solution so that we remain competitive as we have been for many years.

"When one player is irreplaceable you have to do it as a team and this is going to happen."

Rodri has been touted as a potential Ballon d'Or winner this year after his influential role in City's record fourth consecutive Premier League title and Spain's success at Euro 2024.

Tom Ince, son of former Manchester United midfielder Paul Ince, pulled a late goal back for Watford, but it was too little, too late for the Championship side.

Aston Villa's second string were also pushed by lower-league opposition but Emi Buendia's header and Jhon Duran's penalty were enough to win 2-1 at Wycombe.

Fourth-tier Walsall came closest to an upset as they forced Leicester to penalties after a 0-0 draw.

Brook Sets Up First Win as England Captain



LONDON (Dispatches) - Harry Brook said he felt a sense of relief after his maiden one-day international hundred paved the way for his first win as England captain.

Following heavy defeats by world champions Australia at Trent Bridge and Headingley, England had to win at Chester-le-Street on Tuesday to keep the five-match series alive.

Brook came in to bat with England struggling at 11-2 after Australia fast bowler Mitchell Starc had removed both openers.

But the 25-year-old Yorkshireman responded with a superb 110 not out. He received excellent support from Will Jacks (84) in a match-changing stand of 156.

By the time rain curtailed England's pursuit of a target of 305, they had long since done enough to win by 46 runs on the Duckworth-Lewis-Stern method.

It was yet more evidence of Brook's talent and temperament with the novice captain, leading England this series in place of the injured Jos Buttler, appearing in just his 18th ODI.

Brook was simply pleased to be back in the runs.

"I'm relieved, for sure," he told reporters. "It's nice to get that first hundred on the board and hopefully there's plenty more to come."

"I feel like I've been a little bit stop-start this summer. I've had a lot of starts - 30s and 40s - and then not managed to convert, which is frustrating.

"To do that today, I feel like I'm back in a good place. Obviously it's nice to score runs against Australia, but scoring runs is amazing, no matter who it is against."

Wimbledon Finals Tickets Reach Record Price for 2025



LONDON (Dispatches) - Wimbledon have raised their top prices for the singles finals to break the £300 mark for the first time.

The All England Club has reportedly attracted a record level of interest in the 2025 championships and wants to capitalise on it.

The Times have reported that around £8m revenue will be earned from the final weekend on Centre Court, with the most expensive finals tickets set at £315, £40 more than this year.

Wimbledon's price increase is only the latest in a long trend of the All England Club increasing the prices far beyond inflation. A ticket to the men's final at the turn of the century would set you back £63, rising to £100 in 2009 and £210 in 2018.

However, the tournament organiser announced on Monday that the number of applications for the public ballot was set a new high record for the third successive year.

There is good news for people looking for cheaper tickets for the two-week affair with ground passes to remain at £30 for the first eight days, although standard seats at Centre Court for the opening day have also breached the £100 barrier for the first time with a top rate of £105.

The seat prices at the men's and women's singles finals are the same after the men's had been valued higher until 2021.

Wimbledon has been attempting to expand the All England Club across the road into the Wimbledon Park Golf Club, a process which has been opposed by residents and will have a planning hearing on Friday.

An All England Club spokesperson said, reported by The Times: "Very careful consideration is given when setting ticket prices for the Championships, with the greatest price increase applied to premium seats on Centre Court and No 1 Court. Twenty per cent of all tickets have had prices frozen at 2024 levels, including grounds passes.

"The Wimbledon public ballot for the Championships 2025 closed last week, and we were very pleased to receive a record number of applications, including strong interest from fans in the US, Italy, Ireland and Germany."

Mbappe Strikes Again as Real Madrid Hold Off Alaves in La Liga

MADRID (Dispatches) - Kylian Mbappe struck for the fourth consecutive game as Real Madrid survived a late scare to beat Alaves 3-2 in La Liga.

Real Madrid, second, cut the gap on Barcelona to one point before the leaders host Getafe today.

Madrid dismantled Alaves with goals from Lucas Vazquez, Mbappe and Rodrygo before a late salvo from the visitors rocked Carlo Ancelotti's side.

Carlos Protoni and Kike Garcia scored two goals in two minutes in the final stages but Madrid held on.

"This is football, you can think the game has finished, (then there's) a small slip and they score the first, they get confidence and you lose it, this is what happens," Ancelotti told reporters.

"Obviously we don't want this to happen, but it can.

"We have to highlight that for an hour the team played well and that gives us confidence."

Los Blancos overpowered Alaves from the start in what was a hugely uneven contest for most of the game, despite the Basque side's solid start to the season.

Ancelotti brought Vinicius Junior back into the starting line-up and gave Vazquez a rare start and the pair combined inside the first minute.



The Brazilian winger surged in from the left flank and cut the ball back for a simple finish from Vazquez.

Ancelotti said Monday he wanted more intensity at the outset of matches after Madrid had scored just one first half goal this season in La Liga or the Champions League, and his demand was swiftly met.

Los Blancos dominated with Alaves barely reaching Thibaut Courtois' penalty box.

Despite that Madrid's second goal only came five minutes before the interval, when Mbappe and Jude Bellingham combined beautifully.

France captain Mbappe conjured a clever flicked pass to the England international, who completed a one-two by sending his team-mate through on goal.

Mbappe took two deft touches to shake his marker and get a sight of goal, before stroking home clinically for his fifth league goal.

Rodrygo expanded Madrid's lead soon after the interval, roaming in with freedom from the right and firing through Alaves goalkeeper Antonio Sivera's legs.

Teenage Brazilian striker Endrick hit the post with a deflected effort and Abde Rebbach also struck the woodwork as Alaves made a rare foray forward.

Injury-Hit Cilic Creates ATP History With Comeback Title

LONDON (Dispatches) - Former US Open champion Marin Cilic became the lowest-ranked player to win an ATP Tour title with an emotional victory at the Hangzhou Open.

Croatia's Cilic, who started the tournament at 777th in the world, has spent the majority of the past two seasons out with a knee injury which required multiple surgeries.

Given a wildcard to play in Hangzhou, the former world number three had not won an ATP Tour match in 22 months before this week.

On Tuesday, just four days before his 36th birthday, he beat home favourite Zhang Zhizhen 7-6 (7-5) 7-6 (7-5) to lift the title.

"It has been a difficult period for me - I lost my ranking and I didn't play too much," said Cilic, who reached a career-high ranking of third in 2018.

Cilic had the latest surgery on his right knee in May, saying it was the "best option" to help overcome the problem and return to court.

He played just two matches in



2023 and another four times at the start of this season.

The comeback began on the Challenger Tour - the tier below the main ATP events - in August before stepping up a level again over the past week in China.

Cilic hit 18 aces and won 42 of 50 first-service points (84%) against 43rd-ranked Zhang.

In his post-match speech, the 2014 US Open champion dedicated the victory to his family - including his wife and two children - for their support during the low moments.

"Everybody at home has been with me in this difficult period, working day by day, believing and pushing me, giving me strength and spirit," Cilic said.

"I'm happy to make this victory, not just for me, but for them. For everyone there is a small piece of this trophy."

On the back of winning a 21st title of his career, Cilic will rise 404 places in the rankings to 373 next week.