

Iran's Secretary of Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Ali Akbar Ahmadian and Iraqi National Security Advisor Qasim al-Araji Have Stressed Their Countries' Commitment to Broadening of Security Cooperation

IRAN NEWS

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi in an Interview with Pakistan's PTV World Network Said Iran and Pakistan Have Decided to Strengthen Their Joint Efforts Against Terrorism on Both Sides of the Borders

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Trade Growth Not Yet Satisfactory



TEHRAN - The Governor of Iran's Central Bank expressed that, despite the growth in national trade and foreign income, the current levels are not yet satisfactory. He emphasized that improvements are contingent on securing both domestic and international financing.

Speaking at a ceremony on Monday for the signing of a comprehensive cooperation agreement between the Central Bank and the National Development Fund aimed at establishing and expanding various foreign currency financing tools, Mohammad Reza Farzin highlighted the need for stronger financial resources. He noted that the National Development Fund, now in its 13th year, has been playing a significant role in financing Iranian businesses.

According to Farzin, financial constraints remain one of the primary obstacles to achieving an 8% economic growth target. He pointed out that resolving financing issues will be key to reaching this goal. To address this, he mentioned the introduction of a foreign currency bond market last year.

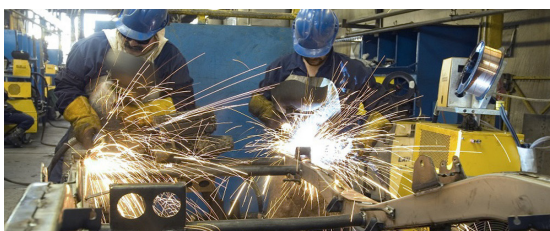
Farzin added that negotiations are ongoing with various businesses to engage with the Iran Currency and Gold Exchange, noting that there is currently \$1.5 billion in demand. Large companies listed on the stock exchange, he explained, are well-positioned to contribute to the capital market, with an initial project involving the Mobarakeh Steel Company valued at 200 million euros.

The National Development Fund, Farzin explained, will act as the underwriter and investor, and could even serve as a market maker for these bonds. He expressed optimism about attracting foreign investment, pointing out that the 6% interest rate on foreign currency bonds is competitive for investors and strengthens the appeal of bond financing.

Farzin stressed that this market should have an international reach beyond Iran, given the National Development Fund's reputation as a credible financial entity worldwide. This, he believes, will attract foreign investors interested in purchasing these bonds.

The comprehensive cooperation agreement between the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the National Development Fund focuses on the development of diverse foreign currency financing tools. This collaboration will support financing for export-oriented and revenue-generating production projects through various sukuk bonds and other foreign currency financial instruments.

Iran's PMI Index up 2.8 to 49.8 in Month to Late October



TEHRAN (PressTV) - The PMI index in the Iranian economy rose to 49.8 in calendar month to late October.

Figures released by the Iran Chamber of Commerce (ICCIMA) show that the country's economy, especially its manufacturing sector, has returned to expansion after nearly half a year of contraction.

The ICCIMA reading of the purchasing managers' index (PMI) of the Iranian economy rose to 49.8 in the calendar month to October 21 from 47.1 in the previous month.

The ICCIMA has reported PMIs of below 50 for six consecutive months to late October. However, experts say a return to areas near the 50-mark, which separates expansion from contraction on a monthly basis, is a sign of hope.

That comes as many economic institutions view PMI readings above 49 over time as generally indicating an expansion of the overall economy.

Iran's Fars news agency said in a report that ICCIMA's first reading of Iran's October PMI had been at 52.3, indicating that the country's economy is being bolstered by higher manufacturing output.

It said the increased supply of electricity to Iranian industries in September and October, which came after several months of restrictions to prevent power cuts in Iran's household sector, was the main reason for the rebound in manufacturing activity in the country.

ICCIMA figures showed that Iran's manufacturing PMI had grown to 54.5 in the calendar month to late October from 47.8 in the previous month.

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK



We're Not Against Immigrants, But Our Capacity to Accept More is Limited

TEHRAN - Iranian Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni addressed Iran's immigration policy, emphasizing that Iran can no longer continue to accept new migrants. At a ceremony for Kerman's new governor, Momeni highlighted the lack of international assistance Iran receives for managing migrants and stressed the need to enforce stricter border controls to prevent further illegal entries.

The event marked the installation of Mohammad Ali Talebi as the governor of Kerman Province, a region with historical and cultural significance in Iran. Momeni acknowledged the legacy of Kerman's martyrs and its people's contributions to Iran's revolutionary struggles, especially paying tribute to General Qassem Soleimani, who hailed from this province.

Momeni also outlined the priorities and policies of President Mohammad Reza Pezeshkian's administration, underscoring its commitment to unity and economic progress. He highlighted that while Iran welcomes its citizens' diverse backgrounds, achieving genuine national development necessitates embracing all of Iran's ethnic and religious communities. Momeni emphasized the government's commitment to inclusivity, fairness, and transparency, both in elections and in implementing policy.

In a pointed section of his speech, Momeni addressed Iran's stance on immigration. "We are not anti-migrant," he clarified, "but we lack the capacity to support more arrivals." He noted that Iran has not received international aid to manage the inflow of migrants, which has put an increasing strain on resources. As a result, Iran will intensify border control efforts to prevent illegal entry.

Momeni criticized assumptions that Iranians rely on foreign labor for strenuous jobs, calling it a "complete fabrication." He cited the recent Tabas mining accident, stating that all workers involved

were Iranian, disputing claims that migrant labor predominantly handles tough or dangerous work. The minister urged the new governor to prioritize managing undocumented migrants in Kerman Province, stressing the need for stringent measures to control and repatriate unauthorized foreign nationals. This reflects a growing concern within Iran about the impact of unregulated immigration on local resources and labor markets.

Talebi, who has a background in both government administration and experience from previous roles in other provinces, was appointed after an extensive vetting process. His appointment is seen as a continuation of the government's agenda to foster unity and ensure effective leadership in key regions.

In his role, Talebi is expected to lead with a focus on using local resources and talents to drive progress. Momeni commended Talebi's background and track record, describing him as a symbol of unity who has earned respect from various political perspectives. Talebi's mandate includes addressing economic and social challenges, working with both private and public sectors, and leveraging Kerman's potential to make it a top tourist destination.

Kerman Province, known for its historical sites, is positioned to play a crucial role in Iran's Seventh Development Plan, which aims to attract 15 million tourists. With five operational airports, a north-south railway line, and diverse weather across seasons, Kerman offers significant potential for tourism, Momeni noted. He expressed optimism that under Talebi's leadership, the province could become Iran's premier tourist destination.

Gov't Spokesman Urges Trump to Learn From Past Mistakes

TEHRAN - In a press conference, Fatemeh Mohajerani, the spokesperson for Iran's government, issued a message to U.S. President-elect Donald Trump. Mohajerani emphasized the importance of learning from previous experiences and adopting a policy approach that respects the rights of the Iranian people. This comes in the wake of Trump's election, raising questions about potential shifts in U.S.-Iran relations.

Addressing reporters, Mohajerani began by expressing condolences for the recent loss of five Iranian border guards in Sistan and Baluchestan. She highlighted that Iran, committed to global peace efforts, has consistently promoted peaceful solutions and paid significant costs in doing so.

Reflecting on Trump's new tenure, she urged him to avoid policies that might infringe upon Iran's rights and to instead consider "a new direction informed by experience." She suggested that Trump steer clear of "mistaken paths" and pursue diplomatic engagement in the interest of mutual respect.

In the press briefing, Mohajerani also reviewed recent developments within Iran, including notable domestic appointments. She mentioned the appointment of a Sunni Baluchi governor in Sistan and Baluchestan, underscoring the government's commitment to inclusivity and regional advancement.

Other domestic updates included the announcement of new regulations for premium gasoline imports. Private entities licensed by the Ministry of Petroleum may now import and sell high-quality gasoline at non-subsidized rates. This move aims to meet the demand from certain sectors for better-quality fuel, particularly for high-performance and luxury vehicles.

Mohajerani also addressed Iran's ongoing electricity challenges. She stated that while the government is taking steps to reduce heavy fuel oil usage, occasional power outages may occur. President Raisi, she assured, is actively overseeing these issues, with commitments in place to increase renewable energy production—specifically, solar, wind, and nuclear sources, targeting an additional 30,000 megawatts.



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

A significant portion of the press conference focused on potential diplomatic openings with the U.S. in light of Trump's return. When asked about Trump's comments on not pursuing "regime change" in Iran, Mohajerani responded that Iran remains cautious. She explained that the "maximum pressure" strategy under Trump's previous administration ultimately failed and urged the incoming president to consider a different approach.

"Our experience has shown that 'maximum pressure' backfired," Mohajerani stated. "Our recommendation is that President Trump should learn from past results and adopt a new approach. We judge based on actions, not words, and have prepared various scenarios to protect our economic interests while aligning with the principles of the Islamic Revolution."

Mohajerani added that any potential negotiations would align with Iran's national interests and Revolutionary goals, all under the guidance of Iran's Supreme Leader and subject to approval by the Supreme National Security Council.

Responding to questions about possible price hikes for gasoline, Mohajerani clarified that the 2025 budget does not include any such increases. However, she noted that Iran faces fuel shortages due to a supply-demand imbalance and the necessity to import gasoline. She assured the public that the government would only pursue price changes after careful research and public consultation.

On the subject of inflation, she acknowledged the financial pressures facing vulnerable populations. She mentioned that while inflation is on a gradual decline, it still places a strain on low-income families. The government is working on targeted food security measures and pension adjustments to support these communities. Expansion of health insurance is also underway to assist more families, especially those impacted by disability, a known risk factor for poverty.

Regarding recent regional matters, Mohajerani confirmed that Iran decided against sending former Health Minister Masoud Pezeshkian to the COP29 summit in Baku, citing the government's discretion based on national interest. Instead, Masoumeh Ebtekar, head of Iran's Environmental Protection Organization, attended on behalf of the country.

National Referendum Sole Lasting Democratic Solution to Palestinian Issue



TEHRAN - Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref says holding a referendum involving all the Palestinians is the sole lasting democratic solution to the Palestinian issue.

Aref made the remark in an address to the Extraordinary Joint Summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Arab League in the Saudi capital Riyadh on Monday.

He said Iran proposes a referendum with the participation of all the Palestinians, including Muslims, Christians and Jews based on the principle of "every Palestinian, one vote."

He added that this proposal will restore the right of Palestinians to determine their fate. Iran also believes avoidance of division among Muslim countries serves as a macro strategy to deal with the conspiracies of ill-wishers against Muslims, Aref stated.

The Iranian vice president said all Muslim and Arab countries shoulder a heavy responsibility to take a firm and collective measure aimed at stopping the Israeli regime's crimes against the Palestinians and occupation of their homeland.

He said that Muslim and Arab countries must develop strategies to ensure the non-repetition of Israel's crimes and adequately compensate for the damages inflicted on the Palestinian and Lebanese people.

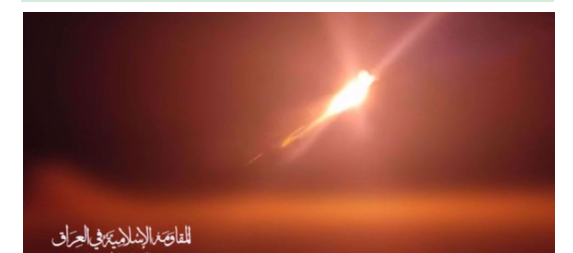
Aref said the United Nations and the Security Council lack the ability to put an end to Israel's genocide against the Palestinian people and onslaught on the Lebanese nation due to the unwavering support of the US and certain Western countries for the regime.

"Under such circumstances, our responsibility as heads of Muslim and Arab countries multiplies," the Iranian vice president stated.

He censured the Israeli regime for shamelessly violating all the principles and rules of international law, tearing up the United Nations Charter at the General Assembly and declaring the UN Secretary General persona non grata.

"We all have a moral obligation not to remain silent in the face of one of the worst evils left over from the last century, namely the bloody occupation of the Palestinian land and continuous displacement and genocide of a nation," the Iranian official said.

Islamic Resistance in Iraq Targets Israeli Military Base With Drones



BAGHDAD (Dispatches) - The Islamic Resistance in Iraq says it has launched a drone attack on an Israeli military base inside the occupied Palestinian territories, in response to the regime's brutal aggression against civilians in the besieged Gaza Strip and Lebanon.

The umbrella group of anti-terror fighters in the Arab country announced in a statement published on Telegram channel that it had "attacked a military target in the southern occupied lands using drones" in the early hours of Tuesday.

The resistance group stressed that the drone attack was carried out "in continuation of our approach to resisting the occupation, and in support of our people in Palestine and Lebanon, and in response to the massacres committed by the usurping entity against civilians, including children, women and the elderly."

It also vowed to continue "striking the enemy's strongholds with increasing intensity."

The resistance group provided no further details about the drone strikes or the targeted Israeli military base.

Since Israel launched its brutal war in Gaza in early October last year, the Islamic Resistance in Iraq has conducted similar operations. The group has also attacked US military bases in Iraq and Syria, denouncing Washington's support for the occupying regime in its genocidal war against Palestinians.

The ongoing Israeli war has resulted in the deaths of at least 43,374 Palestinians, the majority of whom were women and children, with another 102,261 people injured.

Meanwhile the United States and Britain have conducted aerial assaults on Yemen's western province of Hudaydah as the Arab country continues its retaliatory operations against the Israeli regime.

Yemen's al-Masirah television channel reported on Tuesday that American and British warplanes launched three airstrikes on the At Tuhayta district south of Hudaydah.

The report provided no information about possible casualties or damage.

IRAN NEWS



Iran, Turkey Diplomats Discuss Regional Developments

TEHRAN (MNA) – Senior Advisor to Iranian Foreign Minister for Special Political Affairs Ali Asghar Khaji held talks with Turkey's top negotiator Mustafa Yurdakul and his accompanying delegation in Astana on Monday.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed the latest situation in the region, political and field developments in Syria following the crimes and aggressive attacks of the Zionist regime in the region.

In this bilateral meeting, which was held within the framework of the 22nd international meetings of the Astana Peace Process, Khaji strongly condemned the Zionist regime's brutal attacks on Gaza, Lebanon and the West bank in committing genocide against the Palestinian people with the US support and warned against the expansionist goals of the Zionists in the region, especially Syria.

Iran-Belarus Joint Economic Commission Essential for Trade Expansion



TEHRAN - The Belarusian ambassador to Iran emphasized the necessity of holding a joint economic commission between Iran and Belarus, involving trade and industry ministers from both sides. He noted that establishing this commission could play a crucial role in organizing trade between the two countries.

Dmitry Kalsov, during a meeting with the head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), described the relationship between TPO and the Belarusian embassy as friendly, adding that the focus has been on strengthening trade relations.

The ambassador welcomed the proposal to connect the chambers of commerce of both nations, calling it a significant step toward boosting trade cooperation.

In the meeting, the head of the TPO emphasized that forming an Iran-Belarus joint commission would be a suitable tool to expand collaboration. "Our goal with this commission goes beyond formal protocols; we seek tangible and positive results in advancing foreign trade," said Mohammad Ali Dehghan-Dehnavi.

Dehghan-Dehnavi highlighted the importance of involving private sector representatives and business delegations from both countries during the commission's meetings.

The Deputy Minister of Industry, Mine, and Trade (IMT) announced plans for Iran to open a trade center in Belarus and proposed the idea of joint production initiatives, suggesting that co-manufactured products could be exported to other markets.

Additionally, the IMT Deputy suggested establishing an air route between Iran and Belarus to facilitate economic relations and proposed waiving visas for traders and businesspeople from Belarus.



Iranian Bank Cards Now Usable in Russia

TEHRAN - On Monday, Iran's Central Bank Governor Mohammad Reza Farzin participated in a ceremony marking the connection between Russia's "Mir" banking network and Iran's "Shetab" network, enabling Iranian bank cards to be used in Russia.

This connection allows Iranians to withdraw funds from their Iranian bank cards in rubles, the Russian currency, via ATMs in Russia.

In the second phase of this project, Russians or individuals with Russian bank cards will be able to use their cards in Iran.

In the third phase, Iranian Shetab cards will be accepted in Russian retail outlets, enabling Iranians traveling to Russia to make purchases with their Iranian bank cards.

Central Bank Governor Mohammad Reza Farzin and Iran's Ambassador to Russia, Kazem Jalali, were present at the ceremony to mark this milestone.

On the sidelines of the event, the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Russian Federation stated that there are five main issues in expanding Tehran-Moscow trade relations, the first of which is the lack of sufficient familiarity among our traders with the Russian market.

Jalali mentioned customs issues, and continued: Transit issues are another obstacle in the way of economic and trade interactions between the two countries. We are working to resolve this by implementing and focusing on the North-South Corridor.

He emphasized that effective steps must also be taken in logistics. However,

the obstacles in the monetary and banking sector between the two countries are being addressed.

Jalali, expressing appreciation for the Central Bank's technical team, said: With today's action and the connection of Russia's Mir banking network to Iran's Shetab network, some of our banking and monetary issues will be reduced, which is a major effort by the Central Bank in the tourism sector.

The Ambassador of Iran in Russia noted that both our public and private banks are active in relations with Russia. If we can remove banking obstacles in trade as well, we can improve our trade balance with Russia.

He pointed out that currently, we do not have a significant share in Russia's imports, even though at one time 58 percent of Russia's trade was with Europe, which has now been affected.

Jalali added: We have two important roles; first, we can become a hub for Russian imports and exports to overcome the five obstacles mentioned in the expansion of trade.

He said secondly, we ourselves can hold a share in the Russian market and have an inward- and outward-oriented economy; the actions of the Central Bank can be helpful in this area.

Russia's banking network known as "Mir" was connected to Iran's banking network (Shetab) today in a ceremony attended by Mohammad Reza Farzin, the Governor of the Central Bank. This connection will now allow Iranian bank cards to be used in Russian banks.

Iran's Strategic Entry into Iraq's Economy Requires Expert Insight



TEHRAN - Iran's entry into Iraq's economy calls for a strategic approach, driven by both governmental support and private sector involvement, according to the head of Iran's Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (ICCIMA). Speaking at a recent meeting with the Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce board, Samad Hassanzadeh underscored the importance of structured planning to capitalize on the potential \$20 billion trade target between Iran and Iraq.

Hassanzadeh highlighted Iraq's \$150 billion market size as a promising opportunity for Iranian industries. Iran's extensive production capacities in food, construction, and petrochemical industries align well with Iraq's import needs, making it feasible for Iran to expand its presence in Iraq's economy. He stressed that to achieve this goal, Iran must ensure high-quality standards in exports. "Iranian manufacturers should deliver stable quality products, and regulatory bodies should maintain strict oversight," he stated, calling for consistent quality as a fundamental aspect of Iran's competitive edge in Iraq.

Currently, one-third of Iran's non-oil exports go to Iraq. However, trade challenges, such as currency exchange barriers, reduce profitability. Hassanzadeh explained that Iran loses around 10% of export revenue due to banking limitations, diminishing Iran's overall gains. He noted that Iran's Central Bank is working on alternative solutions to minimize these losses.

To strengthen economic ties, Hassanzadeh proposed using educational exchanges as a tool for diplomatic and economic engagement. "The presence of Iraqi students in Iranian universities offers a unique opportunity for deeper cultural, social, and economic connections," he noted, suggesting that these students could serve as informal ambassadors to further Iran-Iraq relations.

Yahya Al-Eshaq, president of the Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber, echoed Hassanzadeh's views, advocating for the revival of the Iran-Iraq Trade Policy Council. He reported that while Iran's official exports to Iraq stood at \$10.7 billion last year, non-official trade reached approximately \$12-13 billion. "With the right conditions, our goal of reaching \$20 billion in trade is achievable," Al-Eshaq affirmed.

He also outlined Iraq's projected infrastructural needs over the next 15 years, presenting a lucrative investment opportunity for Iran, particularly in the fields of construction and engineering. Al-Eshaq stated that 70% of Iraq's investment needs are import-dependent, offering Iran a significant chance to boost exports and investments in Iraq.

Iran Can Become Russia's Import and Export Hub



TEHRAN - Kazem Jalali, Iran's Ambassador to Russia, stated during the unveiling of the integration of Iran's "Shetab" card payment network with Russia's "Mir" network that Russia is a significant target for Iran in terms of trade and tourism. He noted that Russia has a large economy and, given the current international landscape, presents a promising market for Iran.

Ambassador Jalali highlighted five key factors that could enhance trade between Iran and Russia. He emphasized the importance of a clear understanding of the Russian market, adding that Iranian traders need to travel more frequently to Russia to better familiarize themselves with its dynamics. Currently, Iranian business representatives are not actively engaged in this area, and the Chamber of Commerce should increase its understanding.

He also mentioned customs as another critical area, acknowledging recent improvements but noting that further efforts are needed to digitize customs processes. In addition, transit is crucial for boosting trade, requiring connected routes. At present, three routes are operational, with the eastern route, which began in 2023, capable of handling 15 million tons of cargo. The middle route, crossing the Caspian Sea, has a 14 million-ton capacity.

Jalali also pointed to logistics and the monetary and banking sectors

as essential areas. He acknowledged that Iran has made significant strides in logistics, and several Iranian banks are actively involved in Russia.

Expressing optimism, he mentioned that promising developments are underway in trade with Russia. He noted that, since 2022, Russia no longer publicly reports trade statistics, but prior to that year, its imports were valued at \$297 billion, with Iran holding a minimal share.

The ambassador noted that 58% of Russia's trade was with Europe, but much of that has since declined, presenting an opportunity for Iran. By addressing these five factors, Iran could position itself as a key hub for Russia's imports and exports, thereby gaining a share in the Russian economy.

On the sidelines of the event, Jalali, spoke about the potential connection of Iran's Shetab card network with Russia's Mir payment system. He highlighted the importance of Russia as a strategic partner for Iran, noting that the close geographical and economic ties between the two countries lay the foundation for a strong relationship. "We can claim a substantial share of Russia's trade," he stated, emphasizing that both countries share common regional and international perspectives.

Norway's Sovereign Wealth Fund Invited to Invest in Iran



TEHRAN - In a meeting with the Norwegian ambassador, the head of Iran's National Development Fund, Mehdi Ghazanfari, extended an invitation to Norway's Sovereign Wealth Fund and Norwegian investors to engage in joint investments in Iran's oil, gas, and renewable energy sectors. He emphasized Iran's economic potential and the success of Norway's fund, underscoring the importance of collaborative ventures and knowledge exchange.

According to the National Development Fund's public relations, Ghazanfari met with Norwegian Ambassador Paul Bjornsta, encouraging Norwegian investment in various Iranian projects across oil, gas, renewable energy, and emerging technologies. Ghazanfari highlighted Norway's successful investment experience and expressed a strong interest in mutual knowledge sharing.

He noted Iran's National Development Fund currently manages around \$170 billion and is on a growth trajectory toward \$200-250 billion. Ghazanfari proposed two avenues for cooperation: organizing expert meetings to exchange insights between the funds of Iran and Norway, and exploring Norwegian investments in Iran's emerging economic opportunities, particularly in energy and technology.

Ghazanfari also mentioned that U.S. sanctions against Iran have transformed the country into a "land of investment opportunities." He explained that Iran has identified joint projects valued between \$1 billion and \$30 billion and assured Norway of Iran's commitment to ensuring investment returns and reducing risk for Norwegian partners.

Ambassador Bjornsta expressed Norway's interest in expanding engagement with Iran and praised Norway's Sovereign Wealth Fund as a model for governance and capital management. He highlighted Norway's significant gas reserves and potential collaboration in gas condensate trade, signaling Norwegian investors' interest in increasing investments in Iran. Bjornsta also noted that Norway channels all oil revenues into its sovereign wealth fund, drawing only 3% annually to support the national budget.

This meeting represents a key step in strengthening economic cooperation between Iran and Norway, potentially paving the way for joint investments in industrial, energy, and technological projects.

New Step in Tourism Development Between Iran and China



TEHRAN - In an event held at the Association of Iranian Travel Service Offices, a new cooperation agreement was signed between the Iranian Travel Service Association (representing the private sector) and the Iran-China Friendship Association.

The agreement, consisting of 10 points, was signed by Alaeddin Boroujerdi, President of the Iran-China Friendship Association, and Hormatollah Rafiei, President of the Iranian Travel Services Association. Its main objective is to attract more Chinese tourists to Iran.

The agreement highlights the commitment of both parties to strengthen ties and foster cultural understanding between the people of Iran and China, with a focus on expanding tourism between the two nations. Rafiei stated that the agreement includes provisions for creating specialized working groups with experts on Iranian and Chinese culture, promoting sports tourism, creative tourism, cultural tourism, and hosting national and international tourism-related conferences and gatherings.

Rafiei added that several Iranian and Chinese cities are already sister cities, including Tehran-Beijing, Tehran-Guangzhou, Isfahan-Xi'an, Shiraz-Chongqing, and others. This partnership emphasizes leveraging these sister city relationships to further develop tourism.

The collaboration will also encourage the establishment of joint tours under the "One Belt, One Road" initiative, as outlined in the 25-year Iran-China cooperation agreement. Additionally, the five-year agreement with the Iran-China Friendship Association involves launching cultural campaigns to create a positive image of Iran and participating in heritage, tourism, and handicraft initiatives.

UNSC Considers Action on Sudan War

UNITED NATIONS (Dispatches) - The United Nations Security Council is discussing a British-drafted resolution that demands Sudan's warring parties cease hostilities and calls on them to allow safe, rapid and unhindered deliveries of aid across front lines and borders.

War erupted in April 2023 from a power struggle between the Sudanese army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces ahead of a planned transition to civilian rule, and triggered the world's largest displacement crisis. It has produced waves of ethnically driven violence blamed largely on the RSF. The RSF has denied harming civilians in Sudan and attributed the activity to rogue actors. In the first U.N. sanctions imposed during the current conflict, a Security Council committee designated two RSF generals last week.



North Korea Ratifies Mutual Defense Treaty With Russia



SEOUL (Dispatches) - North Korea has ratified a mutual defence treaty with Russia signed by the two countries' leaders in June, which calls for each side to come to the other's aid in case of an armed attack, state media KCNA said on Tuesday.

The report came amid international criticism over increasing military cooperation between the two countries, with North Korea having sent tens of thousands of troops to Russia to support its war against Ukraine.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un signed a decree to ratify the pact on Monday, KCNA said, adding it takes effect when both sides exchange the ratification instruments.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has also signed the treaty into law, which stipulates that the two countries should "immediately provide military and other assistance using all available means" if either side is in a state of war.

Kim clinched the accord with Putin at a summit in June, touting it as a step to elevate bilateral ties to something akin to an "alliance".

Seoul, Washington and Kyiv have said there are more than 10,000 North Korean soldiers in Russia, and U.S. officials and Ukraine's defence minister said some of them have engaged in combat in Kursk, near the Ukraine border.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said last week that North Korean troops had suffered casualties in combat with his country's forces, and the first battles between them "open a new page in instability in the world."

Japan PM Ishiba Survives Parliament Vote as Trump looms large



TOKYO (Dispatches) - Japanese lawmakers voted today for Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba to stay on as leader, after his scandal-tarnished coalition lost its parliamentary majority in a lower house election last month.

Ishiba, who called the snap poll after taking office on October 1, must now run a fragile minority government as protectionist Donald Trump returns to office in main ally the United States, tension rises with rivals China and North Korea, and domestic pressure mounts to rein in the cost of living.

His Liberal Democratic Party and coalition partner Komeito won the biggest bloc of seats in the election but lost the majority held since 2012, leaving him beholden to small opposition parties to pass his policy agenda.

Underlining that fragility, today's vote in parliament, broadcast on television, went to a runoff for the first time in 30 years, with no candidate able to muster majority support in the first round.

But Ishiba eventually prevailed as expected, garnering 221 votes, well clear of his nearest challenger, ex-PM Yoshihiko Noda, the head of the main opposition Constitutional Democratic Party, but still short of a majority in the 465-seat lower house.

Japan will hold elections next year for the less powerful upper house, where the ruling coalition's slim majority could also be at risk if Ishiba cannot revive public trust roiled by a scandal over unrecorded donations to lawmakers.

His imminent challenge is compiling a supplementary budget for the fiscal year through March, under pressure from voters and opposition parties to raise spending on welfare and take steps to offset rising prices.

For approval he needs the backing of at least one opposition party, which is most likely to be the Democratic Party for the People (DPP) headed by Yuichiro Tamaki.



Saudi-Hosted Summit Says Mideast Peace Requires End to Israeli Occupation

RIYADH (Dispatches) - Arab and Muslim leaders demanded on Monday that Israel withdraw from occupied Palestinian territories as a precondition for regional peace, while denouncing "shocking" Israeli crimes in war-ravaged Gaza.

A summit meeting in the Saudi capital Riyadh gave the Arab League and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation's 57 nations a chance to speak with one voice on turmoil engulfing the region, more than a year into the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip.

It came less than a week after Donald Trump secured a second term as president of the United States, Israel's top military backer.

The summit's closing statement said that "a just and comprehensive peace in the region... cannot be achieved without ending the Israeli occupation of all occupied Arab territories to the line of June 4, 1967," referring to the occupied West Bank and east Jerusalem as well as Gaza and the Golan Heights.

The statement mentioned UN resolutions which have called on Israel to withdraw from these areas, and the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative, in which Arab nations offered Israel normalised ties in return for a two-state agreement with the Palestinians along the 1967 lines.

The international community should "launch a plan with specific steps and timing under international sponsorship" to make a sovereign Palestinian state a reality, the statement said.

Hamas later urged Arab and Muslim nations to back up those pledges with action. "The establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital would require more immediate efforts and practical solutions to force (Israel) to stop its aggression and genocide against our people," Hamas said in a statement.

The hard-right Israeli government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu remains opposed to Palestinian statehood and Israel's new foreign minister, Gideon Saar, dismissed the prospect as not "realistic".

Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich later Monday vowed to push for annexation of parts of the West Bank in 2025.

The Riyadh summit reiterated regional leaders' call for Palestinian territories - including Gaza, which is separated from the West Bank by Israeli territory - to be grouped together in a future state.

The leaders also condemned "horrific and shocking crimes" by Israel's army, saying they occurred "in the context of the crime of genocide".

The war began with Hamas's unprecedented attack on Israel on October 7 last year, which resulted in 1,206 deaths, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally of Israeli official figures.

Israel's retaliatory campaign has killed more than 43,600 people in Gaza, most of them civilians, according to figures from the Hamas-run territory's health ministry that the United Nations considers reliable.

Lebanese armed group Hezbollah, which like Hamas is backed by Iran, began firing on Israel after the October 7 attack, in stated support of its Palestinian ally.

The regular cross-border exchanges escalated in late September. Israel has intensified its air strikes and later sent ground troops into southern Lebanon.

Addressing Monday's summit, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman said the world must "immediately halt the Israeli actions against our brothers in Palestine and Lebanon" and condemned Israel's campaign in Gaza as "genocide".

Prince Mohammed, the Gulf kingdom's de facto ruler, also called on Israel not to attack Iran, highlighting improving ties between Riyadh and its regional rival Tehran.

Lebanon's Prime Minister Najib Mikati warned that his country was suffering an "existential" crisis and hit out at countries meddling in its internal affairs - a thinly veiled swipe at Iran.

Trump's election last week for a second term in the White House was likely on leaders' minds, said Anna Jacobs, senior Persian Gulf analyst for the International Crisis Group think tank.

"This summit is very much an opportunity for regional leaders to signal to the incoming Trump administration what they want in terms of US engagement," she said.

Iranian First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref said in his remarks that "the world is waiting" for Trump "to immediately stop the war against the innocent people of Gaza and Lebanon".

The final statement included a call for a ban on the export and transfer of weapons to Israel. Despite criticism of the impact Israel's military campaign has had on Gaza civilians, outgoing US President Joe Biden has ensured that Washington remains Israel's most important military backer during more than a year of fighting.

In his first term, Trump defied international consensus with a series of moves praised by the Israeli government but condemned by Palestinians.

He recognised Jerusalem as Israel's capital, moving the US embassy there, and endorsed Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, which are illegal under international law.

Israeli Strikes Kill 37 as Attacks Intensify in Gaza

CAIRO (Dispatches) - An Israeli airstrike killed seven people late Monday at a café near the southern Gaza city of Khan Younis, Palestinian medics said, bringing the death toll from Israeli strikes since Sunday night to at least 37.

In central Gaza, Israeli forces earlier on Monday sent tanks into the Nuseirat camp from the west, sparking panic among residents and displaced families as advancing tanks opened fire.

Twenty people were killed by air and ground strikes in Nuseirat, one of the Gaza Strip's eight historic refugee sites, overnight and into Monday, including some in a tent encampment, health officials at Al-Awda Hospital in Nuseirat said.

Resident Zaik Mohammad said the tank incursion caught residents by surprise.

"Some people couldn't leave and remained trapped inside their homes, appealing to be allowed out, while others rushed out with whatever they could carry as they fled," Mohammad, 25, who lives one kilometre (half mile) away from the targeted area, told Reuters via a chat app.

Israeli comment on Monday's violence.

With the war in Gaza now in its 14th month, Israel is focusing its operations in the north and centre of the enclave in what it says is a campaign to stop Hamas militants from waging attacks and regrouping.

Tens of thousands of Palestinian residents have been told to evacuate the areas, fueling fears that they may never be allowed to return.

The already slim chances of a ceasefire receded further at the weekend when mediator Qatar said it was suspending its efforts until both Israel and Palestinian group Hamas showed greater willingness to reach an agreement.

Israeli airstrikes also killed people in Gaza City and in the northern Gaza



town of Beit Lahiya, where Israeli forces have operated since Oct. 5, medics said.

At Kamal Adwan Hospital near Beit Lahiya, medics said Israeli fire from a drone wounded three medical workers in the facility.

The Israeli military said it killed a senior commander of the Islamic Jihad group, an ally of Hamas, Mohammad Abu Skhail, in a strike on Saturday at a command center inside a compound that previously served as a school in Gaza City. Palestinian medics said the attack killed six people.

Israeli forces have besieged the three hospitals in and around Jabalia in northern Gaza for several weeks, and hospital officials have refused orders to evacuate the facilities or leave their patients unattended despite the lack of food, medical supplies and fuel.

The Israeli military accuses Hamas of exploiting Gaza's civilian population for military purposes, a charge the militant group denies.

The Israeli army sent tanks into Beit Lahiya, Beit Hanoun, and Jabalia camp in northern Gaza over a month ago. It said it had killed hundreds of militants in Jabalia and around it since the raids began.

The armed wings of Hamas and the Islamic Jihad said their fighters carried out ambushes, mortar fire and anti-tank rocket attacks, claiming to have killed many Israeli soldiers in recent weeks.

On Monday, the Israeli military said it had expanded a humanitarian zone in the enclave. It also said it would allow more tents, shelter materials, food, water and medical supplies to enter.

Its forces "will continue to work to achieve the war's objectives, including dismantling Hamas and returning all the abductees," it said, referring to Israeli hostages.

Palestinian and United Nations officials say there are no safe areas in the enclave, home to more than 2.1 million people and now largely in ruins.

New Leader Takes Helm in Haiti Pledging to Stem Spiraling Violence

PORT-AU-PRINCE (Dispatches) - Haitian Prime Minister Alix Didier Fils-Aime took office as the nation's new interim leader pledging to improve security even as armed gangs flexed their muscles with a brazen attack on a commercial plane attempting to land in the capital.

Fils-Aime was appointed by the Caribbean island nation's transitional council over the weekend to succeed Garry Conille, who only lasted in the role six months.

The council and the new prime minister are tasked with preparing for long-delayed elections amid a deep political and social crisis marked by growing hunger and frequent episodes of raging gangland violence.

"Obviously, the first unavoidable challenge is the reinstatement of security," Fils-Aime said in a crowded room at the prime minister's official office, known as Villa d'Accueil, attended by diplomats and other dignitaries.

"Security of the people, security of the goods and infrastructures. Food security and freedom of movement across the entire national territory," he stressed, in a nod to areas controlled by powerful gangs.

Fils-Aime is the son of well-known Haitian activist Alix Fils-Aime, who was jailed under the regime of former dictator Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier, who ruled from 1971 until he was overthrown by a popular uprising in 1986.

Earlier on Monday, a Spirit Airlines flight to the capital Port-au-Prince was struck by gunfire, injuring a flight attendant who was grazed by a bullet, according to a



Miami Herald report, and forcing the plane to divert to the neighboring Dominican Republic.

The incident marks the latest eruption of violence blamed on the gangs that control most of the capital, as well as key roadways and other infrastructure. The gangs, whom Fils-Aime dubbed "bandits" in his speech, have often targeted the Toussaint Louverture International Airport.

In a statement, Spirit confirmed the plane was damaged but that no passengers were injured.

A video circulating on social media showed where a bullet pierced the rear exit door as well as striking an overhead bin across the aisle. Reuters was unable to immediately verify the authenticity of the video.

All flights in and out of the airport have been halted, according to a travel advisory from the US embassy in Haiti.

The embassy "is aware of gang-led efforts to block travel to and from Port-au-Prince which may include armed violence, and disruptions to roads, ports and airports," it added.

Armed gangs in Haiti's capital have shot at aircraft in recent weeks as the security situation has worsened. Last month, a UN helicopter was hit by gunfire over Port-au-Prince.



Chiefs Block Broncos' FG to Stay Unbeaten

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Harrison Butker kicked three field goals, including a go-ahead 20-yarder with 5:57 left, and Leo Chenal blocked a 35-yard field goal as time expired to help the host Kansas City Chiefs rally to defeat the Denver Broncos 16-14 on Sunday and remain unbeaten.

Patrick Mahomes threw for 266 yards and a touchdown for the Chiefs (9-0), who exhaled after a late blunder put them in a precarious position.

Butker, who also connected on field goals of 36 and 28 yards, sent the kickoff after his final make of the afternoon out of bounds, giving the Broncos the ball at their own 40-yard line.

Denver (5-5) capitalized on the favorable field position and was set up for a chip shot to win the game, but Chenal and the special teams preserved the victory by blocking Wil Lutz's field-goal attempt.

Jake Moody hit a 44-yard field goal as time expired to help visiting San Francisco 49ers edge Tampa Bay Buccaneers 23-20 in the return of Christian McCaffrey.

McCaffrey, who missed the first eight games of the season with bilateral Achilles tendinitis, finished with 39 yards rushing on 13 carries and 68 receiving yards on six catches for the 49ers (5-4). Ricky Pearsall's 46-yard TD reception in the first quarter, which gave the 49ers a 7-0 lead, was the first score of the rookie's career and came after he was shot in the chest in a robbery attempt in August. He finished with four receptions for 73 yards.

Baker Mayfield completed 18 of 29 passes for 116 yards and one touchdown pass for the Bucs (4-6). Tampa Bay lost All-Pro left tackle Tristan Wirfs to a knee injury in the first half.

Jake Bates kicked a 52-yard field goal just inside the left upright as time expired and Detroit Lions overcame a 16-point halftime deficit to record a 25-23 victory over host Houston Texans.

Bates also drilled a game-tying 58-yard field goal that slipped just inside the right upright with 5:01 left in the game. His heroics helped the Lions (8-1) stretch their winning streak to seven games.

Jared Goff threw a career-worst five interceptions while completing 15 of 30 passes for 240 yards and two touchdowns for Detroit. C.J. Stroud completed 19 of 33 passes for 232 yards with one touchdown and two interceptions for the Texans (6-4), who lost for the third time in their past four games.

Eddy Pineiro kicked a 36-yard field goal 2:07 into overtime as Carolina Panthers converted off a New York Giants turnover for a 20-17 victory in Munich, Germany.

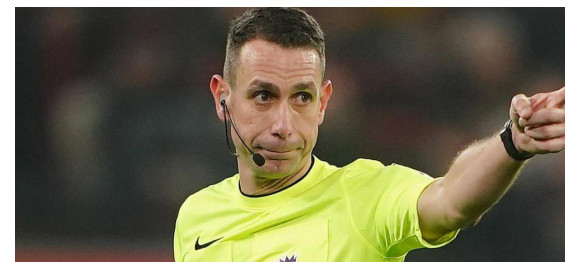
The Panthers (3-7) got the ball at the New York 23 for their only possession of overtime. Bryce Young completed 15 of 25 passes for 126 yards with a touchdown, and Chuba Hubbard churned out a career-high 153 yards on the ground on 28 carries.

Giants quarterback Daniel Jones went 22-for-37 for 190 yards with two interceptions, and he also ran for a touchdown. Running back Tyrone Tracy Jr. gained 103 yards on 18 carries with a touchdown, but his fumble on the first snap of overtime set up Carolina's winning points. Graham Gano's 42-yard field goal with five seconds to play forced overtime for the Giants (2-8), who have lost five straight games.

Deatrich Wise Jr. and Anfernee Jennings each had a pair of sacks as New England Patriots buckled down defensively for the 19-3 victory at Chicago Bears.

New England (3-7) had nine sacks in all and held the Bears to 142 yards of total offense. Chicago was forced to punt on eight of its first nine drives of the game, then turned the ball over on downs during its final two possessions. Patriots quarterback Drake Maye completed 15 of 25 passes for 184 yards, one touchdown and one interception, while Rhamondre Stevenson ran for 74 yards on 20 carries.

Referee David Coote Suspended Over Video of Foul-Mouthed Klopp Rant



LONDON (Dispatches) - The Premier League referee David Coote has been suspended after video footage emerged of him calling Jürgen Klopp a "German cunt" and Liverpool "shit".

In the clip that surfaced on social media on Monday Coote claimed that Klopp was "arrogant" and had accused him of lying after a 1-1 draw between Liverpool and Burnley during Project Restart in 2020. Coote took charge of Liverpool's 2-0 win against Aston Villa on Saturday.

Professional Game Match Officials Ltd said: "David Coote has been suspended with immediate effect pending a full investigation. PGMOL will be making no further comment until that process is complete."

The video appears to date from the 2020-21 season. Coote is asked by a man for his opinion of Klopp, the then Liverpool manager, and says: "Aside from having a right pop at me when I refed them against Burnley in lockdown, then he accused me of lying and then just had a right fucking pop at me. I've got no interest in speaking to someone who's fucking arrogant. So I do my best not to speak to him ... My God, German cunt, fuck me."

The derogatory remark about Liverpool refers to the team's performance in a game, earlier that day according to the video, at which Coote had been the fourth official.

The other man, who appears to be recording the conversation on his phone in a sparsely decorated sitting room, goes on to clarify what he feels to be the takeaway from the conversation: "Long story short: Jürgen Klopp's a cunt, Liverpool are all fucking bellends and we hate scousers."

Alcaraz Given Ruud Awakening With Defeat in ATP Finals Opener

TURIN (Dispatches) - An off-colour Carlos Alcaraz suffered a shock 6-1 7-5 defeat against Norway's Casper Ruud in his opening match at the ATP Finals as the Spaniard's hopes of winning the year-end title for the first time suffered a blow.

The round-robin format of the eight-man event means he could still crown a standout year in style, but the third seed has left himself with little margin for error in his remaining group matches and will need to find a higher level.

"I think he did a really good job today. But I talk about myself, I could just be better. I could play better. Obviously I could feel better on court," world number three Alcaraz, who has been under the weather in the build-up, told reporters.

Ruud, who had lost all four of his previous meetings against Alcaraz, saved break points in the opening game but dominated the first set from then on as surprising errors flowed from his opponent's racket.

Alcaraz responded positively to move 5-2 ahead in the second set, breaking serve with a deft volley, and was two points from levelling the match, only to capitulate.

He dropped serve at 5-3 and looked forlorn as world number seven Ruud surged to victory, winning the last five games.



Alcaraz, who won the French Open and Wimbledon titles this year, is hoping to become the first Spaniard to win the prestigious year-ending title since Alex Corretja in 1998.

Ruud failed to convert his first two match points but closed it out at the third attempt to put himself in a strong position in the John Newcombe group in which Germany's Alexander Zverev beat Russian Andrey Rublev 6-4 6-4 in the evening match.

"This is one of the best wins of the season for me," Ruud said in a courtside interview. "I've seen Carlos play better tennis than he played today but I still had to take my chances."

The Ilic Nastase group began on Sunday with world number one Jannik Sinner beating debutant Alex De Minaur and American Taylor Fritz overcoming Russian Daniil Medvedev.

While Alcaraz did claim the Beijing title in October, his form since winning Wimbledon has been patchy including a second round exit at the U.S. Open.

The 21-year-old made 34 unforced errors against Ruud with his usually destructive forehand misfiring and most of the drop shots he attempted either finding the net or being dispatched easily by the grateful Norwegian.

Japan, South Korea Face Away Tests on Road to 2026 World Cup



HONG KONG (Dispatches) - Japan can take a major step towards the 2026 World Cup over the next week if they can negotiate away tests at Indonesia and China in the space of five days.

Son Heung-min's South Korea will also look to close on a spot at the showpiece in North America as they travel to Kuwait on Thursday and then face Palestine in Jordan next week.

Meanwhile Herve Renard, who masterminded a famous victory over eventual champions Argentina at the Qatar World Cup, takes charge of Saudi Arabia for the first time since returning to the job.

An estimated 78,000 will pack out the Gelora Bung Karno Stadium in the Indonesian capital Jakarta in hope of seeing the hosts pull off a shock on Friday.

Hajime Moriyasu's Japan will then need to face down another hostile crowd when they travel to Xiamen on Tuesday to play China.

"If you look at the FIFA rankings and the games in the World Cup qualifiers so far, you might think that the advantage is with Japan," said coach Moriyasu.

"But we are playing both games away and I think it will be tough."

With the third Asian qualifying round nearing the halfway point, Japan are five points clear at the top of Group C from Australia and Saudi Arabia, who face each other on Thursday.

The top two from each of the three groups go straight to the World Cup.

China and Indonesia occupy the bottom two spots in Group C but are not out of the reckoning as teams finishing third and fourth will advance to a further qualifying stage.

Moriyasu has called up Celtic's Kyogo Furuhashi for the first time in a year after first-choice striker Ayase Ueda was injured.

Australia host Saudi Arabia in Melbourne with both nations on five points after four games.

The Socceroos then travel to Bahrain the following Tuesday when the Saudis will play in Indonesia.

Frenchman Renard, 56, is back for a second spell with Saudi Arabia following the sacking last month of Roberto Mancini.

Like Japan, South Korea are on course for 2026, three points clear at the top of Group B.

They welcome back captain and talisman Son after he missed victories over Iraq and Asian Cup runners-up Jordan last month with a hamstring injury.

Celtics Top Bucks Despite Giannis' 43 Points

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Jayson Tatum scored 31 points with 12 rebounds and six assists to help the visiting Boston Celtics overcome a 17-point deficit and defeat the Milwaukee Bucks 113-107.

Payton Pritchard came off the bench to score 18 points for the Celtics, who trailed 49-32 with 9:16 remaining in the second quarter. Pritchard made 5 of his 8 3-point attempts.

Milwaukee scored 40 points in the first quarter, but was held to 38 points in the second half. The Bucks trailed by three late in the game, but Jrue Holiday made two free throws with 1:35 to play to extend Boston's lead to 109-104. Milwaukee was never closer than five the rest of the way.

Giannis Antetokounmpo had 43 points and 13 rebounds for the Bucks, who fell to 1-3 at home. Bobby Portis added 15 points and seven rebounds for Milwaukee and Damian Lillard had 14 points and six assists.

Stephen Curry scored a season-high 36 points as visiting Golden State Warriors held off Oklahoma City Thunder 127-116.

Curry hit seven 3-pointers and finished 13-of-23 from the field for Golden State, which led by 30 late in the third quarter before Oklahoma City pulled within six with 4:46 remaining in the game. Jonathan Kuminga scored 12 of his 20 points for the



Warriors in the second quarter and shot 8-of-11 from the field. De'Anthony Melton hit five of Golden State's season-high-tying 21 3-pointers and finished with 19 points and 10 rebounds.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander led the Thunder with 24 points but was just 6-of-17 from the field, including 1-for-5 in the fourth quarter.

Nikola Jokic had 37 points, 18 rebounds and 15 assists, Michael Porter Jr. hit a go-ahead floater with 6.5 seconds left and host Denver Nuggets overcame a big night from Kyrie Irving to beat Dallas Mavericks 122-120.

Jamal Murray scored 18 points, Porter added 17 and Peyton Watson finished with 16 for the Nuggets, who swept a five-game homestand. Christian Braun scored 14 points, and Julian Strawther contributed 12.

Irving finished with a season-high 43 points on 17-for-22 shooting from the field. He made six of his eight 3-point attempts. Luka Doncic had 24 points, nine rebounds and nine assists, Daniel Gafford scored 16 points and Klay Thompson finished with 10 for the Mavericks, who have dropped back-to-back games in the final 10 seconds of regulation.