

# IRAN NEWS

A Gyroplane Flown by the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps Ground Force Crashed During a Military Exercise in Southeastern Iran on Monday, Killing the Pilot and a General

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei Decried the Zionist Regime as the Most Villainous Enemy of Islam, Paying Tribute to the Iranian Servicemen Martyred in a Recent Israeli Act of Aggression

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### Iran's Foreign Trade Reaches \$100 Billion



TEHRAN - Iran's Deputy Minister of Economy and the Head of the Customs Administration, Mohammad Rezvani-Far, announced that Iran's foreign trade totaled approximately \$100 billion in the first seven months of 1403 (Iranian calendar year).

Rezvani-Far stated on Sunday that of the \$99.7 billion in trade, \$60.2 billion came from exports, including oil, technical, and engineering services, while \$39.5 billion accounted for imports, which included gold bullion.

Rezvani-Far added that non-oil exports in this period amounted to \$32.5 billion, marking a 15% increase. Crude oil exports reached \$27 billion, with technical and engineering services exports at \$700 million. On the import side, the country brought in \$36.1 billion worth of goods excluding gold, while standard gold bullion imports reached \$3.4 billion.

The Deputy Minister further noted a 2.7% increase in the weight of imported goods (excluding gold) to 21.7 million tons over the same period.

Rezvani-Far pointed out that Iran had a trade deficit of around \$7 billion when excluding crude oil, fuel oil, and technical and engineering services. However, with oil and engineering services factored in, the country recorded a foreign trade surplus of \$20.7 billion.

The volume of non-oil exports reached 88.7 million tons, a 11.48% increase from the previous year. The average value per ton of exported goods rose 3% to \$367.

He highlighted that petrochemical products represented a major portion of exports, with 37.9 million tons valued at \$15.2 billion, reflecting a 23% increase in weight and a 24% rise in value.

Rezvani-Far stated that Iran's primary export destinations in the first seven months included China at \$8.6 billion, Turkey at \$7.3 billion, the United Arab Emirates at \$4.2 billion, Turkey at \$3.3 billion, Afghanistan at \$1.3 billion, Pakistan at \$1.2 billion, and India at \$1.1 billion. Together, these seven countries accounted for 82% of the export volume and 83% of the total export value.

As for imports, the largest sources were the United Arab Emirates at \$12 billion, China at \$10.2 billion, Turkey at \$6.6 billion, Germany at \$1.4 billion, Russia at \$1 billion, India at \$900 million, and Hong Kong at \$700 million. These countries collectively made up 77% of the import volume and 83% of the total import value.

Rezvani-Far noted that the average customs value of imported goods per ton was \$1,819, representing a 6% increase from the same period last year.

### IMF's Forecast for Inflation Decline in Iran: Is it Achievable?



TEHRAN - Majid Reza Hariiri, the president of the Iran-China Chamber of Commerce, discussed the current state of Iran's economy and inflationary conditions. He noted that the situation has become more challenging for the government, as the budget presented to Parliament is in two phases and the country continues to face a budget deficit. Hariiri pointed out that if the government seeks to cover this shortfall through bond sales, it will essentially create debts for the future. However, he acknowledged that a positive aspect of issuing bonds is their non-inflationary nature in the current circumstances.

Hariiri emphasized that one of the fundamental problems in the country is the insufficient generation of wealth; without wealth production, proper decision-making regarding expenditures is impossible. Over the years, the government has employed various methods to address budget deficits, including borrowing from banks or the Central Bank in one year, issuing bonds in another, or relying more heavily on the National Development Fund this year. However, these methods do not solve the core issue, and any borrowing indicates that the country lacks resources that meet its needs.



## Iran Uses Everything at Disposal to Respond to Israel

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Foreign Ministry Spokesman stated that support for national sovereignty and territorial integrity is a fundamental principle. He emphasized that Iran has a clear response strategy against the aggressions of the Israeli regime and noted that it is natural for the country to utilize all material and spiritual resources to respond to these aggressions.

In his weekly presser, Ismail Baqaei Hamaneh highlighted that November 4th, marked the National Day of Struggle Against Arrogance, a symbol of the Iranian people's quest for freedom. He asserted that the Iranian populace has demonstrated its commitment to defending its dignity, sovereignty, and national interests against external threats.

He further mentioned that last week was also the International Day to End Violence Against Journalists, lamenting that journalists have faced severe atrocities at the hands of the Israeli regime over the past year. Baqaei Hamaneh paid tribute to all free journalists worldwide who have lost their lives in the pursuit of exposing the crimes committed in Gaza and Lebanon.

The spokesperson reported that the Foreign Minister engaged in various communications with counterparts in the region last week and is set to travel to Pakistan for discussions on bilateral relations and regional developments.

Baqaei emphasized the importance of national sovereignty and territorial integrity, asserting that this principle has been proven through action. He reiterated the necessity of utilizing all available resources for defense.

Regarding the alleged expulsion of Iranian consulate staff in Germany, the spokesperson clarified that no such actions have occurred. He indicated that ongoing communications between Iranian and German officials have taken place over the past few days. Baqaei Hamaneh criticized Germany's reaction to a matter related to Iran's judicial authority concerning an Iranian national involved in serious crimes, including an incident in Shiraz, deeming it unacceptable.

He described the judicial process as transparent and fair, stating that the offenses committed are severe and the penalties are clearly defined under Iranian law. Discussions are underway in the Foreign Ministry and other related agencies to ensure consular services for Iranians living in Germany, and this matter will continue to be monitored.

On the possibility of Western parties activating the "snapback" mechanism, Baqaei Hamaneh

noted that all potential scenarios have been evaluated, and it has been made clear that there are no grounds for resorting to the mechanisms outlined in Resolution 2231. He asserted that Iran remains committed to its obligations under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The measures taken by Iran were a response to the imbalance created after the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA and were aimed at countering the failures of European parties to fulfill their commitments.

The spokesperson reiterated that Iran believes the U.S. presence in the region contributes to instability, asserting that a consistent principle of Iran's foreign policy is that the region will remain tense as long as it is confronted with the presence of foreign forces, including the U.S. He added that this situation does not affect Iran's resolve to defend itself, but it is essential for regional countries to collaborate to ensure regional security.

Baqaei emphasized that the protection of national sovereignty and territorial integrity is a principle that guides Iran's responses to Israeli aggressions. He reiterated that Iran will utilize all material and spiritual resources in responding to such aggressions. The spokesperson stated that Iran's official position on the rejection of weapons of mass destruction and the peaceful nature of its nuclear program is clear, and as the leadership has indicated, Iran will be equipped with whatever is necessary for its defense.

In response to a question regarding the changing composition of judges at The Hague and the legal pursuit of holding Israeli officials accountable for their crimes, Baqaei Hamaneh expressed support for all processes that confront the impunity of the Israeli regime. He noted that there have been communications with the International Criminal Court (ICC) despite Iran not being a member.

Addressing concerns about potential Israeli influence on judicial proceedings, he stated that such worries are grounded in a long history of the Israeli regime and its supporters attempting to obstruct legal accountability. Baqaei Hamaneh mentioned the immediate strong reactions from U.S. officials following the ICC prosecutor's request to pursue legal actions against Israeli leaders, expressing hope that this would not hinder the quest for justice.

## Israeli Settlers Launch Brutal Attack, Set Fire to Palestinian Homes, Cars

GAZA (Dispatches) - Hundreds of Israeli settlers conducted a brutal attack in the occupied West Bank city of Ramallah.

The settlers set fire to numerous homes and vehicles of Palestinians and then moved to the main road connecting Ramallah to other cities, targeting Palestinian cars passing by.

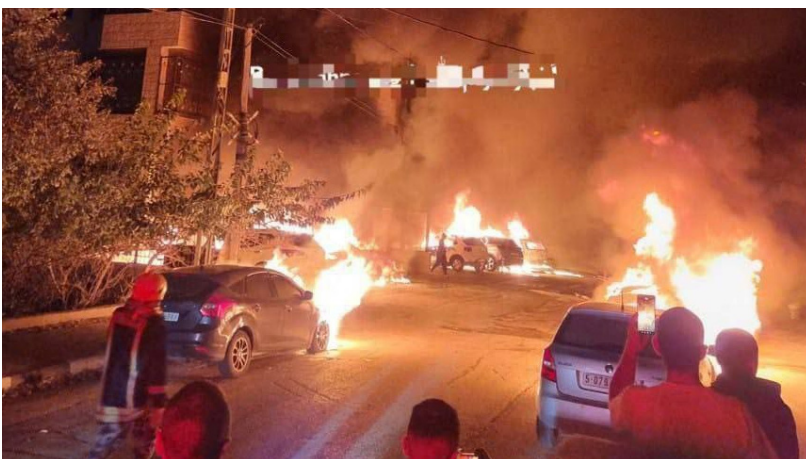
They stormed the city of al-Bireh, near Ramallah, and burned Palestinian property and vehicles.

A woman sustained injuries after the settlers hurled stones at her vehicle, according to Palestinian news outlets.

Tension has been running high across the West Bank because of Israel's genocidal war in the Gaza Strip, which has killed at least 43,341 people, mostly women and children, since last year's October.

The Monday settler attack came as the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas warned of Israel's plans to annex the West Bank and drive Palestinians out.

"We warn of the grave danger posed by the plans led by the extremist occupation regime and illegal settler groups to displace the residents of Palestinian villages in the



occupied West Bank," Hamas official Mahmoud Mardawi said.

Israel's far-right minister Bezalel Smotrich called for the full annexation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip last week.

Smotrich asserted that Israel should unequivocally declare there would be no Palestinian state.

He repeated his proposal of expanding Israeli settlements within the West Bank and other occupied territories.

Meanwhile Gaza's Civil Defense has censured international organizations for their inaction on the suffering of Palestinians amid a genocidal Israeli war on the

besieged territory.

Mahmoud Basal, the agency's spokesman, made the remarks on Sunday, as Israel continues its bloody attacks on the Gaza Strip and impedes the humanitarian response to the catastrophe there.

"All our appeals to international organizations and humanitarian institutions have not changed the current situation in Gaza," he said.

"Our message to the free people of the world is to increase pressure on the international community to enable service providers to fulfill their humanitarian duty."

### Iran After Regional Peace, Stability



TEHRAN (Tasnim) - All regional states have come to the conclusion that Iran is pushing for peace and stability in the West Asia region, whereas the Israeli regime is escalating tensions, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said.

Addressing a cabinet meeting, Pezeshkian hailed the Iranian nation for seeking independence, peace and friendship, and standing against cruelty.

"We have never initiated war and never advised any country to enter war. It has been the United States that has always instigated wars in various parts of the world, including our region", he said, adding that the US is today keeping the "flames of war burning" in West Asia by supporting the Zionist regime.

He also said that the Zionist regime has sought to foment war in the region by taking acts of aggression, adding that the regime assassinated Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh on the inaugural day of the incumbent Iranian government, as part of its warmongering policies.

Iran exercised restraint in hopes of helping establish a ceasefire in Gaza, but the Zionist regime intensified its crimes and spread its aggression to Lebanon, Pezeshkian noted, his official website reported.

The president also criticized the US and European countries for their hypocritical approach towards the crisis in the region, saying, "If they really want a halt to war and bloodshed, why do they veto proposed UN Security Council resolutions on cessation of hostilities?"

"Today, all regional countries have become certain that the Islamic Republic of Iran is seeking to establish peace and stability in the region, while the Zionist regime, with the support of the US and Western countries, is seeking to escalate crisis and war", Pezeshkian said.

The president also warned the Zionist regime that it will receive a crushing response if it violates Iran's security.

"If the Israeli regime accepts a ceasefire and stops the massacre of innocent people, it may affect the type and severity of Iran's response, he said.

### President Declares Economic Warfare Amidst Domestic Challenges



TEHRAN - In his address during a ceremony honoring participants in the national wheat production initiative, President Masoud Pezeshkian emphasized the country's struggle against a comprehensive economic war. He stated that the budget allocated for wheat last year was insufficient, but with permission from the Supreme Leader, the government was able to pay wheat farmers.

Pezeshkian expressed the government's commitment to enhancing public satisfaction with administrative processes, stressing the importance of simplifying procedures. "In every cabinet meeting, we emphasize the need to achieve the satisfaction of the people," he noted.

The President characterized the current situation as an all-out economic war, asserting that while the enemy cannot immobilize Iran militarily, economic challenges remain significant. He claimed that the adversary aims to cripple the country through economic sanctions, but with the support of active economic participants and government cooperation, such efforts will fail.

Pezeshkian highlighted the necessity of executing the best strategies for managing the country's economy, rather than merely maximizing output. He called for informed decision-making involving expert consultation.

He also stressed the importance of acting in accordance with justice and rights within the framework of Islamic governance. "When we operate based on factions and groups, we err," he remarked, advocating for reforms grounded in fairness and justice, which he identified as essential for progress.

In discussing the current economic conditions, Pezeshkian asked how the existing situation aligns with the vision outlined by the Supreme Leader, stating, "Our path is one of dignity, which we do not see reflected in society today." He called for necessary reforms to change this trajectory.



# IRAN NEWS



## Terror Ringleader Behind Taftan Attack Eliminated

ZAHEDAN (IRNA) - The Iranian police spokesman has announced that the ringleader of a terrorist group responsible for the deadly attack on a police convoy in southeastern Iran has been killed.

"We have fulfilled our promise to avenge the pure blood of our police martyrs," Brigadier General Saeed Montazer al-Mahdi said on Sunday.

He added that the main members of the assassination team were either eliminated or apprehended in less than a week. The so-called Jaish al-Adl terrorist group claimed responsibility for the deadly ambush on Iranian police vehicles in Sistan and Baluchestan's Taftan County last week. Ten law enforcement officers were martyred in the attack.

## Iran and Cuba Sign Postal Services Agreement, Pledge AI Cooperation



TEHRAN - On the first day of his visit to Havana, Iran's Minister of Communications and Information Technology discussed advancing scientific, technological, and communications cooperation with Cuba's Deputy Prime Minister. He expressed Iran's readiness to share its knowledge and experience, particularly in artificial intelligence (AI).

Seyyed Sattar Hashemi announced the signing of a cooperation agreement between Iran and Cuba in postal services, highlighting numerous opportunities for collaboration. "We hope to move into the operational phase following these meetings," he noted.

Hashemi revealed that Iran has presented initial proposals from both government and private sectors for ICT projects, emphasizing that with the strong historical ties between the two nations, joint technological initiatives can be effectively implemented.

Addressing the Cuban Deputy Prime Minister, Hashemi reiterated Iran's willingness to share expertise and collaborate on various fronts, with a specific focus on AI.

He also conveyed Iranian President Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian's emphasis on deepening relations with Cuba. "Upon my return, I will report the outcomes and achievements of this trip to him," Hashemi stated.

Hashemi further praised Cuba's firm stance against global powers' hegemonic ambitions and noted Iran's robust response to acts of aggression by the Israeli regime. He emphasized that Iran's defensive capabilities are a testament to its dedication to legitimate defense and deterrence.

Eduardo Martínez, Cuba's Deputy Prime Minister for Science and Technology, commended Iran's scientific and technological advancements. He expressed enthusiasm for expanding bilateral collaboration in telecommunications, postal services, and AI.

Martínez described the groundwork for Iran-Cuba cooperation as "highly promising," highlighting the positive impact of Hashemi's visit in strengthening ties. He emphasized that this visit would herald a new phase in the relations between Iran and Cuba.

The Cuban Deputy Prime Minister expressed gratitude for Iran's firm stance against the Israeli regime's aggressions and reiterated Cuba's solidarity with Iran in countering global hegemonic forces and supporting Palestinian rights.

IRAN NEWS/ECONOMIC DESK



## Iran Records \$27b in Oil Exports Over the Past 7 Months

TEHRAN - Mohammad Rezvani-Far, Head of Iran's Customs Administration, announced that Iran's foreign trade reached a total value of \$99.7 billion over the first seven months of the current Iranian year (March-October 2024). This figure includes \$60.2 billion in exports (comprising oil, non-oil goods, and technical and engineering services) and \$39.5 billion in imports (including gold bullion).

Rezvani-Far elaborated that during this period, non-oil exports reached \$32.5 billion, marking a 15% increase. Crude oil and fuel oil exports amounted to \$27 billion, while technical and engineering services exports reached \$700 million. On the import side, Iran's imports, excluding gold, totaled \$36.1 billion, and imports of standard gold bullion reached \$3.4 billion.

The Deputy Minister of Economy noted that the total weight of imports, excluding gold, increased by 2.7% to 21.7 million tons.

Rezvani-Far explained that Iran's trade balance for non-oil exports, excluding crude oil, fuel oil, and technical services, showed a deficit of around \$7 billion. However, when including oil and technical services, the country achieved a foreign trade surplus of \$20.7 billion.

For the seven-month period, Iran's non-oil exports reached a total weight of

88.7 million tons, a year-on-year increase of 11.48%. Additionally, the average value per ton of exported goods rose by 3%, reaching \$367.

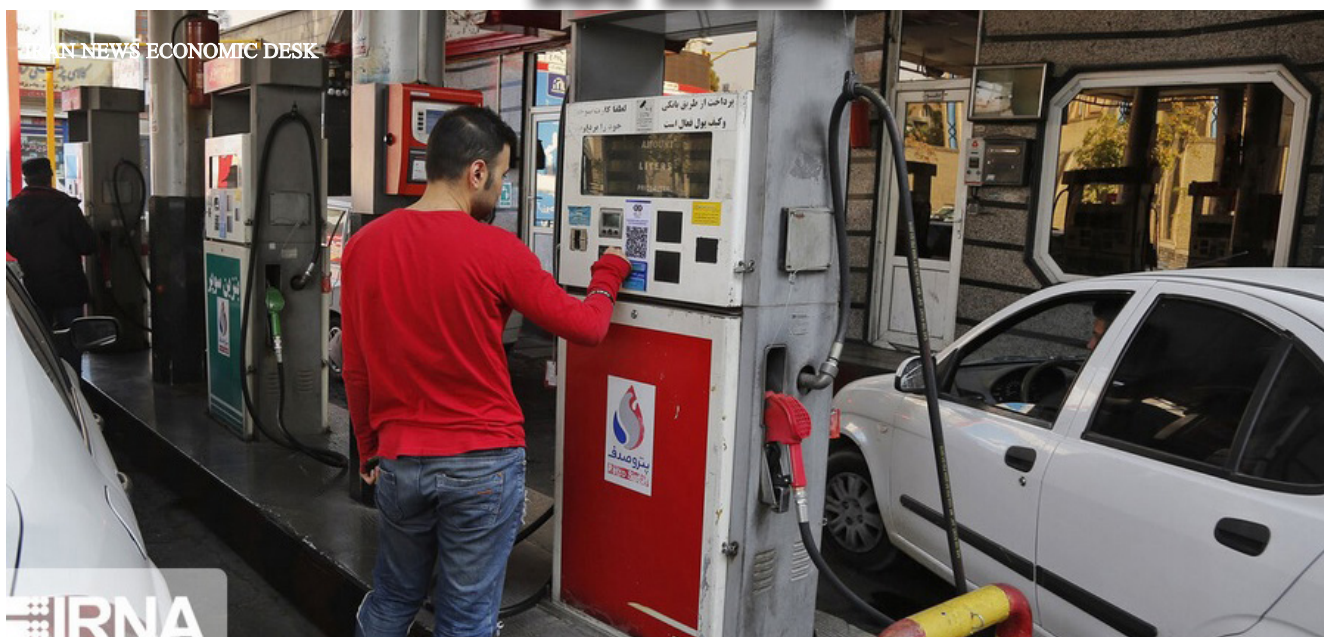
Iran exported 37.9 million tons of petrochemical products valued at \$15.2 billion, which represented a 23% increase in weight and a 24% rise in value compared to the same period last year.

China remained Iran's top export destination over these seven months, importing \$8.6 billion worth of goods, followed by Iraq at \$7.3 billion, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) at \$4.2 billion, Turkey at \$3.3 billion, Afghanistan at \$1.3 billion, Pakistan at \$1.2 billion, and India at \$1.1 billion. These seven countries collectively accounted for 82% of the weight and 83% of the value of Iran's total exports.

As for imports, the UAE was the largest supplier to Iran, exporting \$12 billion worth of goods, followed by China at \$10.2 billion, Turkey at \$6.6 billion, Germany at \$1.4 billion, Russia at \$1 billion, India at \$900 million, and Hong Kong at \$700 million. These seven countries accounted for 77% of the weight and 83% of the value of Iran's total imports during this period.

The average customs value per ton of imported goods was \$1,819, reflecting a 6% increase from the same period last year.

## Gasoline Imports Not Beneficial for Iran



TEHRAN - Mohammad Mahdi Bahrami, President of Iran's Union of Energy Scientific Associations, stated that gasoline imports are not in the country's best interest, both economically and politically.

In an interview with IRNA, Hashem Oraei explained that importing gasoline should be avoided for two primary reasons.

He outlined the first reason as economic, saying, "If gasoline consumption continues at this rate, we could need to allocate 60% of our foreign currency earnings just to import gasoline and diesel." Oraei, a professor at Sharif University of Technology, emphasized that Iran cannot afford to dedicate such a large portion of its foreign currency reserves to fuel imports without impacting other essential areas such as medicine and factory supplies.

The second concern, he said, is political and security-related. Relying on gasoline imports would make Iran vulnerable, which he described as both embarrassing and dangerous.

Oraei stressed that gasoline production in Iran has reached its limit and that consumption levels and smuggling are unsustainable. He called for policy reforms, particularly pricing adjustments, paired with adequate support for vulnerable groups.

Addressing proposals for a three-tier gasoline pricing system, Oraei described them as temporary, "patchwork" measures that only delay addressing the real issue. He argued that real solutions require the courage to address the core issues rather than superficial fixes.

He pointed out that Iran's high inflation rate—30% to 40%—combined with a lack of price adjustments over years has made gasoline heavily subsidized, and this subsidy approach has now become economically unsustainable.

Oraei believes that subsidy cuts should be intelligently implemented. The current subsidy structure, he argued, benefits wealthier people disproportionately, while vulnerable populations receive much less. Statistics show that the wealthiest decile receives 29 times more energy subsidy than the poorest decile, contrary to the original intent of supporting the needy.

He warned that Iran's current gasoline consumption rate, at 124 million liters per day, exceeds production, which averages 110–115 million liters per day. Last year alone, Iran spent \$4 billion on fuel imports, with projections for this year ranging between \$6 and \$8 billion.

The discrepancy between domestic gasoline prices (1,500 to 3,000 toman per liter) and prices in neighboring countries, such as Afghanistan (50,000 toman), has fueled an increase in smuggling. Oraei estimates that fuel smuggling profits could reach 1 trillion toman daily.

He concluded that those who resist gasoline subsidy cuts are likely linked to the "gasoline mafia" and benefit from the current system.

## 31% Increase in Iran's Exports to Afghanistan, Surpassing \$1b



TEHRAN - Hossein Roustaei, Iran's trade representative in Afghanistan, announced that Iran's non-oil exports to Afghanistan surpassed \$1.07 billion in the first six months of the Iranian year 1403 (March-September 2024), marking a 31% increase compared to the same period last year.

Roustaei stated that the value of Iran's non-oil exports to Afghanistan rose by \$254 million, with an additional 559,000 tons in weight. Overall, this brought the total non-oil exports to \$1.07 billion and 2.523 million tons in weight, reflecting a 28% growth in volume compared to the previous year.

Key export items to Afghanistan included light oils and petroleum products, natural gas, iron and steel ingots, polyethylene compounds, eggs and poultry feed, non-velvet floor coverings, urea, light and heavy hydrocarbons, cement, aluminum cans, potatoes, shoes, preforms, tomatoes, various tiles and ceramics, tomato paste, apples, different types of polyethylene, powdered milk, petroleum bitumen, and agricultural tractors.

In terms of imports, Roustaei reported that Iran's imports from Afghanistan also grew significantly, reaching over \$33 million in the first half of the current year—a 192% increase in value and a 598% rise in weight compared to the same period last year.

Major items contributing to the increase in imports included barley (up by \$9.7 million), livestock corn (up by \$3.7 million), rolled iron or non-alloy steel products (up by \$8.4 million), aromatic plants for the fragrance industry (up by \$722,000), sunflower seeds (up by \$170,000), peanuts (up by \$490,000), and turmeric (up by \$393,000).

Roustaei highlighted key imports from Afghanistan as barley, livestock corn, rolled steel and iron products, cocoa butter substitute oil, aromatic plants for perfume production, sunflower seeds, rue, peanuts, dried fruits, pepper, mung beans, sesame seeds, turmeric, various live sheep, and other legumes.

## Gas Agreement With Russia Soon to Become Operational



TEHRAN - Reza Fotouhi, the head of the overseas cultivation project at Iran's Ministry of Agriculture, reported that Iranian-led overseas farming initiatives are ongoing in countries including Ghana, Armenia, Pakistan, Brazil, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan. Fotouhi explained that these efforts, started by the government in 2016, have since been taken over by private investors. Currently, Iranian investors cultivate barley, corn, oilseeds, and rice across roughly 228,000 hectares in these countries.

Fotouhi emphasized that all investments in overseas cultivation come from the private sector. He also mentioned that African countries, especially Ghana, Kenya, and Tanzania, are key areas for tea cultivation. Additionally, Iran imports meat from Kenya as part of these initiatives.

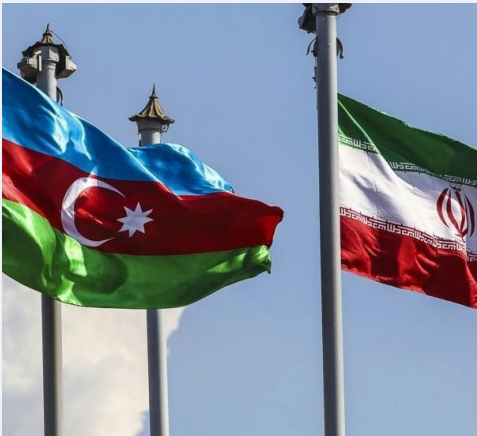
Regarding Ukraine, Fotouhi noted that Iranian investors had started overseas farming projects there as well, but the onset of war with Russia has forced these projects to halt. He expressed hope that, with the end of the conflict, Iran could resume activities in Ukraine. Fotouhi also highlighted Afghanistan as a new destination, where an Iranian investor plans to cultivate sugar beets on 500 hectares, supporting Iran's need for sugar and potential livestock projects.

Fotouhi stated that while Iran's primary focus in overseas cultivation is securing essential goods, the Ministry of Agriculture also aims to establish livestock farming in Afghanistan for the production of various types of livestock. He confirmed that Iran's agriculture ministry backs any overseas farming in Afghanistan, provided it meets import standards set by the Iranian Plant Protection Organization to prevent the spread of plant diseases.

Fotouhi further discussed the role of overseas farming in Iran's Seventh Development Plan, which sets a goal of 2 million hectares for such projects. He emphasized that achieving this goal requires collaboration from other government sectors, including support from the foreign ministry for diplomatic and visa-related issues, as well as financial backing from the economy ministry and central bank.

All produce from overseas cultivation projects, he noted, would be purchased by the government at market rates, as part of Iran's commitment to food security. Fotouhi concluded by noting that many developed countries, such as the U.S., China, India, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Japan, also meet a portion of their food needs through overseas cultivation projects.

## Weight Limit Imposed on Goods Entering Azerbaijan



TEHRAN - Mehran Fekri, Vice President of the Iran-Azerbaijan Joint Chamber of Commerce, explained the rationale behind Azerbaijan's new restriction on the weight of incoming commercial trucks. This limit, set at 40 tons, aligns with international standards in many countries, where trucks are not permitted to carry more than 22 tons of cargo. The weight of the cargo, combined with the vehicle itself, should not exceed 40 tons. Fekri noted that similar restrictions are already in place in Russia and several European nations, although Turkey currently has no such limitations on cargo entering from Azerbaijan.

According to Fekri, Azerbaijan recently began enforcing these limits on both Iranian and non-Iranian trucks in an effort to standardize its transportation regulations. This measure came into effect just yesterday, preventing entry for trucks that surpass the 40-ton weight threshold.

One of the main factors driving Azerbaijan's new regulations is an attempt to curb fuel smuggling from Iran. Some truck drivers have been modifying their fuel tanks to carry extra diesel fuel for smuggling, which adds to the vehicle's weight. Additionally, some drivers overfill their cargo to reduce customs fees, further increasing the total weight of their trucks. Azerbaijan's updated standards aim to prevent these practices.

Fekri further noted that international transportation has its own set of regulations, which were often overlooked in past trade interactions between Iran and Azerbaijan. Historically, trade between the two countries was conducted in a more traditional and unregulated manner, but the new rules have presented challenges for some traders, especially those accustomed to the previous system.

While the weight restriction might slightly raise the cost of transporting goods to Azerbaijan, Fekri explained that the brunt of the financial impact will likely fall on drivers, as they can no longer earn extra income by carrying excess cargo.

He also highlighted that similar weight checks exist on goods entering Iran, where weigh stations monitor truck weight on highways.



### 9 Killed After Indonesia's Mount Lewotobi Laki-laki Erupts

JAKARTA (Dispatches) - At least nine people died after Mount Lewotobi Laki-laki in eastern Indonesia erupted yesterday, spewing explosive plumes of lava and forcing authorities to evacuate several nearby villages, officials said today.

Mount Lewotobi Laki-laki, located on Flores Island in East Nusa Tenggara province, erupted on Sunday at 23:57 local time (15:57 GMT), belching a fiery-red column of lava, volcanic ash and incandescent rocks. Hadi Wijaya, a spokesperson for The Center of Volcanology and Geological Hazard Mitigation (PVMBG), said today.

"After the eruption, there was power outage and then it was raining and big lightning which caused panic among residents," he told Reuters, adding that the authority had raised the status of the volcano to level IV or the highest.



### Israeli Authorities Probe Suspected Gaza Intelligence Leak by Netanyahu Aide



RISHON LE-ZION (Dispatches) - A suspected leak of classified Gaza documents involving an aide to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has jolted Israeli politics and outraged the families of hostages held by Hamas who have been pushing for a deal to get their loved ones home.

Details of the case have trickled out slowly because of a gag order. But a magistrate's ruling partly lifting the order has provided an initial glimpse of the case that the court said had compromised security sources and may have harmed Israel's efforts to release the hostages.

"Classified and sensitive intelligence information was taken from IDF (Israel Defence Forces) systems and taken out illegally," a ruling by the Rishon Le-Zion Magistrates' Court said on Sunday, which may have caused "serious damage to the state's security and posed a risk to information sources".

In that, the court said, the leak could have hurt efforts to release the hostages. Netanyahu has denied any wrongdoing by his office staffers and said in a statement on Saturday that he was only made aware of the leaked document by the media.

The four suspects - one a spokesman from Netanyahu's circle and three of them members of the security establishment - could not be reached for comment.

Details from the document in question were published by the German Bild newspaper on Sept. 6, according to Israeli newspaper Haaretz, one of the media outlets that had appealed the court to lift the gag order.

The article, labelled as an exclusive, purportedly outlined the negotiation strategy of Hamas, the Palestinian Islamist militant group that Israel has been fighting in Gaza for more than a year.

Around that time, the United States, Qatar and Egypt were mediating ceasefire talks between Israel and Hamas, that were to include a deal to release hostages held in Gaza. But the talks faltered with Israel and Hamas trading blame for the deadlock. The article in question largely corresponded with Netanyahu's allegations against Hamas over the impasse.

## Moldova's Pro-EU President Maia Sandu Wins Re-Election



LONDON (Dispatches) - Moldova's pro-EU incumbent Maia Sandu on Sunday won a tense presidential runoff, beating her rival backed by a pro-Russian party in what she described as a "lesson in democracy".

The election in the ex-Soviet republic that lies sandwiched between war-torn Ukraine and the European Union has been overshadowed by allegations of meddling by Moscow.

The key vote took place just two weeks after a referendum backed joining the EU by a razor-thin margin.

Sandu stood at 54.94 percent of the vote against 45.06 percent for Alexandr Stoianoglo, who is supported by the pro-Russian Socialists and whom Sandu fired as prosecutor general last year, according to near-complete results published by the election commission.

"Today, dear Moldovans, you have given a lesson in democracy, worthy of being written in history books... Freedom, truth, and justice have prevailed," Sandu declared.

Earlier, the 52-year-old former World Bank economist thanked jubilant supporters for "their honest vote".

Her rival Stoianoglo, 57, urged people "to remain calm, regardless of the figures".

EU chief Ursula von der Leyen congratulated Sandu on her re-election victory and the country's "European future", saying it took "a rare kind of strength to overcome the challenges you've faced in this election".

French President Emmanuel Macron said democracy had "triumphed over all interference and all maneuvers".

Like in Georgia, another ex-Soviet country where the ruling party won a contested parliamentary election last weekend, Russia has been accused of seeking to sway voters. Moscow has denied the allegations.

Moldovan authorities reported "attacks, provocations and attempts at destabilisation" on Sunday.

Police said they were investigating Russia's alleged use of "organised transportation" to Belarus, Azerbaijan and Turkey so people living in Russia could vote at Moldovan missions in those countries.

Cyberattacks and fake bomb threats also targeted out-of-country voting operations, authorities said.

Turnout was higher than in the first round on October 20, when Sandu came out ahead with 42.5 percent and runner-up Stoianoglo got 26 percent.

"It is very important (to vote) because a change toward the better matters... (We want) Moldova to be a European country," Natalia Grajdeanu, 45, a wedding planner living in Ireland, told AFP as she voted in Chisinau.

But others expressed reluctance. Grigore Gritcan, a retired railway worker from the pro-Russian separatist region of Transnistria, said the ruling party is "deceiving" voters.

"Let there be peace, what we have now is not peace. People have nothing to eat, no work," he told AFP. Sandu applied for Moldova to join the EU after Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Accession negotiations formally opened in June.

In the October 20 referendum, 50.35 percent backed EU membership, with Sandu blaming "foreign interference" for the narrow result in the country of 2.6 million people.

Police said they uncovered a Russian vote-buying scheme that could have affected up to a quarter of the ballots. Casting his vote on Sunday, Stoianoglo said he had "no relations with the Kremlin". While he also favours joining the EU, he boycotted the referendum.

Moldova is deeply polarised.

A large diaspora and the capital mostly favour joining the EU, while rural areas and the pro-Russian separatist regions of Transnistria and Gagauzia are against.

Sandu lost in the territory of Moldova itself, election results showed, with her owing her victory to the diaspora.

"This is what tipped the election," said Florent Parmentier, a political scientist at Paris-based Sciences Po, noting Sandu's "dependence on the outside".

### Bolivian Ex-President Accuses Gov't of Ignoring Dialogue Offer



LA PAZ (Dispatches) - Former president Evo Morales accused Bolivia's government of ignoring his request for dialogue over protests by his supporters in which 200 soldiers have been taken hostage.

Morales made the accusation on his second day of a hunger strike, which he launched demanding the government negotiate with him.

"I asked for immediate dialogue... and the government's response was to arrest... comrades and take them to La Paz," he said in a brief interview with AFP.

Morales's supporters began blocking roads starting last month to prevent his arrest on what the ex-leader calls trumped-up rape charges aimed at thwarting his political comeback.

After 21 days of blockades, losses are estimated at \$2.1 billion in various sectors, according to the Ministry of Productive Development.

On Friday, Morales supporters took more than 200 military personnel hostage in the central Chapare province, according to the foreign ministry.

The defense ministry said it "strongly condemn(ed) the armed and violent takeover of military units," without giving any further details on the fate of the hostages.

## Israeli Airstrikes Kill at Least 31 People in Gaza

CAIRO (Dispatches) - Israeli airstrikes killed at least 31 people in the Gaza Strip on Sunday, Palestinian medics said, with nearly half of the deaths in northern areas where the army has waged a month-long campaign it says is aimed at preventing Hamas from regrouping.

Palestinians said the new aerial and ground offensives and forced evacuations were "ethnic cleansing" aimed at emptying two northern Gaza towns and a refugee camp of their population in order to create buffer zones. Israel denies this, saying it is fighting Hamas militants who launch attacks from there.

Medics said at least 13 Palestinians were killed in separate attacks on houses in Beit Lahiya town and Jabalia, the largest of the enclave's eight historic camps and the focus of the army's new offensive.

The rest were killed in separate Israeli airstrikes in Gaza City and in southern areas, including one in Khan Younis, which health officials said had killed eight people, including four children.

Later on Sunday, health officials at the Kamal Adwan Hospital near Beit Lahiya said the facility came under Israeli tank fire and that one child hospitalized at the hospital was critically wounded.

Hussam Abu Safiya, the hospital's director said the incident took place after a delegation from the World Health Organization visited the facility and evacuated some patients.

He said while evacuating the wounded was important, it was more important to dispatch specialized medical teams to north Gaza hospitals that have become overwhelmed by the number of casualties.

Abu Safiya said the tank fire hit the water supplies, the courtyard, and the neonatal intensive care unit.

COGAT, the Israeli army's Palestinian civilian affairs agency, said the explosion resulted from an explosive device planted by Palestinian militants



and not an Israeli attack.

"The terrorist organizations continue to exploit civilian infrastructure, medical facilities, and international aid organizations for their terror activities," a COGAT statement said late on Sunday.

Hamas has repeatedly denied using civilian facilities such as hospitals, schools, and mosques, for military purposes.

On Saturday, the Israeli military sent a new army division to Jabalia to join two other operating battalions, a statement said. It said hundreds of Palestinian militants have been killed in the "battles" since the raid began on Oct. 5.

Meanwhile, COGAT said it facilitated the launch of the second round of a polio vaccination campaign in northern Gaza on Saturday and that 58,604 children have received a dose.

The Gaza health ministry said Israel's military offensive in northern Gaza was stopping them from vaccinating thousands of children in Jabalia, Beit Lahiya, and Beit Hanoun.

It said one clinic had come under Israeli fire while parents brought their children for the anti-polio dose on Saturday and that four children had been injured.

The head of the World Health Organization said in a statement the clinic incident took place despite a humanitarian pause agreed upon by the two warring parties, Israel and Hamas, to allow the vaccination campaign.

"A @WHO team was at the site just before. This attack, during a humanitarian pause, jeopardises the sanctity of health protection for children and may deter parents from bringing their children for vaccination," Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a post on X on Saturday.

"These vital humanitarian-area-specific pauses must be absolutely respected. Ceasefire!" he said.

## Harris Vows Gaza Peace, Trump Tone Darkens in Final Hours

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Kamala Harris courted voters angered by the Gaza war while Donald Trump doubled down on violent rhetoric with a comment about journalists being shot as the tense US election campaign entered its final hours.

The Democratic vice president and the Republican former president frantically blitzed several swing states as they tried to win over the last holdouts with less than 36 hours left until polls open on Election Day on Tuesday.

Trump predicted a "landslide", while Harris told a raucous rally in must-win Michigan that "we have momentum -- it's on our side."

The 2024 race is going down to the wire, with more key states effectively tied at this point than in any comparable election. Over 77.6 million people have cast early votes, around half of the total ballots cast in 2020.

With the clock ticking, Harris, 60, spent the day in Michigan where she risks losing the critical support of a 200,000-strong Arab-American community that has denounced US handling of the Israel-Hamas war.

"As president, I will do everything in my power to end the war in Gaza," Harris said at the start of her speech at Michigan State University, noting that there were leaders of the community present.

But the rest of the speech was upbeat, with Harris spending more time on urging people to get out and vote than on attacks on Trump.

"We got two days to get this done," she said. Earlier, Harris quoted scripture in a majority-Black church in Detroit, Michigan and urging Americans to look beyond Trump.

"Let us turn the page and write the next chapter of our history," she said. Trump on Sunday zigzagged through Pennsylvania, North Carolina and Georgia -- the three biggest swing-state prizes in the Electoral College system that awards US states



influence according to their population.

The 78-year-old Trump, the oldest major party candidate in US history, added to his increasingly dark rhetoric by musing to supporters in Lititz, Pennsylvania, that he wouldn't mind if journalists were shot.

Discussing his the near-miss assassination attempt against him in July, he said to laughter that to be hit again "somebody would have to shoot through the fake news -- and I don't mind that so much."

Trump called Democrats "demonic" and, despite no evidence of any meaningful election cheating so far, claimed that Democrats in Pennsylvania "are fighting so hard to steal this damn thing."

Adding to fears that he would not accept a defeat in 2024, Trump added that he "shouldn't have left" the White House after he lost his 2020 reelection effort to Joe Biden.

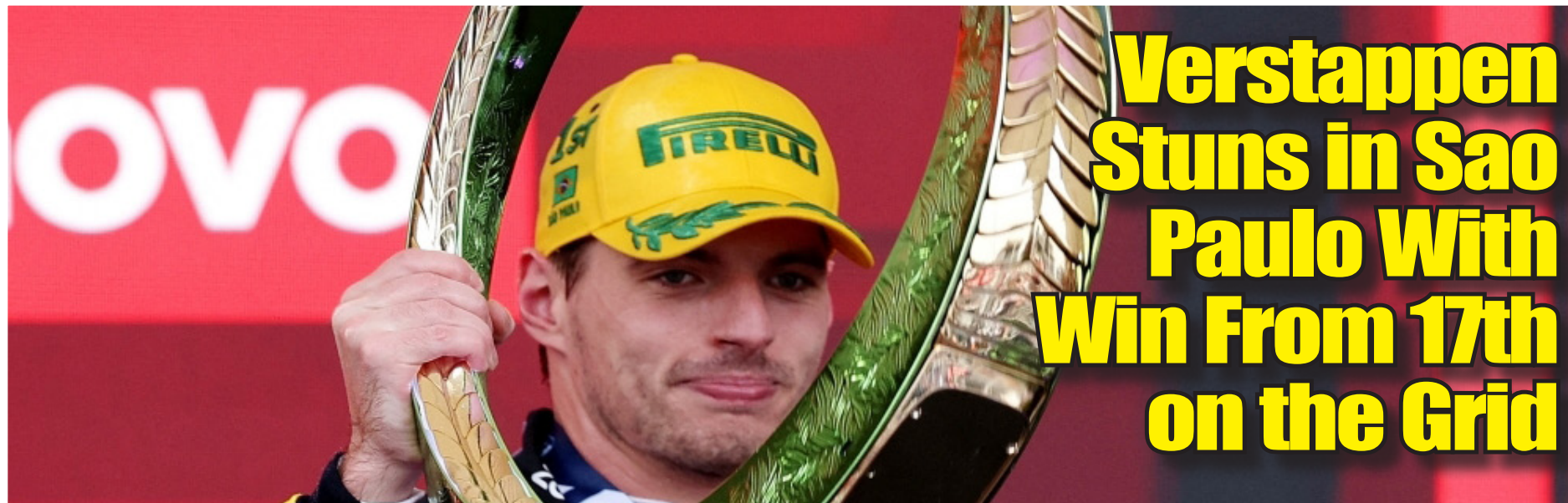
Trump meanwhile said in Macon, Georgia, that he had asked vaccine-skeptic Robert F. Kennedy Jr, who dropped his own presidential bid to support Trump, to work on "women's health" and "pesticides."

His comments came a day after Kennedy caused consternation by saying that a Trump White House would order US water systems to remove fluoride from public water supplies.

Later in another rambling speech in Kinston, North Carolina Trump said "we're going to have on Tuesday a landslide that's too big to rig."

The polls however show that the result is likely to be historically tight. A final New York Times/Siena poll Sunday flagged incremental changes in swing states, but the results from all seven remained within the margin of error.





## Verstappen Stuns in Sao Paulo With Win From 17th on the Grid

SAO PAULO (Dispatches) - Red Bull's Max Verstappen had his fourth Formula One title within reach after a stunning drive to victory from 17th on the grid in Brazil on Sunday dealt a shattering blow to Lando Norris's hopes.

Norris, who started the wet and chaotic Sao Paulo race on pole position and 44 points behind Verstappen, finished sixth for McLaren.

The title gap blew out to 62 points with three rounds remaining and 86 points still to be won. If results go his way, Verstappen could hit the championship jackpot in the next race down the floodlit Las Vegas Strip on Nov. 23.

In a crash-strewn race shortened to 69 laps, halted after 33 and re-started, Verstappen took his eighth win of the season -- and one of the best of his career -- by 19.477 seconds and with a bonus point for fastest lap.

"We stayed out of trouble, we made the right calls and stayed calm and we were flying so all of these things together made that result possible," said Verstappen.

"But I mean unbelievable, to win here from so far back on the grid."

Team boss Christian Horner acclaimed a masterclass of a drive from one of the greats, the win stopping the rot at Red Bull and ending a 10-race losing streak for their Dutch driver dating back to Spain in June.

Amid the mayhem at Interlagos, Alpine took an astonishing points bonanza with Esteban Ocon second and Pierre Gasly third -- rocketing the Renault-owned team from ninth to sixth in the standings.

"I don't think anyone would have got that on their bingo card, it's just fantastic," said Gasly.

George Russell finished fourth for Mercedes with Ferrari's Charles Leclerc fifth.

Yuki Tsunoda was seventh for RB with McLaren's Oscar Piastri eighth after a 10-second penalty, Liam Lawson ninth for RB and Mercedes's seven-times champion Lewis Hamilton 10th.

Verstappen now has 393 points to Norris's 331, with Leclerc on 307. McLaren lead the constructors' standings with 593 points to Ferrari's 557.

"It was a tough day, I did my best. I've had a lot of good races, it was about time that something didn't go right," said Norris, who won the Saturday sprint.

He ended the race under investigation for a procedural breach at the start but kept the position after stewards imposed a reprimand and 5,000 euros (\$5,438) fine. Russell received the same punishment.

Mercedes were also fined a total of 10,000 euros for tyre pressure breaches.

The day started early, with qualifying held at 0730 local after rain forced a postponement on Saturday.

Verstappen was caught out by red flags in that session, his 12th place on the grid becoming 17th after an engine penalty was applied.

The first race start was aborted when Aston Martin's Lance Stroll went off on the formation lap in treacherous conditions, with Norris then leading some of the cars away before the overhead lights had changed to signal permission to move.

## Croatia and Argentina Finalize United Cup Lineup



SYDNEY (Dispatches) - Croatia and Argentina have taken the last two spots in the field for the third edition of the United Cup mixed team tournament to be played in Sydney and Perth at the start of next season, organisers said on Monday.

Donna Vekic and Borna Coric will lead Croatia for the third straight year at the \$10 million event as they battle it out with the United States and Canada in Group A, while Argentina will take on hosts Australia and Britain in Group F.

"It's honestly my favourite tournament of the year," Vekic, who won a singles silver medal at the Paris Olympics this year, said in a news release.

"We have great energy in the team. Borna has been my friend for more than 20 years. It feels like a little family. We are not a team, we are a family."

Argentina, who missed out on last year's United Cup after taking part in the inaugural edition, boast Tomas Martin Etcheverry and Nadia Podoroska as their top-ranked players.

The tournament starts on Dec. 27 with the final in Sydney on Jan. 5.

## Zverev Drops Ugo Humbert, Claims Paris Masters Title

PARIS (Dispatches) - Alexander Zverev of Germany needed just 76 minutes to crush Ugo Humbert 6-2, 6-2 in the final of the Rolex Paris Masters, disappointing the Frenchman on his home turf.

The third seed, Zverev produced 15 winners and nine unforced errors, compared to 12 and 25, respectively, for Humbert.

Zverev also won 91 percent of points on his first serve, 79 percent on his second as he achieved his seventh ATP Masters 1000 title. He lost only five points on his serve and never faced a break.

"I knew I had to play like this to win today," said Zverev, who got his 23rd career win in an ATP Tour final. "Ugo is an incredible player, but here in Paris, he plays even better than he usually does and I knew that. Once the crowd gets involved, it's going to be difficult. So, I had to take that away early, and I did, so I'm happy about that."

"It was not 100 percent guaranteed that I would be back at this level after Roland Garros two years ago, when I basically broke everything possible in my ankle. So, to win this title here in Paris means the world to me, and I'm sure it means everything to those in my box, because they have done so much for me."



He also has won ATP Masters titles in Rome (twice), Madrid (twice), Cincinnati and Montreal.

Humbert was the first Frenchman since Jo-Wilfried Tsonga in 2011 to reach the Paris final at the Accor Arena in Paris. He did so by defeating Russian Karen Khachanov in a tough three-set semifinal on Saturday.

"It was a beautiful week, despite my defeat today," Humbert said. "My feeling is that I gave it my all. I have no regrets."

"He was stronger than me in every aspect of tennis. I couldn't recover from yesterday's match enough, but congrats to him."

Humbert will rise to No. 14 in the ATP rankings.

"To have my family and team with me the whole week has been incredible. It's for moments like this why I do this every day, why I train."

With the win, Zverev will be the second seed at the Nitto ATP Finals, which begin Nov. 10.

Eighth-seeded Alex Michelsen captured a 6-3, 6-1 first-round win over Frenchman Harold Mayot in Metz, France.

Michelsen, a 20-year-old native Southern California, recorded seven aces and saved all nine break points against him.

## Celtics Beat Hornets 113-103 to Sweep Back-to-Back in Charlotte



CHARLOTTE (Dispatches) - Jayson Tatum scored 29 points, Payton Pritchard had 22 points on six 3-pointers and the Boston Celtics beat the Charlotte Hornets 113-103 for the second straight night at the Spectrum Centre.

Derrick White added 18 points and eight rebounds for the Celtics, who beat the Hornets 124-109 on Friday night. Boston improved to 6-1.

Charlotte's LaMelo Ball eclipsed the 30-point barrier for the fourth time this season, finishing with 36 points on 15-of-26 shooting before fouling out for the second straight game. Brandon Miller had 16 points in his return from a strained glute. Tatum was just 1 of 9 from beyond the arc, but converted 14 of 17 free throws.

There were no incidents on the court Saturday night after Boston player Grant Williams was assessed a flagrant-two foul and ejected after plowing over Tatum at midcourt.

No Jaylen Brown, no problem for the deep Celtics. Brown sat out with a hip flexor strain, but Boston didn't miss a beat, bolting to a 19-point lead in the second quarter. White stepped up his scoring and Jrue Holiday made big play after big play.

LaMelo Ball has to find a way to stay out of foul trouble. Ball picked up two quick fouls and had to be replaced and watch as the Celtics built a 21-9 first quarter lead. He's far too valuable to the Hornets to be sitting on the bench.

Meanwhile Luka Doncic had 32 points, nine rebounds and seven assists, Daniel Gafford scored a season-high 18 points, and the Dallas Mavericks beat the Orlando Magic 108-85.

The defending Western Conference champions outscored the Magic 30-9 in the first 9:30 of the second quarter en route to a 65-40 halftime lead. Dallas' largest lead was 33 points.

Orlando played its second game without Paolo Banchero, the No. 1 overall pick in the 2022 draft and 2023 Rookie of the Year, who suffered a torn right oblique last Wednesday.

Another Magic starter, Wendell Carter Jr., was limited to nine first-half minutes, six points and a rebound because of a strain of his left plantar fascia.

Franz Wagner led the Magic with 13 points, and Orlando scored well below its average of 111.7 points per game.

Kyrie Irving had 17 points, and Dereck Lively II had 11 points and 11 rebounds off Dallas' bench.

With the injuries, Orlando was outscored 52-36 in the paint and were a season-worst 19.5% on 3-pointers (8 of 41).

Gafford also had eight rebounds, bouncing back after having only six points and three rebounds in last Thursday's home loss to Houston.

Meanwhile Buddy Hield scored 27 points and the Golden State Warriors squandered a huge lead before outlasting the Houston Rockets 127-121 in overtime.

It's Golden State's 14th straight-regular season win over the Rockets and the eighth in a row in Houston.

The Warriors led by 31 points in the first half. The Rockets tied it with an 18-2 run to open the fourth quarter.

Golden State scored the first six points in overtime to make it 125-119 and went on to a third straight win without Steph Curry, who is out with a sprained left ankle.

The Warriors led by five before a 3-pointer by Jabari Smith Jr. cut the lead to 119-117 with 15.5 seconds to go in regulation. Aaron Holiday stole the ball from Draymond Green and he fouled out a few seconds later. Tari Eason made two free throws after that to send it to overtime.

## Caicedo's Strike Ruins Man United's Celebrations

MANCHESTER (Dispatches) - Moises Caicedo's blistering second-half strike cancelled out a Bruno Fernandes penalty as Chelsea salvaged a 1-1 draw with Manchester United, spoiling United's celebrations in their first Premier League game since manager Erik ten Hag was sacked.

Chelsea are fourth in the table on 18 points while United, who had interim manager Ruud van Nistelrooy in the dugout, are 13th on 12 points after 10 games.

"It was a lot of disappointment in the dressing room. We could have won the game," Fernandes said.

"We know that Erik has gone, it is not good for anyone at the club when the manager goes. The team is not the best, the results are not the best and he is the one who pays for it."

"Whenever you see a manager go you have to take some of the blame on yourself, it is because the team is not doing so well."

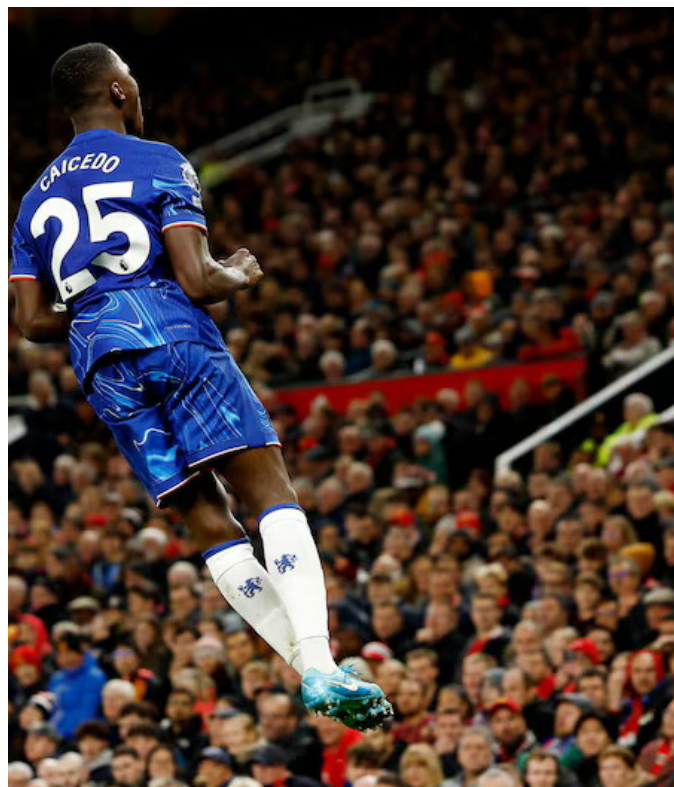
The United captain scored from the spot in the 70th minute after Chelsea goalkeeper Robert Sanchez caught Rasmus Hojlund's foot when diving for the ball. Fernandes sent Sanchez the wrong way, prompting a delighted Van Nistelrooy to leap in the air in celebration.

United briefly looked poised for their second league win in six outings but the mood in Old Trafford swiftly shifted four minutes later when Casemiro failed to fully clear Chelsea's corner, leaving Caicedo to fire a low volley that Andre Onana managed to just get a hand on, though he could not stop it sailing into the bottom corner.

"It was the chance to score a goal. I did it. I'm so happy," Caicedo told BBC Sport.

"We knew if we waited for a long time (to equalise) it was going to be complicated. I'm so happy to equalise."

"We deserved to win. We knew it would be a tough game but we



were prepared for it. I'm so happy for the team. It was a great fight."

Ten Hag was sacked on Monday with United languishing in 14th in the Premier League. Ruben Amorim was named as his replacement on Friday and will arrive at the club on Nov. 11.

A common refrain from Ten Hag was United's inability to score goals -- only Crystal Palace and lowly Southampton have fewer than United's nine -- and it was more of the same on Sunday.

"Everyone knows how much I wanted the goal to come," Fernandes said. "I need to help the team with goals and assists. It's been one of the most disappointing things this season."

Meanwhile two second-half goals from Dominic Solanke and a sublime James Maddison free kick helped Tottenham Hotspur to come from behind and overwhelm Aston Villa 4-1 on Sunday, ending the visitors' seven-match unbeaten run in the Premier League.

Spurs climbed to seventh in the table on 16 points, two points behind Villa who stayed fifth. Should Chelsea win or draw at Manchester United later on Sunday, Villa would drop down to sixth.

Unai Emery's Villa led at halftime through Morgan Rogers, but Spurs were level soon after the break when Brennan Johnson tapped in at the far post.

Solanke's two goals in four minutes, including a flowing team move finished off with a delightful dink over Emiliano Martinez, secured the win, before Maddison curled in a free kick in stoppage time.