

Iran Foreign Ministry Spokesman Says U.S. Claims of Iranian Threats to Senior American Officials Are "Ridiculous Scenarios" Fabricated by Washington

# IRAN NEWS

Foreign Minister Has Taken a Swipe at the International Community Over Its Failure to Stop Israeli Atrocities, Stressing That Iran Will Not Be Indifferent to an All-Out War on Lebanon

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### Iran Dismisses Joint U.S.-UAE Statement on Persian Gulf Islands



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has condemned a joint statement by the United Arab Emirates and the United States regarding the three Iranian islands of Greater Tumb, Lesser Tumb, and Abu Musa.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani reiterated on Wednesday that the three islands are inseparable parts of Iran's territory and sovereignty, and any comments by third parties in that regard are fundamentally invalid and dismissed.

The Iranian official said the repetition of baseless claims by the UAE about the three Iranian islands and the issuance of joint political statements with other parties lack legitimacy and do not affect the legal status of these islands.

The UAE's President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and Joe Biden of the United States issued the joint statement following their meeting at the White House on September 23. The statement supported the UAE's claim to the three Iranian islands in the Persian Gulf.

"The leaders stressed the importance of reaching a peaceful solution to the dispute over the three islands, Greater Tumb, Lesser Tumb, and Abu Musa, through bilateral negotiations or the International Court of Justice, in accordance with the rules of international law including the UN Charter," said the statement.

The three Persian Gulf islands have historically been part of Iran, proof of which can be found and corroborated by countless historical, legal, and geographical documents in Iran and other parts of the world. However, the United Arab Emirates has repeatedly laid claim to the islands.

The islands fell under British control in 1921 but on November 30, 1971, a day after British forces left the region and just two days before the UAE was to become an official federation, Iran's sovereignty over the islands was restored.

### President Brings Home Over 1,100 Achaemenid-Era Clay Tablets From U.S.



TEHRAN (PressTV) - President Masoud Pezeshkian has returned to Tehran from New York after participating in the 79th session of the UN General Assembly, bringing with him 1,100 historical clay tablets from the Achaemenid era.

The tablets were repatriated following intensive consultations of the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Iranian Vice President for Legal Affairs Majid Ansari with the Center for East Asian Studies at the University of Chicago (CEAS), IRNA reported.

The Achaemenid tablets dating to the sixth century BC are among the most important works of Iranian art and history. They contain vital insights into road resource management, social relations, basic necessities of life, wages, and the economy of Achaemenid society.

The tablets, inscribed in cuneiform, Elamite, and Aramaic languages, provide a unique window into the world of one of the most powerful empires in history. They are mainly about the management of natural resources, roads, social relations, basic necessities of life, wages and the economy of the Achaemenid society during the rule of Darius I, commonly known as Darius the Great.

The Achaemenid Empire was the largest of the empires of the ancient Near East and extended from the Balkans and Egypt to India and Central Asia.

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK



## Israel, Supporters Biggest Terrorists in World

TEHRAN - President Masoud Pezeshkian says Israel and its allies are the "biggest terrorists" in the world as they are killing the innocent Palestinian and Lebanese people.

He made the remarks on Thursday at the end of his three-day visit to New York, where he attended the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly and held talks with officials from more than 15 countries.

Pezeshkian told reporters that most of his meetings focused on Israel's ongoing aggressions against the Gaza Strip and Lebanon.

"Israel and those backing it unfairly preach about human rights and claim that they are opposed to terrorism," he said.

"[However,] the Zionist regime and its supporters are the biggest terrorists, because they easily use their tools and power to bomb the innocent in Gaza and Lebanon, and destroy their homes. They have closed the roads and do not allow water, food and medicines to reach the people."

During his visit to New York, Pezeshkian met with Iranians residing in the US and members of the media, and had two interviews with American media.

Earlier Pezeshkian said his administration seeks to pursue political and economic diplomacy with the world from the West to the East, from New York to Samarkand.

"As promised, we will interact with the East and the West based on national interests," Pezeshkian said in a post on his X account on Thursday.

Pezeshkian, who was in the United States to take part in the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly, added that in line with such a policy and simultaneous with his meetings and those of Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi in New York, negotiations were underway in Uzbekistan between Iran's minister of economy and authorities from Asian countries.

He noted that Iran's Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref will also travel to Pakistan and Armenia in the coming days as part of that policy, and expressed hope that the visits will have results that will benefit the Iranian people's livelihood.

During his three-day stay in New York, the Iranian president delivered two separate speeches to the annual session of the General Assembly and the session on "Strengthening the United Nations Goals."

He also met with authorities from more than 15 countries and discussed the latest developments in the region, particularly Israel's genocidal war in the Gaza Strip and its aggression against Lebanon.

The president also had meetings with Iranian nationals living in the US and political elites, the "Group of Elders" - a group of world leaders that formed at the beginning of the 21st century in order to address global human rights issues and abuses -- as well as leaders of divine religions and American think tankers and a meeting with senior managers of American media outlets among others.

## Region on Brink of All-Out Catastrophe Amid Western Support for Israeli Atrocities

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's foreign minister warns that the West Asia region is on "the brink of an all-out catastrophe" due to the US and some other Western countries' support for Israeli atrocities across the region and the UN Security Council's inaction.

Abbas Araqchi made the remarks in New York on Wednesday during a press conference held on the sidelines of the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

"The United States and some [other] Western countries' unconditional support has emboldened the Israeli regime to resort to atrocity without punishment," he said.

"This impunity, alongside the Security Council's inaction, has put the region in the direction of catastrophe," the top diplomat added.

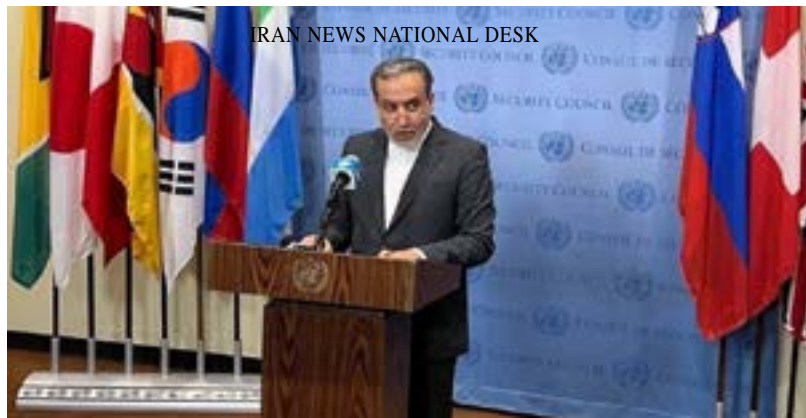
Failure to prevent realization of this unwelcome prospect "will prompt the world to face catastrophic consequences, the likes of which have not been witnessed before," Araqchi said.

He cited the cases of the regime's ongoing genocidal war on the Gaza Strip and escalated deadly attacks on Lebanon.

Since its onset on October 7, the war has claimed the lives of at least 41,495 Palestinians, mostly women and children, wounded around 93,000 others, and destroyed the entirety of the Palestinian territory's vital infrastructures.

The escalation against Lebanon, which began following the launch of the brutal military onslaught, has witnessed the regime carrying out countless attacks against the Lebanese territory, killing hundreds of people over the past week alone.

"The Israeli regime has already turned Gaza into the 'hell on earth' through its campaign of genocide," Araqchi said, citing a senior UN official's remarks concerning the situation in the coastal sliver.



"Now, the regime is repeating its crimes in Lebanon," he remarked, saying the situation in the country had become "worrying to an unprecedented degree."

The official described the regime as "wayward and aggressive," saying it had crossed all the red lines.

"The international laws, human rights, and peace mean nothing to this terrorist regime," he observed, saying the regime's ultimate goal lied in "setting the entire region on fire."

Araqchi noted that the Islamic Republic had repeatedly warned

about the fallout from the regime's roguish actions, saying the international community could not ignore the US and its allies' role in enabling the regime to perpetrate its crimes.

"The Israeli rulers have to understand that their atrocities will not go unanswered," he said, and added that "history will hold the regime's backers, especially the United States, accountable [for these crimes]."

Araqchi strongly advised the Security Council to intervene towards stopping the regime's aggression, asserting, "The path towards de-escalation is clear. The Israeli regime has to immediately cease its attacks on Gaza and Lebanon."

He reasserted the Islamic Republic's decisive support for the Lebanese government, resistance, and people in the face of the Israeli aggression.

"We have always stated this that we support [Lebanon's] Hezbollah [resistance movement] in its [efforts to put up] legitimate defense of Lebanon and its people against the Israeli regime's atrocities and occupation."

Araqchi, meanwhile, noted that the Islamic Republic had so far observed "extraordinary patience and self-restraint" towards preserving the regional peace and security, but cautioned that the country would resolutely stand on its inherent right to defend its vital interests if need be

### UNSC Turning Into Political Tool, Its Silence Is Deafening



TEHRAN (PressTV) - A senior Iranian diplomat has strongly criticized the United Nations Security Council for inaction regarding Israel's crimes in Palestine and Lebanon, saying the world body's silence is deafening.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Kazem Gharibabadi made the statement in an address to the open debate of the UN Security Council on "Leadership for Peace: United in Respect of the UN Charter in Search of a Secure Future" in New York on Wednesday.

"The Security Council regrettably has become a tool in the hands of certain permanent members who prioritize their political and strategic interests over global peace," he said.

"The Security Council's silence is deafening. It sends a dangerous message to the innocent victims of this war and the international community," he added.

He emphasized that the United States has repeatedly used its veto power to shield Israel from accountability for its ongoing acts of genocide and ethnic cleansing of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and now in Lebanon.

"Our world stands at a critical juncture. We are facing the most conflicts [of any time] since the Cold War, marked by a staggering increase in civilian casualties, especially among women, children and humanitarian workers," the Iranian diplomat said.

He expressed concern over violation of the international law and the principles of the United Nations Charter.

Impunity for gross violation of international law, especially international humanitarian law, is becoming the norm, he regretted.

Gharibabadi described the situation in Gaza as a "collective failure" to uphold international peace and security, saying, "We are witnessing an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe."

He quoted a senior United Nations official as saying that Gaza has become the "hell on earth" and said the reports about the casualties are horrifying.

### Muslim Countries Urged to Sever Ties With Israel, Expel Its Envoys



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iran's Defense Minister Brigadier General Aziz Nasirzadeh urges the governments of Muslim countries to cut off diplomatic relations with Israel, expel its ambassadors and impose sanctions on the regime.

"Muslim states should not merely suffice to denunciation of Israeli crimes. They are rather required to put pressure on the regime to stop its genocide and prepare the ground for its collapse by severing political relations with the regime, expelling its ambassadors and ending mutual economic relations," he said.

Nasirzadeh also underlined the need for Muslim countries and freedom-loving nations of the world to implement deterrent measures against the brutalities of the Zionist regime.

"Zionist usurpers are gravely mistaken to think that acts of terror can destroy the resistance front, as the spirit of resistance has defeated the Zionist regime. The idea of jihad and resistance will never be obliterated through bombs and mass killings," he said.

Nasirzadeh made the remarks on Thursday as he visited many wounded victims of the recent Israeli terrorist attack in Lebanon, who have been transferred to Iranian hospitals for medical treatment.

Nasirzadeh said the idea of resistance and steadfastness against oppressors derives from Islamic teachings and has its roots in the Holy Qur'an.

"According to the divine promise in the Holy Qur'an, we must resist oppression and oppressors, including Zionists. This movement will continue until complete destruction of the regime," he said.

The Iranian defense minister said anti-human acts are expected to be committed only by the Zionist regime with the support of the United States and Europe.

"One is bewildered how the world order that the West is propagating has resulted in genocide and damage to civilians," he said.

Nasirzadeh touched on Israel's use of communication devices for terrorist attacks.



# IRAN NEWS



## First Geothermal Power Plant in Mideast to Be Inaugurated by Yearend

TEHRAN - Mehran Golabkesh, Deputy and Vice President of Development Projects at the Thermal Power Generation Company, stated during a visit to the project that approximately 30 trillion rials (about \$300 million) has been invested so far in the construction of this power plant. He added that this project is being implemented as a pilot on a geothermal reservoir with a capacity to produce around 250 megawatts of electricity.

He highlighted that the project is 93% complete and said that for the exploration and extraction of the geothermal resources, several wells have been drilled to a depth of about 3,000 meters, with a production capacity of 30 megawatts. In the first phase, 5 megawatts of this capacity will soon be connected to the grid.

The Deputy of Development Projects at the Thermal Power Generation Company emphasized that the execution of this project has enabled the country to acquire knowledge in the exploration, design, execution, and operation of geothermal resources. He added that the goal is to expand geothermal energy as a clean and sustainable energy source and boost economic growth in the region by attracting tourism.

## S. Korean Company Keen to Finance \$6b in Iran's Construction Industry



TEHRAN - Head of the Research Center of Roads, Housing, and Urban Development Mohammad Mehdi Heidari, in a specialized meeting on steel structures, emphasized the importance of ranking steel structure manufacturers. He stated, "One of our policies at the Research Center of Roads, Housing, and Urban Development is to improve construction quality. By ranking manufacturers, we can play an important role in achieving this goal."

He continued, "We already have experience in ranking manufacturers in the bitumen sector. In the bitumen market, only producers approved by the Research Center are allowed to operate. We are now pursuing the same policy for steel structures to enhance their quality. This will also help prevent substandard products from entering the market, as non-certified products will be differentiated from approved ones."

The head of the Research Center of Roads, Housing, and Urban Development stressed, "In the National Housing Movement project, regardless of the number of units we build, we don't face a lack of technical knowledge. However, the financial model of the project is crucial, and we hope to utilize the capabilities of steel companies in this regard."

Also, during this meeting, Ahmad Karami Rad, a board member of the Association of Steel Structure Manufacturers of Iran, stated, "The financial turnover of this industry is \$2 billion. In the 1990s and 2000s, all steel structures for oil projects were built by foreign companies, but today, no metal structure for oil projects is imported, and we are now self-sufficient in producing steel and metal structures."

He added, "Today, we have achieved self-sufficiency in producing metal structures in four ministries. The ninth and tenth phases of the South Pars project, which were previously built by Chinese and Korean companies, are now entirely Iranian. We also supply all the steel needed by the Ministry of Industry, which accounts for 38% of the country's economy."

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK



## High Capacity of Iranian Companies for Cooperation in Tajikistan's Energy Sector

TEHRAN - Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad, in a meeting with Daler Juma, Tajikistan's Minister of Energy and Water Resources, highlighted the cultural, linguistic, civilizational, and historical commonalities between Iran and Tajikistan. He said, "The development of economic relations, especially in the energy sector, with the friendly and brotherly country of Tajikistan holds a special place for us and is of great importance."

Paknejad noted that significant steps have already been taken to enhance economic relations between the two countries and expressed hope that these efforts would be strengthened under the 14th administration.

The Iranian Oil Minister emphasized Iran's strong potential to enter Tajikistan's energy market, stating that Iranian exploration and production (E&P) companies are ready to participate in the oil and gas market of this Central Asian country.

During the meeting, Tajikistan's Minister of Energy and Water Resources also stressed his country's keen interest in expanding economic cooperation, particularly in the purchase of oil and gas. He mentioned that the trade volume between Iran and Tajikistan reached \$300 million in 2023 and is expected to grow by 60% this year.

Daler Juma highlighted that initiating crude oil and petroleum product

trade between the two nations could potentially double their trade volume. He expressed hope that during the upcoming visit of the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Tajikistan, the groundwork for expanding oil and gas trade with Iran would be laid.

He further pointed out that a significant portion of Tajikistan's daily crude oil and petroleum product needs is met through imports. Currently, Tajikistan operates two oil refineries with a combined refining capacity of 500,000 tons per year to ensure its energy security.

The minister expressed his country's interest in having Iranian companies play an active role in Tajikistan's domestic market.

Daler Juma also thanked Iran's Ministry of Oil for its cooperation in training specialists in Tajikistan's oil and gas industry and requested further assistance in organizing advanced training courses. He additionally called for the use of Iranian knowledge-based companies for the exploration, development, and production of Tajikistan's oil and gas fields.

At the end of the meeting, the Tajik minister formally invited the Iranian Oil Minister and Iranian oil industry experts to visit Tajikistan.

In conclusion, Iran's Oil Minister reaffirmed maximum cooperation and assistance with Tajikistan's Ministry of Energy and Water Resources.

## Iran's Agricultural Products Have a Good Market in Bangladesh

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK



TEHRAN - The 86th meeting of the Government-Private Sector Dialogue Council of Zanjan Province was held to discuss the requirements for developing trade relations with Bangladesh, aiming to implement the province's foreign trade roadmap. The meeting took place at the Zanjan Chamber of Commerce with the participation of Manjurul Karim Khan Chowdhury, the Ambassador of Bangladesh in Tehran, along with various government officials and economic activists.

At the meeting, the President of the Zanjan Chamber highlighted two active industries in the province, Iran Transfo and Pars Switch, as key players in the electricity sector. He emphasized that these companies have significantly contributed to Zanjan becoming a major hub for the electricity industry.

He also mentioned the large textile factories in Zanjan, noting that the province holds a special position in the textile industry at the national level, making it one of the province's key strategic value chains.

Yousefi Asl stressed that Zanjan has a long-standing history in the copper industry and boasts strong businesses in this sector. Copper is one of the most important metals found in Zanjan, widely used in various industries, with its handicrafts also enjoying a favorable market.

He further added that the zinc industry has also flourished in Zanjan, with 90% of zinc producers based in the province.

The President of the Zanjan Chamber noted that a significant portion of the country's olive production comes from the Tarom region of Zanjan. Additionally, the cities of Qeydar and Mahnesan are recognized for their production of wheat, legumes, and rainbow trout.

In the field of handicrafts, he pointed out that Zanjan has skilled artisans in knife-making. He also noted that the city's well-known silver filigree craft, supported by skilled labor and appealing products, has led Zanjan to be recognized globally as a "world city of filigree."

During the meeting, Manjurul Karim Khan Chowdhury, the Ambassador of Bangladesh in Tehran, stated that Iran produces

excellent agricultural products, and there is a good market for them in Bangladesh. However, due to insufficient connections between traders and economic players, only a small quantity of these products currently reaches Bangladesh.

He emphasized the need to establish a mechanism and system for financial interactions, noting that the role of governments in this area is crucial, while private-sector economic players must work to foster partnerships and commercial interactions.

The Bangladeshi ambassador said that Iran's current trade volume with Bangladesh is about \$100 million annually, but there is potential to increase it to over \$1 billion.

He emphasized the importance of greater recognition and interaction between the economic players of both countries, adding that Bangladesh is active in the pharmaceutical and textile sectors and imports various chemical, petrochemical, and cement products from Iran.

Karim Khan Chowdhury also mentioned that some mineral stones from Zanjan are exported to Bangladesh and noted that both Iranian and Bangladeshi economic players are well aware of each other's market opportunities.

Referring to the geographic proximity of the two countries, he highlighted that the traders understand each other's needs well, emphasizing the importance of strengthening bilateral relations.

Mohsen Afsharchi, the Governor of Zanjan, also highlighted the province's industrial, agricultural, academic, and scientific capabilities, stating that Zanjan holds an exceptional position in various economic sectors in the country.

He further remarked that these capacities have facilitated greater cooperation with foreign countries and stressed the need to utilize these capabilities to enhance collaboration.

Afsharchi identified the lack of a direct route between Iran and Bangladesh as one of the challenges in fostering cooperation, explaining that shipping and handling at ports increase costs, and there is a need to find suitable solutions for this issue.

## Construction of 10,000 Housing Units in Venezuela by Iranians

By: F. Taherpoor



TEHRAN - Iraj Rahbar, the head of Tehran's Mass Builders Association, referred to the unsuccessful entry of contracting companies and mass builders into Sulaymaniyah, Iraq. He stated, "Although the Sulaymaniyah market initially seemed promising for exporting technical and engineering services and construction, later developments led Iranian companies to abandon even their machinery in the region and return to the country."

He continued, "In Sulaymaniyah, the payments owed to Iranian companies were not collected, and excuses were made for not paying the claims to Iranian contractors. As a result, Iranian companies faced non-payment and, in some cases, abandoned their machinery."

The head of the Mass Builders Association emphasized that exporting technical and engineering services requires agreements between governments and the provision of guarantees. He said, "Participating in foreign projects carries a very high risk for the private sector, and sometimes Iran's position is exploited."

Rahbar added that currently, the prices in markets like Iraq and Sulaymaniyah are not attractive, and the figures offered are not economically viable for the private sector. "During the ninth and tenth administrations, Chinese companies in Sulaymaniyah were offered \$350 to \$400 per square meter for construction, but now Iranian companies are being offered \$250 per square meter, which is not economically feasible. These countries are essentially taking advantage of Iran's position."

Regarding the entry of Iranian companies into the Venezuelan market, Rahbar stated, "The export of technical and engineering services and the entry of mass construction companies into Venezuela began during Ahmadinejad's administration. In the first phase, 3,000 housing units were built by Iranians in the country. Later, another consortium joined, and ultimately, Iranians constructed 10,000 housing units in Venezuela."

He continued, "In the beginning, the Venezuelan market was very favorable, and payments were made in dollars. However, now dollar payments have stopped, and they are paying in their national currency, which Iranian companies need to convert into dollars in Venezuela, making it economically unviable. As a result, housing projects have not continued."

Rahbar also mentioned the considerable distance between Iran and Venezuela, which made the project more difficult and costly for companies. Despite this, the 10,000-unit housing project was completed using Iranian building materials, which were exported to Venezuela, and even management-level personnel were sent there. However, in Sulaymaniyah, due to the neighboring relationship between the two countries, both the labor force and construction workers migrated to the region.

## Traders' Dissatisfaction With the Ongoing Rice Import Ban



TEHRAN - Amanollah Kohrazhi, a member of the board of directors of the Iran-Pakistan Chamber of Commerce, in response to question about the reason for the few-day halt of Iranian trucks at the Rimdan border in Pakistan, explained: This stoppage was due to an internal dispute in Pakistan's Balochistan province. The story is as follows: Pakistan's militia (law enforcement) prevented the transport of diesel between this province and another, which provoked the protest of the people. They went on strike and blocked the movement of any goods between the two provinces. The protesters demonstrated by creating roadblocks and burning tires.

He added: Eventually, with the intervention of the Pakistan army, the protesters were called to calm, and the army also prevented the entry of trucks carrying commercial goods from the Rimdan border near Balochistan province to avoid damage to the trucks and their cargo during the unrest.



## Loading, Unloading of 115m Tons of Goods in Ports

TEHRAN - During the first six months of the current year, the amount of oil goods unloaded at the proprietary and sovereign ports of the Ports and Maritime Organization reached 13,422,224 tons, the amount of non-oil goods unloaded reached 25,291,342 tons, and the total amount of oil and non-oil goods unloaded was 39,376,566 tons.

The amount of oil goods loaded at the proprietary and sovereign ports of the Ports and Maritime Organization in the first half of this year amounted to 38,897,207 tons, the amount of non-oil goods loaded was 36,248,567 tons, and the total amount of oil and non-oil goods loaded was 75,145,775 tons.

The total oil goods loaded and unloaded during the first six months of 1403 (Persian year) was 52,339,431 tons, and the total non-oil goods loaded and unloaded was 62,182,909 tons. Furthermore, the total amount of oil and non-oil goods loaded and unloaded during this period was 114,522,341 tons.

In the container operation sector, 1,544,160 TEU was handled in the first six months of this year, showing a 15% increase compared to the same period last year when 1,344,236 TEU was handled.



## Musk Hits Out at Britain After Reported Summit Snub

LONDON (Dispatches) - Elon Musk hit back at Britain on Thursday after reports that he had not been invited to the country's upcoming investment summit, alleging the government was releasing convicted paedophiles while imprisoning people over social media posts.

The BBC reported that the U.S. billionaire had not been invited to the summit next month after his posts on his X platform regarding the violent, racist anti-immigration riots in Britain last month.

Britain's Department for Business and Trade and the Treasury did not respond to requests for comment on either the BBC report or Musk's response.

"I don't think anyone should go to the UK when they're releasing convicted pedophiles in order to imprison people for social media posts," Musk said on X in response to a post on the BBC report.

More than 1,700 prisoners were released early this month in an effort by Prime Minister Keir Starmer's Labour government to tackle overcrowding in prisons in England and Wales. Those serving sentences for sex offences were not included in the scheme.



## Ishiba, Takaichi Face Off in Japan Ruling Party Vote for Next PM



TOKYO (Dispatches) - A seasoned defense geek and a nationalist who would be Japan's first woman prime minister will go head-to-head in the final round of a ruling party leadership vote on Friday, the official count showed.

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) lawmakers and party members will choose between former defence minister Shigeru Ishiba and hawkish Sanae Takaichi -- a rare prominent woman in Japanese politics -- as the country's next premier.

Whoever wins must face down regional security threats, from an increasingly assertive China and its deepening 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.

Ishiba, 67, has come close to the top job before, including in 2012 when he lost to nationalist Shinzo Abe, Japan's longest-serving leader who was later assassinated.

The military model-maker with an affinity for 1970s pop idols says his experience tackling tough social issues, such as agriculture reforms, makes him qualified for the job.

As scandals fuel public discontent with the LDP, "the tide is in favour of Ishiba and his 'fair and square' attitude," said Yu Uchiyama, a University of Tokyo politics professor.

Economic Security Minister Takaichi, 63, is a former Abe mentee opposed to changing the law to allow separate surnames for married couples.

She regularly visits Tokyo's Yasukuni war shrine, a flashpoint in relations with South Korea and China.

"Japan is completely looked down on by China," she told Fuji Television when asked about the first confirmed incursion by a Chinese military aircraft into Japan's airspace, which happened in August.

Naofumi Fujimura, a professor at Kobe University's Graduate School of Law, said that while Takaichi currently needs the support of the LDP's right-wingers, she could prove "more centrist, or more pragmatic" as prime minister.

## Israel Rejects U.S.-Backed Lebanon Ceasefire Plan, Hits Beirut Again



BEIRUT (Dispatches) - Israel rejected global calls on Thursday for a ceasefire with the Hezbollah movement, defying its biggest ally in Washington and pressing ahead with strikes that have killed hundreds in Lebanon and heightened fears of an all-out regional war.

Despite Israel's stance, the U.S. and France sought to keep prospects alive for an immediate 21-day truce they proposed on Wednesday, and said negotiations continued, including on the sidelines of a United Nations meeting in New York.

An Israeli warplane struck the edges of the capital Beirut, killing two people and wounding 15, including a woman in critical condition, Lebanon's health ministry said. That took deaths overnight and on Thursday to 28 and over 600 since Monday.

The strike killed the head of one of Hezbollah's air force units, Mohammad Surur, Hezbollah said, the latest senior Hezbollah commander to be targeted in days of assassinations among the group's top ranks.

On the Israeli side of the border with Lebanon, the army staged an exercise simulating a ground invasion - a potential next stage after relentless airstrikes and explosions of communications devices.

Israel's air force is planning to assist troops in the event of a ground operation and will stop any arms transfers from Iran, Air Force Commander Major General Tomer Bar said late on Thursday.

"We are preparing shoulder to shoulder with Northern Command for a ground maneuver. Prepared, if activated. This is a decision to be made above us," he told soldiers in a video distributed by the Israeli military.

Israel has vowed to secure its north and return thousands of citizens who have evacuated since Hezbollah launched a campaign of cross-border strikes last year in solidarity with Palestinian militants fighting in Gaza.

Arriving in New York before addressing the U.N. General Assembly on Friday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told reporters the military will keep hitting Hezbollah with "full force and we will not stop until we achieve all our goals, first and foremost returning the residents of the north safely to their homes."

Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz said on X, "There will be no ceasefire in the north."

Israel's stance dashed hopes for a swift settlement and Lebanese Foreign Minister Abdallah Bou Habib appealed to the U.N. to win an immediate ceasefire "before the situation spirals out of control, with a domino effect, making this crisis

impossible to contain."

"Lebanon is currently enduring a crisis which is threatening its very existence," Bou Habib said at a meeting of the U.N. General Assembly late on Thursday.

White House spokesperson John Kirby told a briefing earlier that Israel had been "fully informed and fully aware of every word" in the ceasefire proposal and allies expected it would be taken seriously. The U.S. is Israel's longtime ally and biggest arms supplier.

French President Emmanuel Macron said he did not believe Israel's rejection was definitive. "It would be a mistake by the prime minister to refuse it because he would be taking responsibility for regional escalation," Macron told reporters in Canada.

"We will do everything to ensure this proposal is accepted," Macron said, adding that France was ready to call a new U.N. Security Council meeting to endorse the proposal.

Hundreds of thousands of people have fled their homes during the heaviest Israeli bombardment of Lebanon since a major war in 2006.

The White House said that U.S. and Israeli officials, including U.S. Mideast envoy Brett McGurk, were holding discussions. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken planned to meet with Israeli Minister for Strategic Affairs Ron Dermer.

In London, U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin warned there was a risk of all-out war in the Middle East, but a diplomatic solution was still possible.

"So let me be clear, Israel and Lebanon can choose a different path, despite the sharp escalation in recent days, a diplomatic solution is still viable," Austin said.

Hezbollah has fired hundreds of missiles at targets in Israel, including its commercial hub Tel Aviv, although Israel's aerial defense system has ensured the damage has been limited.

## Russian Missiles and Drones Target Kyiv for 5 Hours

KYIV (Dispatches) - Ukraine's air defenses battled an overnight Russian aerial attack on the capital Kyiv for five hours, officials said Thursday, as missiles and drones again hammered the Ukrainian power grid.

The Kyiv attack injured at least two people, Ukraine's Emergency Service said. A kindergarten, a gas pipe and around 20 cars were damaged in the city, said the Kyiv Military Administration.

In western Ukraine, the air force said, Russia fired three Kinzhal hypersonic ballistic missiles — one of Russia's most advanced weapons — "in the direction of" Starokostiantyniv, a city in the Khmelnytskyi region, on Thursday morning. The air force said it could not make further information public, suggesting the missiles were aimed at a sensitive site.

Long-range strikes have been a hallmark of Russia's military campaign in Ukraine, now deep in its third year, often hitting civilian areas. Attacks on the electricity network have knocked out around 70% of Ukraine's energy generation capacity, according to the United Nations, bringing blackouts as winter approaches.

Air defense systems are a critical need for Ukraine, and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy was due to meet President Joe Biden in Washington on Thursday in an effort to ensure continuing U.S. military support for his country.

## Armenia Says Peace With Azerbaijan Within Reach

YEREVAN (Dispatches) - Armenia says peace with Azerbaijan is 'within reach', according to its prime minister Nikol Pashinyan. He made the comments during his address to the United Nations General Assembly in New York on Thursday.

Armenia's prime minister said Thursday that peace with Azerbaijan was "within reach," appealing to his neighbor to sign a treaty to turn the page on decades of conflict.

Exactly a year after Azerbaijan triumphed in a lightning military offensive, Armenia promised to meet a key demand of its historic rival: to ensure travel links.

"Today I want to say that peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan not only is possible, but is within reach," Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said in an address to the United Nations General Assembly.

"All we need to do is reach out and take it," he said.

"The pain is very deep and intense, but we must now focus on peace, because peace is the only truth understandable to the people of Armenia and Azerbaijan," he said.

The two former Soviet republics had seen decades of war and tension over Nagorno-Karabakh, a breakaway ethnic Armenian region in Azerbaijan.

After a series of slow-moving negotiations, Azerbaijan rushed in troops last year and swiftly seized back Nagorno-Karabakh, whose entire population of nearly 120,000 people fled to Armenia.

Facing a weaker hand and the lack of intervention by Armenia's historic ally Russia, Pashinyan has insisted on the need for peace but faced protests from nationalists opposed to compromise.

In his UN address, Pashinyan said he was ready to meet the Baku government's key demand of allowing transportation access across Armenian soil to the exclave of Nakhchivan, letting Azerbaijan connect its main territory with its traditional ally Turkey.

"The Republic of Armenia is ready to fully ensure the safety



of the passage of cargo vehicles and people on its territory. It is our wish, our commitment, and we can do it," Pashinyan said, saying it could become a "crossroads of peace."

Another key sticking point is Azerbaijan's objections to a section of the Armenian constitution that speaks of uniting with Nagorno-Karabakh.

Pashinyan said that Armenia had its own issues with Azerbaijan's constitution but that it did not see any obstacle as a peace agreement "solves the problem."

Azerbaijan and Armenia both say that 80 percent of a treaty is ready, including border delineation, but Azerbaijan first wants a resolution of all issues.

Some diplomats view Azerbaijani strongman Ilham Aliyev's stance as cynical, considering the difficulty that Pashinyan would have in changing the constitution.

The diplomats say Azerbaijan believes it can afford to wait as it has the clear upper hand, with its wealth from gas, a modernized military bolstered by Turkish weapons, and a rising international profile, with Baku in November the host of the COP29 climate summit.

Pashinyan insisted that Azerbaijan and Armenia should sign the draft treaty immediately, explaining, "There is no precedent of a peace agreement or any agreement that would regulate and solve everything."

A treaty and diplomatic relations would improve "the overall atmosphere" between the two countries, which will "significantly facilitate the solution of the remaining issues," Pashinyan said.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken met the two countries' foreign ministers on Thursday in New York.

Blinken "encouraged continued progress by both countries to finalize an agreement as soon as possible," State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said.

## Chinese Nuclear-Powered Submarine Sank This Year

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - China's newest nuclear-powered attack submarine sank earlier this year, a senior U.S. defense official said on Thursday, a potential embarrassment for Beijing as it seeks to expand its military capabilities.

China already has the largest navy in the world, with over 370 ships, and it has embarked on production of a new generation of nuclear-armed submarines.

A senior U.S. defense official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said China's new first-in-class nuclear-powered attack submarine sank alongside a pier sometime between May and June.

A Chinese embassy spokesperson in Washington said they had no information to provide.

"We are not familiar with the situation you mentioned and currently have no information to provide," the Chinese official said.

The official said it was not clear what caused it to sink or whether it had nuclear fuel on board at the time.

"In addition to the obvious questions about training standards and equipment quality, the incident raises deeper questions about the PLA's internal accountability and oversight of China's defense industry - which has long been plagued by corruption," the official said, using an acronym for the People's Liberation Army.

"It's not surprising that the PLA Navy would try to conceal" the sinking, the official added.

Speaking in Taipei on Friday, Taiwan Defence Minister Wellington Koo



said authorities "have a grasp of the situation through multiple intelligence and surveillance methods", but did not elaborate.

Taiwan, which China views as its own territory, keeps a close watch on the latter's military activities. In June, pictures appeared online of a Chinese nuclear submarine surfacing in the Taiwan Strait near Taiwan fishermen.

The Chinese submarine news was first reported by the Wall Street Journal.

A series of satellite images from Planet Labs from June appear to show cranes at the Wuchang shipyard, where the submarine would have been docked.

As of 2022, China had six nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines, six nuclear-powered attack submarines and 48 diesel-powered attack submarines, according to a Pentagon report on China's military. That submarine force is expected to grow to 65 by 2025 and 80 by 2035, the U.S. Defense Department has said.

On Wednesday, China said it had successfully conducted a rare launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile into the Pacific Ocean, a move likely to raise international concerns about the country's nuclear buildup.

The United States and China held theater-level commander talks for the first time earlier this month, amid efforts to stabilize military ties and avoid misunderstandings, especially in regional hot spots such as the South China Sea.





## Ten-Man Spurs Cruise in Europa League Opener

LONDON (Dispatches) - Tottenham started their Europa League campaign with a 3-0 win against Qarabag despite playing more than 80 minutes with 10 men, but Son Heung-min gave the north Londoners an injury scare on Thursday.

Radu Dragusin's early dismissal was no obstacle for Ange Postecoglou's side, who cruised to victory at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium thanks to goals from Brennan Johnson, Pape Sarr and Dominic Solanke.

However, the sight of South Korea forward Son being forced off in the 70th minute will be concerning for Postecoglou, who cannot afford to be without his talismanic captain for a long period.

"He said he was a bit tired but I haven't spoken to him or the medical staff yet," Postecoglou said.

With a healthy Son, the Europa League could offer a path to silverware for Postecoglou, who boasts that he always enjoys success in his second season as he seeks to end a Tottenham trophy drought dating back to 2008.

Sterners tests await Tottenham but they delivered a confident opener, once the game -- delayed for 37 minutes after Qarabag were caught in heavy traffic -- finally got underway.

"I wasn't happy as I felt we started really sloppy. It was almost like the delay got to us," Postecoglou said.

"The reaction after the red card was good. We kept pressing high."

Tottenham weren't fazed by being reduced to 10 men after just eight minutes when Romania defender Dragusin was sent off for pulling down Juninho as he raced through on goal.

They took the lead in the 12th minute through Johnson's third goal in his last three games.

Qarabag conceded possession cheaply deep inside their own half and Solanke teed up Johnson for a composed finish from 10 yards.

Sarr volleyed Tottenham's second from six yards after Qarabag keeper Mateusz Kochalski made a hash

of catching a 52nd-minute corner.

Yves Bissouma's foul on Elvin Cafarguliyev gave Qarabag a penalty four minutes later, but Toral Bayramov blazed the spot-kick over.

Solanke wrapped up the win in the 68th minute, slotting home to claim his second goal since his club record move from Bournemouth in the close season.

Fuming about his team's transport issues, Qarabag manager Gurban Gurbanov said: "Imagine being caught in traffic for more than two and a half hours. There was no police to escort us."

"As soon as we arrived, we were told to start in 40 minutes. These things shouldn't happen."

Troubled Roma were held to a 1-1 draw by Athletic Bilbao after conceding a late equaliser at the Stadio Olimpico.

Roma fans were furious with the club's recent decision to sack boss Daniele De Rossi, an iconic figure during his time as a Giallorossi player, just four games into the season.

Given the unenviable task of replacing De Rossi, Ivan Juric inspired a 3-0 win against Udinese last weekend, but he was denied a second successive victory.

Artem Dovbyk put Roma in front after 32 minutes as the Ukrainian made it three goals in his last three games for his new club with a thumping header from Angelino's cross.

But Aitor Paredes headed Bilbao's equaliser after Unai Nunez nodded across goal in the 85th minute.

Jose Mourinho's Fenerbahce beat Union Saint-Gilloise 2-1 as the Portuguese boss started his bid to win the tournament for the third time in his career.

## Alcaraz Hopes Davis Cup Will Not Be Nadal's Last Dance



MADRID (Dispatches) - Carlos Alcaraz welcomed the addition of Rafa Nadal to Spain's Davis Cup team for the quarter-finals in November and hoped the event in Malaga will not mark the end of the 22-times Grand Slam champion's career.

Nadal was a surprise choice for the Nov. 19-24 Final 8. The 38-year-old last competed at the Paris Olympics in July and subsequently missed the U.S. Open and the Laver Cup this month over fitness concerns.

Nadal has said he expects to end his injury-plagued career this year after a hip injury that required surgery limited his appearances in 2023, and there has been speculation the Davis Cup could be his last event.

"It's always great having Rafa around. I miss him. I'm not going to lie, I missed him in the Laver Cup. Obviously, as much time as I can spend with him, it's a privilege for me," said Alcaraz, who partnered Nadal in doubles at the Paris Games.

"I don't want to think that it's a potential last dance for him in Malaga. I just want to ... enjoy seeing him on court as much as I can."

"It's great support having him in the team. He can bring a lot of experience to the Davis Cup."

Nadal had targeted a return at the Laver Cup before eventually withdrawing and the Spaniard has not said where he plans to play before the Davis Cup.

Alcaraz, who was stunned by unseeded Dutchman Botic van de Zandschulp in the second round of the U.S. Open, said guiding Team Europe to victory in the Laver Cup was the perfect preparation for the China Open, which begins on Thursday.

## Cowboys Halt Skid With Victory Over Giants

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - The Dallas Cowboys snapped a two-game skid with a 20-15 victory over NFC East rivals the New York Giants on Thursday to improve to 2-2 early in the NFL season.

A trip to the Giants proved just what Dak Prescott and the Cowboys needed, with the quarterback guiding Dallas to a 13th straight win against their division foes.

Prescott threw for two touchdowns, connecting with running back Rico Dowdle on a 15-yard screen pass that put Dallas up 7-3 in the first quarter before hitting receiver CeeDee Lamb for a 55-yard catch and run TD in the second.

Lamb, who had apologized this week for a poor attitude in Sunday's loss to Baltimore, beat two defenders and coasted into the end zone, flexing his muscles in a celebration that drew a penalty for taunting.

Prescott connected on 22 of 27 passes, Lamb had seven catches for 98 yards and the Cowboys defense -- who surrendered three rushing touchdowns in their last two games and came into the contest in last place in rushing yards allowed per game -- didn't allow a touchdown.

Greg Joseph's five field goals accounted for all of



New York's scoring as the Giants saw their five scoring drives stall within the Cowboys' 35-yard line.

The Cowboys defense held the Giants to 26 rushing yards on 24 carries.

Brandon Aubrey booted two field goals for Dallas, including a 60-yarder in the third quarter that pushed the lead to 17-12.

He added a 40-yard field goal in the fourth to make it 20-15 but missed a 51-yard attempt in the final minute.

That gave the Giants a final chance with 28 seconds remaining, but Dallas defender Amani Oruwariye picked off a pass from Giants quarterback Daniel Jones in the waning seconds to end it.

Jones completed 29 of 40 passes for 281 yards. New York's rookie receiver Malik Nabers caught 12 passes for 115 yards but departed with less than four minutes remaining, reportedly due to a concussion.

The Cowboys saw defensive ends DeMarcus Lawrence and Micah Parsons exit early with injuries.

Lamb said the Cowboys had taken a hard look at themselves after dropping back-to-back home games.

## Ricciardo Thanks Fans for Wild Ride After RB Axing

SYSNEY (Dispatches) - Daniel Ricciardo thanked fans on Friday for a "wild and wonderful" Formula One journey after being axed by the RB team and replaced by New Zealand prodigy Liam Lawson for the rest of the 2024 season.

The 35-year-old's contract expired after the Singapore Grand Prix and he was dropped with six races to go, likely spelling the end of his long career in the sport.

"I've loved this sport my whole life. It's wild and wonderful and been a journey," he said following the team's announcement.

"To the teams and individuals that have played their part, thank you. To the fans who love the sport sometimes more than me, thank you."

"It'll always have its highs and lows but it's been fun and truth be told I wouldn't change it."

Lewis Hamilton and Max Verstappen led tributes to the Australian, who was one of the leading stars of the hit Netflix series 'Drive to Survive'.

"It's been an honour to compete with you over the years," seven-time world champion Hamilton said on Instagram.

"I'll never forget the battles, the laughs, and drinking out of your shoe. It was gross, but glad I got to do it with you bud. "There is so much more for you up ahead and I can't wait to see what you do next," he added. "Always here for you, man."

Hamilton's Mercedes teammate George Russell praised Ricciardo for his impact on F1.

"F1 won't be the same without you, mate. All the best on the next adventure."



Current world champion Verstappen added: "Head up mate! Many more beautiful moments to come," with tributes also coming from Charles Leclerc, Fernando Alonso, Oscar Piastri and Pierre Gasly, among others.

Red Bull chief Christian Horner said he had left "an indelible legacy" on the team.

"Thank you for the wins, smiles, songs (and I wish I could say the shoeys), you will always be a special part of the Red Bull Family," added Horner.

Ricciardo was one of the most popular drivers in the paddock, with an infectious smile and wicked sense of humour.

He spent 13 years on the grid, earning 32 podiums and eight victories from stints with Toro Rosso (later AlphaTauri and now RB), Red Bull, Renault and McLaren, scoring 1,329 points.

The self-styled "Honey Badger", he introduced Aussie culture, in the form of the "shoey", to the podium as he guzzled champagne from his sweaty racing boot after each of his wins.

After McLaren sacked him in 2022 in favour of Piastri, he made a return to the grid in the middle of last season with RB, with the rumour mill at one point suggesting he could rejoin Red Bull Racing as Verstappen's teammate.

But the results did not go his way.

Instead RB have opted for 22-year-old Lawson, who came in for five races last season when Ricciardo broke his wrist in a crash at the Dutch Grand Prix.

## Jota Takes His turn as Liverpool's Lead Man in Rout of West Ham



LONDON (Dispatches) - The new West Ham coach Julen Lopetegui is enduring the worst honeymoon period since the Bride of Frankenstein. Arne Slot, by contrast, must feel like he is already enjoying marital bliss at Liverpool.

For the stricken visitors this was another Hammer horror, Lopetegui struggling to prove he can advance his club without first suffering heavy wounds.

For Slot, the security of a squad brimming with talent means he can indulge a fruitful Anfield rotation policy and heap praise on a different striker following every match.

All the attention was on Mohamed Salah after Old Trafford, Cody Gakpo post-AC Milan, Luis Diaz every weekend this season and Darwin Nunez a few days ago. On this occasion, it was Diogo Jota, whose double gave the holders the platform to safely progress to face Brighton in the fourth round.

Federico Chiesa made his first start, too. Rusty, but showing enough promise to suggest when a yard sharper, full-backs will be fearful. Even half-fit, the Italian claimed an assist.

This is truly a billionaire's inheritance for Slot, such luxuries guaranteeing wholesale changes do not diminish his firepower.

Three goals a game is starting to look compulsory, Slot's side notching at least that total in successive fixtures in the past eight days to send a warning they can attack on all fronts. They could have had more than their five here, Salah and Gakpo inflicting late, brutal punishment.

"I constantly told you guys how many quality players we had and we showed today we have many," enthused Slot.

"What pleased me most is a lot of new players don't try to have a good individual performance they try to work hard for the team, there was a lot of desire to keep a clean sheet."

It must be emphasised the scoreline was tough, embellished by a Gakpo double once West Ham were reduced to 10 men following Edson Alvarez's second yellow card.

The late defensive capitulation aside, West Ham were much better than the side limping along in the Premier League and for 70 minutes were unfortunate to find Caoimhin Kelleher in the kind of form that makes it strange no clubs made a summer offer that could not be refused for his services.

But Liverpool have the capacity to switch gears and demolish, and there are few more accomplished finishers operating than their Portuguese striker.

The task for Slot is to achieve what Jurgen Klopp couldn't and keep him fit. Dig into the reasons why Liverpool could not sustain their title and European challenge at the end of last season, and many will trace the roots to an untimely Jota injury. How can that be avoided?

"Rotation," smiled Slot, well aware the first few games of his reign were dominated by questions about his minimal changes.