

A Senior Iranian Commander Says Heavy Pressures on the Country to Impose Restrictions on Its Export of Technology and Drone Capabilities Will No Longer Have Any Effect

IRAN NEWS

Foreign Ministry Strongly Condemned the United States' Imposition of Sanctions on the International Criminal Court (ICC), Calling It an Egregious Abuse of Power Aimed at Shielding the Israeli Regime From Accountability for Its Crimes

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2 DOMESTIC

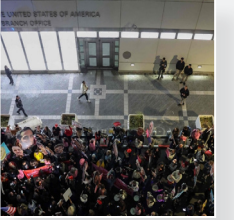


Iran Plans to Export 10% of Gas Production, Eyes European Market

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Iran's Foreign Trade Reaches \$103b



TEHRAN - Iran's non-oil exports have reached approximately \$48 billion from the beginning of this year until the end of January, marking an 18% increase compared to the same period last year.

From the start of the year until the end of January, Iran's total foreign trade volume amounted to 158.18 million tons, valued at \$103.85 billion. Of this, 127.4 million tons, worth \$47.75 billion, were exports, reflecting a 12% growth in volume and an 18% increase in value.

The main destinations for Iran's non-oil exports were: China: \$12.3b, Iraq: \$10b, United Arab Emirates (UAE): \$5.9b and Turkey: \$5.5b.

The primary exported goods included natural gas, liquefied propane, methanol, liquefied butane, and bitumen.

During the same period, 30.78 million tons of goods, valued at \$56 billion, were imported into the country. While the weight of imports saw a 3% decrease, their value rose by 3%.

Among the major imported goods were: Gold bullion: \$6.3b, Animal feed com: \$2.3b, Smartphones: \$1.8b, and Soybean meal: \$1.6b.

Iran's key import sources included: United Arab Emirates (UAE): \$17b, China: \$14.4b, Turkey: \$9.9b, and Germany: \$1.9b.

By the end of January, 41,297 vehicles, worth \$877 million, were imported into Iran, representing a 709% increase in quantity and a 744% increase in value compared to the previous year.

Speaker Opposes Current Internet Filtering Methods, Calls for Governance in Cyberspace



TEHRAN - Majlis Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf has voiced his opposition to the current internet filtering methods, emphasizing the need for proper governance in cyberspace to ensure psychological security, economic activity, and family values. He also highlighted inefficiency in governmental institutions as a major source of corruption and called for stronger judicial oversight.

Speaking at a joint meeting between the Parliament and the Judiciary, Qalibaf stressed the importance of governance in various fields, including economy, culture, society, politics, and the environment. He underlined that addressing existing issues is crucial for effective governance.

He reaffirmed the Parliament's commitment to supporting the judiciary's budget to enhance its role in delivering justice effectively. He noted that judicial infrastructure and human resources have been inadequate and that efforts have been made to address these challenges through the Seventh Development Plan.

He emphasized that asset optimization (known as "productive asset management") is a viable short-term solution to fund judicial improvements. By leveraging this approach, the judiciary can address structural issues in courts and judicial facilities nationwide.

He proposed the formation of a joint working group between the Parliament and Judiciary to ensure effective oversight of government institutions. He suggested streamlining the investigation process of parliamentary reports and inquiries to ensure accountability.

The Speaker stressed the need for a balanced approach to economic governance, advocating for decisive action against corruption while also providing a "protective umbrella" for competent and trustworthy economic managers. He warned that bureaucratic inefficiencies discourage economic leadership, calling for increased confidence and legal protection for investment.



President Inaugurates One of the Largest Recreational Complexes in Southern Iran

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - President Masoud Pezeshkian officially inaugurated one of the largest recreational and tourism complexes in southern Iran during the first leg of his trip to Sirjan, where he aimed to launch several industrial and tourism projects.

The Gohar Park Tourism Village, spanning approximately 570 hectares, has been established to enhance tourism infrastructure in the southern region and promote a culture of tourism. Located near the country's industrial and mining hub, the complex includes a water park, wildlife park, artificial lake and waterfall, amusement park, roller coaster, dry slides, a horror train ride, sports fields, and accommodation units.

The project is expected to create 750 direct jobs and over 1,000 indirect employment opportunities.

President Pezeshkian arrived in Sirjan, Kerman province, on Saturday morning as part of the Ten-Day Dawn celebrations of the Islamic Revolution to inaugurate major mining and industrial projects.

On the sidelines of the ceremony, Pezeshkian expressed optimism that the launch of new industrial and tourism projects in Sirjan, along with the creation of job opportunities in downstream industries, would accelerate economic and social development in the region.

During his visit to various sections of the "Gohar Park Tourism Village," he briefly spoke with Kerman's television network, offering condolences to the families of the students from Kerman who tragically lost their lives in a recent road accident.

"We have traveled to Sirjan today to inaugurate several projects and personally appreciate those involved in their implementation," the president stated. "The projects being launched today have been carried out with an investment of 200 trillion rials, a significant amount. I hope the employment opportunities and production from these facilities, along with the downstream industries that will emerge, will lead to further economic and social progress for Sirjan and Kerman."

During his visit, President Pezeshkian toured different parts of the Gohar Park Tourism Village, including the Sacred Defense Memorial, where he received briefings on the execution and activities of the various sections.

The president reiterated his hope that these new projects would accelerate Sirjan's growth and development.

He also later announced a substantial investment of 120 trillion rials (\$4 billion) in Sirjan for the coming year, emphasizing the need to prioritize the welfare of future generations.

Speaking at the inauguration of development projects in Sirjan, the President expressed his condolences over the tragic bus accident that claimed the lives of several students from Kerman. He acknowledged the efforts of past administrations in initiating investment projects, stating that the government's role was merely to inaugurate these initiatives. He extended gratitude to those who had worked to bring these projects to fruition.

Pezeshkian stressed the importance of collective cooperation in addressing challenges, warning against individualistic decision-making. "If we work together, we can solve problems, but if someone believes they have all the answers, we will face difficulties," he stated.

He also called for better utilization of available resources, noting that despite having abundant facilities, their potential had not been fully harnessed. He urged improvements in the efficiency and quality of resource use.

Highlighting the significance of long-term investments, the President reiterated the necessity of creating a sustainable future. "We can use our oil, gas, and mineral reserves today, but what happens when they are depleted? This is why we must invest in the future of Iran's children while utilizing our current resources wisely," he concluded.

This investment is expected to boost economic development in Sirjan, enhancing infrastructure and creating a more sustainable environment for future generations.

Leader Receives Senior Hamas Delegation



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has told a visiting Hamas delegation that the Palestinian resistance defeated Israel and the US in their war on Gaza, and described the ceasefire deal a "great achievement".

Ayatollah Khamenei received Hamas Shura Council chairman Muhammad Ismail Darwish and other members of the group's political bureau in Tehran on Saturday. "God Almighty granted you and the people of Gaza honor and victory, and made Gaza an example of the noble verse that says, 'How many a small company has overcome a large company by permission of Allah,'" he told the visitors.

"You overcame the Zionist regime and, in fact, the US and by the grace of God, you did not let them achieve any of their goals," the Leader added.

Ayatollah Khamenei touched on the suffering of the Gaza people for a year and half of the Israeli war, saying the ultimate result is "the victory of right over wrong".

"The people of Gaza became an example for all those who have their hearts in resistance," he said.

Ayatollah Khamenei also praised Hamas negotiators, saying their deal forcing Israel to halt its brutal war on Gaza and release thousands of Palestinian prisoners is a "great achievement".

The first 42-day phase of the ceasefire agreement calls for 33 Israeli captives and nearly 2,000 Palestinian prisoners to be released.

So far, the agreement has held, but US President Donald Trump's proposal to clear Gaza of its inhabitants and take over the territory is creating hiccups amid widespread denunciation around the world.

The Shura Council is the main consultative body of Hamas that elects the resistance movement's politburo. The visit to Tehran by Darwish and his team is part of their regional tour which has already taken them to Egypt and Turkey.

Lebanon Leaders Blast U.S. Meddling



BEIRUT (Dispatches) - Senior members of the Hezbollah resistance movement have lambasted comments by visiting US envoy Morgan Ortogus as "blatant interference" in Lebanon's affairs and a violation of diplomatic norms and international relations.

Ortogus said after meeting President Joseph Aoun on Friday that Hezbollah "should not be included" in Lebanon's future government and that the inclusion of Hezbollah was a "red line" for Washington.

Reacting to the comments, Mohammad Raad, head of Loyalty to the Resistance Bloc - the political wing of Hezbollah - in the Lebanese parliament, said the US envoy's statement was "full of hate and irresponsibility."

"It targeted a Lebanese component that is an integral part of the national agreement and Lebanese political life that stood up to Israeli aggression and emerged victorious," Raad said in a statement to the media on Friday.

Such American comments "are an unacceptable interference in Lebanese affairs and a disrespect to all diplomatic customs and international diplomacy rules," he added.

Rejecting Ortogus's claim that Hezbollah was "defeated" by Israel, the Lebanese MP said, "The victor is the one who has exposed the true image of the aggressor, revealing how it commits genocide against civilians, children, and women, targets homes and hospitals, and destroys entire residential neighborhoods."

Raad stressed that Israel's war on Gaza and Lebanon exposed the regime's "ugly reality," and the global community can see who truly funds and arms terrorism and displaces people from their lands.

"We rely on the resistance of our people, which is based on the army-people-resistance equation, the realistic equation that Lebanon can be proud of as it preserves its sovereignty," he added.

Israel is America's Eldest Child; Imam Defeated the Greatest Empire in History

TEHRAN - The Commander-in-Chief of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), Major General Hossein Salami, declared that the late Imam Khomeini led a historic and unexpected victory against the United States and its allies, calling it one of the most astonishing events of recent centuries.

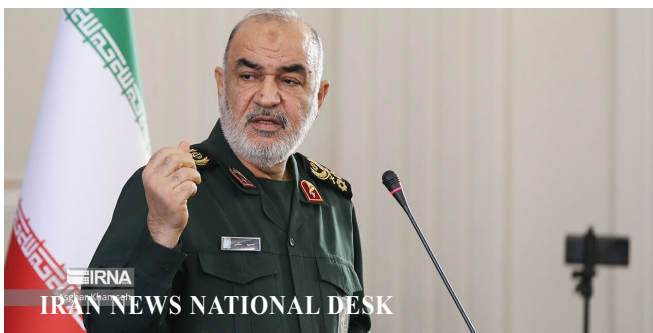
Speaking at a ceremony commemorating the ideals of Imam Khomeini and Iran's martyrs, General Salami congratulated the attendees on the 46th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution. He emphasized that the revolution marked a turning point in history, likening Imam Khomeini's emergence as a guiding light for the Muslim world.

"During these days, Imam Khomeini rose like a sun in the sky of Islamic guidance. His leadership brought divine revelation into action on Earth. Iran became a beacon of light, marking the rebirth of Islam in a powerful and influential way," Salami stated.

Salami drew parallels between the early days of Islam and the revolution, highlighting how a small group of followers transformed into a global force. He credited Imam Khomeini with establishing a new governance model and, in his first major act, overcoming what he described as "the largest empire in human history."

"At that time, the U.S. controlled more than half of the world's military power and wealth. Its political dominance was deeply entrenched, capable of outmaneuvering even the most powerful nations. Yet, with nothing but faith, Imam Khomeini defeated them, delivering a shocking blow to the global hegemonic order," Salami noted.

The IRGC chief referenced Khomeini's defiance of American threats, recalling how Iranian students took over the U.S. embassy in Tehran in 1979. He described the event as "a greater revolution within the revolution." When the U.S. threatened military action in response, Khomeini famously dismissed the threats, stating, "America cannot do a damn thing." This phrase, Salami said, became an enduring motto of resistance.



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

Salami attributed Iran's continued resistance against global powers to Khomeini's ideology. He pointed to key moments such as the failed U.S. military operation in Tabas and Iran's perseverance during the eight-year war with Iraq, asserting that the late leader's vision helped the nation withstand significant challenges.

"Every action of Imam Khomeini stunned the world. He was divinely supported, and whenever his thoughts were manifested, the darkness of modern ignorance faded," Salami remarked.

He also praised Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei for carrying forward Khomeini's legacy. "The torch that Khomeini lit continues to burn through his righteous successor, our dear leader, who embodies all of Khomeini's great qualities—standing firm in the face of every challenge. This path, like a divine straight road, remains unstoppable," he added.

In his speech, Salami reiterated Iran's long-standing opposition to Israel, calling it "America's eldest child." He suggested that the U.S. prioritizes the protection of Israel above all else, saying, "Everyone would rather be harmed themselves than see their child suffer. The threats made by America and others against us were real, not just psychological warfare. But Imam Khomeini guided us with wisdom and foresight."

Salami concluded his address by paying tribute to the late cleric Morteza Motahari, whose tomb lies near the ceremony's location. He emphasized that Iran remains committed to Khomeini's ideals and vowed to continue resisting global oppressors.

"Imam Khomeini restored the lost dignity of Muslims worldwide. Today, we reaffirm our eternal commitment to the symbol of Muslim pride. Our revolution, by the grace of God, has advanced and will continue confronting arrogant powers wherever they may be," he declared.

IRAN NEWS

Iran-Armenia Joint Agricultural Cooperation Committee to Hold Third Meeting in Tehran

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - The third meeting of the Iran-Armenia Joint Agricultural Cooperation Committee is set to take place in Tehran within the next two months, according to Iran's Ministry of Agriculture Jihad.

During a meeting between Iran's Minister of Agriculture Jihad, Gholamreza Nouri, and Armenia's Ambassador to Tehran, Grigor Hakobyan, the Iranian minister emphasized the country's strategic policy of strengthening comprehensive relations with neighboring nations. He highlighted the potential for cooperation in various agricultural sectors, including the export of technical and engineering services, the transfer of advanced agricultural technologies, and the expansion of cross-border aquaculture. Ambassador Hakobyan reaffirmed the significance of Iran in Armenia's foreign policy and described bilateral relations as strategic. He underscored agriculture, animal husbandry, and natural resources as key areas of economic cooperation between the two nations.

Iran-Pakistan Agricultural Trade Reaches \$1b



TEHRAN - The agricultural trade volume between Iran and Pakistan has reached \$1 billion in 2024, marking a significant increase, according to Iran's Minister of Agriculture, Gholamreza Nouri.

As reported by the Ministry of Agriculture's Information Center, Nouri made this announcement during a meeting with Pakistan's Ambassador to Tehran, Muhammad Mudassir Tipu. He highlighted that in the first nine months of 2024, trade between the two countries in the agricultural sector saw a remarkable surge, hitting the \$1 billion milestone.

During the meeting, the Iranian minister emphasized the need to follow up on agreements between the two nations, particularly in the areas of animal and plant quarantine, to facilitate smoother trade.

Ambassador Tipu reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to enhancing quarantine and customs infrastructure to boost agricultural trade. He also noted the crucial role of agricultural products in overall trade between the two countries.

Both sides agreed to hold a Joint Agricultural Cooperation Committee meeting in Tehran in the near future, with the participation of agriculture ministers from both nations.

Iran Plans to Export 10% of Gas Production, Eyes European Market



TEHRAN - The Managing Director of the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) has stated that at least 10% of Iran's gas production should be allocated for export, with the European market being a key focus of the country's export strategy.

Saeed Tavakoli, Managing Director of NIGC, addressed concerns regarding Iran's ability to meet both domestic consumption and export commitments. He emphasized that while the primary priority is ensuring sufficient gas supply for residential, commercial, and small-scale industrial sectors, the company is also making long-term plans to engage in exports. "We are in discussions and negotiations to establish export agreements, particularly given the ongoing projects and the expected increase in production across various sectors," Tavakoli said.

He highlighted that if gas production aligns with the objectives outlined in Iran's Seventh Development Plan and energy consumption is managed efficiently, the country could position itself as a regional energy hub. He also noted that optimizing energy use would enable Iran to allocate more gas for export.

Tavakoli reiterated that exporting a minimum of 10% of the country's gas output is a strategic necessity. He also confirmed that the European gas market is a key target for Iran's export ambitions. However, he stressed that export plans depend on efficient domestic consumption, in line with energy efficiency guidelines outlined in national strategic documents. "The more we enhance energy efficiency, the more we can increase production, boost exports, and secure gas supplies for power plants," he stated.

Beyond simple production and export, he described gas trade as a broader concept that includes various mechanisms such as swap deals, imports, and exports. "Being engaged in gas trade means having multiple mechanisms for transferring gas, not just focusing on production and direct exports," he added.

Regarding Iran's ability to fulfill its export commitments amid high domestic demand, especially in winter, Tavakoli acknowledged occasional deviations from contractual obligations. "During winter, we sometimes exceed our contractual consumption capacity, prioritizing domestic consumers. While we strive to fulfill our obligations within the framework of agreements, actual export volumes may fluctuate depending on domestic demand," he explained. He also noted that any shortfall in contracted exports comes with financial implications, as specified in agreements with international buyers.

He also addressed Iran's gas exports to Iraq, confirming that deliveries are proceeding according to contractual commitments. He stated that Iraq has made partial payments toward its outstanding gas debts and efforts are underway to recover the remaining dues.

On the issue of Iran's gas export agreement with Turkey, he remarked that negotiations for the contract's renewal are ongoing. "Turkey still has time before making a final decision, and preliminary discussions are in progress," he said.

Iran's ambitious gas export strategy is part of a broader effort to enhance its role in the global energy market. However, challenges such as domestic consumption management, infrastructure expansion, and international trade dynamics will play a crucial role in determining the success of these plans.

Iran Ready to Export Seafood, Dairy, and Nuts to Serbia



TEHRAN - Iran has expressed its readiness to export various agricultural products, particularly seafood, dairy products, fruits and vegetables, nuts, and processed foods to Serbia, according to the country's Minister of Agriculture, Gholamreza Nouri.

Nouri made this statement during a meeting on Wednesday with Serbia's Ambassador to Tehran, Demir Kovacevic. He emphasized the friendly relations between Iran and Serbia and the Iranian government's commitment to strengthening bilateral cooperation, particularly in the agricultural sector.

Nouri highlighted the importance of expanding joint agricultural research through experience sharing and collaborative projects between research institutions in both countries. He stressed the need for advancements in plant breeding and hybrid seeds.

Additionally, the Iranian minister noted that agricultural research cooperation could extend to plant protection, biological pest control, and fertilizer production technologies.

Nouri expressed hope that a Joint Agricultural Cooperation Committee between Iran and Serbia would be established soon to further enhance collaboration.

Ambassador Kovacevic also pointed to the ongoing bilateral negotiations for a free trade agreement between the two nations. He expressed optimism that signing such an agreement would significantly boost trade, particularly in agricultural products.

Furthermore, Kovacevic stated that Serbian research institutes are ready to cooperate with Iran in areas such as seed development, corn cultivation, and plant medicine.

This development signals a growing economic partnership between Iran and Serbia, particularly in the agricultural sector, with both sides looking forward to increased trade and research collaboration.

Isfahan Can Become Iran's Top Tourist Destination



TEHRAN - The Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts has stated that Isfahan has the potential to become the country's leading destination for tourism, history, and civilization, particularly in contemporary times, due to its extensive resources in these fields.

During the inauguration ceremony of 20 restoration and preservation projects at the historic Takht-e Foulad complex in Isfahan on Thursday, Minister Seyed Reza Salehi Amiri emphasized the importance of further introducing the city's deep-rooted heritage in books and academic institutions.

He highlighted the need to operationalize Isfahan's capacities, adding that experts at the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage are working not only on new excavations but also on uncovering previously overlooked aspects of the city's rich history.

The minister stressed the importance of education in strengthening national identity, stating that younger generations should have a better understanding of their historical and cultural geography. He recommended that university students be offered courses specifically focusing on the history and culture of Isfahan.

Salehi Amiri also pointed out that providing accurate historical education can enhance young people's sense of belonging to Iran, potentially reducing the inclination to migrate abroad.

Speaking about Takht-e Foulad, the minister described it as more than just a historical site, noting that it embodies various aspects of identity, character, jurisprudence, art, poetry, philosophy, wisdom, and mysticism.

He emphasized that this site, known as the "Second Wadi al-Salam", is among the most significant burial grounds for historical figures in Iran. He called for greater awareness and recognition of its distinguished personalities.

Salehi Amiri urged institutions such as schools, universities, seminaries, and cultural elites to play a more active role in introducing Iran's and Isfahan's historical treasures to the younger generation.

As part of his visit, the minister attended the completion ceremony of 20 restoration projects in Takht-e Foulad, including the full restoration of Takiyeh Kazerooni, which had suffered severe damage due to heavy rains in the late 2010s.

Alongside these restorations, development projects were also carried out, such as fortifying the surrounding walls, which both defined the site's boundaries and harmonized with its historical architecture.

Minister Salehi Amiri's visit to Isfahan coincided with the 46th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution, during which several cultural, tourism, and handicraft projects in the province were inaugurated.

Isfahan is home to over 22,000 historical sites, including 1,940 nationally registered landmarks and 15 UNESCO World Heritage sites. The province also boasts more than 600 historical houses, as well as diverse natural, cultural, religious, and recreational attractions, making it one of Iran's key tourism hubs.

FATF Not Iran's Main Banking Issue

TEHRAN - The ongoing tariff war between the United States and China may result in China reducing its restrictions on trade with Iran in retaliation for U.S. unilateral sanctions. This was highlighted by Majidreza Hariri, the head of the Iran-China Chamber of Commerce, in a recent interview.

Hariri emphasized that U.S. policies are designed to increase pressure on Iran. However, he pointed out that, so far, these pressures have been mostly theoretical rather than practical. He noted that Iran's strategies for circumventing sanctions and selling oil to China remain crucial in determining the real impact of the restrictions.

According to Hariri, signals from former U.S. President Donald Trump indicated a greater willingness to negotiate with Iran rather than simply applying pressure. However, he acknowledged that both pressure and negotiation serve as tools for both countries. He suggested that the U.S.-China tariff conflict might push China to be less stringent regarding U.S. sanctions on Iran, particularly concerning oil exports.

Since 2018, the method of transporting Iranian oil to China has changed. Previously, large Chinese refineries were Iran's primary customers, but after 2018, smaller refineries took over this role. The ongoing tariff dispute could, therefore, prevent further tightening of sanctions on Iranian oil exports to China.

Hariri discussed the possibility of negotiations between Iran and the U.S., stating that neither side has historically rejected sitting at the negotiation table. However, he noted that the U.S. has a poor track record of honoring agreements, while Iran has never unilaterally withdrawn from a deal. He also pointed out that Trump's unpredictable behavior complicates the negotiation process. Moreover, Iran and the U.S. perceive negotiations differently: Iran insists on negotiations based on dignity and national interest, while the U.S. prefers to pressure Iran into a weaker position before engaging in talks.

Addressing the influence of Trump's presidency on the BRICS alliance (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), Hariri dismissed the idea that BRICS was significantly affected by Trump. He pointed out that BRICS was established long before Trump



entered politics and will continue beyond his tenure. While Trump has vowed to prevent the weakening of the U.S. dollar, Hariri argued that BRICS members have not formally pursued a unified currency. He suggested that any serious steps toward a BRICS currency would not materialize before 2030, by which time Trump would no longer be a political figure of significance.

Discussing Iran's banking system, Hariri argued that the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is not the primary challenge for Iran's banking relations with the world. He stated that while FATF compliance is a necessary condition for integration into the global banking system, it is not a sufficient condition. The real issue, he claimed, is the impact of economic sanctions, which prevent Iranian banks from participating in international transactions regardless of FATF status.

Even if Iran were to comply fully with FATF regulations, Hariri maintained that the global banking system would still be reluctant to engage with Iranian banks due to sanctions. Moreover, even in a sanction-free scenario, structural weaknesses in Iran's banking system—including inadequate capital adequacy ratios, problematic balance sheets, and inefficient management—would deter foreign banks from partnering with Iranian institutions.

Hariri explained that FATF is an international financial watchdog that provides recommendations rather than mandates. Although FATF does not explicitly prohibit banks from working with Iran, it advises institutions to apply strict scrutiny when dealing with Iranian transactions. The fact that Iran has not signed agreements such as the Palermo Convention and the Countering the Financing of Terrorism (CFT) treaty has led global banks to take FATF's recommendations seriously, making it more difficult for Iran to engage in global financial markets.

While the U.S.-China tariff war could offer Iran some relief in trade with China, deeper structural issues continue to hinder Iran's banking sector. Hariri's insights suggest that while FATF compliance may be necessary for international banking integration, sanctions and internal financial weaknesses are the primary barriers preventing Iran from engaging effectively with the global financial system.

Iran Elected to UN TIR Executive Board for Fifth Consecutive Term



TEHRAN - The representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran has been elected to the United Nations TIR Executive Board for the fifth consecutive time following a competitive race among member states.

During the 85th session of the TIR Administrative Committee held in Geneva, Switzerland, on Wednesday, Mostafa Ayati, the representative of Iran's Customs Administration, secured his re-election through a unanimous vote of TIR Convention member states. This achievement was made possible through the joint efforts of Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Customs Administration, despite regional competition and international conditions.

The TIR Convention is one of the most important international frameworks for transit and transport of goods, offering global insurance coverage. It plays a crucial role in facilitating trade and transit worldwide. The convention has 78 members, including major global economies such as China, the European Union, the United States, India, and Russia. Iran's continued membership in the TIR Executive Board underscores the significance of this event for the country.

The TIR Executive Board is the key decision-making body of the convention, consisting of nine experts elected by member states for a two-year term.

Iran, after 47 years of membership in the TIR Convention, first secured a seat on the Executive Board in 2016 with the election of Mostafa Ayati. His active and effective participation has led to his re-election for a fifth consecutive term alongside representatives from the European Union, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Italy, Turkey, Kyrgyzstan, and Morocco.

Notably, one of the seats on the Executive Board remains vacant due to candidates failing to secure the required majority vote.

Iran is the world's second-largest user of TIR carnets, and its representation in this high-ranking UN-affiliated body is expected to enhance regional transit development. Given Iran's strategic geographic location within key East-West and North-South transit corridors, its active presence in international organizations provides valuable opportunities to expand regional trade and boost exports and transit services.

In recent years, Iran's Customs Administration has taken significant steps to advance transit and trade facilitation, including the implementation of electronic TIR projects with Turkey and Azerbaijan and the development of multimodal transport routes such as the Slovenia-Iran corridor and the KTAI corridor (India-Central Asia via Chabahar-Afghanistan).

War Crimes Prosecutor First Target of Trump's ICC Sanctions

HAGUE (Dispatches) - International Criminal Court Prosecutor Karim Khan is the first person to be hit with economic and travel sanctions authorized by U.S. President Donald Trump that target the war crimes tribunal over investigations of U.S. citizens or U.S. allies, two sources briefed on the matter told Reuters on Friday.

Khan, who is British, was named on Friday in an annex - not yet made public - to an executive order signed by Trump a day earlier, a senior ICC official and another source, both briefed by U.S. government officials, told Reuters. They spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss a confidential matter.



North Korea Says Its Nuclear Weapons Not a Bargaining Chip



SEOUL (Dispatches) - North Korea said its nuclear weapons are not meant for negotiations but are intended for combat use against enemies that threaten its people and world peace, its state media reported.

The statement comes after US President Donald Trump hosted Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba at the White House yesterday. The two leaders expressed their commitment to ensuring North Korea ends its nuclear weapons program.

KCNA did not mention the meeting between the US and Japanese leaders but instead cited reported comments by officials of NATO and the EU that reiterated demands for a complete denuclearisation of North Korea.

"We say this clearly again: our nuclear weapons are not an advertisement to get anyone's recognition and even less a bargaining chip to be exchanged for some money," KCNA said in a statement.

"Our nuclear forces are for unwavering combat use to swiftly eliminate any attempts by enemy forces that infringe on our country's sovereignty and the safety of our people and threaten world peace," it said.

North Korea has not responded directly to overtures from Trump to resume contact with its leader Kim Jong Un and instead stressed its intention to "bolster" its nuclear forces.

Trump said he "will have relations with North Korea and with Kim Jong Un," adding he had a good rapport with Kim. The two held unprecedented summit meetings during Trump's first presidency.

On Jan 20 when he was inaugurated for his second term, Trump said the North was a "nuclear power," raising questions whether he would pursue arms reduction talks rather than denuclearisation negotiations.

"The two leaders expressed their serious concerns over and the need to address North Korea's nuclear and missile programs and reaffirmed their resolute commitment to the complete denuclearization of North Korea," a joint statement by Trump and Ishiba issued after their talks said.

Sweden to Tighten Gun Laws After Mass Shooting at School



OREBRO (Dispatches) - Sweden's right-wing government said on Friday it would seek to tighten gun laws in the wake of the country's deadliest mass shooting at an adult education center where the attacker appeared to have used several of his own licensed rifles.

Ten people were shot dead at the Campus Risbergska school in Orebro on Tuesday, before the man believed to be the perpetrator - identified by a Reuters source and Swedish media as Rickard Andersson, a 35-year-old Swedish recluse - turned a weapon on himself.

Police confirmed on Friday that the suspected shooter was a 35-year-old man, and said they had completed the identification of all the victims, although they did not release any names.

Seven women and four men between 28 and 68 years of age died in Tuesday's attack, including the suspect, police said in a statement.

Among the victims were several Christians who fled persecution in Syria. Police say they have found no evidence of an ideological motive so far.

Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson said the event had sparked fear and a sense of vulnerability among many people with immigrant backgrounds in Sweden, calling for everyone to "unite and stand behind all that we hold dear together".

"My thoughts are with the relatives who have now received the call that is the worst one can get. To you, I want to say: you are not alone. We stand beside you," he said in a social media post on Friday evening.

The government has agreed with its far-right backers in parliament to tighten up the vetting process for people applying for gun licences and to clamp down on some semi-automatic weapons.

Hamas, Israel to Begin Fifth Hostage-Prisoner Exchange



GAZA (Dispatches) - Hamas is set to release three Israeli hostages in exchange for 183 prisoners held by Israel in the fifth exchange of a fragile Gaza ceasefire.

The exchange comes despite uproar in the region over a proposal by US President Donald Trump to clear out the Gaza Strip of its inhabitants and for the United States to take over the Palestinian territory.

The office of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu confirmed to AFP it had received a list of hostages for release from Gaza after Hamas published three names of captives to be freed.

The three men set to be released today are Eli Sharabi, Or Levy and Ohad Ben Ami, according to Hamas. Their names were confirmed by Netanyahu's office.

Former hostage Yarden Bibas, who was freed last week by Hamas militants in Gaza, yesterday urged Netanyahu to help bring back his wife and two children from the Palestinian territory.

"Prime Minister Netanyahu, I'm now addressing you with my own words... bring my family back, bring my friends back, bring everyone home," Bibas said in his first public message following his release.

Hamas previously said his wife Shiri and his two sons Ariel and Kfir — the youngest hostages — were dead, but Israel has not confirmed their deaths.

Netanyahu, who is in Washington, will "monitor this phase of the hostages' release from the control centre of the delegation in the US", the premier's office said in a separate statement.

The Hostage and Missing Families Forum urged the government yesterday to stick with the Gaza truce, even as Trump's

comments sparked uproar across the Middle East and beyond.

"An entire nation demands to see the hostages return home," the Israeli campaign group said in a statement.

"Now is the time to ensure the agreement is completed — until the very last one," it added.

Israel and Hamas have completed four swaps under the first stage of the ceasefire agreement.

Palestinian militants, led by Hamas, have so far freed 18 hostages in exchange for around 600 mostly Palestinian prisoners released from Israeli jails.

The ceasefire, mediated by Qatar, Egypt and the United States, aims to secure the release of 33 hostages during the first 42-day phase of the agreement.

Negotiations on the second stage of the ceasefire were set to begin on Monday, but there have been no details on the status of the talks.

The second stage aims to secure the release of more hostages and pave the way for a permanent end to the war, which began on Oct 7, 2023 with Hamas's unprecedented attack on Israel.

During the attack, militants took 251 hostages to Gaza. Seventy-six remain in captivity, including 34 whom the Israeli military says are dead.

Israel's retaliation has killed at least 47,583 people in Gaza, the majority civilians, according to the Hamas-run territory's health ministry. The United Nations considers the figures reliable.

Zelenskiy Offering Trump Mineral Partnership, Seeking Security

KYIV (Dispatches) - Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy pored over a once-classified map of vast deposits of rare earths and other critical minerals during an interview with Reuters on Friday, part of a push to appeal to Donald Trump's penchant for a deal.

The U.S. president, whose administration is pressing for a rapid end to Ukraine's war with Russia, said on Monday he wanted Ukraine to supply the U.S. with rare earths and other minerals in return for financially supporting its war effort.

"If we are talking about a deal, then let's do a deal, we are only for it," Zelenskiy said, emphasizing Ukraine's need for security guarantees from its allies as part of any settlement.

Ukraine floated the idea of opening its critical minerals to investment by allies last autumn, as it presented a "victory plan" that sought to put it in the strongest position for talks and force Moscow to the table.

Zelenskiy said less than 20% of Ukraine's mineral resources, including about half its rare earth deposits, were under Russian occupation.

Rare earths are important in the manufacture of high-performance magnets, electric motors and consumer electronics; Zelenskiy said Moscow could open those resources to its allies North Korea and Iran, both sworn U.S. enemies.

"We need to stop Putin and protect what we have - a very rich Dnipro region, central Ukraine," he said.

Russian troops have been gaining ground in the east for months, throwing huge resources into an unrelenting offensive while Kyiv's much smaller army grapples with a shortage of soldiers and frets over future weapons supplies from abroad.

Zelenskiy unfurled a map on a table in the heavily-defended president's office in Kyiv, showing numerous mineral deposits, including a broad strip of land in the east marked as containing rare earths. Around half of it looked to be on Russia's side of the current frontlines.

He said Ukraine had Europe's largest reserves of titanium, essential for the aviation and space industry, and uranium, used for nuclear energy and weapons. Many of the titanium deposits were marked in northwestern Ukraine, far from



the fighting.

Ukraine has rapidly retuned its foreign policy approach to align with the transactional world view set out by the new occupant of the White House, Zelenskiy's most important ally.

But Zelenskiy emphasised that Kyiv was not proposing "giving away" its resources, but offering a mutually beneficial partnership to develop them jointly.

"The Americans helped the most, and therefore the Americans should earn the most. And they should have this priority, and they will. I would also like to talk about this with President Trump."

He said Russia knew in detail where Ukraine's critical resources were from Soviet-era geological surveys that had been taken back to Moscow when Kyiv gained independence in 1991.

In addition, Zelenskiy said Kyiv and the White House were discussing the idea of using Ukraine's vast underground gas storage sites to store U.S. liquefied natural gas.

"I know that the Trump administration is very interested in it ... We're ready

and willing to have contracts for LNG supplies to Ukraine. And of course, we will be a hub for the whole of Europe," he said.

The interview comes days before the February 14-16 Munich Security Conference, where officials from dozens of Western countries will converge at an unpredictable juncture in the nearly three-year-old war.

Zelenskiy said he planned to attend the forum, where Keith Kellogg, Trump's special envoy for Russia and Ukraine, is also expected.

The Ukrainian leader said it was essential that he met Trump in person before the U.S. president meets Russian President Vladimir Putin, "otherwise it will look like a dialogue about Ukraine without Ukraine".

Trump said on Friday that he expected to talk to Zelenskiy next week. Zelenskiy said his own priority would be raising Ukraine's need for security guarantees as part of any deal, to prevent Russia launching another invasion in the future.

In general though, it was vital the West determined a broad strategy before entering into talks with Moscow.

He said there were already regular contacts between his team and Kellogg and Trump national security adviser Michael Waltz.

"Every day we have contacts, we talk about general things, but the specifics will come a little later," he said.

Trump's peace push comes as advancing Russian forces threaten the major Ukrainian logistics hub of Pokrovsk.

On the battlefield, Zelenskiy confirmed for the first time that his troops had launched a new offensive on Thursday, advancing 2.5 km (1.5 miles) further into Russia's Kursk region.

Russia had reported a Ukrainian attack in the area that day, but said it was repelled.

Zelenskiy said thousands of North Korean troops fighting on Russia's side had now returned to active combat against Kyiv's forces in Kursk after a pause of several weeks.

Next week, the government intends to launch lucrative recruitment contracts to entice young men aged 18-24 - below draft age - into the armed forces to help ease a manpower shortage. Zelenskiy declined to say how many men were expected to sign up.

Trudeau Says Trump Talk of Absorbing Canada Is a Real Thing

TORONTO (Dispatches) - Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on Friday said U.S. President Donald Trump's talk about absorbing Canada "is a real thing" and is linked to the country's rich natural resources, a government source said.

Trudeau made the remarks during a closed-door session of business and labor leaders on how best to respond to Trump's threats of tariffs on Canadian imports.

His comments were first reported by the Toronto Star, which said they were mistakenly carried by a loudspeaker.

Trump has repeatedly suggested Canada would be better off if it agreed to become the 51st U.S. state.

"They're very aware of our resources, of what we have and they very much want to be able to benefit from those," the Star quoted Trudeau as saying.

"But Mr. Trump has it in mind that one of the easiest ways of doing that is absorbing our country. And it is a real thing."

The government source confirmed that the Star's account of the remarks was accurate. Canada, seeking to fend off U.S. measures, has stressed it is a trusted partner and a major supplier of oil, minerals and other natural resources.

In remarks open to reporters, Trudeau had earlier said Canada could face long-term political challenges with the United States even if it manages to avert Trump's threat of tariffs.

Trump on Monday said he would delay the imposition of tariffs on Canadian exports



by 30 days in return for concessions on border and crime enforcement, in particular cracking down on fentanyl smuggling.

Trudeau said Ottawa's immediate challenge was to persuade Washington that Canada was doing all it could to combat the flow of fentanyl. Public data shows 0.2% of all the supply of the drug seized in the U.S. comes from the Canadian border.

If tariffs were imposed, Canada would respond in kind, but its goal would always be to have the measures removed as fast as possible, Trudeau told business and labor leaders at the start of the meeting on how to diversify trade and boost the economy.

"The strategic reflection we have to have right now is ... how we get through, and thrive, and grow stronger over the next four years and into what may be a more challenging long-term political situation with the United States?" he said.

Peter Navarro, a senior Trump trade adviser, this week said Canada had become a leading source of small, duty-free shipments of drugs, also had "big" visa issues and had let people on the "terrorism watch list" enter the United States.

Canada sends 75% of all goods and services exports south of the border, making it highly vulnerable to U.S. sanctions.

Trudeau, echoing long-standing complaints from the business community, said internal trade barriers between the 10 provinces were hampering the economy.

"This is one of those moments and opportunities where ... there's a window open because of the context we're in. We have to jump through it," he said.



Alcaraz Eases Into Rotterdam Semis

ROTTERDAM (Dispatches) - Top seed Carlos Alcaraz of Spain and No. 8 seed Hubert Hurkacz of Poland will clash in the ABN Amro Open semifinals on Saturday after both posted victories in Rotterdam, Netherlands.

Alcaraz, ranked No. 3 in the world, dismissed unseeded countryman Pedro Martinez 6-2, 6-1, while he took Hurkacz -- ranked No. 21 in the world -- nearly 2 1/2 hours to defeat No. 4 seed Andrey Rublev of Russia 6-7(5), 6-3, 6-4.

Alcaraz out-aced his opponent 7-0 and won 91 percent (21 of 23) of his first-serve points. Hurkacz posted 17 aces to Rublev's five, and saving four of the five break points on his serve.

The other semifinal match will pit No. 3 seed Alex de Minaur of Australia against Italian qualifier Mattia Bellucci. de Minaur disposed of Germany's Daniel Altmaier 6-1, 6-4, on Friday, while Bellucci continued his impressive run with a 6-4, 6-2 victory over sixth-seeded Stefanos Tsitsipas of Greece.

De Minaur didn't produce an ace, but the No. 8 player in the world saved four of five break points while winning 77 percent (20 of 26) of his first-serve points. Bellucci, ranked No. 92, served up five aces and saved all four break points en route to his first ATP Tour semifinal.

Meanwhile no. 2 seed Casper Ruud of Norway advanced to his first Dallas semifinal, when Japan's Yoshihito Nishioka retired due to a shoulder injury.

Ruud, ranked No. 5 in the world, led 7-5, 3-2 when Nishioka halted the match.

Ruud will oppose Jaume Munar in the semifinals after the Spaniard upset No. 8 seed Matteo Arnaldi of Italy 6-4, 3-6, 6-3. Munar saved four of five break points and won 75 percent (43 of 57) of his first-serve points, including 93 percent (14 of 15) in the decisive third set.

In evening action, third-seeded Tommy Paul (the defending champion) opposed Reilly Opelka in an all-

U.S. match, and sixth-seeded Tomas Machac of the Czech Republic was set to meet Canada's Denis Shapovalov.

Meanwhile American Ashlyn Krueger will go for her second career WTA title at the Mubadala Abu Dhabi Open after she took down Czech opponent Linda Noskova 7-6 (2), 6-4 in the semifinals.

The 20-year-old Krueger will face Switzerland's Belinda Bencic, who rallied to upset No. 1 seed Elena Rybakina of Kazakhstan 3-6, 6-3, 6-4.

Krueger, ranked No. 51 in the world, saved four of six break points against Noskova and won 43 of her 59 first-serve points (72.9 percent). In her only other finals appearance on tour, she won the 2023 Japan Women's Open; that was a WTA 250-level event, while Abu Dhabi is in the more prestigious WTA 500 tier.

Rybakina saved nine of 13 break points, as well as three match points, but it wasn't enough to stave off Bencic, who took control of the second set by winning the first three games and pulled away midway through the third.

Meanwhile Aliaksandra Sasnovich of Belarus charged back to stun No. 4 seed Anhelina Kalinina of Ukraine 2-6, 6-4, 7-6 (3) in the quarterfinals in Cluj-Napoca, Romania.

Kalinina held the advantage in most major statistics, including aces (4-0), break points saved (12 of 18) and break points converted (seven of nine). But Sasnovich charged back from a 5-3 third-set deficit to force a tiebreaker, and after falling behind 3-1, she ripped off six straight points for the upset.

Her reward is to face No. 1 seed Anastasia Potapova of Russia in the semis after Potapova beat Germany's Ella Seidel 6-2, 6-3. Czech fifth seed Katerina Siniakova defeated Bulgaria's Viktoriya Tomova 6-3, 7-6 (7), and Lucia Bronzetti toppled No. 7 seed Elisabetta Cocciaretto 6-1, 6-4 in an all-Italian battle.

Kane Hits Brace as Bayern Beat Bremen



MUNICH (Dispatches) - Harry Kane said he was still "improving" after scoring two penalties as Bayern Munich beat Werder Bremen 3-0 to go nine points clear of Bayer Leverkusen in the Bundesliga.

There were few chances in the first half but Kane signalled his intent 30 seconds after the break, rattling the crossbar with a shot from outside the box.

Kane was key in winning Bayern's first penalty and breaking Bremen's stubborn resistance.

The England captain tussled with defender Anthony Young and headed a chipped cross unsighted against the Bremen man's arm, which was slightly extended.

The England captain stepped up and converted the spot kick, sending goalkeeper Michael Zetterer the wrong way.

Leroy Sane tapped in a Konrad Laimer cross from close range for Bayern's second in the 82nd minute.

In stoppage time, Young was again at fault and penalised for a foul on Jamal Musiala.

Kane stepped up and converted, bringing his penalty streak to 29 in a row for club and country.

The former Spurs striker has 21 goals in 19 league games for Bayern this season, including nine penalties.

Despite his remarkable record, Kane, 31, told DAZN he was still improving.

"I had a couple of other chances which could've gone my way, if I was a bit more ruthless, but there's still room for improvement, with the left foot especially," he said.

He added: "Throughout the season there's going to be tight games like tonight and you need moments to break through."

"As a striker, I take the responsibility to break the deadlock and get the 1-0."

Bayern coach Vincent Kompany praised Kane's work ethic.

"I see everything he does, not just in games but at training. It's not luck, he works very, very hard on it," the coach told DAZN.

Defending champions Leverkusen travel to Wolfsburg on Saturday and can cut Bayern's lead back to six points with a win.

Bayern play away at Leverkusen next week in a match bookended by a two-legged Champions League knockout tie against Celtic.

Down 21 in 2nd Half, Hawks Storm Past Bucks

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Mouhamed Gueye had his first career double-double to lead the short-handed Atlanta Hawks to a 115-110 win over the visiting Milwaukee Bucks.

Gueye got a chance to play extended minutes since none of the four players Atlanta added at the trade deadline were available. Gueye scored a season-high 15 points along with career highs in rebounds (12) and blocks (four) to help the Hawks overcome a 21-point second-half deficit.

Gueye had two free throws and a dunk during a 6-0 stretch late in the fourth quarter that gave the Hawks a 112-105 lead with 1:49 left. Losing for the fifth time in six games, Milwaukee never got closer than four points.

Atlanta leads the season series 2-1. The teams play again in Atlanta on March 4.

Atlanta's Trae Young added 24 points and seven assists and came up with a key steal with 34 seconds left. Dyson Daniels added 15 points and 10 assists, Onyeka Okongwu had 14 points and 12 rebounds and Vit Krejci contributed 11 points and 10 boards.

The Bucks played without two-time MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo (left calf tightness) for the third straight game. They were led by Bobby Portis with 26 points and 15 rebounds and Damian Lillard with 23 points, nine rebounds and 10 assists. Gary Trent came off the bench to make five 3s and score 19. Kyle Kuzma had 12 points and seven rebounds in his Milwaukee debut.

The Hawks shot 52 percent from the field in the first quarter and took a 36-26 lead. Atlanta led 41-29 after Young's 3-pointer at 10:02,



only to have the Bucks outscore them 44-14 to take a 73-55 halftime lead.

Milwaukee led 76-55 in the third when the Hawks rode a 33-12 run to tie the game at 88-all. Atlanta regained the lead on Gueye's turnaround at 1:09 and took a 92-90 lead into the fourth quarter.

Both teams complete a back-to-back on Saturday. Atlanta begins a three-game road trip at the Washington Wizards, while Milwaukee returns home to play the Philadelphia 76ers.

Meanwhile Donovan Mitchell scored a team-high 33 points, helping the visiting Cleveland Cavaliers earn a 134-124 win over the Washington Wizards.

Evan Mobley had 27 points, Darius Garland added 23 and Max Strus scored 17 as the Cavaliers recorded their sixth victory in seven

tries. Ty Jerome scored 13 off the bench, while Jarrett Allen collected 12 points and 12 rebounds.

Despite Jordan Poole's career-high 45 points, the Wizards saw their season-best three-game winning streak come to an end. Kyshawn George scored 17, Bilal Coulibaly chipped in 16, Bub Carrington added 13 and Richaun Holmes tallied 12 points and 12 boards in the loss.

After trailing 67-64 at halftime, Cleveland opened the third quarter with an 8-2 spurt, taking a four-point lead on Garland's 3-pointer.

With 7:16 left in the third, Poole's layup gave the Wizards a 77-76 lead, but Jerome's trey and Garland's floater put Cleveland up 81-77. Mitchell's floater with 3.1 seconds left in the third gave the Cavaliers a 94-93 edge entering the final quarter.

Mitchell scored the first five points of the fourth before Jerome's basket stamped a 7-0 run to give the Cavaliers a 101-93 advantage. Later in the fourth, Poole's four straight points pulled Washington within five, but Garland's 3-pointer began a 7-2 spurt as Cleveland pushed its edge to 122-112 with 5:13 to go.

Poole's free throws trimmed Washington's deficit to eight with 3:38 remaining, but Strus' 3-pointer started an 8-0 run that helped Cleveland ice the game.

The Cavaliers led 35-33 after the first quarter thanks to 52.4 percent shooting from the field, despite Coulibaly's 12 first-quarter points.

Maguire Strikes Late as Man United Beat Leicester in FA Cup

MANCHESTER (Dispatches) - Harry Maguire headed a last-gasp winner as FA Cup holders Manchester United came from behind to beat Leicester 2-1, denying Ruud van Nistelrooy a fairytale return to Old Trafford.

Bobby De Cordova-Reid put the Premier League strugglers ahead late in the first half of the fourth-round tie against a pallid United, who have lost their fear factor at home.

But the introduction of Alejandro Garnacho at half-time gave United a different dimension and fellow substitute Joshua Zirkzee levelled midway through the second period.

Ruben Amorim's team pushed for a winner and it finally came when former Leicester defender Maguire headed in a Bruno Fernandes' free-kick deep into stoppage time.

The Portuguese manager, who is struggling to implement his ideas at Old Trafford three months into his reign, said it was a "poor performance" from his side.

"We didn't have any energy in the beginning, especially in the first half," he told ITV. "Then in the second half we played a little bit better, with a little more speed, winning second balls."

"Then we managed to turn things around so it was a good result but not a good performance."

"The coach is the first responsible. When one team doesn't perform, doesn't improve, it is the coach but we are here to do things and to see the game, to study the game and try to improve."



United scored eight goals in two games against Leicester earlier in the campaign during Van Nistelrooy's brief spell as interim boss at Old Trafford following the sacking of Erik ten Hag.

But this time their former star striker was in the opposition dugout. United, who beat Manchester City in the final at Wembley last May, were short of confidence after five defeats in their past seven matches at home in all competitions.

The home side were tepid in attack in the early stages but Leicester's Jordan Ayew tested Andre Onana at the other end.

Leicester, the 2021 FA Cup winners, gave the Old Trafford crowd a familiar sinking feeling in the 42nd minute.

Manuel Ugarte gave the ball away near the left touchline and Bilal El Khannouss got to the byline before pulling the ball back to Wilfred Ndidi.

Onana saved Ndidi's shot with his feet but De Cordova-Reid nodded home from close range.

Cordova's trapezoid off at half-time to a chorus of boos after failing to manage a shot on target.

Amorim brought on Garnacho at half-time for debutant Patrick Dorgu in a desperate search for inspiration and the Argentina international immediately menaced the Leicester defence.

United's equaliser came after fine work from the lively Garnacho down the left.

Rasmus Hojlund's flick from Garnacho's cross was blocked but Zirkzee tapped into an empty net for just his fifth goal of the season.

United looked the more likely to find a winner but it did not arrive until the 93rd minute, when Maguire headed home from Fernandes' free-kick.

The England defender appeared to be offside but there was no VAR. Van Nistelrooy was angry that off-side flag was not raised.

"We deserved to go into extra time, go for the battle in extra time and maybe penalties," he said.

Global January Football Transfers Hit All-Time High of \$2.35b in 2025



GENEVA (Dispatches) - Clubs worldwide spent a record \$2.35b on international transfers in men's football in the January window, nearly a 58 per cent increase from last year, world football's governing body FIFA said in a study published on Friday.

According to FIFA's International Transfer Snapshot, the amount is also 47.1 percent higher than the previous record set in January 2023 when there was a total outlay of \$1.57b.

With 5,863 international transfers taking place between January 1 and February 4, it also marks a 19.1 per cent increase from last year's record for the highest number of players making moves in the January window.

English clubs topped the table for spending on international transfer fees last month, spending \$621.6m in total.

Reigning Premier League champions Manchester City alone spent over \$224m to sign Omar Marmoush, Nico Gonzalez, Abdulkodir Khusanov, Vitor Reis and Juma Bah.

But the most expensive player signed in January was Colombian forward Jhon Duran, who moved from Aston Villa to Saudi Arabian club Al-Nassr for around €77m plus add-ons.

FIFA said Germany (\$295.7m), Italy (\$223.8m), France (\$209.7m) and Saudi Arabia (\$202.1m) completed the list of the top five countries for their clubs' January spending.

On the other hand, clubs in France received the highest amount in transfer fees at \$371m, followed by clubs in Germany (\$226.2m), England (\$185.2m), Portugal (\$176.4m) and Italy (\$162m).

Brazil had the most incoming international transfers (471) while Argentina had the highest number of outgoing players (255).

Women's football also had a record \$5.8m spent on transfer fees in January, which represents a whopping 180.6 per cent increase on the previous record after 455 international transfers were made.

English clubs led the way in women's football too, with \$2.3m being spent on players, while they also made the most incoming international transfers with 39 signings.