

Iran's New Foreign Ministry Spokesman Esmail Baghaei Has Condemned Israel's Measure to Declare the Secretary-General of the United Nations as Persona Non Grata

Iran Rejected "Baseless" U.S. Accusations That It Is Attempting to Influence the Upcoming Presidential Election, Saying Washington, Is "in No Position" to Make Such Claims Against Tehran

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### Iran Slams G7's "Irresponsible" Statement on Necessary Response to Israel



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has condemned the Group of Seven (G7)'s "biased and irresponsible" approach toward the developments in West Asia, including Tehran's "necessary response" to Israel's acts of aggression.

G7 leaders in a statement on Wednesday condemned Tehran's launch of more than 180 missiles at Tel Aviv in retaliation for Israel's assassination of Hamas and Hezbollah leaders and an Iranian military commander.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei "pointed to the definite responsibility of G7 countries, especially the US, in aggravating insecurity and instability in West Asia due to their armament, financial and political support of the aggressor".

He warned about the serious consequences of this approach on the peace and stability of the region and beyond.

"The recent missile operation by the Islamic Republic of Iran against a combination of military-intelligence targets of the Zionist regime was a necessary response to the acts of aggression by the occupying regime," Baghaei said.

The operation was "within the framework of the inherent right of legitimate self-defense", the spokesman said, condemning the use of threats and sanctions to put pressure on the Iranian nation.

Baghaei emphasized Iran's determination to protect the national security and the vital interests of the Iranian people in the region.

He also criticized the "irresponsible interventions of extra-regional actors, including the US, especially through continuing their all-out support for the Israeli occupation regime" which he described as the "main cause of instability in the West Asia region".

"If the Group of Seven is really concerned about the peace and security of the region, it should use its leverage to immediately end the Palestinian genocide and stop the aggression of the Zionist regime against Lebanon, Syria and other countries in the region," he said.

The Foreign Ministry on Thursday said it had summoned the German and Austrian ambassadors after Berlin and Vienna summoned Iran's representatives to protest the Islamic Republic's response to the Israeli assassinations.

Foreign Ministry summoned the heads of German and Austrian embassies to Tehran to protest the two countries' reaction to Tehran's retaliatory missile attack on the Israeli-occupied territories.

### Hezbollah Launches Barrages of Missiles at Haifa



BEIRUT (Dispatches) - Lebanon's Hezbollah resistance movement has launched barrages of missiles at Haifa in the northern part of occupied territories.

In a statement issued on Friday, Hezbollah said it fired missiles at Krayot, north of Haifa City, at 07:00 am local time.

The statement noted that that attack took place in solidarity with the Palestinian people who are subjected to a genocidal war in Gaza, and in retaliation for the Israeli strikes on Lebanon that claimed the lives of hundreds of civilians.

According to Israeli media, sirens were sounded in Haifa, Caesarea, the Western Galilee, the Lower Galilee, Acre (Akko) and Nahariya.

The resistance fighters also launched a barrage of missiles on mortar emplacements in southern Kiryat Shmona.

They also fired a missile at a Merkava tank in the vicinity of Malkiya post, leaving its crew members either killed or injured.

Also on Friday, Israel launched artillery strikes on Khiam Town, and the villages of Kafarkila and Odaisseh in southern Lebanon.

Israel drones also targeted an ambulance belonging to the Islamic Health Authority opposite the Marjayoun Government Hospital, causing casualties.

The regime's forces also carried out an airstrike on Masnaa crossing on the Syrian border, cutting off the main international road linking Lebanon with Syria.

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK



## Iran Will Neither Hesitate Nor Hurry to Perform Its Duties

TEHRAN - Hailing the Iranian Armed Forces for their recent legitimate missile attack on Israel, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei Iran will not either procrastinate or hurry to perform its duties.

Addressing the sermons of the Friday Prayer, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei called on Muslims to stay united together to enjoy the endless power of God. Ayatollah Khamenei also noted that creating division is the policy of the enemies.

According to the Quran, if Muslims get united, they can overcome the enemies, the Leader said, adding, "The enemy of the Iranian nation is the enemy of the Iraqi nation, the same enemy of the Lebanese nation, the same enemy of the Egyptian nation, the enemy of all of us is the same."

Referring to the Al-Aqsa storm operation, the Leader said that the operation was a legal and international move and the Palestinians were right.

Hailing the Iranian Armed Forces for their recent legitimate missile attack on Israeli military targets as a punishment for the Zionist regime, Leader of the Islamic Revolution said Iran will not either procrastinate or hurry to perform its duties.

Ayatollah Khamenei described Nasrallah "my brother, my dear and my pride, the beloved face of the Islamic world, and the eloquent language of the nations of the region, [and] the shining jewel of Lebanon".

"I felt it necessary to pay tribute to Mr. Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah (May God bless him and grant him peace) in the Friday prayer in Tehran, and to convey some notifications to everyone," the Leader said.

"We are all saddened and mourned by the martyrdom of Dear Sayyed. This is a great loss and we are deeply saddened, but our mourning does not mean depression, distress and despair.

"It is a kind of mourning for the Master of Martyrs Hussein ibn Ali. It is enlivening, instructive, motivating, and hopeful," the Leader said, referring to Imam Hussein (AS).

Ayatollah Khamenei said though Nasrallah's body has left this world, "his true personality, his soul, his way, and his expressive voice are still among us and will be with us forever".

"He was the high flag of resistance against oppressive and predatory demons - an eloquent voice and a brave defender of the oppressed. He was a source of encouragement and valor for fighters and rights seekers. His popularity and influence had gone beyond Lebanon, Iran and Arab countries, and now his martyrdom will increase this influence."

"The audience of this sermon is the whole Islamic world, but it is specially addressed to the dear nation of Lebanon and Palestine," he said.

The main cause of war, insecurity and backwardness in this region is the "existence of the Zionist regime" and the presence of governments that claim to seek peace and tranquility in the region, he said.

"It is our duty and the responsibility of all Muslims to repay our debt to the wounded, bloodied Lebanon. Hezbollah and the martyred Sayyid have taken steps in defense of Gaza and jihad for Al-Aqsa Mosque, delivering a blow to the usurping, cruel regime. They have provided a vital service to the entire region and the entire Muslim world. The insistence of the US and its allies on ensuring the safety of the usurping regime serves as a cover for their lethal policy of changing the [Zionist] regime into a tool for seizing all the resources of this region and using it [that regime] in major global conflicts," Ayatollah Khamenei noted.

"Their policy is to turn the [Zionist] regime into a gateway for exporting energy from the region to the Western world while facilitating the import of goods and technology from the West to the region. This [approach] ensures the survival of the usurping regime and increases the entire region's dependency on it. The [Zionist] regime's brutal, reckless behavior toward the [Resistance] fighters stems from its self-serving desire for such a situation," he added.

"This reality helps us to realize that every blow to the Zionist regime by any individual or group is not only a service to the entire region but to all of humanity. Surely, this Zionist and American dream is a vain, unattainable delusion. The [Zionist] regime is like "an evil tree, uprooted from the ground," which according to God's true words, "lacks any stability" (Quran 14:26), the Leader said.

## Iran Will Continue to Support "Strong Tree" of Resistance Until Palestine Liberation

TEHRAN - President Masoud Pezeshkian says the Islamic Republic will continue to support the "strong tree" of resistance groups until Palestine is liberated.

Addressing the 3rd summit of Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) in the Qatari capital of Doha on Thursday, Pezeshkian said the Israeli regime will soon face justice for the serious crimes it has committed in the region. "Given the sensitivities and challenges in West Asia and the Zionist regime's repeated attacks against the resistance groups, ...violators of human rights and perpetrators of crimes should know that resistance is a fruitful tree that cannot be destroyed at all," Pezeshkian emphasized.

Regarding the Palestinian issue, he added, Iran considers itself duty-bound to support the resistance groups and will strongly insist on this stance. He noted that Palestine and Lebanon are an important part of the Asian community.

Given the international community's inability and lack of will to "immediately and effectively" address the ongoing critical situation in Gaza and Lebanon, all the countries which are concerned about "security and peace", particularly Asian states, should take action to resolve the crisis and end Israel's war in the besieged Strip, he emphasized.

The Iranian president added that inaction towards Israel's warmongering in Gaza and Lebanon has emboldened the regime to continue its aggressive acts.

"We have always warned against the sinister intention of this regime to spread the war to the entire region," Pezeshkian pointed out.

He emphasized that Iran's recent missile attack on the occupied territories was in response to violation of the Islamic Republic's territorial integrity and based on the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter regarding the right to self-defense.

Pezeshkian reiterated, "The Islamic Republic of Iran does not seek to escalate tension or spread the fire of war to other places, and it is the Zionist regime that pursues its sinister goals

in engaging other countries."

The Iranian president further stressed the need for establishment of a ceasefire in Gaza, expulsion of all the occupying forces and liberation of the Palestinian land after seven decades.

He proposed the formation of a special committee within the ACD to swiftly address the situation of war victims and dispatch humanitarian and medical aid to the besieged territories.

The committee can also report to authorized international bodies and the United Nations the cases of human rights violation as well as Israel's breach of principles, he said.

Pezeshkian also proposed that the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) hold an emergency meeting to discuss the Palestinian issue.

The Iranian president further stressed the importance of promoting numerous cultural commonalities among the ACD countries.

Meanwhile later Pezeshkian said Iran has reached a "good understanding" with Qatar on the \$6 billion in Iranian funds that are being withheld by Doha after their release from South Korean banks.

Pezeshkian made the remarks on Thursday upon his return to Tehran from a visit to Doha, where he attended the 19th Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) summit, held talks with Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, and oversaw the signing of six cooperation documents between the two countries.

"In Qatar, we have \$6 billion in assets. The issue was discussed during a meeting between the governors of the two countries' central banks, as well as the meeting with the Qatari Emir; We reached a good understanding in this regard," he said.

In August 2023, Iran and the United States agreed to a Qatar-brokered deal to secure the release of some \$6 billion of Iranian funds that had remained frozen in two South Korean banks since 2018 under the pretext of US sanctions.

### The Iron Dome Was Nothing More Than a Strainer

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian



The Zionists' festive night turned into mourning with over 180 missiles from the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) at 8 p.m. on the 10th of Mehr 1403 (October 1, 2024), just five days before the anniversary of the Al-Aqsa Storm. The revenge for the bloodshed from assassinations, child killings in Gaza, and the bombardment

of Lebanon over the past year had accumulated, leading the Islamic Republic of Iran to make a decision that finally came after months of anticipation.

The reaction of the Muslim people was perhaps even more compelling than the missile retaliation by the IRGC. Just moments after the missile attack was announced, people joyfully poured into the streets, expressing their satisfaction.

The innovation of Operation "True Promise 2," which avoided the use of drones that would have taken a longer time to reach their destination and kept the enemy's missile defense systems on alert, was both unique and unprecedented.

In the early hours, when reports of the missiles hitting their targets surfaced — though heavily censored by the Zionist regime — it became clear that the intelligence gathered by the Quds Force and the precision of the operational strategy were highly effective, leaving the enemy in shock and psychological paralysis.

Despite television hosts in Tel Aviv claiming that nothing had happened and urging people in the occupied territories to remain calm, the remarkable impact of Operation "True Promise 2" was reflected in global media, proving to be a blow to the cruel regime and a benefit to the Resistance Front. People took to the streets, dancing and celebrating. After a year of tears and sorrow, Gaza saw smiles once again.

Handwritten signs addressed to martyr Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah said, "We wish you were here to witness the celebration of the Resistance Front." It truly was an incredible night — the world witnessed joy. But, unfortunately, I must admit that sometimes even cannons, mortars, and missiles have their own sweet melody, especially when they are in response to 75 years of oppression.

How sad it is that the world's educated people — doctors, engineers, architects, and chemists — are dedicating themselves to creating tools that spread bloodshed, destruction, and killing. If only there were no hostility in the world, so there would be no need for tools of hostility. May God curse Satan, who brought about oppression.

The statement that "the Zionist regime is a cancer, whose initial seed was sown by Britain and later formally handed over to its great Satan" is completely accurate. If this regime is not restrained, it will overrun the entire region. Treating cancer requires surgery with a knife.

How many innocent people have been killed in these military confrontations? How much of their unjustly shed blood has soaked the ground? Does this blood not remind us of the blood that America spilled in Nagasaki, Hiroshima, Vietnam, Iraq, Yemen, and beyond?

Today, the U.S. hides behind its internal elections, while its bloodthirsty dog Netanyahu continues the same policies that America itself once enacted in various parts of the world. It is misleading to think that Netanyahu is not executing America's bloodthirsty policies.

The bloodthirsty hand of the U.S. can be seen in all the violent events in West Asia and the rest of the world, like in Ukraine. Zionist Arabs, Zionist Iranians, along with Europe and America, are not innocent in these scenes. Operation "True Promise 2" blossomed in anticipation of revenge from the Muslims of the world, and it may lead to more "True Promises" in the ongoing suppression of Zionism in the region.

The bloodthirsty Zionist regime has built a land for itself with guns, bullets, and the expulsion of Palestinians, where every inch smells of Palestinian blood. The expectation that they can remain there in peace is baseless, and there is no doubt in God's promise that it will soon be obliterated.

The Al-Aqsa Storm was a good start for this obliteration.

The yearlong path of resistance by the people of Gaza has revealed to the world the true nature of this global wolf-like regime. Today, the distinction between Zionists controlling the destinies of people in all countries is clear and visible.

Gaza was the test to separate the wheat from the chaff, and this distinction has now become evident.

As the political editor of Iran News and Sobh Eqtasad, I proudly congratulate the heroic actions of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the leadership of the Quds Force of the IRGC in gathering the necessary operational intelligence and executing the daring missile operation of the IRGC Aerospace Force. I salute each member of this force, the brave children of the Iranian nation, and I confess that Iran has not witnessed such courageous pride in many ages. Thus, I can confidently say that the Islamic Republic of Iran is the most rational, intelligent, and courageous government in Iran in the past 500 years. If not for traitors and infiltrators, Iran would have also become a leader in culture and economy in the region.



# IRAN NEWS



## Production of Over 264 Thousand Tons of Aluminum Ingots

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - The four major aluminum companies in the country (South Aluminum, IRALCO, Almahdi, and Iran Alumina) produced 264,617 tons of aluminum ingots from the beginning of March to the end of August. This figure was 267,982 tons during the same period last year, indicating a 1% decrease.

Of the aluminum ingots produced in the first five months of 2024 (1403 in the Iranian calendar), "South Aluminum" produced 111,521 tons, "IRALCO" 73,182 tons, "Almahdi" 65,295 tons, and "Iran Alumina" 14,619 tons. Additionally, during the first five months of this year, "Iran Alumina" produced 96,685 tons of "alumina powder," 163,096 tons of "aluminum hydrate," and 284,827 tons of "bauxite."

## Iran, Qatar Sign Six Cooperation Agreements



TEHRAN - Senior officials from Iran and Qatar have signed six cooperation agreements across various sectors.

High-ranking officials from the Islamic Republic of Iran and Qatar signed six documents and memoranda of understanding in various economic, commercial, cultural, educational, and sports sectors. Among them, four documents related to agriculture, education, ports and maritime affairs, and culture were signed by Iran's Minister of Energy, who is the Iranian chairman of the Iran-Qatar Joint Cooperation Commission.

Key cooperation agreements included the development plan of Dayyer Port, health, welfare, and live trade, as well as cultural cooperation programs through 2026 and sports cooperation programs until 2026. These were signed by the Iranian ministers of Energy, Foreign Affairs, and Sports and Youth, alongside their Qatari counterparts.

On the sidelines of the signing ceremony, "Abbas Aliabadi," as the chairman of the Iran-Qatar Joint Commission, met with "Sheikh Mohammed bin Hamad bin Qasim Al Abdullah Al Thani," Qatar's Minister of Industry and Commerce and the Qatari chairman of the Joint Commission for Economic Cooperation between Iran and Qatar, to discuss the expansion of economic collaboration between the two countries.

During the meeting, it was agreed that the 10th meeting of the Joint Commission would be held in December of this year in Qatar, with the participation of both countries' executive bodies.

The report adds that the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, heading a high-ranking delegation, traveled to Doha, the capital of Qatar, on Wednesday, October 2, 2023, for an official bilateral meeting with the Emir of Qatar and to participate in the Asia Cooperation Dialogue summit.

## Establishment of a Standardization Working Group for Iran-Armenia Trade Sector



TEHRAN - During a meeting with the Armenian Deputy Minister of Economy, the Head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization proposed the formation of a joint standardization training working group between Iran and Armenia, while also highlighting the increase in trade exchanges between the two countries.

Mohammad Ali Dehghan Dehnavi, Head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization, pointed out the rising volume of trade between the two nations and said: "Forming specialized committees in banking, customs, standards, and transportation should be prioritized in Iran-Armenia trade relations. These committees will create the necessary infrastructure to boost trade exchanges, and their work should commence before the Armenian delegation's visit to Iran to ensure tangible results."

He added that Iran's Export Guarantee Fund is ready to cooperate with Armenia's export insurance agency, stating, "Although the National Standard Organization in Iran is not part of the Ministry of Industry, Mines, and Trade (IMT), we can establish a national standard committee. We hope the agreement for the national standard committee between the two countries will be signed during the upcoming visit of Armenian officials to Iran."

The Deputy Minister of IMT suggested that the two countries hold a joint educational workshop for merchants and traders to familiarize them with each other's standards.

Dehghan Dehnavi also welcomed Armenia's interest in investing in Chabahar and emphasized the importance of understanding the transit route of Armenian goods to East Asia, especially India.

In conclusion, he invited the Armenian Deputy Minister of Economy to participate in the Eurasia Exhibition, which will be held from December 24-27 this year in Tehran.

In the meeting, Armenian Deputy Minister of Economy Hovakimian welcomed the formation of a national standard committee between Iran and Armenia, noting that in Armenia, the standards and export insurance agency are under the Ministry of Economy.

He mentioned that the road tariff legislation is currently in the process of being approved by the Armenian parliament and believes that the approval of these tariffs will further strengthen cooperation between the two countries.

The Armenian Deputy Minister also highlighted the positive step of opening an Iranian trade center in Armenia to develop and facilitate trade between the two nations. In return, he expressed hope that Iranians would support the establishment of an Armenian trade center in Tehran.

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK



## Iran Warns Israel's Backers Against Involvement in Tehran-Tel Aviv Escalation

TEHRAN - Iran's ambassador and permanent representative to the United Nations has warned the Israeli regime's Western and regional supporters against any involvement in the escalation between the Islamic Republic and the illegal entity.

Amir Saeid Irvani made the statement in response to a question by the American media regarding the scope of Iran's retaliation against the Israeli regime's possible attack on the country after Tehran showered the occupied territories with a massive salvo of missiles in reprisal for the assassination of the resistance front's top leaders and commanders.

"Our response will solely be to the aggressor. If a country helps the aggressor, that country will be considered as a complicit in the crime and a legitimate target," Irvani said.

"Our advice is that they do not enter into the conflict between the Israeli regime and Iran and stay away from the battle."

Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) launched on Tuesday night hundreds of missiles at targets in the Tel Aviv area as part of a daring military campaign, dubbed Operation True Promise 2.

The IRGC said it targeted "the heart of the occupied territories" in response to the Israeli assassinations of Hamas political bureau chief Ismail Haniyeh, Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah and IRGC general Abbas Nilforoushan.

The IRGC said the operation was in line with the country's right to legitimate self-defense as per the United Nations Charter, and in response to the regime's escalating crimes — backed by the United States — against the people of Lebanon and Gaza.

A number of air and radar bases, as well as centers for conspiracy and assassination planning against resistance leaders and IRGC commanders were targeted in the operation, according to the force.

Meanwhile Iran's deputy foreign minister has urged the UN Security Council to impose severe sanctions against the Israeli regime based on Chapter 7 of the UN Charter.

In an interview, Majid Takht-Ravanchi pointed out that Iran notified the UN Security Council every time the Zionist regime attacked its interests and sovereignty, but the council did not do anything.

"We think that the UN Security Council has the duty to impose severe sanctions against the Israeli regime based on Chapter 7 of the UN Charter," he said.

According to Takht-Ravanchi, the support of the US and some European countries for the Zionist regime prevents the UN Security Council from fulfilling its responsibility for international peace and security.

"We exercised restraint for a while, but our restraint was exploited by the Zionist regime, and the regime had the misconception that it can commit any crime with impunity," he said.

The senior Iranian diplomat further argued that Iran's retaliatory operation against the Israeli military positions was carried out in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter.

"We declared that our operation was over at this stage and that if they wanted to start a new adventure, they would definitely be dealt with severely," he added.

## 2024 a Very Challenging Year for Global Maritime Transport Industry



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The CEO of the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Group described the Supreme Leader's directive on implementing maritime-based development policies as a unique opportunity for the country's maritime sector. He stated, "We are looking to reduce the fleet's age and plan to bring the fleet's average age down to under 10 years within the next decade."

Mohammad Reza Modarres Khiabani, speaking at the general assembly of shareholders of the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Group for the fiscal year ending June 31, 2024, which was attended by over 80% of the shareholders, recalled that in 2020, the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Group added another achievement to its record by transporting gasoline to Venezuela. This successful and prestigious mission led to a congratulatory message from the Supreme Leader to the fleet, marking a proud moment in the 57-year history of the company.

He also mentioned the extraordinary assembly of the shipping group in the last days of March 2024 and said, "Fortunately, with the cooperation of shareholders, a 43% capital increase from the company's retained earnings was approved. As a result, the registered capital of the company has increased to 82.5 trillion toman."

Modarres Khiabani noted that the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Group ranks 18th among the world's largest container companies and 22nd among the top 100 companies in Iran according to the Industrial Management Organization. He added that currently, this fleet handles 21% of domestic cargo transport.

He described 2024 as a very challenging year for the global maritime transport industry and explained, "In this year, container shipping rates dropped by 57%, and we are still witnessing a further decline in shipping rates in global markets."

The CEO continued, "The average shipping price for imported goods has decreased by 52%, and we have also seen a decline in shipping rates in the export sector. Additionally, global shipping prices in the bulk transport sector are facing fluctuations and decreases."

Despite these challenges, he added, "The weight of goods transported by the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Group increased by about 0.7% compared to 2023, reaching 26.5 million tons last year."

He announced a 14% growth in the container transport of the national shipping fleet in 2023 and said, "At the same time, we faced an 8% reduction in bulk transport. However, this did not affect the revenue in this sector, as some ships were leased as cabotage."

In regards to the company's human capital, Modarres Khiabani emphasized that "training the workforce is a top priority for the shipping group." He noted that while in 2019 about 700 foreign seafarers worked on the national fleet, "Today, thankfully, all sailors employed on the fleet are Iranian."

He also stated that the fleet currently consists of 143 vessels, including container ships, bulk carriers, multipurpose ships, general cargo ships, and tankers. Additionally, the number of containers in the fleet has reached 206,000 with the purchase of new containers, all of which are tasked with transporting goods.

He noted that in the field of combined transport, 1,558 wagons of various types are currently in operation, purchased from domestic manufacturers. He added, "With the use of tanker wagons, all the fuel required by the fleet, produced by domestic refineries, can be transported to southern ports. Furthermore, we have obtained permission to issue international rail freight documents, which has made door-to-door transport even more feasible."

## Tourism Attractions Should Be Introduced to the World

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK



TEHRAN - Seyed Reza Salehi Amiri, at the end of a government meeting, spoke to reporters about the elements of tourism in the country. He said, "Regarding tourism, we need to focus on three main issues to increase the country's tourism capacity."

The Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts stated, "First, we must introduce our attractions to the world. According to World Bank studies, Iran is ranked seventh globally in terms of tourism appeal, but I believe we are among the top three countries in the world when it comes to tourism, cultural heritage, and handicrafts."

He continued by saying, "The second issue we need to address is infrastructure, and the third is security. Currently, the country's tourism capacity is about 6.2 million, and our plan is to increase this to 15 million. We've developed a comprehensive program and are in discussions with key government members to seriously pursue these three areas."

The minister also added, "Another important action is to activate diplomacy. Last Thursday and Friday, I spoke with several tourism ministers from the region. We are negotiating with Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan, Georgia, Iraq, and many other countries to prepare the ground for the arrival of tourists. Just this Saturday, I inaugurated the sixth five-star hotel in Tehran. We are committed to building 100 hotels per year in the country, especially four- and five-star hotels. We believe that the fourteenth government, with its consensus-building approach, will provide the necessary groundwork for the development of tourism. God willing, within the next year, we will witness a significant change in the number of tourists visiting Iran."

Regarding the return of historical artifacts to the country, Salehi Amiri said, "Perhaps it is interesting for our people to know that one of the important tablets, taken by an explorer during an excavation near the Dez Dam, was returned by the children of that explorer after about 50 years. They handed it over to our representative, saying it belongs to the people of Iran. God willing, it will be unveiled soon at the National Museum of Iran in the presence of the president. We are working to bring back these artifacts. We are currently pursuing legal cases in several countries to retrieve artifacts taken from Iran and return them to the country."

## Communication Equipment Should Not Be Used for Killing Civilians



TEHRAN - Seyed Sattar Hashemi, the Minister of Communications and Information Technology, condemned the use of electronic and communication equipment for terrorist purposes and the killing of civilians, calling for action against this violation of international regulations.

In a meeting with Masanori Kondo, the Secretary-General of the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT), Hashemi emphasized that terrorist crimes such as the martyrdom of civilians, particularly children in Palestine and Lebanon, using communication equipment undermine public trust in technology.

During the meeting, held on the sidelines of a workshop on the latest trends and technologies of the South Asian Telecommunications Regulators' Council (SATRC), hosted by Iran, Hashemi stressed that the terrorist use of communication equipment disrupts the growing role of information and communication technology in the economy.



## Taiwan Re-Opens, Mopping Up After Typhoon Krathon

KAOSHIUNG (Dispatches) – (Reuters) - Southern Taiwan worked on Friday to clear up damage from flooding and high winds after Typhoon Krathon slammed into a major port city, while most of the rest of the island resumed work and financial markets re-opened.

Krathon, now downgraded to a tropical depression, hit land in the southwestern city of Kaohsiung, inundating streets, blowing out the windows of some buildings and scattering debris amid record-breaking winds.

While the rest of Taiwan resumed work, the governments in Kaohsiung and neighbouring Pingtung county declared a fourth successive day off work as they scrambled to pump away floodwaters, remove fallen trees, and clear roads.

"We hope as fast as possible to resume transport, water and electricity supplies, so work and life can get back to normal," Kaohsiung Mayor Chen Chi-mai told reporters. The city government said it was tackling more than 2,000 trees that had fallen on roads, but reported only two injuries.



## Japan PM Warns "Today's Ukraine Could Be Tomorrow's East Asia"



TOKYO (Dispatches) - Japan's new Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba warned in his first policy speech Friday that "today's Ukraine could be tomorrow's East Asia" while also dubbing the country's low birth rate a "quiet emergency".

"Many fear that today's Ukraine could be tomorrow's East Asia. Why did deterrence not work in Ukraine?" Ishiba told parliament.

"Combined with the situation in the Middle East, the international community is becoming increasingly divided and confrontational," the 67-year-old former defence minister said.

Ishiba made no direct reference to China but his country's relations with Beijing have deteriorated in recent years as it asserts its military presence around disputed territories in the region.

Of particular concern is Taiwan. Beijing claims the democratic island as part of its territory and has never renounced the use of force to bring the self-ruled island under its control.

Japan has also irked China with plans for a major increase in defence spending and by boosting security ties with the United States and its allies including the Philippines and South Korea.

In August, a Chinese military aircraft staged the first confirmed incursion by China into Japanese airspace, followed weeks later by a Japanese warship sailing through the Taiwan Strait for the first time.

Ishiba has backed the creation of a regional military alliance along the lines of NATO, saying on Tuesday that the security environment in Asia was "the most severe since the end of World War II".

Japan, like many developed countries, is facing a looming demographic crisis as its population ages and the birth rate stays stubbornly low.

The country has the world's oldest population after tiny Monaco, according to the World Bank.

Last year, its birth rate -- the average number of children a woman is expected to have in her life -- stood at 1.2, well below the 2.1 needed to maintain the population.

## Ukraine's Top Commander Orders Defenses Bolstered in the East



KYIV (Dispatches) - Ukraine's armed forces commander General Oleksandr Syrskiy said he had ordered defenses to be strengthened in the eastern Donetsk region, a day after Kyiv forces announced they had withdrawn from the town of Vuhledar.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy acknowledged the loss of Vuhledar, saying moving troops out and preserving lives was the critical issue.

The Russia-appointed governor of Donetsk region said both sides had recognised the strategic value of the town, adding that reconstruction efforts there would take time.

Russian troops are steadily inching forward in different sectors in eastern Ukraine despite Kyiv's surprise incursion into Russia's western Kursk region in August that Ukraine hoped would slow the advances.

Syrskiy said on social media he was working on "one of the hottest front sectors" with the 25th Sicheslav Airborne Brigade.

He gave no details on the location but the brigade operates in the Pokrovsk front, an area of intensified Russian assaults.

"While working in the brigade, I made a number of decisions aimed at strengthening stability and effectiveness of our defense," Syrskiy said.

## North Korea's Kim Threatens to Use Nukes If Attacked



SEOUL (Dispatches) - North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said his country would use nuclear weapons "without hesitation" if attacked by the South and ally the United States, state media reported Friday.

Relations between the two Koreas are at one of their lowest points in decades, with Seoul this week staging a military parade where it showcased its bunker-busting "monster" missile and President Yoon Suk Yeol warned Kim that using nukes would mean the end of his regime.

Pyongyang has also been bombarding the South with balloons carrying bags of trash, and a fresh flurry was seen floating over Seoul early Friday by AFP reporters. Seoul's military confirmed it had detected the balloon launches overnight.

If an enemy's forces were "encroaching upon the sovereignty" of the North, Pyongyang would "use without hesitation all the offensive forces it has possessed, including nuclear weapons," Kim said, according to the official Korean Central News Agency.

Images in state media showed Kim, clad in his customary leather jacket, speaking at a training event for special operations forces.

There, he slammed Yoon for his "end of regime" comments and "clamoring" about his country's alliance with the United States.

Seoul, which does not have nuclear weapons of its own, is covered by the US nuclear umbrella, and Washington has stationed tens of thousands of troops in the country since the Korean war ended in 1953 without a peace treaty.

Kim said it was Seoul and Washington who were "destroying regional security and peace", KCNA reported, while branding South Korea's leader "an abnormal man".

On Tuesday, fighter jets flew over downtown Seoul and tanks rolled through the streets, as South Korea displayed for the first time its largest ballistic missile, the Hyunmoo-5, which is capable of destroying underground bunkers.

An American B-1B heavy bomber also staged a flyover of the ceremony early Tuesday, flanked by F-15K jets. Washington periodically deploys nuclear assets to the Korean peninsula, underscoring its protection of the South from Pyongyang's growing threats.

At the event marking South Korea's Armed Forces Day, Yoon said that if the North "attempts to use nuclear weapons, it will face the resolute and overwhelming response of our military and the US and Republic of Korea alliance."

"That day will be the end of the North Korean regime," he added.

North Korea is expected to scrap a landmark inter-Korean agreement signed in 1991 at a parliamentary meeting next week, Seoul's unification ministry said Wednesday, as part of Kim's drive to officially define the South as an enemy state.

Earlier this year, Kim called to remove unification-related clauses from the constitution, while abolishing agencies dedicated to improving ties with the South.

Last month, the North also disclosed images of a uranium enrichment facility for the first time, showing leader Kim touring the site as he called for more centrifuges to boost the country's nuclear arsenal.

South Korea's spy agency later said the unprecedented disclosure was "directed at the US" and that North Korea was believed capable of producing a double-digit number of nuclear weapons.

Last week, a lawmaker told reporters that the National Intelligence Service had warned the North might carry out another nuclear test -- its seventh -- after the US elections in November.

## Israel Bombards Beirut After Deadliest West Bank Strike in Decades

BEIRUT (Dispatches) - Israel bombarded south Beirut at least 10 times late Thursday, Lebanese sources said, after it launched its deadliest strike on the occupied West Bank in decades.

The escalating assaults by Israel come as it weighs retaliation for Iran's barrage of missiles fired at the country, with the United States saying Israel hitting Iranian oil facilities is on the table.

Iran said the attack was its response to the killing of Hassan Nasrallah, chief of its ally Hezbollah, and other top figures.

There was no let-up to Israeli strikes on Beirut, with AFP correspondents in the capital and beyond hearing loud bangs that made buildings shake.

The military launched 11 consecutive strikes on Hezbollah's south Beirut stronghold late Thursday, a source close to the group told AFP, while the official National News Agency (NNA) put the tally at more than 10.

The Israeli military said it hit "targets belonging to Hezbollah's intelligence headquarters in Beirut".

Israel's bombing in Lebanon has killed more than 1,000 people, according to the Lebanese health ministry, and forced hundreds of thousands to flee their homes in a nation already mired in economic and political crisis.

"We are peaceful civilians in our homes," said Hassan Ammar, 82, who had been staying in a building whose walls were partly blown out by a strike in Beirut after he fled south Lebanon.

Another strike late Thursday targeted a warehouse adjacent to the



capital's airport, a source close to Hezbollah said.

Meanwhile, a source within the Palestinian security services told AFP that an air raid on the refugee camp of Tulkarm, killing 18 people, was the deadliest in the occupied West Bank since 2000.

The Israeli military said its strike in the northern West Bank killed Hamas leader Zahi Yaser Abd al-Razeq Oufi, who it accused of participating in numerous attacks.

Alaa Stroj, a social activist from the area, said an Israeli warplane had "hit a cafeteria in a four-story building".

Israel, at war in Gaza since Hamas's October 7 attack, has expanded its military campaign to secure its northern border and ensure the safe return of more than 60,000 people displaced by Hezbollah attacks over the past year.

A target of one of its recent Beirut strikes was Hashem Safieddine, a potential successor as Hezbollah head to Nasrallah who was killed a week ago, US news site Axios reported, citing three unidentified Israeli officials.

The Israeli military did not confirm the report when questioned by AFP.

Israel announced this week that its troops had started "ground raids" into parts of southern Lebanon, a stronghold of Hezbollah, after days of heavy bombardment of areas across the country where the group holds sway.

Israel told Lebanese people Thursday to "immediately" evacuate more than 20 villages and the city of Nabatiyeh.

## U.S. Dock Workers Reach Deal With Port Operators to End Crippling Strike

NEW YORK (Dispatches) – U.S. dock workers and port operators reached a tentative deal that will immediately end a ruinous three-day strike that has shut down shipping on the US East Coast and Gulf Coast, the two sides said Thursday.

The tentative agreement is for a wage hike of around 62% over six years, two sources familiar with the matter told Reuters, including a worker on the picket line who heard the announcement. That would raise average wages to about \$63 an hour from \$39 an hour over the life of the contract.

The International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) workers union had been seeking a 77% raise while the employer group - United States Maritime Alliance (USMX) - had previously raised its offer to a nearly 50% hike.

The deal ends the biggest work stoppage of its kind in nearly half a century, which blocked unloading of container ships from Maine to Texas and threatened shortages of everything from bananas to auto parts, triggering a backlog of anchored ships outside major ports.

The union and the port operators said in a statement that they would extend their master contract until Jan. 15, 2025 to return to the bargaining table to negotiate all outstanding issues.

"Effective immediately, all current job actions will cease and all work covered by the Master Contract will resume," the statement said.

Among key issues that remain unresolved is automation that workers say



will lead to job losses.

Union boss Harold Daggett said previously that employers such as container ship operator Maersk and its APM Terminals North America had not agreed to demands to stop port automation projects that threaten jobs.

U.S. President Joe Biden's administration had sided with the union, putting pressure on the port employers to raise their offer to secure a deal and citing the shipping industry's bumper profits since the COVID-19 pandemic.

The tentative deal "represents critical progress towards a strong contract," Biden said on Thursday. "Collective bargaining works," he added.

His administration has repeatedly resisted calls from business trade groups and Republican lawmakers to use federal powers to halt the strike - a move that would undermine Democratic support among unions ahead of the Nov. 5 presidential election.

The White House had been heavily involved in talks to get a deal, sources said.

After days of talks, White House Chief of Staff Jeff Zients convened a 5:30 a.m. (0930 GMT) virtual meeting on Thursday with the CEOs of ocean carriers and impressed upon them the need to reopen the ports to speed hurricane recovery efforts, according to a source briefed on the events.





## Maguire Saves Man United, Spurs Win at Ferencvaros

BUDAPEST (dispatches) - Harry Maguire's stoppage-time header earned Manchester United a dramatic 3-3 draw at Porto in the Europa League group stage on Thursday as Tottenham Hotspur won 2-1 at Ferencvaros.

England defender Maguire, a late substitute, salvaged a point for his team who led 2-0 after 20 minutes before conceding three goals and having their captain Bruno Fernandes sent off to stand on the verge of another damaging defeat.

Marcus Rashford put United ahead in the seventh minute and Rasmus Hojlund added a second, but Porto quickly narrowed the gap through Pepe's header and Samu Omorodion equalised before halftime and put Porto ahead five minutes into the second half with a close-range strike.

Spurs claimed a 2-1 win at Ferencvaros thanks to goals in each half from Pape Sarr and Brennan Johnson. Senegalese midfielder Sarr opened the scoring in the 23rd minute, taking advantage of a loose ball to calmly slot a precise right-foot shot into the far corner and substitute Johnson doubled the lead for the English side four minutes from time with a left-foot strike from inside the box.

Ferencvaros grabbed a consolation goal in stoppage time through Varga, but it was not enough to deny Spurs victory in their first-ever match against Hungarian opponents.

Anderlecht won 2-1 at Real Sociedad who took an early lead through Pablo Marin before Luis Vazquez

and Theo Leoni scored for the Belgian side to turn the game around.

The match was briefly halted in the first half as visiting fans hurled objects on to the pitch from the lower stand, resulting in the arrest of two Anderlecht supporters.

In Rome, Taty Castellanos, celebrating his 26th birthday, struck twice to lead Lazio to a convincing 4-1 home victory over Nice. Pedro Rodriguez and a penalty from Mattia Zaccagni completed the rout.

Ajax Amsterdam were held to a 1-1 draw by Slavia Prague in the Czech capital, with Branco van den Boomen scoring an early penalty for the Dutch team and Tomas Chory equalising in the second half for the hosts. Ajax's Youri Baas was sent off in the closing stages.

Malick Fofana and Alexandre Lacazette struck twice each as Olympique Lyonnais hammered Scottish side Rangers 4-1 in Glasgow.

Swedish club IF Elfsborg secured a surprise 1-0 home win over AS Roma after forward Tommaso Baldanzi's handball in the box led to a penalty which captain Michael Baidoo slotted home late in the first half.

Inaki Williams was at the heart of Athletic Bilbao's 2-0 home win over Dutch side AZ Alkmaar.

His brother Nico provided a superb cross for the striker to tap home and midfielder Oihan Sancet doubled the lead four minutes from time.

## Alcaraz Tops Sinner in Epic Beijing Final



BEIJING (Dispatches) - o. 2 seed Carlos Alcaraz of Spain rallied to defeat No. 1 Jannik Sinner of Italy 6-7 (6), 6-4, 7-6 (3) to capture his fourth title of the season at the China Open in Beijing.

The three-hour, 21-minute battle was the longest match in the history of the ATP 500 tournament and improved Alcaraz's record to 3-0 against his rival in 2024 -- also winning at Indian Wells and the French Open.

Sinner, the defending champion, had won 18 of his past 19 tiebreaks and jumped out to a 3-0 lead in the third-set tiebreak before Alcaraz ripped off seven straight points to claim the trophy.

Alcaraz finished with 55 winners and 59 unforced errors, compared to 31 and 46 for Sinner. Alcaraz now owns a 6-4 lead in their head-to-head series.

Frenchman Gael Monfils overpowered Bosnia's Damir Dzumhur 6-4, 6-3 to advance to the second round of the ATP 1000 tournament in China.

The 38-year-old Monfils hammered 22 winners and saved seven of eight break points in the 81-minute victory and will next face No. 22 seed Sebastian Baez of Argentina.

Other first-round winners included Japan's Taro Daniel, Spain's Roberto Carballes Baena and Alejandro Davidovich Fokina, France's Arthur Cazaux and Arthur Rinderknech, Italy's Fabio Fognini, Canada's Denis Shapovalov, China's Juncheng Shang and American qualifier Zachary Svajda.

Poland's Hubert Hurkacz is the defending champion but withdrew due to a knee injury. World No. 1 Jannik Sinner of Italy is the No. 1 seed.

## Conte plays down Napoli's title chances

ROME (Dispatches) - Antonio Conte has taken Napoli back to the top of Serie A for the first time since they won the title in 2023 but he says while the fans can dream of regaining the crown "I have to keep my feet on the ground."

The next test of their title credentials comes on Friday as they host in-form Como, coached by former Spain and Arsenal star Cesc Fabregas.

Napoli, perhaps benefitting from not being engaged in European competition, after a disastrous defence of their crown resulted in them finishing 10th last season, go into the seventh round of matches a point clear of Juventus at the top.

However, it is a congested table with AC Milan, Inter Milan and previous table-toppers Torino just two points off Napoli on 11.

A further three clubs are on 10 points and Como, on the back of two successive victories, are a respectable 10th with eight points.

Inter Milan host Torino on Saturday, coming into the game fresh from a good win in the Champions League league phase -- and with Argentinian star Lautaro Martinez rediscovering his scoring form.

Torino will want to get back to winning ways after two successive home defeats, in the cup against Empoli and then to Lazio in the league.

Juventus and AC Milan both have good opportunities to pick



up three points to keep the pressure on Napoli.

Juventus host lowly Cagliari on Sunday with AC Milan travelling to mid-table Fiorentina.

Little wonder the no-nonsense Conte is not permitting himself to make any bold predictions with the season still young.

Indeed the 55-year-old, who has won the Serie A title four times as a coach -- guiding Juventus to three Scudettos and Inter Milan to one -- sees both sides of the coin regarding the southern side's lack of involvement in European competition.

"There is an advantage and a disadvantage -- the advantage is that you can train the team all week, the disadvantage is that the squad is not as competitive as those that do play in Europe," Conte told DAZN.

Conte, who due to being a proven winner is regarded as worth hiring despite a history of taking on club directors, said so much had happened at the club recently -- including the departure of Nigerian forward Victor Osimhen, in a surprising loan move to Turkish club Galatasaray -- they still need time to settle down.

"Not even three months have passed, the president (Aurelio De Laurentiis) is the first to have spoken of a total reconstruction," he said.

"Osimhen and (Piotr) Zielinski left. I know there are high expectations for me because I have done important things.

"Let's let the fans dream, but I have to keep my feet on the ground. I hear people talking who know nothing about Scudettos."

## Bagnaia Leads Martin in First Japan MotoGP Practice



MOTEGI (Dispatches) - Defending champion Francesco Bagnaia finished fastest in a rain-interrupted first practice for the Japan MotoGP on Friday, with championship leader Jorge Martin behind him in second.

Italy's Bagnaia clocked a fastest lap of 1min 45.209sec on his Ducati, with more than half of the 45-minute session wiped out by rain at Motegi.

Spaniard Martin, who leads Bagnaia by 21 points in the championship standings with five races remaining, trailed his rival by 0.109.

Pramac rider Martin is looking to win his first MotoGP championship after finishing second behind Bagnaia last year.

Italian Fabio Giannantonio clocked the third-best practice time, 0.380 behind Bagnaia, while Spain's six-time world champion Marc Marquez was fourth, 0.572 off the leading pace.

Italy's Enea Bastianini, who is third in the overall standings and trails Martin by 75 points, had the 10th-fastest practice time, 0.759 behind Bagnaia.

The riders went out for around 15 minutes under cloudy skies before rain halted the session.

The action later resumed for around five minutes before rain again forced them back to the garage.

The second practice session, from which the top 10 riders go straight into the second round of qualifying.

Qualifying shapes the grid for both the sprint race on Saturday and the main event GP on Sunday afternoon, with a maximum of 37 points available.

## FIFA to Allow Close-Season Signings to Play in Club World Cup

ZURICH (Dispatches) - Teams taking part in the new Club World Cup in June-July next year will be allowed to replace players during the tournament if the transfer window in their country is open at the time, world soccer's governing body FIFA said on Thursday.

FIFA member associations of participating clubs will also have the option of opening an "exceptional registration window" in June before the event begins to sign players.

The Club World Cup in the United States is scheduled to run from June 15-July 13 but that period either coincides with ongoing leagues where the transfer window is closed or countries where the window is open and player contracts end.

FIFA said the optional window for member associations will be open from June 1-10 "for all their affiliated clubs" before the tournament gets under way in a bid to make it fair for all clubs in the league to sign players during the same period.

"The decision as to whether or not to open an



additional window remains at the full discretion of each FIFA Member Association concerned," FIFA said in a statement.

With most player contracts expiring on June 30, FIFA also said participating clubs may replace players during a "restricted in-competition period" from June 27-July 3.

But a standard registration window - like the summer one in Europe -- must be open for the club at the time.

Players who start the Club World Cup with one team cannot play for another side in the tournament if they switch.

The 32-team Club World Cup includes 12 European sides with players whose deals may finish at the end of their season.

"The objective is to encourage clubs and players whose contracts are expiring to find an appropriate solution to facilitate the players' participation," FIFA added.