

UNHCR's Assistant High Commissioner for Operations Raouf Mazou Says Iran Should Be Introduced as a Role Model in the World in Hosting Refugees

IRAN NEWS

Iran Condemned the "Unjustified, Baseless and Rejected" Move by U.S. President to Reinstate Cuba as a State Sponsor of Terrorism, Stressing That Such Unilateral Actions Further Weaken the Rule of Law at the International Level

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West's Sanctions Flagrantly Infringe on Rights of Iranians



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's deputy foreign minister for legal and international affairs has sternly criticized the hypocritical approach pursued by the self-styled advocates of human rights, stating they have encroached upon the rights of the Iranian nation by imposition of sanctions.

Addressing a meeting held in Geneva on Thursday at the initiative of his country and with the participation of countries under the supervision of the UN human rights political mechanisms, Kazem Gharibabadi expressed concern and strong criticism of double standards, selective approaches, as well as political and instrumental exploitation of human rights.

Gharibabadi said the self-proclaimed flag bearers of human rights in the world have created numerous challenges for Iran, through sanctions and support for terrorists, and have flagrantly infringed upon the rights of the Iranian nation.

They have shamelessly accused Tehran of violating human rights, and slapped political mechanisms against it with the aim of exerting more pressure, he added.

Such an approach comes whilst they must be responsive to their conduct, Gharibabadi said, apparently referring to the US and Europeans.

"We have witnessed the massacre of more than tens of thousands of people in Gaza. These self-proclaimed guardians of human rights did not take any action against the Zionist regime, and instead supported it."

Gharibabadi described the imposition of political and unjust human rights mechanisms on developing countries as an intervention in the internal affairs of those states and a violation of their sovereignty.

The political measures of the so-called advocates of human rights come while they themselves are widely violating the rights of their own people, and those of other nations, the Iranian deputy foreign minister stated.

The remarks come as ambassadors at the meeting voiced concern over concern for the abuse of human rights, stating that existing monitoring mechanisms are ineffective, selective, and politicized.

U.S. Designation of Ansarullah Excuse for Sanctions on Yemen



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has condemned President Donald Trump's re-designation of Yemen's Ansarullah resistance movement as a terrorist organization, dismissing the move as "baseless" and "contrary to international law."

In remarks on Thursday, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei stressed that the designation only serves as "an excuse to apply anti-human sanctions against the Yemeni people."

He cited the Yemeni people's "honorable solidarity with the oppressed Palestinians against the occupation and genocide by the Zionist regime", saying the designation is a follow-up to the former administration's 15-month complicity in the massacre and genocide of Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip.

"Such arbitrary, unilateral, and baseless actions further undermine the rule of law in international relations and pose a threat to regional peace and stability," Baghaei said.

Trump on Wednesday officially re-designated Ansarullah as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO), returning the movement to the same status it held at the end of his first administration.

He also threatened to mobilize Washington's regional proxies against Yemen in an attempt to pressure the Yemeni people to abandon their support for Gaza.

Under the new directive, Secretary of State Marco Rubio is required to report to the president within 30 days, after consulting with the director of National Intelligence and the secretary of the Treasury, on the designation of Ansarullah in accordance with US law. Following this report, appropriate actions must be taken within 15 days.



Iran Stands Firm Against Excessive Demands, Seeks Peace Not War

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TEHRAN - President Masoud Pezeshkian, in an interview with Russia's Channel 1 during his visit to Moscow, emphasized that Iran and Russia will not succumb to external pressures and are committed to mutual cooperation in regional stability, security, and economic development.

According to the Iranian presidential news service, Pezeshkian discussed the significance of the newly signed comprehensive strategic agreement between Iran and Russia, which aims to deepen and expand their bilateral cooperation.

Pezeshkian highlighted the importance of the agreement, noting its 47 provisions covering various areas of cooperation. The first 12-13 articles focus on political and security matters, while articles 19 to 40 address economic collaboration in sectors such as railways, trade, energy, and infrastructure. He stated that both countries are determined to implement these agreements across cultural, political, security, scientific, and economic fields.

Regarding potential military threats from the U.S. or Israel, Pezeshkian affirmed that under the agreement, both nations have pledged not to cooperate with any aggressor against each other. He mentioned that while the agreement outlines general commitments, further negotiations will determine specific defense measures.

Pezeshkian criticized Western nations, particularly the U.S., for their economic terrorism and targeted assassinations, such as the assassination of General Qassem Soleimani. He expressed frustration that despite Iran's consistent cooperation with the international community and its clear stance against nuclear weapons, it continues to face false accusations of terrorism. Pezeshkian stressed that Iran remains committed to its peaceful policies and will not be provoked by baseless

allegations.

The Iranian president strongly condemned Israel's actions in Gaza, Lebanon, and Syria, accusing it of violating international laws through indiscriminate bombings and killings. He argued that Western powers, particularly the U.S. and Europe, support Israel's actions while hypocritically advocating for human rights and democracy.

Addressing accusations of anti-semitism, Pezeshkian pointed out Iran's historical protection of Jewish communities and their current representation in the Iranian parliament. He emphasized that Iran respects all divine religions and opposes oppression and injustice, regardless of religious affiliation.

Pezeshkian highlighted the challenges facing the region, such as U.S. interference and the destabilization efforts in Syria, Armenia, and Turkey. He warned that foreign powers exploit regional conflicts to exert control and plunder resources, urging regional countries to cooperate and resist external influence.

Despite severe sanctions, Pezeshkian noted Iran's significant advancements in defense, including missile and drone technology. He asserted that Iran's true strength lies in national unity and silence, recalling that even during the Iran-Iraq war, the country defended its sovereignty without advanced weaponry but with the solidarity of its people.

Pezeshkian concluded by stating that Iran seeks friendship and cooperation with its neighbors while resisting efforts to destabilize the region. He called for unity among independent nations to counter unilateralism and safeguard their sovereignty against foreign intervention.

Iran-Oman Trade Volume Increases by 1,000% Over the Last Decade

TEHRAN - Iran's Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade Seyed Mohammad Atabak in Muscat, capital of Oman, emphasized the Islamic Republic of Iran's policy of developing relations and cooperation with countries worldwide, especially neighbors.

Speaking at the Iran-Oman Joint Cooperation Commission held on Thursday in Muscat, he stated that Iran-Oman relations are at a highly constructive and ongoing level. The relationship holds a special place due to cultural similarities and deep political and economic achievements.

Atabak highlighted the depth of bilateral relations based on geographical proximity and historical and civilizational ties, which have paved the way for strong economic relations.

The Iranian head of the Iran-Oman Joint Cooperation Commission added that Iran-Oman relations have always been unique. A preferential trade agreement has been signed to strengthen economic ties and increase trade volume appropriately.

He stated that creating a safer environment for sustainable trade growth, diversifying exchanged products, encouraging competition among enterprises, and removing obstacles were key topics discussed at the commission. These measures aim to elevate both countries' relations to a strategic level in all political, commercial, and economic fields.

Atabak further noted that the commission seeks to approve three important agreements: preferential trade, mutual investment protection, and customs administrative cooperation.

He reported that the economic exchange volume between the two countries has increased by 1,000% over the past decade and is expected to grow by 15% in 2024.

The Iranian Minister underscored the crucial role of the private sectors of both countries in advancing strategic trade and economic objectives between Tehran and Muscat. He emphasized that this cooperation results from effective collaboration between the public and private sectors and is only the beginning of a strategic partnership for large-scale economic projects internationally.

Atabak noted that there are no obstacles from Iran's perspective in expanding political, economic, cultural, and commercial relations with Oman. Despite recent progress, there remain significant untapped potentials.

Atabak assessed Oman's efforts to facilitate money transfers between Iranian and Omani



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traders positively, stating that designating exchange offices for financial transactions is a welcome move.

He highlighted the critical role of the private sectors of both countries, alongside their governments, in addressing existing challenges and barriers. The commission's priority is to accelerate the implementation of agreements in economic, commercial, and financial sectors to facilitate investments.

The Iranian head of the commission noted the interest of private sector companies in investing in Oman as an indication of Iran's commitment to strengthening cooperation. He cited food industries, petrochemicals, wires and cables, technical and engineering services, and tourism as key areas of interest.

Atabak emphasized cooperation in small industries to develop micro-enterprises and transfer technical knowledge through industrial parks, viewing this as a significant step in attracting investors.

He also pointed to identifying and introducing development capacities in the mining sector for joint investment in Iranian and Omani mining projects and the subsequent export of products as a mutual advantage, which could boost Iran-Oman international trade.

He described mineral products as a potential area of cooperation that would benefit both nations.

In conclusion, the Minister of IMT stressed the determination of high-ranking officials from both countries to expand cooperation and move toward strategic agreements. He stated that many necessary conditions have already been established for deeper collaboration, ensuring national interests align with this vision.

During his visit to Oman, Seyed Mohammad Atabak met with the Omani Ministers of Commerce, Investment, Energy, Transport, and Communications to participate in the joint commission meeting between Iran and Oman.

The trade and economic relations between Iran and Oman, alongside their political ties, continue to expand. Enhancing relations and increasing trade volumes in line with both countries' industrial and commercial capacities remain key focal points of technical discussions between Tehran and Muscat.

FM Slams UN Chief's Call to Renounce Nuclear Weapons



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has denounced "audacious" remarks by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Iran's peaceful nuclear activities, reaffirming the country's longstanding commitment to the global nonproliferation regime.

In an X post on Thursday, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi blasted Guterres for preaching the Islamic Republic, which is pursuing a civilian nuclear program as a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the US-abandoned 2015 nuclear deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

He also highlighted a fatwa (religious decree) by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei that bans the production, possession and stockpiling of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction (WMDs).

"It is audacious to preach that Iranians must "once and for all make it clear that they will renounce to have nuclear weapons."

"Iran's longstanding commitment to the global nonproliferation regime is clear."

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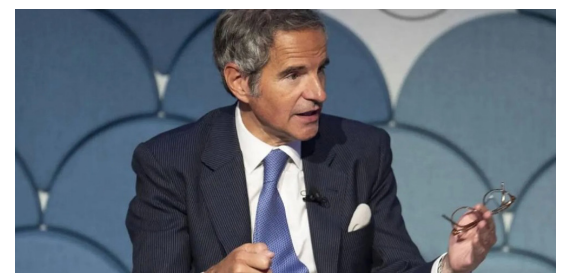
Speaking about the situation in West Asia at the World Economic Forum in Davos on Wednesday, the UN chief said Iran must make it clear that it does not aim to build nuclear arms.

"The most relevant question is Iran and relations between Iran, Israel and the United States," he claimed.

"Here my hope is that the Iranians understand that it is important to once and for all make it clear that they will renounce to have nuclear weapons, at the same time that they engage constructively with the other countries of the region."

The top Iranian diplomat also noted that the most relevant question in the region is Israel's genocidal war on the Gaza Strip, as well as the regime's occupation of Palestinian, Syrian & Lebanese territory.

IAEA Has No Evidence of Iran's Building a Nuclear Weapon



TEHRAN (PressTV) - The head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has said the United Nations nuclear watchdog had no evidence pointing to Iran's underway development of a nuclear weapon.

Rafael Grossi made the remarks on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

The remarks verified the nuclear body's record of invariably verifying non-diversion and peaceful nature of the Islamic Republic's nuclear energy program.

Grossi, however, reiterated the body's apparently-Western-driven propaganda claiming that the country had accumulated a vast amount of enriched uranium, which was "very, very close" to weapon-grade.

The allegations, however, run directly counter to Iran's insistence of implementing its doctrine of non-pursuance of non-conventional arms as per religious concerns and a relevant fatwa (religious decree) issued by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

In December, the country's security chief asserted that the Islamic Republic's nuclear doctrine of pursuing peaceful energy and opposing pursuance of atomic weapons had remained "unchanged."

"Based on the relevant observation of Iran's Leader Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the country's nuclear doctrine has remained unchanged," said Ali-Akbar Ahmadian, head of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC).

Grossi also repeated other Western claims about Iran's alleged insufficient cooperation with the IAEA.

"We have not been having the full cooperation of Iran in clarifying a few important things about the past and perhaps the present activities," he said.

Back in November, the United States and its allies pushed the IAEA's Board of Governors into passing a resolution, which repeated the unfounded accusations against the Islamic Republic of such alleged insufficient cooperation.

IRAN NEWS



FM Calls for Protection of Minorities' Rights in Syria

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi called for the protection of the rights of minorities in Syria. Araqchi made the remarks in a telephone conversation with his Turkish counterpart Hakan Fidan. He re-emphasized the principled policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in supporting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria and the need to avoid internal conflicts and the formation of an inclusive government with the participation of all political, ethnic and religious currents in that country. Araqchi voiced Iran's concern about news published on the arbitrary actions of armed groups against ordinary people and civilians in the Shiite and Alawite areas and demanded the protection of the rights of minorities. The Iranian and Turkish foreign ministers also discussed bilateral ties.

Embassy of Pakistan Participates in Kish Expo 2025



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IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The Embassy of Pakistan in Tehran proudly participated in the Kish Expo 2025, showcasing the country's vibrant business development capabilities, rich cultural heritage, and diverse tourism opportunities. The event, held on Kish Island, provided a prominent platform for Pakistan to connect with international businesses and investors, fostering collaboration and promoting its economic growth potential. The Embassy's participation highlighted Pakistan's strong commitment to enhancing bilateral ties, strengthening economic partnerships, and promoting cultural exchange. A variety of initiatives were showcased at the event, reflecting Pakistan's dynamic tourism industry and its commitment to fostering sustainable development and investment opportunities across various sectors. This engagement aligns with the Embassy's continued efforts to facilitate economic diplomacy, expand trade relations, and introduce Pakistan's cultural and tourism treasures to a global audience.

Iran and Azerbaijan Aim to Boost Trade to \$10 Billion Over Five Years



ILNA News Agency - 4 minutes

According to an economic correspondent from ILNA, Farzaneh Sadegh, speaking at the 16th Joint Economic Commission of Iran and Azerbaijan, expressed hope that the meeting would mark the beginning of new relations and cooperation between the two countries. She emphasized that the Iranian government is committed to removing any barriers hindering bilateral cooperation. She stated that after more than three years of delay, the 16th economic commission meeting between the two countries was finally held in Tehran. Sadegh expressed optimism that discussions in areas such as transportation, energy, customs, oil and gas, banking affairs, preferential trade, and investment would pave the way for expanded cooperation and increased trade between Iran and Azerbaijan. The Minister of Roads and Urban Development highlighted that bilateral trade between the two countries reached \$583 million in the past 11 months. He noted that the trade potential is significantly higher and set an ambitious target of increasing trade to \$10 billion within the next five years. Sadegh further elaborated that trade between the two countries in 2023 amounted to \$487 million, with Iran's exports to Azerbaijan totaling \$473 million, while Iran's imports from Azerbaijan stood at \$14 million. In the first 11 months of 2024, total trade reached \$583 million, with Iranian exports accounting for \$570 million and imports from Azerbaijan at \$12.9 million. She proposed the development of a roadmap to achieve the \$10 billion trade target, emphasizing the need to resume negotiations on finalizing the preferential trade agreement as soon as possible. The minister also highlighted the potential for cooperation in transit and transportation, acknowledging significant progress in recent years but pointing out that the current capacity in road, rail, air, and sea transport is far from being fully utilized. She suggested forming a joint transport committee to address existing challenges. Referring to key infrastructure projects, Sadegh mentioned the inauguration of the second Astara-Chai bridge last year as a crucial step in enhancing transport ties. She also noted progress on the border road bridge over the Aras River in the Kalaleh region, expected to be completed by early spring 2025. Additionally, the Aghband-Nakhchivan road project via the Jolfa border is under construction, and efforts are underway to resolve obstacles related to the Astara rail terminal to maximize its transit potential. Sadegh emphasized the importance of a tripartite meeting between Iran, Azerbaijan, and Russia to activate the North-South Corridor, with a target of transporting 15 million tons through this route. The meeting is scheduled for January 28, 2025, in Moscow, where the three countries aim to establish mechanisms for expanding transit cooperation. Discussing energy cooperation, Sadegh highlighted the strategic significance

of the electricity and water sectors in bilateral relations. She expressed hope for progress in the unification of the power grids of both countries to facilitate electricity transit and called for joint efforts to overcome challenges in this area. On the sidelines of the event, Shahin Mustafayev, Deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan, announced during the 16th session of the Iran-Azerbaijan Joint Economic Commission that the first visit to Iran took place in October. Over the past three months, joint efforts have been made to review negotiations, and in the last three days, discussions between Tehran and Baku were finalized. Talks continued until the last minute, resulting in mutual agreements on multiple subjects. He stated that at the conclusion of the meeting, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) will be signed with the Iranian Minister, reflecting cooperation frameworks and future prospects across all areas of collaboration. Mustafayev emphasized that the MoU will contribute to the successful implementation of projects and is not a short-term effort but rather a forward-looking initiative. Highlighting Azerbaijan's extensive ties with Iran, he noted that Azerbaijan shares broader cooperation with Iran than with any other neighboring country. He pointed out that economic and trade indicators between the two nations are highly positive. According to Azerbaijani statistics, trade cooperation between the two countries has increased by 30%, surpassing \$600 million. Mustafayev stressed the need to further enhance exchanges and ensure dynamic commercial relations. Negotiations are underway on a preferential trade agreement, and a final agreement is expected soon. Significant steps have also been taken regarding transport and trade relations. The Azerbaijani Deputy Prime Minister stated that Azerbaijan is actively involved in the North-South and East-West corridors and has signed the Baku Declaration for a joint corridor project. One of Azerbaijan's major initiatives is the Rasht-Astara railway project. He announced that the new Aghband Bridge will be completed by the end of this year, and a new terminal, crucial for cargo transportation from China, will also be completed by year-end. The new bridge in Astara is expected to be completed by May, which will facilitate the transportation of 700,000 tons of Russian cargo. Mustafayev affirmed that Azerbaijan and Iran's ongoing projects will not only benefit the two countries but also contribute to regional interests. Regarding the oil and gas sector, he stated that successful agreements have been reached, with initial understandings established. Representing Azerbaijan, Mustafayev expressed strong interest in implementing these projects and highlighted the beneficial cooperation opportunities available with Iran.

Sanctions Hinder Cooperation with South Korean Companies



TEHRAN - Poya Firoozi, Vice President of the Iran-South Korea Joint Chamber of Commerce, spoke with ILNA regarding the current state of trade between the two countries. According to statistics released by South Korea's customs authorities, Iran's total exports to South Korea in 2024 amounted to \$8.609 million. The joint chamber has also published the same figures; however, it is essential to note that Iran's customs data presents a significantly different figure. According to Iranian customs, Iran's exports to South Korea in the first nine months of 2024 amounted to approximately \$63 million, while imports from South Korea stood at around \$412 million. Firoozi explained that the discrepancy in trade statistics between the two countries arises from the fact that each country relies on its own customs data. Since intermediary countries play a role in the trade process, South Korea includes them in its customs records, whereas Iran does not. As a result, the reported figures differ. He further noted that Iranian traders, in their efforts to bypass sanctions and maintain trade under restrictions, often resort to indirect methods that hinder the transparency of trade data. Despite the discrepancies, Firoozi acknowledged a general downward trend in Iran's imports from South Korea. Although Iranian exports to South Korea have shown some growth, this increase is primarily value-based due to global inflation and remains modest in volume. Currently, over 90% of Iran's exports to South Korea consist of copper concentrate. Given South Korea's advanced technology sector, the demand for copper remains high. Previously, Iran's primary export to South Korea was gas condensate. Firoozi pointed out that 2020 marked the lowest trade volume between Iran and South Korea, and the decline continued until 2022. However, in 2023, trade volumes saw a slight improvement, halting the downward trend. Nevertheless, he confirmed that trade levels have now reached their lowest point, primarily due to financial exchange barriers and sanctions, which prevent direct collaboration with South Korean companies. Iran's main imports from South Korea currently include medical, pharmaceutical, and dental equipment. Firoozi added that due to the ban on household appliance imports to Iran, South Korean brands such as Samsung and LG are no longer available in the Iranian market. The import of cars, except for a few specific and limited cases, has also been halted, and direct imports of South Korean mobile phones remain highly restricted. Regarding Iran's frozen assets in South Korea, Firoozi stated that the matter is no longer under negotiation, as the funds have been transferred to Qatar.

Utilizing Chamber of Commerce Capacities to Develop Economic Cooperation Between Tehran, Minsk



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - In a recent meeting, Mahmoud Najafi Arab, President of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, and Dmitry Kaltsov, Belarusian Ambassador to Iran, discussed ways to enhance economic relations and trade exchanges between the two countries. During the meeting, the Iran-Eurasian Free Trade Agreement was highlighted as a practical tool and a valuable pathway for expanding trade relations between Iran and Belarus.

The Belarusian ambassador emphasized that the recently finalized Iran-Eurasian Economic Union Free Trade Agreement presents a new opportunity for expanding trade relations between Iran and the member states of the union. He underscored the pivotal role of chambers of commerce in guiding economic relations in this new phase, with the collaboration between the Tehran and Minsk chambers playing a crucial role in shaping the future of economic ties between Iran and Belarus.

Najafi Arab pointed out the relatively low volume of trade between Iran and Belarus and stressed the potential for industrial and economic cooperation between the two countries. He highlighted the need to leverage available opportunities to expand economic ties, noting that the Tehran and Minsk chambers could facilitate investment opportunities and business partnerships by introducing reputable companies from both sides.

The President of the Tehran Chamber also referred to the upcoming Third International Eurasia Trade Exhibition, scheduled to take place in Tehran from February 22 to 25. He emphasized that the event would serve as a platform for fostering dialogue between the Iranian private sector and Eurasian Economic Union member states, aiming to enhance trade relations.

Najafi Arab stated that Iran and Belarus have significant potential for joint investment and economic cooperation in various fields.

Fereydoun Vardi-Nejad, Secretary-General of the Tehran Chamber, also participated in the meeting and stressed the importance of enhancing the exchange of economic information and investment opportunities between the two countries. He assured that the Tehran Chamber is ready to collaborate with the Minsk Chamber to identify investment opportunities and reliable business partners, sharing this information with relevant stakeholders in both countries.

Vardi-Nejad further highlighted that the formation of the Tehran-Minsk Economic Cooperation Council, proposed as a side event of the Eurasia exhibition, would help address economic challenges and explore new opportunities for private-sector cooperation between Iran and Belarus.

The Belarusian ambassador praised the longstanding cooperation between the Tehran Chamber and the Belarusian Embassy and reaffirmed the embassy's readiness to strengthen economic ties through chamber-led initiatives. He acknowledged the growing trade relations between the two countries and referred to successful agreements reached during the recent Iran-Belarus Joint Economic Commission meeting in Minsk, chaired by Iran's Minister of Industry, Mine, and Trade.

Tourism Relations with Saudi Arabia Have Begun

TEHRAN - In a meeting with provincial governors, Seyyed Reza Salehi Amiri stated that tourism and cultural heritage have never been a top priority for the country, calling this a chronic issue. He emphasized that while Iran aimed to lead in all sectors, it currently lags far behind its goals.

The Minister of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism noted that the gap with neighboring countries in tourism has widened to such an extent that catching up in the current environment seems unlikely. He stated that around 90% of the country's heritage and tourism potential is within the provinces, and immediate actions are required to address the deterioration of heritage structures.

Salehi Amiri highlighted Iran's unique position, mentioning that the country has 50 sites pending UNESCO registration, with efforts to collaborate with Spain, France, and Italy in this regard. He stressed that Iran should not separate its Iranian and Islamic identities, emphasizing that both aspects coexist harmoniously, celebrating religious events such as Ashura alongside cultural traditions like Yalda and Nowruz.

The minister pointed out that Iran is home to countless historical treasures, including ancient sites from the Achaemenid and Sassanid periods. He noted that Iran has not effectively leveraged its rich cultural heritage, which includes advanced ancient medical practices and artistic innovations dating back 5,000 years. He called for a cultural knowledge exchange to strengthen national identity and reduce emigration by showing younger generations that Iran has much to offer.

Discussing tourism development, Salehi Amiri identified three key elements: attractiveness, capacity, and infrastructure. While Iran lacks nothing in terms of tourism attractions, he stressed the need for a five-year strategic plan to expand the medical tourism sector, particularly in border provinces where healthcare costs are lower compared to neighboring countries.

He also mentioned initiatives to develop maritime tourism, focusing on regions from Khorramshahr to Makran and Chabahar, as well as from Ashuradeh to Anzali. Religious tourism, with Mashhad as the



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primary destination, was also emphasized, noting that pilgrims often seek a second destination after visiting Mashhad. Regarding infrastructure, the minister stated that Iran currently has 455,000 hotel beds but must increase this to one million to accommodate 15 million tourists. He criticized foreign media for portraying Iran as unsafe, asserting that the country is in fact safer than many of its neighbors.

Salehi Amiri announced the initiation of tourism relations with Saudi Arabia and the establishment of direct flights from Kuwait and Bahrain to Mashhad, citing significant interest from these countries' citizens in visiting Iran's religious sites.

He further discussed efforts to attract tourists from Central Asia and the Caucasus, emphasizing the need for more provincial involvement rather than relying solely on Tehran. The minister underscored Iran's openness by pointing to the inclusion of Armenian churches in UNESCO listings and called for similar recognition of Islamic sites by other countries.

Discussing engagement with Iranian expatriates, Salehi Amiri stressed the need to address their concerns and facilitate investment opportunities, with a focus on private sector involvement. He reported that 6 million tourists visited Iran this year, a 17% increase compared to the previous year, and expressed confidence that the upward trend would continue.

On the topic of handicrafts, Salehi Amiri described them as an underutilized resource, citing successful initiatives such as a women's cooperative in Shirabad that exports Baluchi needlework internationally. He noted that Iran exports handicrafts worth 224 million euros annually and aims to increase employment in the sector to one million workers by the end of the next development plan.

The minister concluded by emphasizing the importance of addressing infrastructure challenges and encouraging private sector investment to support the country's ambitious tourism targets.

75% Progress in Iran-Russia Railway Agreement



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The agreement for the construction of the Rasht-Astara railway, spanning 164 kilometers, was signed with Russia in May 2023. As per the former Minister of Roads and Urban Development, the final commercial contract for the project was expected to be signed in early 2024. However, despite a year passing, the final agreement has not yet been signed, and Russia has not officially entered the project.

Recently, the Minister of Economy announced on a television program that Russian President Vladimir Putin has expressed readiness to activate a \$5 billion credit line for three infrastructure projects, including the Rasht-Astara railway. According to the Minister, Putin has expressed concerns over delays in implementing this project.

The primary reason cited for the delay in construction is the issue of land acquisition along the railway route. It has been stated that Russia's official entry into the project is contingent on the completion of land acquisition.

Abbas Khatibi, Deputy for Railway Construction and Development at the Construction and Development of Transportation Infrastructure Company, told ILNA that the acquisition of land is the most critical aspect of the railway project. He mentioned that approximately 60 trillion rials (6 Hemat) in funding is required to complete the land acquisition process.

Firefighters Halt Advance of Latest Los Angeles Wildfire

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Firefighters stopped the expansion of a new wildfire north of Los Angeles on Thursday after it spread rapidly, as California Governor Gavin Newsom signed a \$2.5 billion relief package for the fire-devastated region. The Hughes Fire, about 50 miles (80 km) north of Los Angeles, broke out on Wednesday as emergency services continued to battle two fires on the city's eastern and western flanks that have burned for more than two weeks. The Hughes Fire quickly burned some 10,176 acres (41 square km), but that figure held steady throughout the day as 4,000 firefighters dropped water and retardant from the air and used hand tools and hoses on the ground. Containment, a measure of the perimeter that is under control, grew to 24%, up from 14% earlier in the day, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) said on its website.



IRAN NEWS

Leading German Chancellor Candidate Merz Vows More Assertive Global Role



BERLIN (Dispatches) - German opposition leader Friedrich Merz, tipped to become the next chancellor, said on Thursday he wanted to win back the lost trust of key allies and ensure Berlin is more assertive on the global stage in a speech laying out his foreign policy plans.

He also said calls by U.S. President Donald Trump, who returned to power on Jan. 20, for Europe to do more to defend itself presented an opportunity for the continent to strengthen.

Germany's partners have struggled in recent years to strategise with Berlin due to infighting within Chancellor Olaf Scholz's awkward three-way coalition, Merz said in a speech that focused more on Europe than transatlantic relations.

That discord ultimately led to the coalition's collapse late last year, prompting a snap election on Feb. 23 that Merz's conservatives are on track to win by a large margin.

If elected head of government, Merz said, he would create a national security council anchored in the chancellery to better coordinate all issues that touch on foreign, development and defence policy across the different ministries, so Berlin would speak with one strong voice.

"The times when European partners received different answers from Berlin - depending on whether they were in the Chancellery, the Foreign Office or the Ministry of Finance - must be a thing of the past," Merz told the event in Berlin.

The 69-year-old conservative, who was a deputy in the European Parliament from 1989-94, said he would expect all cabinet members to regularly attend EU Council meetings in Brussels to ensure Germany's voice was well represented.

He would only appoint ministers and deputy ministers from his party who were able to communicate in English.

"The overriding maxim of (my) government will therefore be that Germany can be relied on again, we keep our word, we will make decisions - and once a decision has been made we stick to it," he said.

Bangladesh's High Growth Under Ousted PM Hasina Was Fake



DAVOS (Dispatches) - The head of Bangladesh's interim government, Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus, said on Thursday that his country's high growth under ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was "fake" and faulted the world for not questioning what he said was her corruption.

Yunus, 84, an economist and the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize winner, took charge of the South Asian country's interim government in August after Hasina was forced to flee to neighbouring India following weeks of violent protests.

Hasina has been credited with turning around the economy and the country's massive garments industry during her 15 years in power, although critics have accused her of human rights violations and suppressing free speech and dissent.

Hasina, who had ruled Bangladesh since 2009, is being investigated there on suspicion of crimes against humanity, genocide, murder, corruption and money laundering and Dhaka has asked New Delhi to extradite her.

Hasina and her party deny wrongdoing, while New Delhi has not responded to the extradition request.

"She was in Davos telling everybody how to run a country. Nobody questioned that," Yunus told Reuters in an interview on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum's annual meeting in the Swiss Alpine resort. "That's not a good world system at all."



Trump Issues Davos Elites a Blunt Warning: Invest in U.S. or Face Tariffs

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - U.S. President Donald Trump issued a blunt warning to global elites in a video message to the World Economic Forum on Thursday: Make your product in the United States or pay tariffs.

Beamed on a giant screen in the Swiss Alpine village of Davos, Trump received a loud round of applause from political and business A-listers who had eagerly awaited his appearance all week.

Speaking from the White House, Trump touted his plans to cut taxes, deregulate industries and crack down on illegal immigration. But he also had a tough message.

"Come make your product in America and we will give you among the lowest taxes of any nation on earth," Trump said. "But if you don't make your product in America, which is your prerogative, then very simply you will have to pay a tariff."

In his wide-ranging speech, Trump made a link between the war in Ukraine and oil prices.

Trump said he would ask Saudi Arabia and the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries to bring down crude prices. "If the price came down, the Russia-Ukraine war would end immediately," he said.

The U.S. leader then fielded question from the top executives of Bank of America, Blackstone investment firm, Spanish group Banco Santander and French oil and gas giant TotalEnergies.

Trump is always a top draw in Davos, making waves at two previous in-person appearances during his first term in 2018 and 2020. But showing up this year was tougher as the forum happened to start on the day of his inauguration in Washington on Monday.

Scores stood in line to hear him speak. Some in the audience included European Central Bank chief Christine Lagarde, Polish President Andrzej Duda and Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic.

One of the Republican president's biggest cheerleaders on the world stage, Argentina's libertarian President Javier Milei, took the stage hours before Trump, delivering a fiery speech against "the mental virus of woke ideology".

Milei said Argentina was "re-embracing the idea of freedom" and "that is what I trust President Trump will do in this new America".

He praised like-minded leaders such as Trump, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban and El Salvador's President Nayib Bukele.

"Slowly an international alliance has been formed of all those nations that want to be free and that believe in the ideas of freedom," he said.

He also defended his "dear friend" Elon Musk.

The U.S. billionaire and Trump ally caused a stir this week by making hand gestures at an inauguration event for the US president that drew comparisons to the Nazi salute.

Milei said Musk, the head of Tesla and SpaceX, has been "unfairly vilified by wokeism in recent hours for an innocent gesture that only means... his gratitude to the people".

Read more: Europe's leaders have had enough of Musk's meddling, but can they stop him?

Trump already gave Davos a taste of what is to come since his inauguration on Monday, which coincided with the WEF's first day. He has threatened tariffs on China, the European Union, Mexico and Canada, pulled the United States from the Paris climate pact and renewed his claim the Panama Canal, just to name a few.

His plans to cut taxes, reduce the size of the US federal government and deregulate industries likely found a sympathetic ear among many businesses, though economists warn the policies could rekindle inflation.

U.S. trade partners and rivals already had a chance to react in Davos earlier this week, as they brace for a second round of his America First policies.

Without invoking Trump's name, Chinese Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang warned: "There are no winners in a trade war."

European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen said Brussels was ready to negotiate with Trump.

But she also underscored the European Union's diverging policy with him on climate, saying the bloc would stick by the Paris accord.

World Trade Organization chief Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala called on cooler heads to prevail during a WEF panel discussion on tariffs on Thursday, warning that tit-for-tat levies would be "catastrophic" for the world economy.

"Please let's not hyperventilate," she quipped. "I know we are here to discuss tariffs. I've been saying to everybody: could we chill, also?"

Russia Repels Massive Ukrainian Drone Attack on 13 Regions Including Moscow

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russian air defences repelled a massive Ukrainian drone attack overnight, intercepting and destroying 121 drones targeting 13 regions, including Moscow, Russia's Defense Ministry said on Friday, making no mention of casualties or damage.

The ministry said six drones had been destroyed over the Moscow region and one over the capital itself, while other drones had targeted other regions, including those that border Ukraine and Kursk, where Ukrainian troops hold a chunk of land despite Russian efforts to eject them.

Twenty drones had also targeted the Ryazan region, southeast of Moscow, the ministry said, and channels on the Telegram messaging app posted unverified videos of what bloggers there described as large blazes in the city. They said an oil storage depot and a power station had been hit.

Reuters could not confirm those reports.

Pavel Malkov, the Ryazan regional governor, said on Telegram that emergency services were tackling the aftermath of an air attack. Emergency crews had extinguished a fire after drone debris had damaged a house, he added.

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanian said early on Friday that air defences had intercepted attacks by Ukrainian drones at four locations around the Russian capital.



Sobyanian, writing on Telegram, said air defences southeast of the capital in Kolomna and Ramenskoye had repelled "enemy" drones, without specifying how many.

"At the site where fragments fell, no damage or casualties occurred," Sobyanian wrote. "Specialist emergency crews are at the site."

Sobyanian said two drones also headed for Moscow had been downed by air defences in Podolsk, south of the capital, and he reported a single drone downed in Troitsky, southwest of the capital and in Shchyolkovo, to the northeast.

Russian news agencies quoted Rosaviatsiya, the federal aviation agency, as saying two Moscow airports, Vnukovo and Domodedovo, were handling flights after suspending operations for a time. Six flights were redirected to other airports.

In the city of Kursk, Mayor Igor Kutsak said the overnight attack had damaged power lines and cut off electricity to one city district.

The Defence Ministry statement said drones had also been destroyed over the border regions of Bryansk and Belgorod and the Russian-annexed Crimean Peninsula. It said the Saratov, Rostov, Voronezh, Tula, Oryol, and Lipetsk regions had also been targeted.

Chief U.S. Diplomat Vows Unwavering Support for Israel

JERUSALEM (Dispatches) - The United States' new top diplomat Marco Rubio reaffirmed the country's "unwavering support" for Israel, days into a fragile ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and a large-scale raid in the occupied West Bank.

As Israel pursued its deadly operation in Jenin, Rubio assured Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Washington's continued backing.

Rubio spoke to Netanyahu from Washington to "underscore that maintaining the United States' steadfast support for Israel is a top priority for President Trump," State Department spokeswoman Tammy Bruce said.

He also "congratulated the Prime Minister on Israel's successes against Hamas and Hezbollah and pledged to work tirelessly to help free all remaining hostages held in Gaza," she said.

Israel and Hamas began implementing a ceasefire in their 15-month war on Sunday that includes an exchange of hostages and prisoners.

Former US president Joe Biden had pushed for months for a deal along the same outlines. Trump sent an envoy to help push through an agreement before he took office, although the Republican has since said he is not confident the deal will hold.

In one of his first acts in office, Trump ended sanctions on extremist Israeli settlers in the West Bank imposed by Biden over their attacks on Palestinians.

During his first term in the White House, Trump put forward a peace plan he and his proponents called "the deal of the century", which would have included major Israeli annexations in the West Bank.

As Rubio and Netanyahu spoke, Israel's West Bank operation, dubbed "Iron Wall", was pressing on.

The Israeli military said that it has "neutralised over 10 terrorists", while the



Palestinian Ministry of Health said the operation has killed 10 people, and wounded 35 others.

"The situation is very difficult," Jenin governor Kamal Abu al-Rub told AFP.

"The occupation army has bulldozed all the roads leading to Jenin camp and to the Jenin government hospital... There is shooting and explosions," he added, referring to the Israeli military.

Israeli forces have detained around 20 people from villages around Jenin since the operation began on Tuesday, he said.

An AFP correspondent reported hearing gunfire and explosions from the northern city's refugee camp, a hotbed of militancy where Israeli forces have carried out repeated raids.

Qatari news channel Al Jazeera reported that its journalist Mohammed Al-Attrash had been arrested at his home by Palestinian forces "to prevent him from covering the Israeli operation" in Jenin.

The raid in Jenin aims to counter "hundreds of terrorist attacks, both in Judea and Samaria (the occupied West Bank) and the rest of Israel," military spokesman Nadav Shoshani said at a press briefing.

He said that since the start of the Gaza war, Israel had seen "over 2,000 terror attack attempts" from the West Bank, adding that the army had "eliminated around 800 terrorists".

The Palestinian Authority's foreign ministry accused Israel of "collective punishment" and said the raid was part of an Israeli plan aimed at "gradually annexing the occupied West Bank".

Djokovic Retires Injured to Put Zverev Into Australian Open Final



MELBOURNE (Dispatches) - Novak Djokovic retired injured after losing the first set 7-6(5) against Alexander Zverev to put the German through to his first Australian Open final and extend his wait for a record 25th Grand Slam title.

Zverev will meet either Jannik Sinner or Ben Shelton in Sunday's decider as he bids for his first Grand Slam title, but Djokovic will remain locked with Margaret Court on 24 major trophies until at least the French Open.

There were doubts about Djokovic's left thigh following his taxing quarter-final win over Carlos Alcaraz when he took a lengthy medical timeout after the first set against the Spaniard.

The 37-year-old Serb skipped a training session on the eve of the semi-final and entered Rod Laver Arena for the afternoon match with the thigh strapped.

But there was little indication he was struggling until late in the set when he began trudging slowly between points and muttering in frustration at his players' box.

He gave up the set by hammering a regulation forehand volley into the net and promptly walked to Zverev's side to shake hands and embrace the German, leaving the crowd gasping.

With a rueful expression, Djokovic held two thumbs up and clapped at the terraces but there was a round of boos as the 10-times champion made his exit.

Djokovic later said he had been trying to nurse a torn muscle and he was in increasing pain as the set wore on.

"I knew even if I won the first set, that it's going to be a huge uphill battle for me to stay physically fit enough to stay with him in the rallies, you know, for another God knows what, two, three, four hours," the

Serb told reporters.

"I don't think I had that, unfortunately, today in the tank."

Zverev said he was also surprised by Djokovic's retirement but noted the Serb's movement had fallen away in the tiebreak.

"I thought it was a high level first set," he added.

"Of course there are some difficulties ... in the tiebreak he was not moving. I did see him struggle a bit more."

Zverev also admonished sections of the crowd for jeering Djokovic, who has dominated the year's opening Grand Slam since winning his first trophy at Melbourne Park in 2008.

"The very first thing I want to say is, please guys, don't boo a player when he goes out with injury," Zverev said.

"I know everyone paid for tickets and everyone wants to see hopefully a great five-set match.

"But ... Novak Djokovic is someone who has given this sport for the past 20 years absolutely everything of his life.

"He has won this tournament with an abdominal tear, won this tournament with a hamstring injury.

"So please show some respect."

The truncated semi-final win is a huge boost for Zverev's hopes of finally winning a Grand Slam, having missed out to Alcaraz in last year's French Open final and surrendering a two-set lead before losing to Dominic Thiem in the 2020 U.S. Open decider.

Real Madrid Break Billion-Euro Revenue Barrier to Top Money League



LONDON (Dispatches) - Real Madrid are the first football club to top a billion euros in revenue during a single season, fuelled by income generated by the revamped Santiago Bernabeu stadium, according to financial experts Deloitte.

The order of the clubs at the top of Deloitte's annual Football Money League stayed the same, with Madrid (1.05 billion euros, \$1.09 billion) followed by Premier League champions Manchester City (838 million euros) and Paris Saint-Germain (806 million euros).

The 208-million-euro gap between first and second is the biggest Deloitte have ever recorded.

The dramatic refurbishment of the home of Real Madrid doubled matchday revenues to 248 million euros in the 2023/24 campaign.

Madrid have taken out loans totalling more than a billion euros since 2018 to renovate the Bernabeu, with the aim of turning it into a major source of revenue.

The state-of-the-art venue now boasts an undulating metal roof, shops, expanded VIP areas and a retractable pitch.

Pop megastar Taylor Swift is among the big names who have performed at the stadium since it reopened, while the NFL's first game in Spain will take place there later this year.

However, Madrid's aim of using the Bernabeu, which has a capacity of about 80,000, to generate extra cash has been hit by complaints over noise pollution from residents, with the club temporarily suspending the hosting of concerts.

Man United, Spurs Enjoy Europa League Boost With Wins

PARIS (Dispatches) - Manchester United and Tottenham both enjoyed some much needed respite from their Premier League woes with victories in the Europa League.

Bruno Fernandes conjured up the injury time winner in United's 2-1 defeat of Scottish giants Rangers, while in Germany Son Heung-min scored twice in a 3-2 win for Spurs at Hoffenheim.

Both English teams closed in on direct qualification to the last 16.

The Red Devils looked set to suffer more disappointment at Old Trafford when Cyril Dessers levelled for an injury-ravaged Rangers in the 88th minute.

The Scottish side had fallen behind when goalkeeper Jack Butland punched the ball into his own net early in the second half.

Fernandes spared United's blushes and possibly the playoff round by blasting home in stoppage time.

United were earlier controversially denied a goal when Matthijs de Ligt's towering header was ruled out for a foul on Robin Propper and VAR did not intervene.

United move up to fourth in the table with one match of the league phase remaining.

The top eight will qualify directly for the last 16, which may now be beyond Rangers who slip to 13th.



A point away to Romanian side FCSB next week should be enough to secure a top-eight finish for United and avoid the playoff round.

"Today was important to get the win because we want to get through in the Europa League, we want to go to the final," said Fernandes.

"We want to be in the first eight so we avoid playing two more games."

Spurs are sixth in the revamped league phase format topped by Lazio, who beat Real Sociedad 3-1 to ensure their ticket to the knock out stages.

Eintracht Frankfurt, who beat Ferencvaros 2-0, are placed second.

Goals from Son and James Maddison took some of the heat off Spurs manager Ange Postecoglou whose team have lost seven of their last nine Premier League games.

Postecoglou had pledged to win silverware for the first time for the London side since 2008 in his second season as boss.

With Spurs struggling in 15th behind Liverpool at home that leaves the Europa League, FA Cup and League Cup to fulfil his promise.

A win against Swedish outfit Elfsborg in their closing league phase game at home next week will give them an automatic ticket to the next round as one of the top eight finishers.

"I told them to enjoy it," Postecoglou told TNT Sports.

"Winning away in Europe, it's a significant victory for us and gives us a good foothold to get into those top eight spots which will give us a week off," the Australian added.

Tottenham charged out of the stalls with Maddison receiving a pinpoint pass from Pedro Porro to fire the ball past keeper Oliver Baumann and into the roof of the net to give Spurs the perfect start after just four minutes.

Richarlison, making only his second start of the campaign, could have doubled the advantage but the Brazilian's shot went straight to Baumann.

Man City Step Up Rebuild With Marmoush Signing in £59m Deal



LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester City on Thursday announced the signing of Eintracht Frankfurt forward Omar Marmoush, with Kyle Walker joining AC Milan on loan, as the club step up their rebuild during a disappointing season.

Egypt forward Marmoush has signed a four-and-a-half-year contract with the Premier League champions in a deal reportedly worth about £59 million (RM322 million) plus a potential £4.2 million in add-ons.

Marmoush is City's third signing of the January transfer window following the arrivals of defenders Abdou Diallo and Vitor Reis as manager Pep Guardiola reshapes his squad.

The 25-year-old, who scored 37 goals in 67 games for Bundesliga side Frankfurt, said signing for City was "an amazing feeling".

"With Pep, his technical staff and the world-class facilities here, players have everything they need to improve," he said. "That was really enticing for me when I had the chance to come here."

"And I cannot deny I also want to win trophies. City have been the most successful club in England for many, many years, so I know I am joining a winning environment and winning culture."

Director of football Txiki Begiristain said Marmoush, who has 35 international caps, was an "accomplished and exciting forward".

"He's had an outstanding season, and every time we have watched him, he has influenced matches," he said.

"He has all the attributes a top-class attacker requires. He has outstanding pace and awareness, and he is exceptional in front of goal. He can also play a number of different positions, which is a really valuable asset."

Marmoush's arrival at the Etihad comes during a frustrating season for City by their sky-high standards.

The club, champions for the past four seasons, are currently fifth in the Premier League, 12 points behind leaders Liverpool having played a game more.

Defeat at Paris Saint-Germain on Wednesday means Guardiola's side are in danger of missing out on the Champions League knockout stages.

The 2023 European champions must beat Club Brugge next week to qualify for the Champions League play-off round after letting a two-goal lead slip in their 4-2 defeat in Paris.

City have been hit by a spate of injuries this season, particularly in defence.

Earlier this week they announced the signing of teenage defender Vitor Reis from Brazilian club Palmeiras for a reported fee of £29.6 million.

It followed the arrival of Uzbekistan defender Abdou Diallo from Lens.

Davis Leads Surging Lakers Past Celtics

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Anthony Davis recorded 24 points, eight rebounds and three blocked shots to help the Los Angeles Lakers roll to an easy 117-96 victory over the visiting Boston Celtics night.

Austin Reaves had 23 points and six assists and LeBron James added 20 points, 14 rebounds and six assists for Los Angeles, which won for the fourth time in the past five games.

Dalton Knecht added 13 points, Gabe Vincent had 12 points on four 3-pointers and Rui Hachimura added 10 points and seven rebounds for the Lakers.

Kristaps Porzingis had 22 points and seven rebounds for the Celtics, who have split their past 10 games after beginning the season with 26 wins in 35 games.

Jaylen Brown had 17 points and eight rebounds and Jayson Tatum added 16 points, six rebounds and five assists for Boston, which sustained its largest loss of the season.

Los Angeles led by as many as 28 and was about to post its largest margin of victory for the second straight game until Boston's Jaden Springer hoisted a 3-pointer that went through the net as time expired.

The referees confirmed Springer got the shot off in time, meaning the Lakers' 23-point win over Washington on Monday remains their top blowout win.

Los Angeles shot 47.2 percent from the field, including 15 of 35 from 3-point range.



The Celtics made 38.5 percent of their shots and were 14 of 41 from behind the arc. Springer had 10 points for Boston.

The Lakers led by 15 after three quarters before James scored six points during a 9-0 burst to open the fourth quarter to give Los Angeles a 92-68 lead.

Vincent drilled a 3-pointer as the Los Angeles lead reached 95-70 with 8:54 remaining as it became apparent Boston wasn't going to make a charge on the second end of a back-to-back.

Earlier, the Lakers led 48-32 after a 3-pointer by Reaves with 6:48 left in the first half. Hachimura and Knecht drained consecutive treys to make it 64-43 with 2:01 remaining.

Los Angeles was up 67-48 at the break with Davis leading the way with 14 points. Porzingis had 17 in the half for Boston.

Tatum drained consecutive 3-pointers in the third quarter as Boston trimmed its deficit to 74-62 with 7:19 left. The Lakers later pushed the lead back up to 18 on two straight hoops by Jaxson Hayes before the Celtics moved within 83-68 entering the final quarter.

Meanwhile James Harden recorded his second triple-double of the season and the host Los Angeles Clippers sent the Washington Wizards to their 12th consecutive loss in a 110-93 rout.