

Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Esmail Baghaei Has Urged Russia to Play a Greater Role in Forcing Israel to Fulfill Its Commitments and Ending Violence

IRAN NEWS

Iran Plans to Deepen Its Partnership With Russia's Rosatom, Focusing on Small and Large-Scale Nuclear Power Projects, According to Rosatom CEO Alexey Likhachev

2 DOMESTIC



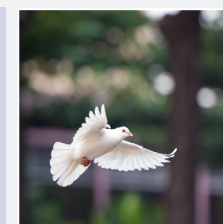
Foreign Trade Costs and Investment Attraction Tied to FATF Membership

> SEE PAGE 2

3 INTERNATIONAL

Gaza Ceasefire Finally Set to Start Sunday

> SEE PAGE 3



Digital Currency of Iran and Russia to Launch



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The Governor of the Central Bank of Iran announced that a new monetary agreement between Iran and Russia will eliminate any financial and banking obstacles in the trade between the two nations. He confirmed that digital currency would soon be activated in their economic exchanges.

In a meeting with economic stakeholders from Russia, Mohammadreza Farzin, Governor of the Central Bank of Iran, explained that Iranian bank cards will now allow users to withdraw rubles from ATMs in Russia. He also revealed the creation of a new currency exchange market called the "conventional currency market," where exchange rates will be set based on mutual agreements between exporters and importers.

"The exchange rates in this market will align more closely with unofficial markets or those where certain goods are priced," said Farzin. He also highlighted new initiatives with Russia, including launching the ruble display board at the central exchange and introducing an offshore rial-ruble system.

Farzin further elaborated on ongoing efforts to create a separate ruble exchange rate for traders, with hopes of completing the framework in the next two weeks. "I am confident there will be positive news soon, and the difficulties will be resolved," he added.

Currently, Iran's Shaparak network cards work seamlessly with Russian ATMs. Farzin mentioned that prior to his trip to Russia, one billion rubles were deposited into the "VTB" account. Additionally, plans are underway to involve other Iranian banks such as Bank Melli in the project.

Looking forward, Russian cards will soon work in Iran's ATMs, and by next year, Iranian cards will function in Russian point-of-sale (POS) systems, enabling cross-border purchases. The expansion of bank branches in both countries is also on the agenda to further facilitate economic relations.

Farzin emphasized that the monetary agreement between Iran and Russia would eliminate any financial barriers to trade between the two nations.

Yemen Conducts 4 Retaliatory Operations Against Israeli, U.S. Targets



SANAA (Dispatches) - The Yemeni Armed Forces spokesman says they have carried out four military operations against Israeli and U.S. targets in retaliation for the genocide in Gaza and anti-Yemen strikes.

In a statement, Brigadier General Yahya Saree said "four cruise missiles" were fired at "vital" Israeli targets in the city of Umm Rashrash, also known as Eilat, in the southern part of Occupied Palestine, describing the operation as "successful."

He added that two other drone attacks "successfully" hit Israeli targets in occupied Yaffa (Tel Aviv) and Asqalan.

Meanwhile, Saree announced that the Yemeni naval forces targeted the American aircraft carrier "USS Harry S. Truman" in the northern Red Sea, using a number of drones. "The operation achieved its goals successfully."

The operation came after U.S. warplanes launched multiple airstrikes on Yemen's northwestern province of Amran.

Saree reiterated the armed forces' readiness to respond to any anti-Yemen Israeli or US escalatory actions, and also vowed to retaliate in case Israel intensified its attacks on Gaza.

He made the remarks during a pro-Gaza rally in the capital Sana'a.

On an almost a weekly basis, Yemenis have been staging mass protests across the country to decry the Israeli atrocities in Gaza, and to reiterate their support for their country's retaliatory operations.

Since the onset of Israel's genocidal war on the Gaza Strip in October 2023, Yemeni forces have carried out scores of operations in support of the war-hit Gazans, striking targets throughout the occupied Palestinian territories, in addition to targeting Israeli ships or vessels heading towards ports in the occupied territories.

World Bank Reports Economic Downturn in Iran; Growth in Decline



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The World Bank has forecast a significant slowdown in Iran's economic growth, predicting it will drop from 5% in 2024 to just 3% in 2025. The international body also expects this downward trend to continue over the next two years. The Bank attributes this decline in GDP growth to the adoption of contractionary fiscal and monetary policies aimed at controlling high inflation. It further anticipates that reduced demand for crude oil and a slowdown in non-oil sector investments will continue to drag down economic activity in the coming years.

In its latest report, the World Bank states that Iran's economy will experience slower growth in 2025 compared to last year. The organization forecasts a growth rate of approximately 3% for 2025, down from 5% in 2024. The report projects that the country's economic growth will continue to decelerate, with GDP growth expected to further decline to 2.7% in 2026 and 2.2% in 2027.

Similarly, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has estimated Iran's GDP growth for 2025 at 3.7%, which is 0.7 percentage points higher than the World Bank's projection. The IMF also predicts a downward trend over the next four years, with economic growth shrinking from 5% in 2024 to 2.8% by 2027.

Meanwhile, the United Nations has forecast a 3.8% economic growth rate for Iran in 2025, with projections for 2026 and 2027 at 3.2% and 3.3%, respectively. The World Bank attributes the sharp decrease in Iran's GDP growth this year to fiscal and monetary tightening measures aimed at curbing inflation.

The continued decline in economic growth over the next two years is expected to stem primarily from reduced demand for crude oil, particularly from China, and slower investment growth in non-oil sectors. The report notes that high inflation in Iran, driven by these contractionary policies, has been somewhat mitigated by tighter reserve requirements for banks and rising interest rates.

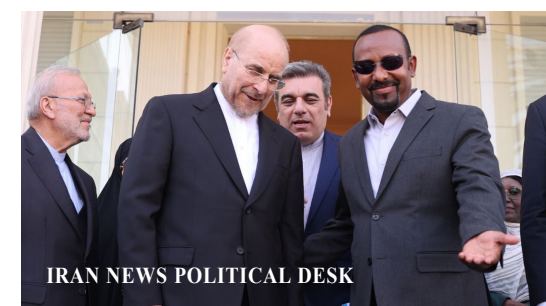
The World Bank (WB), in its previous report, had predicted Iran's economic growth in 2024.

According to the estimate of the international body, Iran's economy experienced a five percent growth and a 40.8 percent inflation in 2023.

The bank forecast that the industrial sector in Iran would take the lead in 2024, experiencing a 4.9 percent growth, followed by the services and agricultural sectors with a 2.7 and 0.9 percent growth.

According to the World Bank, global economic growth is stabilizing as inflation rates decrease and monetary policies are eased. The global economy is expected to grow at an average rate of 2.7% in 2025 and 2026, supported by increased trade and investment. However, this growth is expected to be insufficient to recover from the economic shocks of recent years, particularly in vulnerable countries. Over the long term, the process of income convergence between emerging and developing economies (EMDEs) and advanced economies is expected to continue weakening in the first quarter of this century.

Iran, Ethiopia to Remove Private Sector Trade Hurdles



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iranian and Ethiopian parliament speakers have emphasized the enhancement of economic, political, and parliamentary cooperation, and the removal of obstacles for the private sector.

Mohammad-Baqer Qalibaf and his Ethiopian counterpart Tagesse Chafo met and held talks in Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital, on Friday.

Qalibaf, who was leading a parliamentary delegation to Ethiopia to develop bilateral relations, arrived there on Thursday.

In this meeting, Qalibaf emphasized the importance of establishing the Ethiopian embassy in Tehran, stating that this action could be the beginning of the development of economic and political relations.

He also referred to the release of four Ethiopian sailors from Iranian prisons, adding that this matter was pursued domestically in Iran but could have been resolved sooner had Ethiopia had an embassy in Tehran.

Stressing Ethiopia's position in East Africa, especially in providing regional security and stability, he added that strengthening economic relations and regional security is of great importance, especially because Iran's policy is to expand relations with African countries, including Ethiopia.

Praising Ethiopia for its recent economic growth, Qalibaf said that with a large population and strong economy, Ethiopia has a good capacity for expanding economic relations with Iran.

He also expressed dissatisfaction because the joint economic commission of the two countries has not had a meeting in 10 years, noting that one of the goals of this trip was to take steps to revive this commission.

Qalibaf continued that Iran has several capabilities in the fields of knowledge-based industries, health, artificial intelligence, and medical equipment and can cooperate with Ethiopia in these areas.

Iranian Coast Guards Conduct Maritime Exercise in Sea of Oman



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iranian coast guards have held a maritime exercise in the country's southeastern Sistan and Baluchestan province along the shores of the Sea of Oman.

The drill, codenamed "Mohammad Rasulullah 3" (Prophet Mohammad 3), kicked off during a ceremony off the coast of the strategic port of Chabahar on Friday, with Iran's police chief Brigadier General Ahmad Reza Radan and several provincial military and police commanders in attendance.

The naval drill started with the motto of "empathy and authority for security." Naval units from Sistan and Baluchestan province as well as private vessels paraded in the event.

The exercise aims to maintain the operational readiness of coast guards, enhance their combat capabilities, and establish cooperation and coordination among marine units, coastal patrol teams and various border guard forces.

"Through powerful measures and timely operations, the armed forces have kept enemies at bay and denied them the chance of launching an act of aggression on the sacred soil and waters of the Islamic Republic of Iran," Radan said while addressing the event.

Iran's police chief also honored the families of several martyred coast guards with appreciation plaques and gifts.

Iranian military forces hold routine exercises according to a detailed schedule in various parts of the country in order to test their weaponry and equipment and evaluate their combat preparedness.

Iranian officials have repeatedly underscored that the country will not hesitate to strengthen its military capabilities, including its missile power, which are entirely meant for defense, and that Iran's defense capabilities will be never subject to negotiations.

Iran, Russia Sign Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Agreement

TEHRAN - The presidents of Iran and Russia have signed a comprehensive strategic partnership agreement for long-term cooperation.

The agreement was signed by Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in Moscow on Friday.

Speaking at a joint press conference following the signing event, Pezeshkian said the agreement will open a new chapter in relations between the two countries in all arenas, notably in the economic sector.

"This document, which has been drawn up based on the two countries' interests, can chart the path of cooperation between Iran and Russia with a bright horizon," he added.

He said both Tehran and Moscow are determined to remove obstacles to customs tariffs, banking, investment guarantees, facilitation of meetings among traders and visa issues.

The Iranian president noted that the document includes increasing the level of exchanges by utilizing the capacities and capabilities within the Eurasian Economic Union.

It also emphasized the importance of improving bilateral cooperation on issues such as the fight against extremism, terrorism and organized violence, he added.

He expressed hope that Iran and Russia will strengthen bonds to serve mutual interests and open a new chapter in strategic cooperation.

Pezeshkian said Russia is an important country in the world which has a privileged status in the Islamic Republic policy of neighborliness.

He noted that he held "positive" talks in Moscow on regional and international cooperation, including the developments in the West Asia region, the Caucasus and peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Given the two countries' membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the BRICS group of emerging economies, the development of mutual relations will have a leading impact on strengthening regional convergence and serving common interests, the Iranian president stated.

Pezeshkian reiterated that war is not a proper solution to issues and said Tehran welcomes the establishment of peace between Russia and Ukraine through negotiations.

"We firmly believe that Western countries should respect the security concerns of other countries and avoid imposing their own excessive demands on others."

He said he exchanged views with Putin on the Israeli regime's military aggression against Lebanon and Syria.

"Both countries emphasize the need to establish a permanent ceasefire in Lebanon and put an end to this regime's aggression against the Syrian territory."



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

Iran and Russia hope that a final ceasefire will be established in Gaza to end the war in the Strip, Pezeshkian added.

The Russian president said Tehran and Moscow heed the developments in Ukraine and have intelligence cooperation in accordance with international law and the United Nations Charter.

Putin said the two sides have very close stance on the developments in West Asia and the Caucasus which will be beneficial to all countries.

Iran and Russia do not interfere in the internal affairs of the countries and stand against illegal sanctions against them, he emphasized.

The Russian president placed a premium on the expansion of trade ties with Iran and noted that in talks with Pezeshkian, the two sides discussed ways to increase trade exchanges.

Putin expressed hope that a ceasefire in Gaza would lead to a "long-term stabilization" and called for efforts to secure a "comprehensive settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict".

The Russian president also said that both his country and Iran are resolutely opposed to external pressure from abroad and attach importance to the establishment of peace and security in the Caucasus.

He voiced his country's support for the settlement of issues in Syria based on its territorial integrity.

Pezeshkian also said Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei favors the expansion of interaction between the country and Russia.

Speaking at a joint press conference following the signing event, Pezeshkian said the agreement would open a new chapter in relations between the two nations in all arenas, notably in the economic sector.

"This document, which has been drawn up based on the two countries' interests, can chart the path of cooperation between Iran and Russia with a bright horizon," he added.

Pezeshkian emphasized the imperative nature of the operationalization of the deal, hailing it for heralding "a new chapter in the countries' relations."

The president also predicted that the relations would expand even further during the upcoming Caspian Sea summit.

Putin approved a proposal forwarded by the country's foreign ministry for signing the agreement last September through a decree.

The decree stated that signing such an agreement would be "expedient," without specifying the timing of its expected conclusion.

IRAN NEWS



Iran Plans to Significantly Increase Tourist Visits From Tajikistan

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - The Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts emphasized the importance of expanding relations with Tajikistan on the sidelines of a commercial delegation's visit to Tajikistan. He stated that Tajikistan, with its cultural and civilizational commonalities, is one of Iran's strategic priorities in strengthening ties with its neighbors. Highlighting Tajikistan's unique potential for enhancing trade and cultural cooperation, he said: "Given the shared cultural heritage and the common language, Tajikistan, as part of the Nowruz civilization, is a key country for boosting Iran's economic and cultural connections."

Russian Companies Offered Strong Investment Opportunities in Iran's Oil Industry



TEHRAN - Iran Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad announced that there are significant investment opportunities available for Russian companies in Iran's oil industry.

In a meeting with economic activists from the Russian Federation on Friday night, Paknejad emphasized that the Iranian oil industry is a treasure trove of investment opportunities.

He stated that several Russian companies are already involved in various oil and gas fields in Iran, with ongoing projects valued at more than \$7.5 billion. These projects have made notable progress, he added.

The Minister highlighted that the return on investment in Iran's oil industry is highly attractive. However, to fully realize these opportunities, collaboration with banks and financial markets is essential so that stakeholders in the sector can successfully finalize contracts.

Paknejad also pointed to another key area of interest: the supply of goods. Russian companies now have ample opportunities to participate in Iran's oil projects as suppliers of goods, he noted.

He invited all economic stakeholders to coordinate with the Iranian Embassy in Moscow to explore investment opportunities in Iran's oil industry and take advantage of these favorable conditions.

In related news, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, on the final day of his official visit to Moscow, met with Russian economic activists. In the meeting, he referred to the signing of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Agreement between Iran and Russia, which, according to him, outlines a roadmap for both countries to pursue joint activities effectively.

The President stressed the determination of both governments to strengthen bilateral relations, particularly due to their geographic proximity and strategic importance, especially in the fields of transport and logistics.

Investment Opportunities of Up to 30,000 Megawatts in Iran's Energy Sector



TEHRAN - Energy Minister announced that there is potential for investment in Iran's electricity sector up to about 30,000 megawatts.

In a meeting with Russian economic stakeholders on Friday, Abbas Aliabadi, the Minister of Energy, stated: "There is no state competition in the energy market. The government has committed to providing electricity to certain segments of society, while the rest will be available to investors."

He emphasized that Iran's energy market is highly attractive, citing long-standing successful collaborations with Russian companies in the electricity sector as a foundation for further cooperation. Aliabadi highlighted that Iran has made electricity exports feasible under certain regulations and has made the national grid accessible to investors who wish to supply electricity to neighboring countries.

The Minister also pointed out the legal backing available for energy investments, noting that the renewable energy sector in Iran is in a promising state. "We provide affordable land for investors, have abundant sunlight and wind, and can create attractive opportunities in renewable energy," he added.

President Masoud Pezeshkian also participated in the meeting with Russian economic figures on Friday evening as part of his official visit to Moscow. This marked the final segment of his trip, which aimed to expand bilateral relations. He remarked that the signing of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Agreement between Iran and Russia provides a clear roadmap for both countries, enabling them to pursue mutual activities effectively.



TEHRAN - The Iranian Chamber of Commerce has voiced its support for the government's logical and principled policies, particularly under the 14th administration, emphasizing the positive economic outcomes of resolving the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) issue and expressing its readiness to collaborate with the government. This has led to significant developments in this area.

In a meeting with the Board of Directors and several members of the Iran Chamber, President Masoud Pezeshkian announced that discussions would be revisited regarding the FATF-related bills in the Expediency Council. He expressed hope that joint efforts could facilitate economic activities and ease business operations.

As the Expediency Council begins revisiting the Palermo and CFT bills—final steps for Iran's adherence to FATF's conditions—private sector economic leaders continue to stress the importance of joining these international conventions and implementing FATF's requirements.

Mohammad Reza Bahraman, Vice-President of the Iran Chamber, stated that the continuation of FATF-related restrictions amounts to a form of self-sanctioning, which prevents foreign investment in various sectors, including mining.

Message Bagheri, also a Vice-President of the Iran Chamber, noted that to achieve the 8% growth target and objectives set in the 7th development plan, Iran must leverage all opportunities, including joining FATF.

Kadir Qiafah, another Vice-President, added that ratifying FATF would help boost exports, as even strategic partners like Russia and China now express concerns about FATF restrictions in their dealings with Iran.

Keyvan Kashi, a Board Member of the Iran Chamber, emphasized that removing Iran from FATF's blacklist would lower trade costs and expressed optimism that a professional review of the FATF bills by the Expediency Council would lead to a positive vote.

Beyond the Board of Directors, leaders of specialized commissions and Chamber heads across Iran have also voiced their support for joining FATF.

Mohammad Khaki, President of the Khoramabad Chamber of Commerce, explained that one of the prerequisites for integrating into the global value chain is the ease of financial transactions, which can only be achieved by complying with FATF standards and global banking norms.

Mustafa Mosavi, President of the Khorramshahr Chamber, stressed that

the Expediency Council must prioritize foreign trade development when reviewing FATF bills, as joining FATF is essential for being accepted into the international community.

Khorshid Gozdarazi, President of the Bushehr Chamber, emphasized that the private sector requires banking transactions with various countries, a necessity that can only be fulfilled through Iran's FATF membership and adherence to international banking standards.

Mahmoud Najafi Arab, President of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, underscored that Iran's trade relations and financial transactions depend on joining FATF to improve economic cooperation with global partners.

Mohammad Reza Tavakolizadeh, President of the Mashhad Chamber, stressed that Iran must accept FATF rules to attract foreign investment and address its economic imbalances.

Ali Abdollahian, President of the Ardabil Chamber, expressed that, despite the shortcomings of international organizations, Iran's economic development requires FATF membership.

Alireza Khameh Zareh, President of the Birjand Chamber, stated that the government must clear obstacles to FATF acceptance, helping Iran escape its current economic and trade isolation.

Mahmoud Oliayi, President of the Iran Chamber's Corporate Responsibility and Governance Commission, noted that the failure to accept FATF creates immense pressure on businesses and citizens, adding that unnecessary costs should not be imposed on economic actors.

Farshid Shokrhodai, President of the Investment and Finance Commission, highlighted that joining FATF and connecting with international banks is vital for attracting investment and streamlining the process.

Alireza Kolahi Samadi, President of the Industry Commission, emphasized that if Iran intends to engage in global frameworks like BRICS or any non-dollar-based economic system, FATF membership is a must.

Saeed Tajik, Vice-President of the Standards, Environment, Sustainable Development, and Water Commission, also commented that self-sanctions, alongside international sanctions, are harming the economy, and not joining FATF is a form of such self-sanctioning.

Agricultural and Food Trade Between Iran and Russia Expanding

TEHRAN - The Minister of Agriculture announced that, given the outlined prospects, economic and trade exchanges, particularly in agriculture and food sectors, between Iran and Russia are on the rise.

During the second day of the President's visit to Russia, a meeting with Russian economic actors was held in Moscow, attended by President Masoud Pezeshkian.

Minister of Agriculture, Gholamreza Noori Qazlajeh, stated that agriculture and food are vital components of trade relations between Iran and Russia. He highlighted that, considering the historical ties between the two countries and the outlined prospects, trade in these sectors is growing significantly.

Approximately 65% of the trade between Iran and Russia involves agricultural products, according to Noori Qazlajeh. He added that the volume of agricultural products Russia imports from Iran is lower compared to similar imports from other countries. Iran is ready to increase the supply and export of agricultural goods, such as fruits and vegetables, to Russia.

The Minister emphasized that Iran has the capacity to provide water and land for joint agricultural productions, stressing that economic actors can invest in agricultural towns and greenhouses, particularly in the southeast of Iran, to produce tropical fruits specifically for the Russian market.

He also noted that there is good potential for banking cooperation between the two countries and emphasized that agriculture can see rapid growth in bilateral exchanges. Iran is keen to increase imports in



the food and agricultural sectors to the greatest extent possible.

The meeting also addressed several issues raised by Russian economic figures related to optimizing bilateral trade, especially in banking, transportation, investment, and agricultural exports from Iran to Russia. The Minister provided the necessary clarifications.

In related news, President Masoud Pezeshkian, in his final official program in Moscow, attended a session with Russian economic actors and discussed the strategic partnership between the two countries. He mentioned that the Iran-Russia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Treaty has set a roadmap for future cooperation, ensuring the continuation

of bilateral activities.

Pezeshkian emphasized that the determination of both governments to strengthen bilateral relations is due, in part, to their shared geographical significance, particularly regarding transportation and logistics.

Highlighting the cooperation between Iran and Russia in the North-South International Transport Corridor, the President reaffirmed the commitment to completing infrastructure and connectivity projects.

Regarding the views of Russian economic actors, Pezeshkian stated that for the agreement to be operational, both sides need to be fully aware of each other's capabilities. He stressed the need for a cohesive economic, financial, and commercial structure to facilitate this.

The Iranian government, he said, is ready to ease the way for traders and investors to ensure the smooth implementation of agreements between businesses from both countries.

MoU on Cooperation Signed Between ICCIMA and Tajikistan



TEHRAN - A memorandum of understanding on cooperation was signed between the Technical Services, Engineering, and Construction Commission of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (ICCIMA), and the Ministry of Transport of the Republic of Tajikistan, aimed at expanding economic and trade cooperation in the fields of transportation and logistics.

Ali Naqvi, Head of the Technical Services, Engineering, and Construction Commission of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, believes that this agreement represents a practical step towards deepening bilateral relations, particularly in the development of road and rail transport infrastructure, the establishment of joint logistics centers, and strengthening economic ties.

Under the terms of the memorandum, both parties have committed to collaborating in the development of road and rail transport infrastructure, facilitating the activities of construction companies, implementing joint projects, and exchanging investment information. The creation of joint logistics centers, strengthening direct communication between the business communities of both countries, and holding joint meetings to address any potential obstacles are also key aspects of the agreement.

At the signing ceremony, Ali Naqvi highlighted the extensive capabilities of Iranian companies in the transportation infrastructure sector and invited the Minister of Transport of Tajikistan to visit Iran and explore successful projects in this field. He also emphasized the importance of expediting the implementation of the memorandum's provisions and organizing the next meeting in Iran.

Soheil Al-Rasoul, Vice President of the Commission, presented a report on Iran's technical and engineering capacities, referencing the country's scientific achievements in this area and expressing Iran's readiness to transfer technical knowledge, conduct joint research, and undertake infrastructure projects.

Tajikistan's officials also expressed interest in strengthening the presence of Iranian engineering companies in the country's infrastructure projects, leveraging their technical expertise and experience. This approach underscores Tajikistan's commitment to utilizing Iran's capabilities in the development and completion of national projects.

Additionally, the strategic priority of Tajikistan's investment in the Chabahar (Makran) region was emphasized as one of the key areas of cooperation.

Economic Significance of President's Visit to Russia



TEHRAN - Abdullah Mohajer Darabi, Vice President of the Iran-Russia Joint Chamber of Commerce, discussed the economic outcomes of President Masoud Pezeshkian's recent visit to Russia and the impact of the upcoming Free Trade Agreement between Tehran and Moscow.

Darabi emphasized the importance of Russia to Iran's commercial interests, noting that a 100-member delegation from Iran's Chamber of Commerce accompanied President Pezeshkian during his visit to Tajikistan and Russia. "Russia, with a population of 160 million, is a significant trading partner for Iran, and despite strong political relations between the two countries, Iranian exports to Russia should be much higher than they currently are," he explained.

He went on to describe the frequent signing of protocols between the two nations, typically every five to ten years. "This time, however, the protocol will include a key addition: the signing of a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between Iran and Russia," Darabi stated. "This FTA is expected to have a significant impact on trade between the two countries."

Darabi also pointed out that Russia holds substantial potential for Iranian exports, yet this potential has not been fully realized due to deficiencies in Iran's export infrastructure.

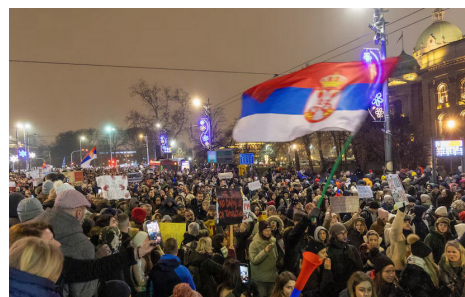
With the establishment of a Free Trade Agreement, Darabi believes that Iranian trade with Russia will be on par with other countries that have signed similar agreements with Russia. However, he stressed that the removal of trade tariffs alone will not be sufficient for the growth of exports to Russia. "In addition to tariff reductions, other infrastructure improvements are needed, particularly in domestic policy," he said. "Currently, Iranian exporters face challenges such as the need to obtain one-time use business cards, a situation caused by policies enacted by Iranian politicians."

Tens of Thousands Join Student-Led Protests in Belgrade

BELGRADE (Dispatches) - Tens of thousands of anti-government protesters in Belgrade stood in silence in front of the state television RTS building for 15 minutes to commemorate victims of a railway station roof collapse for which they blame Serbian authorities.

The protest was organised and led by students of the Belgrade state university who are demanding that those responsible for the roof collapse that killed more than a dozen people are brought to justice.

Twin brothers, Lazar and Luka Stojakovic, activists at the Faculty of Organisational Science at the Belgrade University, had been identified by a pro-government daily Vecernje Novosti as protest leaders paid by Croatia's secret service.



At Least \$10b Needed to Rebuild Gaza's Devastated Health System



GENEVA (Dispatches) - At least \$10b will likely be needed to rebuild Gaza's devastated health system over the next five to seven years, according to an initial World Health Organization assessment.

"The needs are massive," the UN health agency's representative in the Palestinian territories, Rik Peepkorn, told reporters.

With a ceasefire finally looming, humanitarians are calling for a dramatic scaling up of humanitarian aid into war-ravaged Gaza, amid efforts to determine the size of the towering needs.

Peepkorn said his team's initial estimate of the cost to rebuild just the health sector was "even more than \$3b for the first 1.5 years and then actually \$10b for the five to seven years".

"In Gaza, we all know the destruction is so massive. I have never seen that anywhere else in my life," he said.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus meanwhile said "less than half of Gaza hospitals are functional".

He hailed Wednesday's announcement of mediators that Israel and Hamas had finally reached a truce as "just about the best news".

He voiced hope that "this agreement marks the end of the darkest chapter in the history of the relationship between the Israelis and the Palestinians".

"We welcome this news with great relief, but also with sorrow that it has come too late for those who have died in the conflict," he said.

He also voiced "caution, given that we have had false dawns before, and the deal has not yet been confirmed".

While the mediators said the deal was due to take effect on Sunday, Tedros urged the sides not to wait.

"If both sides are committed to a ceasefire, it should start immediately," he said. "The best medicine is peace".

"So, let the healing begin, not just for Gaza, but for Israel as well. This is in everyone's best interest."

Gaza Ceasefire Finally Set to Start Sunday



TEL AVIV (Dispatches) - Israel's cabinet voted to approve a Gaza ceasefire and hostage release deal on Saturday, the office of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said, ending days of uncertainty about whether the truce would go into effect this weekend.

The ceasefire, set to begin Sunday, would halt fighting and bombardment in Gaza's deadliest-ever war.

It would also enable the release of hostages held in the territory since Hamas's October 7, 2023 attack on Israel in exchange for hundreds of Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails.

"The government has approved the hostage return plan", Netanyahu's office said early Saturday morning after the cabinet held its vote.

The justice ministry published a list of 95 Palestinians to be freed starting Sunday, "subject to government approval". They include 69 women, 16 men and 10 minors.

Israeli strikes have killed dozens since the ceasefire deal was announced, with the military saying Thursday it had hit about 50 targets across Gaza over the previous 24 hours.

The truce is to take effect on the eve of the inauguration of Donald Trump, who claimed credit for working with outgoing US President Joe Biden's team to seal the deal.

It was earlier approved by Israel's security cabinet, with Netanyahu's office saying it "supports achieving the objectives of the war".

Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas said the Palestinian Authority has completed preparations "to assume full responsibility in Gaza" after the war.

Even before the truce begins, displaced Gazans were preparing to return home.

"I will go to kiss my land," said Nasr al-Gharabli, who fled his home in Gaza City for a camp further south. "If I die on my land, it would be better than being here as a displaced person."

In Israel, there was joy but also anguish over the remaining hostages taken in the Hamas attack.

Kfir Bibas, whose second birthday fell on Saturday, is the youngest hostage.

Hamas said in November 2023 that Kfir, his four-year-old brother Ariel and their mother Shiri had died in an air strike, but with the Israeli military yet to confirm their deaths, many are clinging to hope.

"I think of them, these two little redheads, and I get shivers," said 70-year-old Osnat Nyska, whose grandchildren attended nursery with the Bibas brothers.

Two far-right ministers had voiced opposition to the deal, with one threatening to quit the cabinet, but US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said prior to the vote he believed the ceasefire would proceed.

"I am confident, and I fully expect that implementation will begin, as we said, on Sunday," he said.

Gaza's civil defence agency said Israel pounded several areas of the territory, killing more than 100 people and wounding hundreds more since the deal was announced on Wednesday.

Hamas's armed wing, the Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades, warned that Israeli strikes were risking the lives of hostages and could turn their "freedom... into a tragedy".

The October 7, 2023 attack on Israel resulted in the deaths of 1,210 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally of Israeli official figures.

Of the 251 people taken hostage, 94 are still in Gaza, including 34 the Israeli military says are dead.

Israel's retaliatory campaign has destroyed much of Gaza, killing 46,876 people, most of them civilians, according to figures from the Hamas-run territory's health ministry that the UN considers reliable.

The ceasefire agreement followed intensified efforts by mediators Qatar, the United States and Egypt after months of fruitless negotiations.

In the days of talks, Biden pointman Brett McGurk was joined in the region by Trump envoy Steve Witkoff in an unusual pairing to get the deal over the line, US officials said.

"If we weren't involved... the deal would've never happened," Trump said in an interview Thursday.

Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani, announcing the agreement on Wednesday, said an initial 42-day ceasefire would see 33 hostages released.

On Friday, he said: "We seek a full implementation of the first phase, and for the second phase to be the final."

"We are waiting for the Security Council to issue a binding resolution to implement the agreement."

The Israeli authorities assume the 33 are alive, but Hamas has yet to confirm that.

Also in the first phase, Israeli forces would withdraw from Gaza's densely populated areas and allow displaced Palestinians to return "to their residences", the Qatari prime minister said.

Two sources close to Hamas told AFP three Israeli women soldiers would be the first to be released on Sunday evening.

The women may, in fact, be civilians, as the militant group refers to all Israelis of military age who have undergone mandatory military service as soldiers.

Pakistan Launches First Home-Made Observation Satellite



KARACHI (Dispatches) - Pakistan launched its first home-made observation satellite on Friday from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre in northern China, Pakistan's space agency said.

The PRSC-E01 satellite will boost Pakistan's ability to monitor and manage natural resources, respond to disasters, and improve urban planning and agricultural development, the Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) said in a statement.

This type of satellite uses electro-optical sensors to collect data and images of the Earth's surface by detecting and measuring reflected sunlight or emitted radiation.

China's Long March-2D carrier rocket also launched on Friday two other satellites, Tianlu-1 and Blue Carbon 1, into orbit along with the PRSC E01, China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation said in a statement.

"Spearheaded by SUPARCO, this demonstrates our nation's growing capabilities in space science and technology," said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Currently valued at \$5 billion, the earth observation satellite market is among the fastest growing sectors within the commercial space industry, with Novaspac predicting it to exceed \$8 billion by 2033.

Countries including the United States, China and India have been building their own government and private satellite constellations to map the Earth. Indian startup Pixxel this month launched the country's first privately built satellite constellation.

The Technology Roundup newsletter brings the latest news and trends straight to your inbox. Sign up here.

IMF Lifts U.S. Outlook, Warns Countries Against Protectionism, Subsidies



WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The International Monetary Fund on Friday raised its forecast for global growth in 2025 by one-tenth of a percentage point, with stronger-than-expected growth in the U.S. offsetting downward revisions in Germany, France and other major economies.

In its latest World Economic Outlook, the IMF projected global growth of 3.3% in both 2025 and 2026, and said global headline inflation was set to drop to 4.2% in 2025 and 3.5% in 2026, allowing a further normalization of monetary policy and ending the global disruptions of recent years.

But it said global growth remained below the historical average of 3.7% from 2000-2019, and warned countries against unilateral measures such as tariffs, non-tariff barriers or subsidies that could hurt trading partners and spur retaliation.

Such policies "rarely improve domestic prospects durably" and may leave "every country worse off," IMF chief economist Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas said in a blog released Friday.

The new IMF forecast comes days before the inauguration of U.S. President-elect Donald Trump, who has proposed a 10% tariff on global imports, a 25% punitive duty on imports from Canada and Mexico until they clamp down on drugs and migrants crossing borders into the U.S., and a 60% tariff on Chinese goods.

"An intensification of protectionist policies, for instance in the form of a new wave of tariffs, could exacerbate trade tensions, lower investment, reduce market efficiency, distort trade flows and again disrupt supply chains," the IMF said, noting growth could suffer both in the near and medium term.

Gourinchas told Reuters there was clearly "tremendous uncertainty" about future U.S. policies that was already affecting global markets, but the global lender needed to wait for specifics to draw clearer conclusions.

Rising confidence and positive sentiment in the U.S. could boost demand and

spur near-term growth, but excessive deregulation especially in the financial sector could "generate boom-bust dynamics for the United States in the longer term, with repercussions for the rest of the world," the IMF wrote.

Gourinchas said the IMF would be looking carefully at any moves by the incoming U.S. administration to deregulate digital currencies, noting the need to ensure adequate oversight of cross-border payments to avert future "runs" on the system.

"The payment system is the blood that irrigates the economy, and if there is the emergence of alternative forms of payments, and these become important in the economy, you also have the potential for collapses or runs," he said.

"This is a very fluid environment, but there is a need to be careful if there is a concentration of risks, if a few actors become critical for the payment system," he said.

Tariffs could make it harder for businesses to get needed inputs, leading to higher prices, and immigration restrictions - also promised by the incoming

Trump administration - could lead to labor constraints, which could also raise costs, he said.

Higher inflation would prevent the Federal Reserve from cutting interest rates as initially planned, he told reporters, adding that new U.S. policies would also likely strengthen the U.S. dollar and tighten financial conditions elsewhere.

Looser U.S. monetary policy, driven by tax cuts and other expansionary measures, could boost economic activity in the near term, but could require bigger fiscal adjustments later on that could then weaken the role of U.S. Treasuries as a global safe asset and lead to fiscal vulnerabilities, the IMF said.

"The increase in U.S. long-term yields, despite the Federal Reserve easing, reflects some market nervousness about future policies," Gourinchas told a news conference.

The IMF said it raised its growth forecast for the United States to 2.7% based on robust labor markets and accelerating investment, an increase of half a percentage point from its October forecast, with growth to taper to 2.1% next year.

It cut its euro area forecast by 0.2 percentage points to 1.0% for 2025, and by 0.1 percentage point to 1.4% for 2026, citing weaker-than-expected momentum in manufacturing and heightened political and policy uncertainty.

Gourinchas said the divergence between the United States and Europe was due to structural factors, reflecting stronger U.S. productivity growth particularly in the technology sector. It would linger, unless issues such as the business environment and deeper capital markets were addressed.

The IMF nudged its China growth forecast up by 0.1 percentage point to 4.6%, and by 0.4 percentage point to 4.5% for 2026, citing a fiscal stimulus package unveiled in November.

Macron Urges Acceleration of Israel-Hezbollah Truce Implementation

BEIRUT (Dispatches) - France's President Emmanuel Macron was in Lebanon on Friday for a visit to meet his newly-elected counterpart and offer support to leaders seeking to open a new chapter in their country's turbulent history.

After more than two years of a political vacuum at the top, Joseph Aoun was elected president on January 9 and chose Nawaf Salam as prime minister-designate.

They now face the daunting task of leading Lebanon after a devastating Israel-Hezbollah war, years of economic crisis and decades of Syrian domination.

Macron is also expected to meet UN chief Antonio Guterres in the Lebanese capital as a January 26 deadline to fully implement a ceasefire deal between Israel and the Iran-backed militant group approaches.

Macron's visit aims to "help" Aoun and Salam "to consolidate Lebanon's sovereignty, ensure its prosperity and maintain its unity", the French presidency said prior to his arrival.

Analysts say Hezbollah's weakening in the war with Israel last year allowed Lebanon's deeply divided political class to elect Aoun and to back his naming of Salam as premier.

Islamist-led rebels overthrowing key Hezbollah ally Bashar al-Assad on December 8



has also contributed to the ushering in of a new era for tiny Lebanon.

France has special ties with Lebanon, which it administered for two decades after World War I, and the two countries have maintained close relations even since Lebanon's independence in 1943.

"In Lebanon, we have gone in a matter of months from a situation of dramatic escalation to a situation of hope for possible redress," a French diplomatic source said on condition of anonymity.

"It's a dynamic to which France has greatly contributed."

Salam, a former presiding judge at the International Court of Justice, is "a true reformist", though he now faces the challenge of turning the hope around his election into action, the source said.

The new premier has launched delicate consultations to pick a government, with Hezbollah continuing to play an important role in Lebanon's political scene despite its weakening on the battlefield.



Mensik's Giant-Killing Australian Open Run Ends

MELBOURNE (Dispatches) - Giant-killing Jakub Mensik's Australian Open ended at the hands of Spain's Alejandro Davidovich Fokina as the 19-year-old Czech crashed out in five gruelling sets.

Mensik stunned sixth seed Casper Ruud en route to the third round and looked on track for another win when he took a two-set lead in Melbourne.

He had a match point in the third-set tie break but failed to convert and the more experienced Davidovich Fokina ground his way back as Mensik ran out of puff.

The 66th-ranked Spaniard eventually got over the line 3-6, 4-6, 7-6 (9/7), 6-4, 6-2 after a draining 3hrs 30mins.

It set him up with a clash against 12th seed Tommy Paul for a place in the quarter-finals after the American downed another Spaniard, Roberto Carballes Baena, in straight sets.

"Wow, I don't know how to describe my feelings," said Davidovich Fokina, who made the fourth round for the first time.

"Three wins for the first time in Australia, it means a lot."

Mensik is one of a trio of teens who set the Australian Open alight with wins over top-10 players, alongside Brazil's Joao Fonseca and American Learner Tien.

While Mensik and the highly rated Fonseca are now out, Tien is still alive after a massive five-set upset of fifth seed Daniil Medvedev.

Meanwhile defending champion Aryna Sabalenka overcame a wobbly display to reach the Australian Open fourth round while Novak Djokovic and Carlos Alcaraz were at their dazzling best on a warm but at Melbourne Park.

Third seed Coco Gauff swept through in straight sets in the evening, but it was the end of the road for twice champion Naomi Osaka after an abdominal strain forced her to withdraw from her match against Belinda Bencic.

Djokovic was in vintage form for his late match against Tomas Machac, the 37-year-old ramping up his

serve to crush the Czech 6-1 6-4 6-4 and remain on course for his 25th Grand Slam title and 11th in Melbourne.

"Best match of the tournament for me. I didn't have too many drops in the concentration and the level of tennis," he said.

"I think I prepared myself very well and played a terrific match."

Djokovic is likely to have to beat Alcaraz in the last eight and the French Open and Wimbledon champion continued to carve his way through the draw despite dropping his first set of the tournament in his 6-2 6-4 6-7(3) 6-2 win over Nuno Borges.

"I'm just really happy with my level," the 21-year-old said. "Could be better. I made a lot of mistakes that I shouldn't have ... but in general, I'm just happy and have things to improve in approaching the next match."

Second seed Alexander Zverev continued to fly under the radar in search of his first major title, as the German eased past Briton Jacob Fearnley 6-3 6-4 6-4.

Blazing sunshine and intermittent gusts of wind caused problems for some players early in the day but they might look back on the cooler conditions with fondness as the temperatures soar over the next few days.

Sabalenka was one of those who struggled but she came away unscathed from a 7-6(5) 6-4 victory over Clara Tauson that kept the Belarusian on track for her third straight title.

Meanwhile second seed Iga Swiatek charged into the fourth round of the Australian Open with a 6-1 6-0 humbling of Emma Raducanu in a meeting of former U.S. Open champions at a sunny Melbourne Park.

Polish number one Swiatek targeted Raducanu's backhand and feasted on the Briton's second serve to win the last 11 games of the contest and reach the last 16 in Melbourne for the fifth time in just 70 minutes on Rod Laver Arena.

Kvaratskhelia Signs for Paris Saint-Germain From Napoli



PARIS (Dispatches) - Georgia winger Khvicha Kvaratskhelia completed a move to Paris Saint-Germain from Italian league leaders Napoli, the French champions announced.

"Paris Saint-Germain is pleased to announce the signing of Khvicha Kvaratskhelia. The 23-year-old winger, who will wear number seven, becomes the first Georgian player in the club's history," said a PSG statement.

No transfer fee was revealed but media reports in France said the Parisians would pay 70 million euros (\$72m), not including potential bonuses, for the player.

The move comes 24 hours after the 23-year-old posted a video on social media telling Napoli fans "it's hard for me but it's time to say goodbye".

"It's an honor to be able to wear the PSG shirt," he added in an interview with the PSG website.

"It was a dream for me to play for one of the biggest teams in the world. I'm very proud, it's a dream and we're going to fight together to fulfil our dreams. I'm very happy."

The 2023 Scudetto winner, who arrived at Napoli in 2022 as a bargain buy from Dinamo Batumi in his homeland, was voted Serie A's best player that season.

Kvaratskhelia scored 30 goals and provided 29 assists in 107 matches in all competitions for Napoli.

He has signed a contract until 2029 with the Ligue 1 leaders and will hope to dislodge France international Bradley Barcola from his position on the left wing in coach Luis Enrique's starting line-up.

Kvaratskhelia could make an immediate debut for his new club when they go to Lens today, looking to extend their lead at the top of Ligue 1 to 10 points from nearest challengers Marseille.

Frankfurt Heap More Pain on Dortmund



FRANKFURT (Dispatches) - Eintracht Frankfurt overcame the imminent departure of in-form Omar Marmoush to beat Borussia Dortmund 2-0 at home, heaping more misery on the slumping visitors.

Frankfurt, who cut Manchester City target Marmoush from the matchday squad just hours before kickoff, were clinical and controlled.

Striker Hugo Ekitike put Frankfurt in front early and Dortmund had few clear chances despite dominating control of the ball.

In stoppage time, Oscar Hojlund took advantage of a Dortmund mistake in midfield, winning possession and running 40 metres to slide the ball past a helpless Gregor Kobel.

"We know what we had in Omar," Frankfurt's Mario Goetze told DAZN.

"An incredible player, a great character. It's always a shame when a player leaves, but the team did well against Dortmund today."

The result means Dortmund, who played in the Champions League final in June, have lost their past three and have just one victory in their last six games.

They could fall to as low as 11th depending on results this weekend and are 11 points behind Frankfurt, who are on course for their first top-four finish in three decades.

Dortmund midfielder Pascal Gross said: "It's a results sport and at the end of the day, we couldn't get a result. It's extremely difficult."

Dortmund sporting director Sebastian Kehl backed coach Nuri Sahin after the game despite the lean run, saying "we will keep going. Nuri has our trust."

"We're disappointed and unsatisfied with where we are," and added "this is not a team who should be sitting where we are on the table."

Just hours before kick-off, Frankfurt's sporting director Markus Kroesche confirmed Marmoush had been left out of the squad due to a "very, very likely" move to City.

Despite their poor recent form, the visitors started strong, Serhou Guirassy heading a lofted Julian Ryerson cross against the post eight minutes in.

Expected to carry a heavier burden after Marmoush's departure, Frankfurt's French forward Ekitike put the hosts in front 18 minutes in.

Taking advantage of some sleepy Dortmund defence, Rasmus Kristensen ran into acres of space on the right. The Dane tore down the flank and laid a controlled cross into the path of Ekitike, who glanced the ball home.

Hornets Hand Reeling Bulls Another Loss

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - LaMelo Ball had 26 points and nine assists and Mark Williams notched a double-double of 19 points and 19 rebounds to lift the visiting Charlotte Hornets to a 125-123 victory over the slumping Chicago Bulls.

Charlotte opened the fourth quarter on a 21-2 run before holding on to win consecutive road games for the first time this season. The Hornets have won back-to-back games only once before this season, a pair of home games on Nov. 6 and 8.

A late Bulls run didn't make it easy. Nikola Vucevic scored 13 points during a 16-3 Chicago spurt that brought the hosts within 124-123 with 16 seconds remaining.

Charlotte's Vasilije Micic split a pair of free throws with 13 seconds left to give the Bulls a last chance at victory, but the team missed three attempts at a win or tie before the final buzzer, starting with a clean Vucevic look at a trey from the top of the key.

Vucevic notched a double-double of 40 points and 13 rebounds while going 17-for-25 from the floor. Zach LaVine (19 points) and Coby White (18) followed.

Miles Bridges scored 21 points for Charlotte. Seth Curry and Nick Smith Jr. chipped in 15 points each.

Chicago has lost five of six to fall six games below .500. After thumping Washington 138-105 on Jan. 10 to kick off a season-high five-game homestand, the Bulls dropped each of the next four



games. The Bulls took a 103-98 lead into the third quarter Friday but sputtered to start the fourth, surrendering the first 12 points of the quarter, including six from Williams.

Chicago trailed 73-71 at halftime, staying close thanks to strong ball movement that steered the Bulls to 21 assists on 29 field goals in the first half.

Brandon Miller (sprained right wrist) missed the game for the

Hornets while Torrey Craig (right calf contusion, right ankle sprain) and Talen Horton-Tucker (sprained left knee) were out for the game.

Patrick Williams tallied five points for Chicago in the opening four-plus minutes of the game but managed zero points after that.

Meanwhile CJ McCollum scored 26 points, Zion Williamson had a double-double and the host New Orleans Pelicans defeated the Utah Jazz 136-123.

Williamson finished with 24 points and 14 rebounds, Trey Murphy III and Jose Alvarado scored 19 each, Daniel Theis had a season-high 18 and Jordan Hawkins added 11 for the Pelicans, who enjoyed their highest point total and largest margin of victory this season.

Keyonte George scored 26, Collin Sexton had 24, Drew Eubanks had 17, Svi Mykhailiuk had 16 and Brice Sensabaugh added 15 to lead the Jazz, who will visit New Orleans again Monday night.

The Pelicans, who have won three straight and four of their last five, scored the first 10 points of the third quarter to open a 71-52 lead before Sexton scored eight points to help Utah close within 82-74. McCollum, Hawkins and Alvarado each made a 3-pointer and New Orleans took a 96-80 lead at the end of the period.

Man United and Scotland Great Denis Law Dies Aged 84

LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester United and Scotland great Denis Law has died at the age of 84, sparking a wave of heartfelt tributes to a man known at Old Trafford as "The King".

Law was a member of United's European Cup-winning side under Matt Busby in 1968, when they became the first English club to lift the trophy, though he was injured for the final.

Capped 55 times by Scotland, he remains his country's joint all-time leading scorer with 30 goals alongside Kenny Dalglish and is the only Scottish player to win the Ballon d'Or, in 1964.

Law — part of the famed "Holy Trinity" at Old Trafford alongside Bobby Charlton and George Best — was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and vascular dementia in 2021.

His death was confirmed yesterday "with a heavy heart" by his family, who said "he fought a tough battle but finally he is now at peace".

"We would like to thank everyone who contributed to his wellbeing and care, past and much more recently," the statement added. "We know how much people supported and loved him and that love was always appreciated and made the difference. Thank you."

Law scored a total of 237 goals in 404 appearances during an 11-year spell at Old Trafford until 1973, which places him third behind Wayne Rooney and Charlton on United's all-time list.



Manchester United said the club was mourning the loss of "the King of the Stretford End".

"He will always be celebrated as one of the club's greatest and most beloved players," United added.

"The ultimate goalscorer, his flair, spirit and love for the game made him the hero of a generation."

The Scotland national team called Law "a true great", adding: "We will not see his likes again."

Rooney paid tribute on X, posting: "Legend. Thoughts with all Denis' family and friends."

Former United and England captain Bryan Robson, who worked with Law in an ambassadorial role at Old Trafford, described the Scot as a "fantastic man".

"We have lost one of football's giants both as a player and a gentleman. It's incredibly sad," Robson wrote in a column in the Daily Mail.

"Denis was more than just a fantastic footballer, he was a fantastic man. So generous with his time and everything delivered with that great sense of humour of his."

Law began his career at Huddersfield Town and also two spells with Manchester City plus one with Italian club Torino.

He was sold for a British record fee three times during his career.

During his time at United, Law won the FA Cup and English top-flight twice, in 1965 and 1967.

However, a cartilage injury forced him to miss the famous 4-1 victory over Benfica in the European Cup final at Wembley in 1968.

Law is the only player to have two statues dedicated to him at Old Trafford, one as part of the "United Trinity" alongside Best and Charlton.