

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei Has Said That the Arrest Warrant for the Prime Minister and Other Leaders of the Zionist Regime Was Insufficient and That Death Sentences Should Be Issued for Them

IRAN NEWS

Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Hossein Baqeri Warned the Zionist Regime That It Will Receive an Appropriate Retaliatory Response Beyond Imagination for Its October 26 Act of Aggression Against Iran

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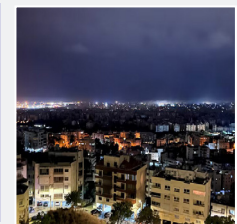


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Iran to Activate 1000s of Advanced Centrifuges



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi says Iran is to activate several thousands of its domestically manufactured advanced centrifuges in response to the United Nations nuclear agency's recent Western-backed resolution against the country.

The top diplomat made the remarks to his Spanish counterpart José Manuel Albares Bueno on the sidelines of a meeting of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) in the city of Cascais in southwestern Portugal on Tuesday.

Araqchi said the retaliatory measure was to come in reaction to the UK, France, and Germany's forwarding the United States-backed resolution to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)'s Board of Governors and the body's adoption of the resolution, which took place on Friday.

He considered the European trio's policy towards the Islamic Republic to be "confrontational and meddlesome," calling the approach unjustifiable and unconstructive.

The official urged that various regional and international matters, such as the Iranian nuclear energy program, rather be treated realistically and in line with the international law.

The United States and its European allies have been taking numerous similar measures against Iran in line with their accusation against the Islamic Republic of insufficient cooperation with the IAEA, although Tehran's cooperation with the body has increased in frequency and quality over the past years.

Resorting to legitimate reprisal, Iran has already activated a number of its advanced centrifuges in reaction to the recently adopted resolution.

The Islamic Republic has, however, repeatedly announced that it was prepared to retrace its retaliatory steps in response to positive attitude and measures on the part of the agency and the Western countries.

Araqchi and Bueno also addressed various other regional and international issues, including the Israeli regime's ongoing deadly atrocities across the West Asia region.

Anti-Iran Statement by G7



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - The foreign ministers of the Group of Seven (G7) have issued a provocative and interventionist statement, reiterating unsubstantiated claims regarding Iran's nuclear program and alleged support for Moscow. They also called for restraint to reduce tensions in the Middle East.

According to IRNA, the G7 statement, published on the U.S. State Department's website, condemned retaliatory operations by groups affiliated with the Axis of Resistance against Israel and labeled their activities as "destabilizing."

The statement declared: "We will continue our actions to prevent further escalation. Broader conflict in the region benefits no one. We urge all parties to exercise restraint."

The group reiterated its opposition to Iran acquiring nuclear weapons, stating: "We will continue to work together and with other international partners to address the escalating tensions related to Iran's nuclear program. A diplomatic solution remains the best way to resolve this issue."

Furthermore, the statement called on Iran to: "Cease and roll back nuclear activities without civilian justification, and cooperate promptly with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for full implementation of its binding safeguards agreement and commitments under UN Security Council Resolution 2231."

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmacel Baqaei previously announced that deputy foreign ministers of Iran, France, Germany, and the UK would hold discussions on bilateral, regional, and international issues on December 1.

Baqaei, a senior Iranian diplomat, emphasized Iran's commitment to dialogue and cooperation based on the principles of dignity, wisdom, and expediency. He described the upcoming talks as a continuation of discussions held on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York, covering a range of topics, including Palestine, Lebanon, and Iran's nuclear program.



TEHRAN - Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi emphasized his nation's steadfast commitment to fostering dialogue and cooperation among nations as the cornerstone of global peace. Speaking at the 10th meeting of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) in Cascais, Portugal, Araqchi delivered a powerful address on the need for collective action to combat injustice and promote coexistence, while sharply criticizing international inaction on ongoing humanitarian crises in the Middle East.

Araqchi opened his speech by reiterating Iran's deep historical and cultural commitment to dialogue. "Dialogue, engagement, and negotiation are rooted in Iranian civilization," he stated, highlighting the nation's enduring role as a meeting point for diverse peoples and cultures throughout history. He also recalled Iran's 2001 proposal of the "Dialogue Among Civilizations," which was unanimously adopted by the UN General Assembly as a pathway to mutual understanding.

The forum, themed around the role of civilizations in promoting peace, provided an opportunity for Iran to underscore its vision of a world where nations collaborate to resolve conflicts through dialogue rather than aggression.

Turning to regional issues, he condemned the global community's failure to address what he described as "an ongoing genocide in occupied Palestine." He criticized international institutions, including the UN Security Council, the International Criminal Court (ICC), and the International Court of Justice (ICJ), for their inability to take meaningful action against Israel's alleged violations of international law and human rights.

"The atrocities committed by the Zionist regime against Palestinians and Lebanese people have put the international community to a serious test," Araqchi declared. He accused the United States and other nations supporting Israel of complicity in what he called a "colonial and racist plan" to erase Palestinian identity and sovereignty.

The Iranian diplomat also highlighted the destruction of historical and cultural landmarks in the region, framing it as an assault on humanity's shared heritage. "These deliberate acts of destruction are not only war crimes but crimes against all humanity," he said, emphasizing the importance of preserving symbols of coexistence and mutual respect.

Araqchi outlined four key points for addressing the crisis in the Middle East. He urged nations to uphold international law and support Palestinians in their pursuit of self-

determination against occupation and apartheid.

The diplomat called for immediate and effective measures to reinstate the UN's credibility and enforce international law in the region.

Araqchi argued that impartiality in the face of Israel's actions equates to complicity. "We must disallow the normalization of atrocities," he stressed.

He underscored Iran's respect for Judaism as a faith, criticizing efforts to equate criticism of Israel's policies with anti-Semitism.

He also welcomed the ICC's recent moves to hold Israeli leaders accountable for alleged crimes but described them as overdue. "The issuance of arrest warrants for Israeli regime officials is a promising step toward justice," he added.

Beyond addressing specific conflicts, Araqchi emphasized the universal relevance of Iran's approach to global peace. "The Islamic Republic of Iran firmly believes that the only path to guarantee global peace lies in returning to the values of interaction, cooperation, and mutual respect among civilizations and cultures," he said. He urged nations to focus on commonalities rather than divisions and to champion shared human values over hostility.

He concluded his speech with a call for unity, reminding the audience of humanity's resilience in the face of oppression and injustice. "History has shown that justice, truth, and coexistence always triumph over tyranny," he stated. "Let us commit to a future where civilizations collaborate for the betterment of all humanity."

The forum, attended by representatives from over 100 countries, provided a platform for nations to discuss pressing challenges to peace and stability. Araqchi's remarks served as a stark reminder of the deep divisions and unmet responsibilities in the international community, particularly regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

While Iran's stance on global dialogue and cooperation was well-received in some quarters, its sharp critique of Western nations and Israel highlighted the geopolitical complexities surrounding efforts to achieve peace. Observers noted that Iran's role as a regional power lends weight to its calls for collective action but also brings its political motivations under scrutiny.

As the UNAOC Forum concluded, Araqchi's speech underscored the urgency of addressing humanitarian crises with renewed commitment to justice and dialogue. Whether the international community will heed this call remains to be seen.

IAEA BoG's Anti-Iran Resolution Has No Legal Basis



TEHRAN (IRNA) - The strategic deputy to the Iranian president has asserted that the new anti-Iran resolution by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors is legally baseless, arguing that Europe and the United States are not in a position to make a claim against the Islamic Republic.

Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Wednesday that the Europeans failed to fulfill their commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and did not implement the commitments they made after the US exited the deal. After the US withdrawal, Europe made commitments twice, yet did not execute even one of those 11 commitments; therefore, the Europeans are not in a position to make claims against Iran, and for this reason, the resolution passed in the Board of Governors has no legal standing and is legally baseless.

Regarding the European's measures concerning the implementation of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, Zarif noted that the Europeans sided with the United States; although they opposed the US in declarations and statements, they took no action. Europe's commitments to Iran were not contingent upon the fulfillment of commitments by the US but were dependent on the execution of commitments by Iran, he added.

As for the commencement of negotiations between deputy foreign ministers of Iran and European countries, which are slated for starting on Friday, Zarif emphasized that dialogue can always be a solution; of course, the other party (the European Union) must step away from a superior position and the notion that they define the global norms. Europeans are not norm-centered; just look at how they deal with the crimes of the Zionist regime in Palestine, Gaza, and Lebanon. Thus, they are not in a position to consider themselves the center of norm-setting for the world.

Referring to the recent remarks of the advisor to the Supreme Leader Ali Larjani, the former foreign minister said that Iran did not exit the JCPOA; it consistently stated its readiness to adhere to the deal, and Tehran acted within the framework of the agreement, but the United States withdrew from the JCPOA and violated its commitments.

However, the basis for a new agreement will certainly be the JCPOA, an agreement that has been worked on for months and perhaps tens of thousands of hours in Iran, the US, Europe, Russia, and China, he argued, adding that this agreement, according to the Europeans, is one of the most important diplomatic achievements in the world.

Iran Strongly Present in Dangerous Waterways



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iranian Navy Commander Rear Admiral Shahram Irani has stressed that Iran's Navy maintains its strong presence in "dangerous" waterways, which are infested with threats and terrorist attacks.

"Despite facing threats, sanctions and plots, the Navy maintains a powerful presence in the waterways where threats or maritime terrorist incidents are common," Irani said, adding that the powerful presence has amazed world powers.

The Navy chief said such a power was indebted to the unity among the naval forces and their efforts.

"If we are acting today in such a way that has proved to the world that Iran and Iranians cannot be isolated and sanctioned, this has been rooted in the round-the-clock efforts of my dear fellow comrades and the utilization of all the capacities of the establishment and the country."

Irani stressed that the Navy will continue to double efforts to purge the region of foreign troops.

"We will definitely increase our efforts in maintaining the [country's] centrality in the field of maritime security so that foreigners leave this ... area forever."

Iran's Navy has in recent years achieved self-sufficiency in manufacturing surface and sub-surface vessels. It has also increased its presence in international waters to protect naval routes and provide security for merchant vessels and tankers.

The Iranian naval forces have also staged military drills with different countries, including Russia, China and Pakistan, over the past years to promote their combat readiness.

They have also been involved in joint efforts aimed at countering piracy and maritime terrorism, exchanging information in naval rescue and relief operations as well as sharing operational and tactical experience to enhance the security and stability of international maritime trade.

Iran Welcomes Lebanon Ceasefire

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Foreign Ministry Spokesman has welcomed a ceasefire agreement between Hezbollah and Israel, reaffirming the Islamic Republic's unwavering support for the Lebanese government, nation and its resistance movement.

Esmacel Baghaei in a Wednesday statement reiterated Iran's "firm support for the Lebanese government, nation and resistance," stating that Tehran has long underlined the need for an immediate cessation of Israeli aggression against Gaza and Lebanon, and has undertaken extensive diplomatic efforts over the last 14 months toward that goal.

The Iranian diplomat noted that the Zionist entity's warmongering policies and atrocities, with the full support of the United States and certain European states, have resulted in the martyrdom of 60,000 innocent people, injury of 120,000 individuals, displacement of more than 3.5 million people from the oppressed Palestinian and Lebanese nations, and widespread destruction of critical infrastructure in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon.

"In light of interim rulings of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to prevent genocidal acts [in Gaza], and the International Criminal Court (ICC) arrest warrants for the leaders of the



Zionist regime on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity, the world public opinion had been demanding an end to war and genocide over the past 14 months, and is now looking forward to the prosecution and punishment of the criminals of the occupying regime," Baghaei stated.

The spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry emphasized that the international community has a responsibility to safeguard peace and stability in West Asia, and exert effective pressure on the aggressive Israeli regime to stop the war on Gaza.

A ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah took effect at 4 a.m. local time in Lebanon (0200 GMT) amid hopes the truce will bring a permanent end to Israeli attacks on Lebanese towns and cities and halt more than a year of fighting in southern Lebanon and the northern sector of the occupied territories.

US President Joe Biden says the deal involves withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon over the next 60 days, with the Lebanese Army and state security forces taking control of territory in the south of the country.

United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres has said that the UN peacekeeping force in Lebanon, UNIFIL, will also help implement the agreement.

IRAN NEWS



Iran Terms Change of Envoy to Afghanistan as Normal

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Ministry Spokesman Esmail Baghaei has emphasized that the change of Iran's envoy to Afghanistan is quite normal.

In response to the news suggesting a reshaping Iran's policy toward Afghanistan, with the appointment of Alireza Bikkdeli as the head of the mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Kabul, Baghaei stated on Tuesday that changes in Iran's envoys and diplomatic and consular missions are routine and occur at specific intervals.

On Sunday, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi appointed Bikkdeli as the head of the Iranian mission in Kabul. Bikkdeli has previously served as the deputy foreign minister for consular affairs and as Iran's ambassador in Azerbaijan, Turkiye, and Cyprus.

Iran Determined to Strengthen Relations With Serbia



TEHRAN - Minister of Sports and Youth stated, "We view Serbia as a good friend and have always had close and friendly relations. The new Iranian government is very determined to enhance relations with Serbia."

Demir Kovačević, Serbia's ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Iran, met with Ahmad Donyamali, the Iranian Minister of Sports and Youth, at the ministry to discuss potential collaborations.

In the meeting, Donyamali expressed: "I hope this meeting will strengthen the ongoing cooperation between Iran and Serbia, particularly in the fields of sports and youth. Strengthening relations with Serbia across all sectors is essential for us in terms of enhancing diplomacy. Sports is one of the avenues that can bolster diplomacy."

Donyamali congratulated the Serbian ambassador on Serbia's achievements in the 2024 Olympics, saying: "We are pleased with Serbia's successes as we consider ourselves friends of this country. The performances of Iran, ranked 21st, and Serbia, ranked 27th, in the 2024 Olympics reflect the sporting capabilities of both nations. I hope that our joint efforts leading up to the Los Angeles Olympics will elevate the standings of both countries in the next Olympic rankings."

He added: "Last year, Iran's Minister of Sports and Youth visited Serbia, and productive discussions were held between the two parties. In response to that visit, we hope to soon host Serbia's Minister of Sports in Iran. We are confident that the presence of Serbia's sports minister will further strengthen the two countries' collaboration in sports. In some disciplines, we require coaching from Serbian experts. We are particularly interested in utilizing Serbian coaches in sports like ice hockey and water polo."

The Minister continued: "Based on the memorandum of understanding signed during the trip to Serbia, we hope to finalize and implement programs in three key areas: organizing training and preparation events, holding sports competitions, and conducting joint workshops."

He also emphasized: "Football is one of the most popular sports in both Iran and Serbia. Currently, we are ranked 19th globally and second in Asia, after Japan. Considering the popularity of football in both countries, we hope to organize a friendly match during one of FIFA's designated dates. This match could be a significant test for both the Iranian and Serbian national teams and bring the people of both nations closer."

Iran's Non-Oil Exports Surge by 18%, Major Trade Partners Revealed



TEHRAN - Iran's non-oil exports have experienced a significant surge, growing by 18% in the first eight months of the Iranian calendar year compared to the same period last year, according to Faroud Asgari, Deputy Minister of Economy and Head of Iran's Customs Administration. Exports totaled \$38.152 billion, while imports, including gold ingots, amounted to \$45.127 billion.

The weight of non-oil exports reached 103.558 million tons, marking a 14.66% increase, while the average value of exported goods rose by 3% to \$368 per ton. Conversely, imports dropped by 1.73% in weight, totaling 24.525 million tons, with an average customs value of \$1,840 per ton—an 8% increase compared to the previous year.

Petrochemical products were a major contributor to the export growth, with 44.9 million tons valued at \$17.5 billion, reflecting a 31.43% increase in weight and a 29.79% rise in value.

Top Export Destinations are: China: \$9.9b; Iraq: \$8.3b; UAE: \$4.8b; Turkey: \$4.4b; Afghanistan: \$1.6b; Pakistan: \$1.5b and India: \$1.2b.

These seven countries accounted for over 82% of the total weight and value of Iran's non-oil exports.

Top exported goods are: Liquefied natural gas: \$5.1b; Liquefied propane: \$2.2b; Methanol: \$1.7b.

Iran's largest import partners during the same period included the UAE (\$13.6 billion), China (\$11.5 billion), and Turkey (\$7.8 billion).

Other major import partners are: Germany: \$1.6b; Russia: \$1.1b; India: \$1b; Hong Kong: \$900m.

Together, these countries contributed 76.42% of the weight and 83% of the total value of imports.

The latest figures underscore Iran's growing emphasis on diversifying its trade portfolio and strengthening ties with key partners in Asia, the Middle East, and Europe.

IRANNEWS/ECONOMICDESK



ECO Member States Urged to Hold Trade Meetings and Specialized Exhibitions

TEHRAN - During a meeting between the new ECO Secretary General and the President of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, the lack of implementation of past agreements and memorandums among ECO member states was discussed. It was emphasized that the upcoming ECO Council of Governors meeting should focus on organizing trade meetings among economic players of member states and holding specialized exhibitions.

At the start of the meeting, Samad Hassanzadeh, President of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, highlighted the existence of six agreements within ECO's programs aimed at facilitating trade among member states. However, he lamented the lack of progress in implementing these agreements and called for a review. He also noted that ECO's secretariat is based in Iran, which should strengthen communication and cooperation.

Hassanzadeh pointed to ECO's approved initiatives, such as establishing a cultural institute, an insurance company, ECO Trade and Development Bank, ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industry, an educational institute, and a regional standardization institute. He stressed the importance of leveraging these capacities to enhance relations among member states.

Expressing optimism about the Iranian government's approach to strengthening international relations, Hassanzadeh voiced hope for expanding ties among ECO nations in the future.

He also called on ECO member chambers of commerce to prioritize their missions in corporate social responsibility to help the organization achieve its goals.

"We should leverage the current momentum in Iran, focusing on peace and security globally, to address regional and global tensions within the ECO framework," he added.

Despite ECO's potential, Hassanzadeh criticized the low trade volume among its member states. He stated that intra-ECO trade constitutes only 7% of global trade, a figure that must be significantly increased through proactive strategies.

He emphasized the importance of implementing preferential and free trade agreements among member countries, citing agreements between Iran and Tajikistan that have yet to be realized. He also highlighted logistical issues like visa delays, the lack of direct flights, and inconsistent trade laws as major obstacles hindering member states' interactions.

Asad Majeed Khan, the new ECO Secretary General, acknowledged these challenges and called for collaborative solutions. He noted the unique historical, linguistic, religious, economic, and geographic ties among ECO members but questioned why ECO has not fulfilled its development potential despite its structural readiness.

Khan, who contributed to drafting the ECO Trade Agreement 20 years ago, expressed disappointment over its non-implementation. He pledged to revitalize ECO during his three-year term by enhancing financial and institutional frameworks to facilitate member interactions.

Estimating ECO member trade volume at \$1.8 billion, or just 8% of global trade, Khan said this is far too low. He suggested starting with focused initiatives like developing the tourism industry to spur growth.

He also emphasized the need to revise past agreements, address trade tariffs, and improve collaboration among member governments. Additionally, he called for more trade meetings and specialized exhibitions as vital steps forward.

As the tenure of Iran's presidency of the ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industry nears its end, Khan urged its leadership to prioritize these proposals at the upcoming ECO Council of Governors meeting.

Conditions for Building Power Plants and Electricity Exports for Investors

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK



TEHRAN - Head of the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA)'s Investment Group Hamidreza Bahmanabadi, emphasizing Iran's strong potential for renewable energy, highlighted the importance of collaborative efforts to address challenges in the energy industry. He noted the necessity of focusing on renewable power plants to improve the situation. Currently, 2 MW of electricity in Kermanshah Province, 14 MW in Kurdistan Province, and 1 MW in Ilam Province are generated through solar power plants.

Bahmanabadi explained that Iran enjoys excellent conditions for solar and wind energy due to abundant sunlight and favorable wind speeds. He stated that effective programs are in place for developing renewable energy plants and purchasing electricity from investors. For guaranteed purchases, electricity generated up to 20 kW is bought at 25,000 IRR per kWh, between 20 and 200 kW at 22,000 IRR, hydropower at 15,000 IRR on transmission lines, and at 19,000 IRR for flow-based systems. These rates apply to the previous year.

He stated that currently, 49% of renewable energy comes from solar, 27% from wind, 15% from small-scale plants, and 7% from hydropower. Per Article 16 of the Knowledge-Based Economy Development Law, industries consuming over 1 MW of electricity must source at least 1% of their annual energy from renewable sources starting in 2023, increasing to 5% by 2028.

As of now, 88 industrial projects have been licensed to build

renewable power plants with a total capacity of 3,755 MW, of which six plants are operational, generating 44 MW of electricity.

Bahmanabadi emphasized that industrial producers can sell excess renewable electricity on the Energy Exchange or purchase additional electricity at free-market rates if they fail to use renewable sources. Industrial zones are mandated to allocate land for renewable power plants and simplify licensing procedures.

Renewable plants on private or industrial lands up to 1 MW are allowed, and excess electricity is purchased at a base rate of 22,000 IRR per kWh. Currently, 60 renewable power plants with a capacity of 460 MW are traded on the Green Energy Exchange, with transactions valued at approximately 2.7 trillion IRR.

Under Article 12 of the Law on Removing Production Barriers, 122 solar power plants with a capacity of 3,900 MW are under construction, with 14 plants (63 MW) already operational. Additionally, a support plan for installing 5 kW solar systems has been implemented in cooperation with various organizations, including the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee and the Ministry of Energy.

Bahmanabadi outlined a straightforward process for building renewable plants, from investment model selection and financial assessment to obtaining construction permits and commencing operations.

21% Growth in North-South Corridor Transport



TEHRAN - Javad Hedayati, Director General of the Transit and International Transport Department at the Road Maintenance and Transportation Organization of Iran, announced a 21% increase in border crossings and the movement of 76,000 trucks through the Astara border in the first seven months of this year. Astara serves as the most significant border point on the western branch of the North-South Corridor.

Hedayati stated that this growth aligns with national measures to enhance trade relations between Iran and Eurasian countries through preferential trade agreements, leading to a steady increase in commercial exchanges.

He highlighted a 20% growth in transit tonnage at the Astara border, with over 525,000 tons recorded during the seven-month period. Additionally, incoming transit from this border in 2023 has surged by 184%, a result of trilateral agreements between Iran, Azerbaijan, and Russia to optimize the corridor's performance and facilitate activities along this strategic route.

Based on data from the automated appointment system at Astara, demand for crossings and issued appointments for both Iranian and foreign drivers rose by 16% in the same period. On average, 208 appointments were issued daily, peaking in May with 238 daily appointments, reflecting the high demand among drivers and international transport companies.

Drivers can schedule appointments through the online platform borderpark.ir, which supports seven languages to improve accessibility for foreign users. The system coordinates customs clearance, administrative formalities, and border crossings efficiently.

Hedayati emphasized that various logistical and infrastructural projects are underway at the Astara border. These include traffic management, border infrastructure upgrades such as reinforcing the old vehicle bridge, constructing a new overpass on the Baghche Sara road, expanding terminal facilities, and increasing parking space by 2.2 hectares.

As the peak export and transit season begins, the Road Maintenance and Transportation Organization is collaborating with regional and national agencies to enhance Astara's border operations and provide better services to traders, transport companies, and drivers.

Railway Connection of Chabahar Port to Zaranj and Kandahar



TEHRAN - Hassan Mirshafi, the Special Representative of Iran's Minister of Roads and Urban Development for Afghanistan Affairs, discussed the joint Iran-Afghanistan project aimed at strengthening Chabahar Port.

He stated: "We are collaborating on several transportation projects with Afghanistan. On the road leading to Chabahar, we have provided special facilities to Afghan traders, economic players, and cargo owners from both countries."

He continued: "Parking areas (TIR parks) have been established along the route. The Afghans have also expressed willingness to invest, and Iran has offered privileges to ensure mutual cargo flow."

Mirshafi noted that Chabahar Port and its free trade zone are experiencing growth. He added, "The Chabahar-Zahedan railway project is nearing completion and will be fully operational next year. As part of this project, we have agreed with Afghanistan to extend the railway from Zahedan to Zabol, and then to Zaranj and Kandahar. Afghanistan has committed to prioritizing the Zahedan-Zaranj-Kandahar railway in return for Iran's investment in this project, which is, of course, not free."

The Special Representative explained that the railway spans 450 kilometers and is an attractive cargo route. "It will transport Afghanistan's mineral cargo from Zaranj to Zahedan and then to Chabahar, which serves as an export hub," he said.

Mirshafi also highlighted the ongoing construction of the Herat-Mahirood road, a 120-kilometer route connecting Birjand to Mahirood and from there to Herat. "This road project is nearing completion and will soon strengthen Iran's connection with southern Afghanistan," he noted.

Furthermore, the Mahirood-Birjand route is being developed as a four-lane highway to bolster the Shahid Beheshti Port in Chabahar. He added, "A highway from Birjand to Zahedan is also under construction, with remaining segments of the Zahedan-Chabahar route being developed as a highway. However, the Mahirood-Herat route does not solely lead to Chabahar; part of it also connects to Bandar Abbas."

Bolivia Announces \$1b Deal With China to Build Lithium Plants

LA PAZ (Dispatches) - Bolivia said Tuesday it had signed a \$1 billion deal with China's CBC, a subsidiary of the world's largest lithium battery producer CATL, to build two lithium carbonate production plants in the country's southwest. Bolivia's state-owned Bolivia Lithium Deposits (YLB) said the plants -- one with an annual capacity of 10,000 tons of lithium carbonate and the other of 25,000 - would be situated in the vast Uyuni salt flats. Lithium, nicknamed "white gold," is a key component in the production of batteries for electric vehicles and mobile phones. Bolivia claims to have the world's largest lithium deposits. President Luis Arce, who presided over Tuesday's signing ceremony, said it paved the way for Bolivia to become "a very important player in determining the international price of lithium."



China State Media Warn Trump Against Mutually Destructive Tariff War



BEIJING (Dispatches) - China's state media warned U.S. President-elect Donald Trump his pledge to slap additional tariffs on Chinese goods over fentanyl flows could drag the world's top two economies into a mutually destructive tariff war.

Trump, who takes office on Jan. 20, said on Monday he would impose "an additional 10% tariff, above any additional tariffs" on imports from China until Beijing clamped down on trafficking of the chemical precursors used to make the deadly drug.

The two superpowers are setting out their positions ahead of the former president's return to the White House. Trump's first term resulted in a trade war that uprooted global supply chains and hurt every economy as inflation and borrowing costs shot up.

Editorials in Chinese communist party mouthpieces China Daily and the Global Times late on Tuesday warned the next occupant of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue to not make China a "scapegoat" for the U.S.' fentanyl crisis or "take China's goodwill for granted."

"The excuse the president-elect has given to justify his threat of additional tariffs on imports from China is farfetched," China Daily said.

"There are no winners in tariff wars. If the U.S. continues to politicize economic and trade issues by weaponising tariffs, it will leave no party unscathed."

Economists have begun downgrading their growth targets for China's \$19 trillion economy for 2025 and 2026 in anticipation of further tariffs promised by Trump during the election campaign, and are warning Americans to brace for an increase in the cost of living.

"For now the only thing we know for sure is that the risks in this area are high," said Louis Kuijs, chief Asia economist at S&P Global Ratings, which on Sunday lowered its China growth forecast for 2025 and 2026 to 4.1% and 3.8%, respectively.

Deadly Clashes Erupt as Imran Khan Supporters Breach Lockdown in Pakistani Capital



ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - Pakistani protesters demanding the release of ex-prime minister Imran Khan on Tuesday killed four members of the nation's security forces, the government said, as the crowds closed in on the center of the capital.

Protesters armed with sticks and slingshots took on police in western Islamabad on Tuesday morning, less than 10 kilometers (six miles) from the government enclave they aim to occupy.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said four members of the paramilitary Rangers force had been killed in an attack by "miscreants" on a city highway leading towards the government sector.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said the men had been "run over by a vehicle."

"These disruptive elements do not seek revolution but bloodshed," he said in a statement. "This is not a peaceful protest, it is extremism."

The government said Monday that one police officer had been killed and nine more were critically wounded in two days of clashes with demonstrators as they closed in on the capital.

Khan was barred from standing in February elections that were marred by allegations of rigging, sidelined by dozens of legal cases that he claims were concocted to prevent his comeback.

His Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party has defied a government crackdown with regular demonstrations aiming to seize public spaces in Islamabad and other large cities.

Gunfire Heard Across Beirut as Israel-Hezbollah Ceasefire Takes Effect



BEIRUT (Dispatches) - A ceasefire between Israel and Iran-backed group Hezbollah came into effect at 0200 GMT on Wednesday after U.S. President Joe Biden said both sides accepted an agreement brokered by the United States and France.

Bursts of gunfire could be heard across Beirut after the ceasefire took effect. It was not immediately clear if the shooting was celebratory, as gunfire had also been used to alert residents who may have missed evacuation warnings issued by Israel's military.

Streams of cars began heading to southern Lebanon, which borders Israel, after the ceasefire early on Wednesday, according to Reuters witnesses.

The ceasefire promises to end a conflict across the Israeli-Lebanese border that has killed thousands of people since it was ignited by the Gaza war last year.

Biden spoke at the White House on Tuesday shortly after Israel's security cabinet approved the agreement in a 10-1 vote. He said he had spoken to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Lebanon's caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati, and that fighting would end at 4 a.m. local time (0200 GMT).

"This is designed to be a permanent cessation of hostilities," Biden said. "What is left of Hezbollah and other terrorist organizations will not be allowed to threaten the security of Israel again."

Israel will gradually withdraw its forces over 60 days as Lebanon's army takes control of territory near its border with Israel to ensure that Hezbollah does not rebuild its infrastructure there, Biden said.

"Civilians on both sides will soon be able to safely return to their communities," he said.

Hezbollah has not formally commented on the ceasefire but senior official Hassan Fadlallah told Lebanon's Al Jadeed TV that while it supported the extension of the Lebanese state's authority, the group would emerge from the war stronger.

"Thousands will join the resistance ... Disarming the resistance was an Israeli proposal that fell through," said Fadlallah, who is also a member of Lebanon's parliament.

French President Emmanuel Macron said on social-media platform X the deal was "the culmination of efforts undertaken for many months with the Israeli and Lebanese authorities, in close collaboration with the United States."

Lebanon's Mikati issued a statement welcoming the deal. Foreign Minister Abdallah Bou Habib said the Lebanese army would have at least 5,000 troops deployed in southern Lebanon as Israeli troops withdrew.

Netanyahu said he was ready to implement a ceasefire but would respond forcefully to any violation by Hezbollah.

He said the ceasefire would allow Israel to focus on the threat from Iran, give the army an opportunity to rest and replenish supplies, and isolate Hamas, the Palestinian militant group that triggered war in the region when it attacked Israel from Gaza last year.

"In full coordination with the United States, we retain complete military freedom of action. Should Hezbollah violate the agreement or attempt to rearm, we will strike decisively," Netanyahu said.

Hezbollah, which is allied to Hamas, was considerably weaker than it had been at the start of the conflict, he added.

"We have set it back decades, eliminated ... its top leaders, destroyed most of its rockets and missiles, neutralized thousands

of fighters, and obliterated years of terror infrastructure near our border," he said.

A senior U.S. official, briefing reporters on condition of anonymity, said the U.S. and France would join a mechanism with the UNIFIL peacekeeping force that would work with Lebanon's army to deter potential violations of the ceasefire. U.S. combat forces would not be deployed, the official said.

Jon Finer, deputy national security adviser in the Biden administration, told CNN that Washington would be watching for any violations of the deal.

"Implementation of this agreement will be key and we will be very vigilant to any attempts to disrupt what the two parties have committed to as part of this process today," he said.

Biden, who leaves office in January, said his administration would continue to push for an elusive ceasefire and hostage-release deal in Gaza, as well as for a deal to normalize relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia.

In the hours leading up to the ceasefire, hostilities raged as Israel ramped up its campaign of airstrikes in Beirut and other parts of Lebanon, with health authorities reporting at least 18 killed.

The Israeli military said it struck "components of Hezbollah's financial management and systems" including a money-exchange office.

Hezbollah also kept up rocket fire into Israel.

Israel's air force intercepted three launches from Lebanese territory, the military said, in an extensive missile barrage on Tuesday night that led to warning alarms in about 115 settlements.

Alia Ibrahim, a mother of twin girls from the southern village of Qaaqaiyat al-Snawbar, who had fled nearly three months ago to Beirut, said she hoped Israeli officials, who have expressed contradictory views on a ceasefire, would be faithful to the deal.

"Our village - they destroyed half of it. In these few seconds before they announced the ceasefire, they destroyed half our village," she said. "God willing, we can go back to our homes and our land."

A poll conducted by Israel's Channel 12 TV found that 37% of Israelis were in favour of the ceasefire, compared with 32% against.

Opponents to the deal in Israel include opposition leaders and heads of towns near Israel's border with Lebanon, who want a depopulated buffer zone on Lebanon's side of the frontier.

Both the Lebanese government and Hezbollah have insisted that a return of displaced civilians to southern Lebanon is a key tenet of the truce.

Israeli Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, a right-wing member of Netanyahu's government, said on X the agreement did not ensure the return of Israelis to their homes in the country's north and that the Lebanese army did not have the ability to overcome Hezbollah.

"In order to leave Lebanon, we must have our own security belt," Ben-Gvir said.

Russia Says Ukraine Has Launched Two More ATACMS Missile Strikes



MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia vowed to retaliate after announcing Ukraine had struck Russian military installations with US-supplied weapons, after President Vladimir Putin had warned Kyiv and the West against the missile attacks.

Moscow and Kyiv have been ratcheting up their deadly aerial broadsides with increasingly sophisticated weapons over recent days, spurring fears the conflict could further escalate.

Ukraine first fired US-made ATACMS missiles at Russia last week after getting the green light from Washington, and the Kremlin retaliated with an experimental hypersonic missile that hit the Ukrainian city of Dnipro.

The Russian defence ministry said Ukraine's new ATACMS strikes -- on 23 November and 25 November -- targeted military installations and an airfield in Russia's western Kursk region, causing some damage to the infrastructure.

"Retaliatory actions are being prepared," it added.

Russian forces launched a record 188 drones at Ukraine overnight in an attack that disrupted energy supplies in the east of the country, Kyiv said Tuesday.

Ukraine's ATACMS strike on the Kursk Vostochny air base wounded two servicemen, Moscow's defence ministry said in a rare admission, while a strike on an air defence battery damaged a radar system and also caused

"casualties".

It said three of the five missiles fired in the first strike were shot down, while seven of the eight used in the second were destroyed.

In response to Ukraine's first use of the US-supplied weapon, Moscow on Thursday used its new Oreshnik experimental hypersonic missile, which Putin hinted was capable of carrying a nuclear payload.

He warned Russia could continue using the weapon depending on "the

actions of the United States and its satellites" and said Moscow had the right to hit military facilities in countries that allow Ukraine to use their weapons against Russia.

Moscow's comments on the new strike -- and its record drone barrage -- came as ambassadors from Ukraine and NATO's 32 members were due to meet in Brussels over Russia's firing last week of the intermediate-range missile.

The meeting was to come hours after Ukraine's air force said it had shot down 76 Russian drones in 17 regions, while another 95 were either lost from their radars or downed by electronic jamming defensive systems. It did not specify what happened to the remainder.

"These attacks are possible only because of Russia's ability to circumvent sanctions through various schemes," President Volodymyr Zelensky said in response.

"We need greater collective efforts to enforce sanctions and force Russia to stop this war," he said.

AFP journalists heard explosions ring out over the capital during the attack, while in the relatively untouched western Ternopil region, authorities said the drones had damaged a "critical infrastructure facility," without elaborating.

They said the attack had disrupted electricity supplies in the region and that engineers were working to stabilise the situation.

Kyiv had said it hopes to get "concrete and meaningful outcomes" after calling the meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Council.

Trump Team Weighs Direct Talks With North Korea's Kim

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - President-elect Donald Trump's team is discussing pursuing direct talks with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, hoping a fresh diplomatic push can lower the risks of armed conflict, according to two people familiar with the matter.

Several in Trump's team now see a direct approach from Trump, to build on a relationship that already exists, as most likely to break the ice with Kim, years after the two traded insults and what Trump called "beautiful" letters in an unprecedented diplomatic effort during his first term in office, the people said.

The policy discussions are fluid and no final decisions have been made by the president-elect, the sources said.

Trump's transition team did not respond to a request for comment.

What reciprocation Kim will offer Trump is unclear. The North Koreans ignored four years of outreach by U.S. President Joe Biden to start talks with no pre-conditions, and Kim is emboldened by an expanded missile arsenal and a much closer relationship with Russia.

"We have already gone as far as we can on negotiating with the United States," Kim said last week in a speech at a Pyongyang military exhibition, according to state media.

During his 2017-2021 presidency, Trump held three meetings with Kim, in Singapore, Hanoi, and at the Korean border, the first time a sitting U.S. president had set foot in the country.

Their diplomacy yielded no concrete results, even as Trump described their talks as



falling "in love." The U.S. called for North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons, while Kim demanded full sanctions relief, then issued new threats.

It was not clear what result a new diplomatic effort would yield. An initial Trump goal would be to reestablish basic engagement but further policy aims or a precise timetable have not been set, the people said. And the issue may take a backseat to more pressing foreign policy concerns in the Middle East and Ukraine, according to one person briefed on the transition's thinking.

North Korean state media have not yet publicly mentioned the re-election of Trump, and Kim said this month that the United States was ramping up tension and provocations, raising the risks of nuclear war.

Trump and some of his allies left office with the impression that the direct approach was Washington's best shot at influencing behavior north of the demilitarized zone, which has divided the Korean Peninsula for seven decades. The countries' war was never technically ended even as the guns fell silent.

On Friday, Trump named one of the people who implemented that initial North Korea strategy, former State Department official Alex Wong, as his deputy national security adviser. "As Deputy Special Representative for North Korea, he helped negotiate my Summit with North Korean Leader, Kim Jong Un," Trump said in a statement.

Trump inherits an increasingly tense situation with Kim when he returns to the White House in January, as he did in 2017, an atmosphere allies expect the incoming president to confront head-on.



Manchester City's Woes Continue as Lewandowski Makes History

LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester City's struggles continued as Pep Guardiola's side remarkably blew a three-goal lead to draw 3-3 with Feyenoord in the Champions League on Tuesday, while Bayern Munich beat Paris Saint-Germain to leave the French club in danger of elimination.

There were also big wins for Arsenal, Atletico Madrid, Atalanta and Bayer Leverkusen, while Inter Milan went top of the standings after five games and Barcelona's Robert Lewandowski reached a century of Champions League goals.

However, the biggest drama came at the Etihad Stadium, where City were cruising early in the second half with a three-goal advantage as they sought to end a run of five successive defeats in all competitions. Erling Haaland opened the scoring from a penalty just before half-time, and Ilkay Gundogan's deflected shot made it 2-0 in the 50th minute.

Haaland struck again to make it 3-0, but Feyenoord's comeback began on 75 minutes when Anis Hadji Moussa took advantage of hapless defending to round goalkeeper Ederson and pull one back. Substitute Santiago Gimenez bundled in to make it 3-2 on 82 minutes and the equaliser arrived a minute from the end.

Ederson was again caught out with Igor Paixao going around the goalkeeper and crossing for Slovak international David Hancko to head in.

"We concede a lot of goals because we are not stable," complained Guardiola. "We lost a lot of games lately. We are fragile and of course we need a victory."

It is the first time that a team has gone into the last 20 minutes of a Champions League game trailing by three goals and still avoided defeat, as the point boosts the Dutch side's hopes of progressing.

City are two points outside the top eight places which offer direct qualification for the last 16, while Bayern moved above them by beating PSG 1-0 in Munich.

South Korean defender Kim Min-jae scored the only goal seven minutes before half-time, heading in after goalkeeper Matvei Safonov failed to clear a corner.

PSG had Ousmane Dembele sent off in the second half and the French champions have just four points, and three goals, from five games.

They are a lowly 26th in the 36-team league, a point adrift of the positions which offer a place in the play-off round in February.

"We need to win our last three matches, otherwise we risk being eliminated," admitted PSG coach Luis Enrique.

Lewandowski netted his 100th goal in the competition with an early penalty in Barcelona's 3-0 home win over French side Brest.

Dani Olmo netted midway through the second half before Lewandowski sealed Barca's win at the death, his 101st goal in the Champions League -- only Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi have scored more.

Inter lead the standings with 13 points, a point ahead of Barcelona and Liverpool, after a 1-0 win at home to RB Leipzig which means they are also still yet to concede a goal.

Castello Lukeba's own goal made the difference at San Siro, and Leipzig are one of only three teams to have lost five games out of five.

Arsenal romped to a 5-1 victory away to Sporting in Lisbon, as the Portuguese side adapt to life without coach Ruben Amorim, who has departed for Manchester United.

Gabriel Martinelli, Kai Havertz and Gabriel Magalhaes all scored in the first half for Arsenal, before Goncalo Inacio pulled one back shortly after the restart.

Bukayo Saka converted a penalty on 65 minutes after Martin Odegaard had been brought down, and Leandro Trossard headed in to seal Arsenal's win late on.

Atalanta romped to a 6-1 win over rock-bottom Young Boys in Switzerland, with Mateo Retegui and Charles De Ketelaere both scoring braces.

Sead Kolasinac and Lazar Samardzic also netted for the Italians, with Silvere Ganvoula getting the hosts' reply.

Florian Wirtz struck twice, including a penalty, as Leverkusen crushed Red Bull Salzburg 5-0, with Alejandro Grimaldo scoring a superb free-kick and Patrik Schick and Aleix Garcia also netting.

Julian Alvarez and substitute Angel Correa each scored twice and Marcos Llorente and Antoine Griezmann once as Atletico romped to a 6-0 win away to Sparta Prague.

Mascherano Hired as New Inter Miami Head Coach



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Javier Mascherano is the new head coach of Inter Miami, the team announced Tuesday.

Mascherano, whose contract runs through the 2027 season, replaces Tata Martino, who stepped down last week due to personal reasons.

The 40-year-old Mascherano comes to MLS after coaching Argentina's U-20 and U-23 men's teams since 2021. Most recently, he guided Argentina to the knockout stage of the 2024 Paris Olympics.

"This job requires somebody with the experience to be able to maximize our unique collection of talent - from our global superstars, to our burgeoning homegrown players, to our young international prospects, and everything in between," said Inter Miami managing owner Jorge Mas in a statement.

"Javier has amassed unmatched experience in his career, from playing on the world's biggest stages, to coaching at the youth international level; he has the blend of skills and experience we were looking for, and even has had direct coaching experience with Tomás Avilés, Facundo Fariás, Federico Redondo, and Benjamin Cremaschi. We believe Javier is an important addition to our club as we continue on our quest to be among the world's elite, setting a new standard for fútbol in North America."

Before he entered management, Mascherano had a long playing career featuring for such clubs as River Plate, Corinthians, West Ham United, Liverpool and Barcelona, where he won five La Liga titles, as well as the Champions League, UEFA Cup and FIFA Club World Cup championship twice.

Del Potro Lives With Daily Pain After Tennis Career



LONDON (Dispatches) - Former US Open champion Juan Martín del Potro has detailed the toll injuries took on his career and the pain he still experiences.

The 36-year-old's last professional tournament came in February 2022 at the Argentina Open, when he hinted his career was over after a first-round loss. He had not played in the three years before that after fracturing his knee at Queen's in 2019.

In an Instagram video on Monday, the Argentinian spoke about how his injuries still affect him.

"My daily life isn't what I would like it to be. I can't play football, I can't play padel [tennis]. It's terrible. They took [from] me the chance to do what I loved the most, which was to play tennis," said Del Potro. "It's very tough. There are moments where I have no more strength. I'm not indestructible. I have good things, bad things but most of the times I have to fake it and put a good face, but many times I feel terrible. Every day when I wake up I have to take six or seven pills. Gastric protectors, anti-inflammatories, one for anxiety. Then the pills made me gain weight so they told me to stop eating some things".

Del Potro said his problems had started after he had knee surgery following his injury at Queen's. "The doctor told me I would play in three months. I even signed up for three indoor tournaments at the end of the year. Since that moment, I was never able to climb stairs without pain. I hurts when I drive, it hurts many times when I go to sleep. It's been a never-ending nightmare."

However, Del Potro said he still has grounds for optimism. He says he is looking forward to playing Novak Djokovic in a farewell exhibition match in Buenos Aires next month.

"I started my diet, I'm losing weight, I'm training. I want to arrive at that match in the best shape possible. It's a match to say goodbye," Del Potro said. "Djokovic was very generous in accepting my invitation. I want to give him all the love possible. If at least for one, two or three hours I can be at peace and happy on a tennis court, it will be beautiful."

At one point in his career, Del Potro looked like he would compete with Djokovic, Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal and Andy Murray in grand slam finals for years. As a 20-year-old he used his huge forehand to beat Nadal and Federer on his way to winning the 2009 US Open. But injuries took their toll on his 6ft 6in frame and he reached only one more grand slam final, finishing runner-up to Djokovic at the 2018 US Open. He also won a silver medal at the 2016 Olympics, where he met Murray in the final. Altogether he won 22 singles titles, including the Indian Wells Masters in 2018 when he reached a career high world ranking of No 3.

ATP Award Nominees Announced as Jannik Sinner Snubbed

LONDON (Dispatches) - The shortlist for the 2024 ATP Awards have been announced, with World No.1 Jannik Sinner and his coaches not featuring at all.

Sinner has just helped Italy defend the Davis Cup for the first time in their history, completing a dominant season that has seen him win a tour-leading eight singles titles, including the Australian Open and the US Open.

Last year, Sinner was awarded the 'Most Improved Player', while his coaches Darren Cahill and Simone Vagnozzi were voted the winners of the 'Coach of the Year'.

However, the 23-year-old has not been nominated for any awards this year, while his aforementioned coaches have been snubbed for the 'Coach of the Year' category.

The player award nominees are compiled by a International Tennis Writers' Association (ITWA) vote, while the 'Coach of the Year' shortlist is selected by a first round of voting from ATP coaches.



Some of the standout nominees in the shortlist include Carlos Alcaraz, Grigor Dimitrov, Casper Ruud and the now retired Dominic Thiem (Stefan Edberg Sportsmanship Award).

While Brit Jack Draper has also been rewarded for his breakout season by being nominated for 'Most Improved Player of the

Year', with his coach James Trotman also being shortlisted.

The winners of these awards will be announced on the week beginning Monday 9th December.

It is less surprising that Jannik Sinner, himself, has been awarded for any of these awards, given that they are less relevant to him. It also seems unlikely that he would be nominated for a Sportsmanship Award given the current doping case hanging over him. However, what is surprising is that his coaches Darren Cahill and Simone Vagnozzi have not been nominated, especially as they won the award last year and have had an even better season in 2024.

The four player awards will now be voted for by their colleagues, while the 'Coach of the Year' category will go through a second round of voting by fellow coaches.

Lillard Leads Giannis-Less Bucks Past Heat

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - November 27 - Damian Lillard scored 37 points and dished 12 assists as the short-handed Milwaukee Bucks defeated the host Miami Heat 106-103 in an NBA Cup game.

Milwaukee has won five straight games and seven of eight.

Lillard made 10 of 17 shots, including 8 of 13 from 3-point range.

Bucks star Giannis Antetokounmpo, who leads the NBA in scoring (32.4 points per game), missed the game due to swelling in his left knee.

In addition, three-time Bucks All-Star Khris Middleton has yet to play this season due to surgery on both of his ankles.

The Bucks, who are 3-0 in East Group B in the NBA Cup, never trailed in the game.

Miami, 1-2 in East Group B, was led by Jimmy Butler's 23 points. Tyler Herro added 18.

Heat guard Terry Rozier returned after missing two games due to an injury to his right foot. He finished with 17 points on 7-of-9 shooting, including 3-of-4 from deep.

Milwaukee, thanks to 17 points from Lillard, led 31-20 after the first quarter. Lillard made his first four 3-point attempts, and the Bucks shot 55 percent from the floor for the quarter.

Lillard scored eight points in the second quarter as the Bucks



stretched their halftime lead to 65-51. Miami shot 56.2 percent in the second quarter, but Milwaukee was even better (59.1 percent).

In the third quarter, Milwaukee stretched its lead to 22 points. But Miami made a comeback, cutting the deficit to 85-80 by the end of the period. Lillard had 10 points in the third, but Milwaukee cooled off overall, shooting 46.2 percent.

Miami finally caught Milwaukee at 96-96 on a Butler layup with 4:02 left in the game.

In the final minute, the Bucks, leading 104-103, seemed to get a

Cup game on Tuesday night.

Dillon Brooks added 22 points for Houston, which improved to 3-0 in the competition and clinched West Group A and a spot in the NBA Cup quarterfinals.

Anthony Edwards had 29 points and 10 rebounds for Minnesota, which has lost three in a row. Julius Randle scored 21, while Naz Reid had 19 off the bench.