

CEO of Iran's National Petrochemical Company (NPC), Hassan Abbaszadeh, Says That the Country Will Put Out Another 14 Gas Flares in Its Oil-Rich Southwest Until Late March

IRAN NEWS

Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Ali Akbar Ahmadian Says the Islamic Republic Will Continue Its Support for the Resistance Front Until Its Ultimate Victory in Palestine and Lebanon

VOL. XXIX, No. 8201 TEHRAN Price 50,000 Rials

www.irannewsdaily.com

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 11, 2025 BAHMAN 23, 1403

2 DOMESTIC



Iran's Oil Exports Will Not Stop

> SEE PAGE 2

3 INTERNATIONAL

Trump to Impose 25% Tariffs on All Steel, Aluminum Imports



> SEE PAGE 3

Iran Urges World to Oppose Dangerous U.S.-Israeli Plot



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's foreign minister has strongly condemned the U.S.-Israeli plot of ethnically cleansing Palestinians from Gaza, and expelling them from the war-ravaged besieged territory, calling on the international community to vigorously oppose the ploy.

Abbas Araqchi made the remark in a Sunday phone conversation with Gambia's Foreign Minister Mamadou Tangara, whose country currently holds the rotating presidency of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

Araqchi censured the "dangerous, criminal and inhuman" plan which "runs counter to all international principles and regulations."

Pointing to his talks with the OIC secretary general and his counterparts from Arab and Muslim countries, the top Iranian diplomat called on Gambia to make efforts to hold an emergency meeting of the organization's foreign ministers to address the issue.

During a meeting with Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Thursday, US President Donald Trump announced his plan to seize the Palestinian region of Gaza and evict its natives from their homeland.

Trump's plan also included the people of Gaza being forcibly relocated to Egypt and Jordan, despite the fact that both countries have officially rejected the scheme.

The Gambian foreign minister, for his part, hailed Iran's attention to the Palestinian issue and welcomed the country's proposal for an emergency meeting of the foreign ministers of the OIC member countries.

Tangara added that he will consult and coordinate with other OIC member countries in this regard.

Earlier Araqchi has said Israel failed to achieve its goals in the 15-month-long genocidal war on Gaza.

Araqchi said the Israeli regime was finally forced to sit for talks and come to an agreement with the same movement it was seeking to annihilate.

He was speaking at a meeting with members of the leadership council of the Hamas resistance movement.

He said Hamas managed to compel the enemy to accept a ceasefire based on conditions laid out by the resistance.

Iran Embassy in London Rejects Telegraph's "Lies"



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's Embassy in London has firmly rejected the unfounded allegations made by the British daily Telegraph, asserting that Iran's nuclear program is entirely peaceful and that nuclear weapons have "no place" in its defense doctrine.

The embassy issued a statement on Sunday following a Telegraph article that claimed Iranian military commanders had privately urged the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, to revoke his fatwa (religious decree) banning the production of nuclear weapons.

Describing the allegations as "beyond absurdity," the embassy characterized the report as part of a broader disinformation campaign against the Islamic Republic.

"The Telegraph has turned itself into an apparatus for a malign disinformation campaign against Iran," the statement read, which was posted on the social media platform X.

The Telegraph has turned itself into an apparatus for a malign disinformation campaign against Iran.

"We reject all the claims and accusations it has disseminated on Iran's nuclear programme throughout the past month, including the one published yesterday which is truly beyond absurdity," it added.

Reiterating the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear activities, the embassy noted, "Iran's nuclear program is absolutely peaceful and is part of Iran's national plan for scientific, technological, and industrial development."

"WMDs (weapons of mass destruction), in particular nuclear weapons, have no place in our defense doctrine and are prohibited under our religious beliefs and national values," it stated.

Iranians Mark 46th Anniversary of Islamic Revolution With Nationwide Rallies

TEHRAN - In a display of national unity and unwavering revolutionary spirit, millions of Iranians from all walks of life have taken to the streets across the country to commemorate the 46th anniversary of the victory of the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

The various commemoration events and celebrations, which were held on Monday, were imbued with fervor and patriotic zeal, showcasing the deep-rooted allegiance of the Iranian people to the values and principles that shaped the Islamic Republic following the Revolution's victory.

From the sprawling metropolis of Tehran to the remotest villages, citizens participated in mass marches, carrying banners, waving the national flag, and chanting slogans echoing the indelible legacy of the Revolution that overthrew the United States-backed tyrannical Pahlavi monarchy.

The waves of demonstrators converged on iconic spots, such as the capital's Azadi Square and Enqelab Square, filling the air with resounding chants of "Death to America" and "Death to Israel," reiterating Iran's steadfast opposition to foreign interference, imperialist hegemony, and Western-backed occupation and aggression.

Senior officials, including President Masoud Pezeshkian as well as military and religious figures, addressed the nation on the occasion that marks drawn-out religious fervor and struggle on the part of Iranians against the Pahlavi regime under the guidance of the revered late founder of the Islamic Republic, Imam Khomeini.

The addresses underscored, among other things, the country's unwavering support for oppressed nations, particularly the peoples of Palestine, Yemen, and Lebanon, in line with the Revolution's overall anti-imperialist vision.

Across various cities, students, religious scholars, and families of martyrs, who gave their lives towards enabling the Revolution's victory or its preservation, paid homage to the sacrifices that were made in defense of the development, while reaffirming their unshakable commitment to Imam Khomeini's ideals.

Observers say the victory of the Revolution on February 11, 1979 marked the dawn of a new era in Iran's history, one that dismantled decades of Western-backed deadly oppression and replaced it with a ruling structure rooted in Islamic principles and popular sovereignty.

They say the Revolution remains a beacon of defiance against global arrogance, serving as an inspiration to oppressed nations worldwide.

Addressing participants at the rally at Azadi Square, President Pezeshkian said the Islamic



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

Republic will strive to thwart all plots hatched by the enemies.

He criticized U.S. President Donald Trump's recent claim that he wishes to hold talks with Iran while simultaneously issuing a presidential memorandum that instructs the U.S. Treasury and State Department to implement a campaign aimed at "driving Iran's oil exports to zero."

"Trump says let's have a dialogue, and then ... he signs and announces all possible conspiracies to bring the [Islamic] Revolution to its knees," the president said.

Trump claims that Iran is disrupting regional security but "it is Israel that, with the support of the United States, is the root cause of insecurity and bombs the oppressed people of Gaza, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, Iran and wherever it wishes," he added.

The U.S. president claims to defend peace and tranquility but he defends a criminal who has been convicted by international organizations, Pezeshkian said, referring to Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Pezeshkian warned that the enemies and ill-wishers seek to sow discord in Iran and instill the belief of Iran's weakness in the minds of the people and pretend that today is "the best time to harm the country."

"However, they are unaware that, under the leadership of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei and with the constant presence and sacrifices of the [Iranian] people, they will bring all these dreams and wishes to grave," he emphasized.

He said Iran has powerfully resisted bullying and will stand up to conspiracies aimed at sowing discord and division.

Pezeshkian said Iran has never sought to wage a war against any country and would never bow to the enemies.

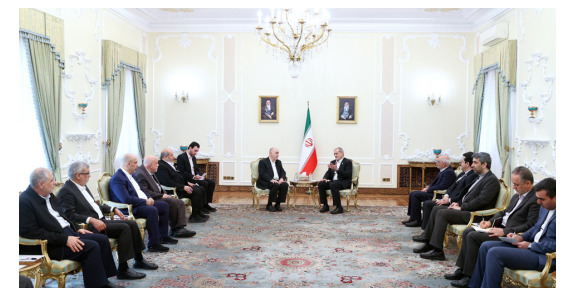
He added that the enemies are afraid of Iran's unity and coherence, noting that Iranians would be able to solve all of the problems if they forge national unity.

Iran would never allow enemies to implement their ominous objectives, the president asserted.

He reiterated Iran's resolve to have peaceful coexistence with its neighbors based on fraternity and mutual respect.

"If we defend Gaza and Palestine, we are defending the oppressed. If you seek [to promote] peace in the region, do not defend oppression, aggression and injustice," he said.

Resistance Front Will Definitely Achieve Final Victory



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian says the Islamic Republic is certain that the resistance front will achieve an ultimate victory in the face of enemies.

Pezeshkian made the remark in a meeting with Hamas Shura Council chairman Muhammad Ismail Darwish, acting Hamas leader Khalil al-Hayya, and other members of the group's political bureau in Tehran.

He said Iran would continue to support the resistance front and the oppressed people of Palestine in the Gaza Strip.

He stressed the need to form an international coalition, particularly with the participation of Muslim countries, to help the people of Gaza and reconstruct the war-ravaged strip.

"Certainly, Muslim countries will be able to rebuild Gaza in cooperation with each other and to restore life to the Muslim people of this region," Pezeshkian said.

He cherished the memory of all martyrs of the resistance front and expressed his congratulations on the valuable achievements made by Hamas and the oppressed and resilient people of Gaza in thwarting the Israeli regime's goals despite the high number of martyrs.

Israel's genocidal war on Gaza has resulted in the death of at least 48,181 Palestinians, mostly women and children, and injury of 111,638 others since early October 2023.

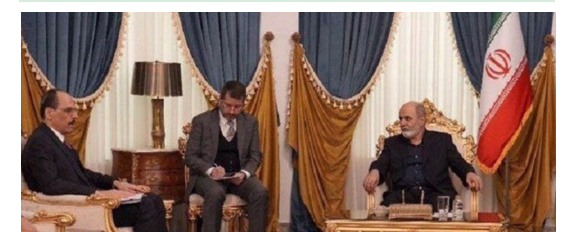
A ceasefire and prisoner exchange agreement went into effect in Gaza on January 19, halting Israel's aggressive campaign against the coastal region.

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.

A member of the Hamas delegation said the recent claims by the United States and the Israeli regime regarding the future of Gaza have no value.

Iranian Officials, Turkish Intelligence Chief Meet



TEHRAN (PressTV) - The visiting head of the Turkish Intelligence Organization, Ibrahim Kalin, has met Iranian officials in Tehran to discuss the latest developments in the region and the fight against terrorism.

Kalin on Saturday met with Iran's Intelligence Minister Esmail Khatib and Secretary of Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Ali Akbar Ahmadian.

The discussions mainly focused on combating terrorism, particularly the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) militant group and Daesh terrorist group, addressing common threats, the situation in Syria, the Gaza ceasefire, and developments related to the Palestinian issue.

The two sides emphasized that Tehran and Ankara have close and fraternal relations and share stances on many issues.

Meanwhile, in a phone call on Saturday, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and his Turkish counterpart, Hakan Fidan, discussed regional issues, particularly the latest developments in the occupied Palestinian territories and mutual relations.

Araqchi said several countries strongly oppose the forced displacement of Palestinians from Gaza, adding that the plot would be a continuation of the Israeli regime's genocide in Palestine.

He urged Muslim countries to adopt a "firm and unified" stance to counter the plan and called for an immediate meeting of the foreign ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to address the issue.

The top Iranian diplomat also hailed good ties with Turkey and stressed the importance of holding constant consultations between the two countries in a bid to expand relations in various fields.

The Turkish foreign minister, for his part, said the two countries should bolster cooperation in all areas of mutual interest.

Fidan also stressed the need for continued support by all Muslim countries for the rights of the Palestinian people and welcomed the proposal by the Iranian foreign minister to hold an OIC emergency meeting.

Iran to Unveil Supersonic Cruise Missile With 2,000 km Range

TEHRAN - The commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy says the Islamic Republic is to soon unveil a domestically developed supersonic cruise missile with a range of 2,000 kilometers (1,242 miles), further solidifying the country's advanced military capabilities in naval defense.

The new projectile, set to be unveiled during the next Persian calendar year -- which will start on March 20 -- would significantly enhance Iran's deterrence capabilities, Rear Admiral Alireza Tangsiri said on Sunday, detailing the latest advancements in the country's naval power.

"We now have missiles that can be launched from the depths of the Iranian territory, eliminating the need for coastal launches," the commander stated, speaking during a special televised program titled Fajr (Dawn) of Hope: Powerful Iran, aired on the eve of the 46th anniversary of the historic victory of the country's 1979 Islamic Revolution.

"With these advancements, we can strike targets in the Sea of Oman directly from the northern [part of the] Persian Gulf."

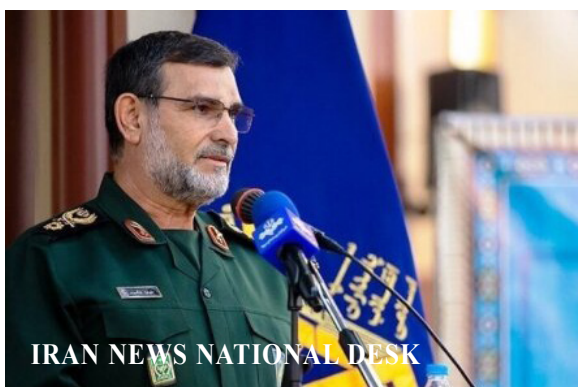
He confirmed that the Corps had successfully launched a cruise missile from southern part of the western Iranian Tabas region, saying the projectile accurately struck a target lying 650 kilometers (403 miles) away in the Sea of Oman that lies to the country's south.

Highlighting Iran's strategic military preparedness, Tangsiri revealed that the country's entire 2,200-kilometer (1,367-mile) southern coastline has been fortified through collaboration between the IRGC, the Army's naval forces, and the Basij volunteer force's maritime division.

He further emphasized that many military assets have been strategically relocated to beneath high-altitude areas across the coastal areas, rendering them impervious to the enemy's bunker-busting bombs.

"In the southern regions, we have leveraged the natural mountainous terrain to safeguard critical military infrastructure, ensuring that no missile or bomb can inflict damage on our assets," he said.

The commander also highlighted Iran's expanding naval reach, stating that the Corps' Shahid Mahdavi military vessel -- that is capable of carrying helicopters and missile launchers -- was



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

currently deployed in Indonesia alongside an Iranian Army naval fleet for joint military exercises.

Previously, the vessel undertook a remarkable 39-day mission, sailing as far as the waters lying near northern Australia and within 500 nautical miles of Diego Garcia, a key American military base in the Indian Ocean, he noted.

Tangsiri also touched on another milestone achievement by the Islamic Republic further demonstrated the country's self-sufficiency in high-tech military innovation.

He revealed that the IRGC Navy had repurposed aging commercial vessels, transforming them into state-of-the-art drone carriers, a practice that only used to be employed by some, including the US and Britain.

"The first American aircraft carrier was originally a converted merchant ship. The British have done the same with captured German vessels, and recently, the Dutch handed over a commercial ship to the UK for transformation into a warship. Iran has followed a similar approach, successfully developing its first drone carrier," he explained.

According to the commander, the IRGC has also mastered the aircraft arrestor technology -- that helps slowing down an aircraft, reducing its torque or the distance it could run on the ground during routine or emergency landings.

He said that the capability used to be previously exclusive to the United States, adding that its harnessing by the Islamic Republic further demonstrated the country's self-sufficiency in high-tech military innovation.

Tangsiri emphasized that all of Iran's latest missiles were AI (artificial intelligence)-driven and equipped with precision-strike capabilities, underscoring the nation's commitment to self-reliance in defense technologies.

Observers say Iran's unveiling of the supersonic cruise missile and its expansion of its naval power signal a clear message of deterrence to the country's adversaries that have been addressing it with a torrent of threats.

With these advancements, Iran continues to reinforce its standing as a formidable power in the region, showcasing military innovation that strengthens both national security and strategic deterrence, they note.

IRAN NEWS



Iran, Afghanistan Resolve Long-Standing Water Dispute

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran's interim ambassador to Afghanistan, Alireza Bikkeli, has said a long-standing dispute between Afghanistan and Iran over shared water resources has been resolved following recent discussions.

Bikkeli said that Iran seeks to strengthen its relations with Afghanistan in various sectors as part of its "neighborhood policy." He pointed out that boosting economic ties with Afghanistan is a top priority for Tehran. He added that Iran has exchanged over \$2 billion in trade with Afghanistan in the past nine months.

Bikkeli expressed optimism about the future of bilateral relations. "The coming year will be more successful in advancing mutual interests."

Iran, Turkey to Form Joint Transport Committee to Resolve Transit Issues



TEHRAN - The head of Iran's Road Maintenance and Transportation Organization announced that a joint transport committee between Iran and Turkey will be established within the next three months. The initiative aims to reduce transit problems at the Turkey-Iran border and strengthen trade relations between the two neighboring countries.

Reza Akbari addressed recent challenges faced by Iranian transit drivers at the Turkish border. He stated that the issue is related to Iran's Ministry of Oil and the Anti-Smuggling Task Force, clarifying that no organization or agency has been at fault in handling the situation.

He explained that while each organization had fulfilled its responsibilities, a decision made regarding fuel policies had negatively impacted road transit. However, efforts have been made to suspend the decision temporarily while seeking a comprehensive solution to protect transit operations and prevent fuel smuggling.

Akbari emphasized that both Iran and Turkey naturally pursue their own interests, but it is essential to maintain a balance in revenues, goods pricing, transport, and transit between the two sides.

He noted that Iran had initially implemented a policy to reduce fuel smuggling, but after a month, it became evident that the decision had harmed Iran's transit sector. Turkey's reciprocal measures created additional challenges, prompting a temporary halt to the policy to prevent further damage.

According to Akbari, Turkish officials have acknowledged the issue, and both countries are now working on a joint strategy. A three-month period has been allocated for expert teams from both sides to discuss and draft a comprehensive cooperation agreement. Iran's Road Maintenance and Transportation Organization has already set up a working group to prepare the necessary drafts for negotiation.

Iran's Oil Exports Will Not Stop

TEHRAN - Oil Minister has declared that the U.S. policy of maximum pressure on Iran's oil exports has failed, emphasizing that Washington's dream of reducing Iranian oil exports to zero will never be realized.

Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad responded to U.S. President Donald Trump's renewed maximum pressure campaign aimed at halting Iranian oil exports. He stated, "This is nothing more than a dream for them, and they will never achieve it."

Addressing the policy of economic pressure and threats to cut Iranian oil exports to zero, Paknejad asserted that such strategies have already failed in the past and will continue to do so. "This approach has been tested before with no success. If they try again, they will fail once more," he added.

The minister assured that Iran's oil industry experts, from production to export specialists, are taking necessary and effective measures to counteract any restrictions. "The greater the limitations imposed on us, the more sophisticated our strategies will become," he said.

He said: "When foreigners were leaving the oil industry, it may have been hard for them to believe that the colleagues and employees in the oil industry could manage this complex industry without their presence. Today, we see that we have achieved self-sufficiency in various sectors of the oil industry."

Paknejad said during his visit to the Parchin Gas Pressure Boosting Station: "Simultaneously with the joyous days of the Fajr decade and on the threshold of the 46th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution's victory, this opportunity arose to visit one of the hundreds of operational centers of the oil industry and meet and talk with my colleagues at this unit."

He emphasized: "Today is a holiday, but my colleagues in the operational units of the oil industry are working day and night without the defined holidays that our dear people have, to deliver energy carriers to consumption centers, whether in industrial sectors that help the country's economic growth or in the public welfare sectors where our dear people benefit from gas and have warm homes during these cold winter days."

The Oil Minister congratulated the anniversary of the Islamic Revolution's victory to all his colleagues in the oil industry (from those on the oil and gas production platforms in the azure waters of the Persian Gulf to the farthest corners of the country) and said: "I thank all the oil industry professionals for all the hard work they do."

Paknejad mentioned the achievements of the oil industry after the Islamic Revolution, saying: "When foreigners left the oil industry, it may have been



hard for them to believe that our colleagues and the workers in the oil industry could manage this complex industry, from upstream to downstream, without their presence."

He stated: "Today, we see that in various sectors of the oil industry, self-sufficiency has been achieved in equipment and the development of oil and gas fields. With these capabilities, the oil and gas industry is largely managed by the domestic sector."

The Minister referred to the excellent performance of the colleagues at the Parchin Gas Pressure Boosting Station in turbine repairs, noting: "A series of actions, within the timeframe that this unit needs for major repairs, are being carried out by our colleagues in this unit using their capabilities and the training they have received."

Paknejad commented on the sustainability of the country's gas network in light of the upcoming cold weather: "For many years, we have faced an issue known as energy imbalance, which is not something that has happened in the last six months or two years; gas is also one of these sectors."

He pointed out that part of the solution to the energy imbalance in the gas sector is increasing production, adding: "Developing onshore and offshore fields, developing new gas fields, and boosting the pressure of the South Pars gas field to increase gas production are all part of the plan."

The Oil Minister emphasized that managing demand and optimizing consumption is another key issue in addressing the energy imbalance. He said: "If we cannot take the necessary measures and monitor consumption in this area, no matter how much we invest in production, consumption will always exceed production, and the imbalance will not be resolved. Therefore, to solve the imbalance, in addition to increasing production, we need to focus on managing and optimizing demand and consumption."

Paknejad continued: "There are various strategies for managing demand and optimizing consumption, such as using high-efficiency gas heaters and adhering to building regulations regarding energy use. We must be active in both increasing production and managing energy consumption."

He emphasized that with the recent rains and approaching the coldest days of 2025, gas consumption in households, businesses, and non-major industries will increase. He said: "To maintain the sustainability of the network and gas supply to all parts of the country, I urge all compatriots to conserve gas consumption as much as possible."

Regarding the signing of contracts for pressure boosting in South Pars, the Minister of Oil said: "These contracts will be signed soon."

Youthful Population Requires National Determination and Scientific Approach



TEHRAN - The Minister of Health, Treatment, and Medical Education emphasized that fostering a youthful population is a serious national issue requiring both national determination and a scientific approach, as consistently highlighted by the Supreme Leader.

Dr. Mohammadreza Zafarghandi, speaking at the third meeting of the Central Coordination Headquarters for Population Youthfulness on Sunday, stated that while certain aspects of the Youthful Population Law fall under the Ministry of Health's responsibilities, other parts require active engagement from various governmental entities.

He noted that discussions on the responsibilities of other institutions under this law are being presented in cabinet meetings. For example, the Minister of Interior has been urged to highlight this issue during governor meetings, demonstrating the Ministry of Health's active role in advocating for the law's implementation.

The Health Minister also pointed out that ensuring a youthful population is not only about increasing birth rates but also about preserving the existing population. He stressed that road accidents are a major factor affecting population retention. Last year, more than 20,400 people lost their lives in traffic accidents, with hundreds of thousands injured, some of whom eventually succumbed to their injuries.

Expressing regret over recent incidents, including a tragic bus crash involving students in Kerman province, Dr. Zafarghandi underscored the need for stricter measures to reduce fatalities. He emphasized the importance of strengthening the emergency response system to prevent avoidable deaths from accidents and other trauma-related causes, which account for approximately 25% of preventable deaths.

Dr. Zafarghandi also mentioned several meetings with key officials, including the head of the Traffic Police, discussing how strict traffic laws and penalties have proven effective in reducing accidents globally. He announced that a new campaign will soon be launched to reduce road accidents during the upcoming Nowruz holidays.

The Health Minister highlighted the essential role of media and government agencies in accident prevention, emphasizing that media campaigns, especially those using artistic expression, can be highly impactful. He urged national broadcasters and online platforms to fully support this initiative alongside the Ministry of Health.

Dr. Zafarghandi addressed concerns regarding reported reductions in the National Youthful Population Headquarters' budget. He stated that the matter is being pursued with the head of the Planning and Budget Organization, and he called on the President and Parliament to ensure that these funds remain intact.

Additionally, he noted a collaboration agreement with the Foundation for the Underprivileged, which will assist the Ministry of Health in implementing population youthfulness strategies. Meetings have also been held with the head of the Executive Headquarters of Imam Khomeini's Orders to further these efforts.

Birth Rate Below One Million for the First Time in 45 Years



TEHRAN - The Deputy Minister of Health has reported that, according to data from the National Statistics Center and the Civil Registration Organization, the number of births in the country this year will fall below one million for the first time in 45 years, since the revolution.

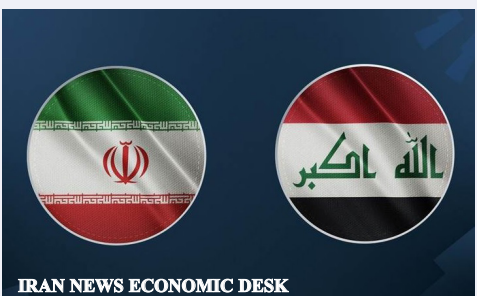
Dr. Alireza Raesi made this announcement during the third meeting of the Central Coordination Committee for Population Growth at the Ministry of Health. He emphasized that the country's population is aging, predicting that within the next 30 years, 25% of the population will be elderly. Additionally, the number of marriages has declined in recent years.

Dr. Raesi pointed out that the average age of marriage has risen, with men now marrying at an average age of 27.4 years and women at 23 years. In Tehran, this average is closer to 30 years, highlighting the need for serious intervention.

"If a woman marries at 30 and has her first child at 34 or 35, and then a second child at 40, the overall birth rate will naturally decline," he explained. "Therefore, we must work to lower the average age of marriage."

He also noted that while the divorce rate has remained stable and even declined in recent years, the absolute number of divorces is still high.

Iran and Iraq to Establish Joint Industrial Towns



TEHRAN - The President of the Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce has announced plans for the establishment of joint industrial towns along the Iran-Iraq border as a measure to balance trade disparities between the two countries.

Yahya Al-Eshaq stated that trade imbalances have been a key challenge in economic relations between Iran and Iraq. One of the proposed solutions is the development of shared industrial zones at border points, allowing for joint production and investment.

Al-Eshaq explained that both governments have recognized the necessity of these industrial towns for some time and are committed to their development. In a recent meeting with the Iraqi ambassador, two specific border locations—Mehran and Shalamcheh—were selected for the first industrial zones. Fast-tracking the implementation of these projects has been prioritized by both nations to help regulate trade balance.

According to Al-Eshaq, Iran and Iraq aim to boost their trade volume to \$22 billion. Currently, Iran's exports to Iraq stand at \$10.7 billion annually, while imports from Iraq amount to just \$400 million. During the first ten months of 2024, Iran's exports to Iraq reached \$10 billion, whereas imports remained between \$400 million and \$500 million. The industrial zones are expected to help reduce this trade imbalance through increased joint production and investment.

Products manufactured in these industrial towns will not only be sold in the Iraqi market but can also be exported to other countries through Iraq. Al-Eshaq emphasized that there will be no restrictions on the types of goods produced, with priority given to industries where both Iranian and Iraqi manufacturers have a competitive advantage. The industrial zones will rely on energy and workforce contributions from both countries.

In addition to the industrial zone initiative, Al-Eshaq highlighted the possibility of issuing government-backed guarantees for Iranian projects in Iraq. He noted that Iran has significant expertise in engineering and technical services, having exported \$35 billion worth of such services since 1994. Iranian companies have undertaken projects in 24 countries, completing 900 engineering and construction projects.

However, one of the main barriers to expanding Iran's technical service exports has been the requirement for performance guarantees. Due to international sanctions, Iranian banks have been unable to issue the necessary guarantees. To address this issue, the Iranian government has agreed to step in and provide state-backed guarantees for Iranian companies operating abroad. This new measure has already been implemented in one case, with Iran's Minister of Economy signing the first such guarantee, which was accepted by the Iraqi side.

Al-Eshaq noted that while this initiative is currently focused on Iraq, it could potentially be expanded to other countries through mutual agreements.

Tehran Hosts 18th Int'l Tourism Exhibition With 12 Countries Participating

TEHRAN - The 18th Tehran International Tourism and Related Industries Exhibition is set to take place from February 13 to 15 at the Tehran International Exhibition Center, featuring tourism professionals from 12 countries, according to Iran's Deputy Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts.

At a press conference, Anoushirvan Mohseni Bandpei, while congratulating the 46th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution, announced that exhibitors from the UAE, Turkey, Madagascar, Tajikistan, Qatar, Thailand, Brazil, Indonesia, and Russia will participate with two booths. A total of 395 square meters has been allocated for international exhibitors.

Mohseni Bandpei stated that eight international delegations have confirmed their attendance, and aside from tourism industry professionals, 500 domestic and international guests have been invited to the exhibition's opening ceremony. The event, attended by Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, will be held at the Islamic Republic's International Conference Center.

He emphasized that this year's exhibition benefits from past experiences, strengthening its advantages while minimizing weaknesses. The event will span 55,000 square meters, showcasing Iran's tourism capabilities, including water resources, ecotourism, and local cuisine, to attract both domestic and international visitors.

Highlighting tourism's economic, political, cultural, and social significance, Mohseni Bandpei noted that it is a vital source of revenue for many countries. He stressed that tourism can also serve as a tool for cultural diplomacy, allowing Iran to counter negative perceptions and showcase its historical heritage.

"When a tourism event focuses on children's cuisine, we see a flood of children attending. The same principle applies to other groups," he remarked, underlining the importance of making tourism appealing to various demographics.

Additionally, 20 educational workshops featuring 27 top experts and 10 specialized panels will be held at the exhibition. Student associations, creative young entrepreneurs, and foreign students studying in Iran have also been invited to participate as cultural ambassadors. Given the upcoming Nowruz holiday, a special section will be dedicated to travel safety and accident prevention.

Discussing Iran's tourism infrastructure, Mohseni Bandpei acknowledged challenges in air transportation and emphasized the need for stronger infrastructure as part of a strategic approach. He described tourism as a "white industry" and revealed incentives such as customs exemptions for importing tourism equipment and tax breaks for accommodations using renewable energy.

To make travel more affordable for all social groups, agreements have been signed with retirement funds, welfare organizations, and



the hotel industry, ensuring lower-cost travel options.

Iran currently has 1,470 hotels, with 143 rated between four and five stars. To prevent price hikes in budget hotels, tax exemptions have been granted to owners of one- to three-star hotels.

Regarding transportation issues, the country faces a shortage of 1,000 public buses compared to last year. Authorities have instructed that urban public transport not be used for travel during Nowruz.

Discussions are underway with the railway sector to add more train compartments, and negotiations between the Ministry of Tourism and the Central Bank are in progress to introduce credit cards for international tourists.

Meanwhile the Director General of Domestic Tourism Development at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts said that the 18th International Tourism and Related Industries Exhibition in Tehran is set to welcome 700 domestic and international companies, featuring dedicated halls for cuisine, children, and geotourism.

Mostafa Fatemi announced that the exhibition will be held from February 12 to 15 at the Tehran International Exhibition Center, with the participation of 12 countries. The event will showcase ethnic groups in traditional attire, alongside investment opportunities in the tourism sector.

Fatemi also noted that part of the exhibition space will be allocated to the police and Red Crescent Society for safety education. Additionally, cultural programs will highlight Iran's diverse heritage, including local rituals, Semnan's Turkish ceremonies, Shoushi traditions, rural daily life, and traditional weddings from Gilan. Other performances will feature Zanjan's sword dance, Kermanshahi traditions from Golestan and Mazandaran, and registered ceremonies from Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari.

Fatemi emphasized that government presence in this year's exhibition has been reduced, with more booths allocated to private sector companies. He also hinted at the possibility of a separate food tourism exhibition in future editions.

Moslem Shojaei, head of the Foreign Tourism Marketing and Development Office, revealed that a project titled "Hello Iran" will bring 15 prominent social media influencers—each with over three million followers—from countries including the U.S. and Indonesia to the event.

International delegations from Tajikistan, the United Nations, Brazil, Iraq, and Bangladesh will also attend. Additionally, a content creation competition titled "Magnificent Iran" has been organized for international students residing in the country.

The 18th Tehran International Tourism Exhibition promises to be a vibrant showcase of Iran's diverse tourism potential, with a strong emphasis on cultural heritage, private sector engagement, and international collaboration.

Macron Announces €100b Investments in AI

PARIS (Dispatches) - Investors will pump 109 billion euros into artificial intelligence (AI) projects in France in the coming years, President Emmanuel Macron said Sunday ahead of a two-day global summit on the technology in Paris. He described the investment as “the equivalent for France of what the US has announced with ‘Stargate,’” referring to OpenAI’s \$500-billion programme.

To promote the summit, Macron posted a series of AI-generated fake videos featuring himself in various roles. In one scene, Macron dances to a 1980s hit song “Voyage Voyage” by French singer Desireless. In another, he is inserted in a spy comedy film about the exploits of a French secret agent played by Jean Dujardin. In a third, he sings a rap song and shows off his moves, channelling French performer Nekfeu.



Baltic States Join European Power Grid After Cutting Ties With Russia’s Network



BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - The three Baltic states successfully connected to the European power grid Sunday after severing Soviet-era links with Russia’s network, a shift that EU chief Ursula von der Leyen hailed as “freedom from threats and blackmail”.

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania – former Soviet states that are now EU and NATO members -- have been planning the switch for years but had been particularly keen to do so since Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022.

The small Baltic countries fear that they too could be targeted. The staunch Ukraine supporters had also worried that Russia would weaponise the electricity grid against them.

“Moments ago, I received great news,” Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda told reporters in Vilnius, alongside his Estonian, Latvian and Polish counterparts and von der Leyen.

“The synchronisation of the Baltic states’ electricity system with the continental European system has been successfully completed... We have achieved full energy independence,” he said.

Nausėda also posted a video to X of the moment he received confirmation of the grid connection. “Goodbye Russia, goodbye Lenin,” he said on the phone, before von der Leyen and others applauded.

Von der Leyen told reporters “today history is made”.

“Electricity lines with Russia and Belarus are being dismantled. These chains of power lines linking you to hostile neighbours will be a thing of the past,” she said. “This is freedom, freedom from threats, freedom from blackmail.”

A total of 1.6 billion euros (\$1.7 billion) -- mostly EU funds -- have been invested in the synchronisation project across the Baltic states and Poland. The Baltics integrated into the European grid via Poland.

Polish President Andrzej Duda called the synchronisation “a milestone development... for the entire European Union”.

“It is the final step towards emancipation from the post-Soviet sphere of dependence,” he added.

Trump to Impose 25% Tariffs on All Steel, Aluminum Imports



WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The United States will move to impose 25-percent tariffs on steel and aluminum imports this week, President Donald Trump said, the latest in a slew of trade levies he has announced.

Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One that the tariffs, which he will announce on Monday, will apply to “any steel coming into the United States,” adding this will also affect aluminum.

Trump imposed similar tariffs during his 2017-2021 presidency to protect US industries, which he believed faced unfair competition from Asian and European countries.

Canada -- which Trump has already threatened with tariffs -- is the largest source of steel and aluminum imports to the United States, according to US trade data. Brazil, Mexico and South Korea are also major steel providers to the country.

On Sunday, the Republican billionaire also said he would announce “reciprocal tariffs” to match his government’s levies to the rates charged by other countries on US products.

“Every country will be reciprocal,” Trump said, adding that he would make a detailed announcement on the tariffs on Tuesday or Wednesday.

The president has already shown his fondness for weaponizing the United States’ financial power, ordering tariffs on key trade partners China, Mexico and Canada soon after he took office.

He paused 25-percent levies against Canada and Mexico for a month after both countries vowed to step up measures to counter flows of the drug fentanyl and the crossing of undocumented migrants into the United States.

The tariffs against China went ahead, however, with products entering the United States facing additional levies of 10 percent since Tuesday.

Beijing responded with targeted tariffs on certain US products such as coal and liquefied natural gas, which was to come into

play on Monday.

The new Chinese tariffs cover \$14 billion worth of US goods, while the tariffs announced by Trump cover \$525 billion worth of Chinese goods, according to Goldman Sachs.

Trump has also pledged tariffs on the European Union and said that he would soon announce unspecified “reciprocal tariffs.” French President Emmanuel Macron vowed in an interview aired Sunday to go head-to-head with Trump over his financial threats to Europe, though he said that the United States should focus its efforts on China rather than the European Union.

Macron also warned on CNN that Americans would feel the effects of any tariffs on Europe, saying they “will increase the costs and create inflation in the US.”

And in an otherwise friendly meeting Friday with Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, Trump warned Tokyo could still face tariffs on exported goods if it fails to cut the US trade deficit with Japan to zero.

The trade deficit of the United States -- the world’s largest economy -- widened last year to nearly \$920 billion.

Trump, who has promised a “new golden age” for the United States, has insisted that the impact of any tariffs would be borne by foreign exporters without being passed on to US consumers, despite most experts saying the contrary.

But he did acknowledge after announcing tariffs on Mexico, Canada and China earlier this month that Americans might feel economic “pain.”

Trump has wielded tariffs as a threat to achieve his wider policy goals, most recently when he said he would slap them on Colombia when it turned back US military planes carrying deported migrants.

After a day-long showdown with Trump, the Colombian government backed down.

Kosovo’s Ruling Party Leads in Parliamentary Elections



PARIS (Dispatches) - Prime Minister Albin Kurti’s ruling party appeared set to secure the most seats in Kosovo’s parliamentary elections but it remained uncertain whether he stood a chance of forming a majority government.

Sunday’s contest largely pitted Kurti’s quest to stamp out Serbian influence on Kosovo’s soil during his time as premier against the opposition’s vow to boost the economy in one of the poorest pockets of Europe.

Without a single party winning a clear majority in the 120-seat parliament, Kosovo would likely be headed for days, if not weeks, of coalition talks and political horse-trading.

Twenty seats are reserved for minority parties, including 10 for Kosovo’s ethnic Serbs.

A projection published by leading Kosovo news outlet KOHA said Kurti’s Vetevendosje (“Self-Determination”) party (VV) was leading the race with an estimated 42 percent of votes.

The right-wing Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) trailed in second with 21 percent followed by the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) with 20 percent.

Kosovo’s election commission said software designed to help tally the vote had malfunctioned, forcing officials to hand count ballots.

The commission said no preliminary data would be released in the coming hours.

Long-time rivals the PDK and LDK have partnered to form coalition governments on multiple occasions since the independence war from Serbia in the late 1990s, following mediation and pressure from the international community.

Germany’s Scholz Slams Merz for Accepting Far-Right Support

BERLIN (Dispatches) - German Chancellor Olaf Scholz on Sunday accused his election rival Friedrich Merz of having broken his word by accepting support from the far-right AfD to push an anti-immigration motion through parliament.

In their first direct TV debate ahead of the February 23 vote, Scholz said Merz’s tactic of accepting parliamentary votes from the Alternative for Germany had meant “a breaking of his word and of a taboo.”

“And therefore one cannot be sure what the future will be like when things become difficult again” added the centre-left leader.

Post-war Germany had done “very well in the past decades when the democratic parties agreed not to cooperate with the extreme right”, Scholz added.

Merz, who has a strong poll lead two weeks ahead of the vote, stressed that his Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and their Bavarian allies the CSU would not cooperate or rule with the anti-immigration AfD.

“I want to make it clear here once again that we will not do that,” Merz said during the TV debate, adding that “there is no common ground” between his CDU and the AfD.

He stressed that “we are worlds apart on the issues concerning Europe,



NATO, the euro, Russia, America, there is no common ground between AfD and the Union”.

Merz said he had been driven to act quickly in parliament and accept AfD backing after a crime that shocked Germany, a knife attack on a kindergarten group that killed a two-year-old boy and a man trying to help the toddlers.

“I could no longer justify it with my conscience,” said Merz of the option of waiting any longer before launching a motion on his promised crackdown on irregular immigration.

Scholz listed progress made by his coalition government at the national and EU level to control irregular migration, but Merz accused him of “wishful thinking” and “living in a different world” to German citizens.

The knife rampage was the latest in a series of deadly attacks that have darkened the mood in Germany over the arrival of millions of war refugees and other asylum seekers in recent years.

But tens of thousands of people have repeatedly taken to the streets of Germany to protest against the conservatives’ recent cooperation with the AfD.

Merz, whose party is polling at around 30 percent, is banking on going “all in” on immigration to peel away voters tempted by the AfD’s strident anti-migrant policies.

Critics argue this gamble will only pander to the extremes in Germany, a country still seeking to atone for the crimes of the Nazi regime and the Holocaust.

The AfD is polling behind the CDU-CSU in second place with at least 20 percent of the vote. The Social Democrats of Scholz and the Greens are both trailing at around 15 percent.

North Korean Leader Vows Further Nuclear Forces Development

SEOUL (Dispatches) - North Korean leader Kim Jong Un criticised trilateral military cooperation among the United States, Japan and South Korea for raising tensions in the region and vowed countermeasures, including the further development of nuclear forces.

Kim said US deployments of nuclear strategic assets, war exercises and military cooperation with Japan and South Korea were inviting military imbalance in the region and raising a grave challenge to the security environment, state media KCNA reported.

“The DPRK does not want unnecessary tension of the regional situation but will take sustained countermeasures to ensure the regional military balance,” Kim said during a visit to the defence ministry yesterday to commemorate the founding day of its Army.

DPRK stands for the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, North Korea’s official name.

US President Donald Trump, after a meeting on Friday with Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, said he would have relations with North Korea, as they expressed concern over its nuclear program.



But during the visit, Kim “clarified once again the unshakable policy of more highly developing the nuclear forces,” according to the report.

On Russia’s war with Ukraine, Kim said: “The army and people of the DPRK will invariably support and encourage the just cause of the Russian army and people to defend their sovereignty, security and territorial integrity in keeping with the spirit of the treaty on the comprehensive strategic partnership between the DPRK and Russia.”

Last month, South Korea said it suspected North Korea of preparing to send more troops to Russia, in addition to about 11,000 soldiers who had been dispatched for the three-year-long war.

In a separate commentary released later today, North Korea’s KCNA again criticized South Korea’s military activity with the United States this year and warned that aggressive actions would be met by undesired consequences.

“Anyone could easily guess how we would take the fact that they carried out war exercises that were more intense than ever before at a time when diplomacy schedules were being cancelled due to political turmoil,” KCNA said.

Switchboard:(+98) (21) 44253448
Public Relations Tel:(+98)(21) 44253450
Editorial Board: 44253449
Public Relations Fax:(+98)(21) 44253395
Advertising Department:

Tel/Fax:(+98) (21) 44253335-9/44253234
Website: http://www.irannewsdaily.com
E-Mail Address:info@irannewsdaily.com
ISSN 1024-6053 P.O. Box: 15875-8551
Address: No 13, Pajouhesh St., Golestan II St, Golestan

St.Marzadaran Blvd., Tehran, Islamic Republic of
Iran Distributed by: Cities of Iran Cultural and
Artistic Institute
Managing Director: *Fereydoon Taherpour Asl*



Eagles Crush Chiefs 40-22 to Win Super Bowl

NEW ORLEANS (Dispatches) - The Philadelphia Eagles soared to a crushing 40-22 Super Bowl victory over the Kansas City Chiefs on Sunday, shattering their opponents' bid for a historic hat-trick of NFL titles in a rout watched by President Donald Trump. Philadelphia quarterback Jalen Hurts threw for two touchdowns and rushed for another as the Eagles avenged their agonizing Super Bowl defeat to the Chiefs two years ago in emphatic style at New Orleans' Superdome.

"I've been able to use every experience and learn from it – the good, the bad, all of it – to pursue my own greatness," Hurts said.

"But I couldn't do any of these things without the guys around me. We had a special group this year – we were able to learn from the past, get some nice new pieces and get over that hump."

The Chiefs had been bidding to become the first team in history to win three consecutive Vince Lombardi trophies following Super Bowl victories in 2023 and 2024.

But Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes – who was sacked six times and threw two interceptions – never looked like leading his team to glory as the Eagles' iron defense and clinical offense dominated throughout. The Eagles effectively had the game won by half-time, powering into a 24-0 lead at the break after three unanswered touchdowns from Hurts, Cooper DeJean and A.J. Brown.

They extended the lead to 34-0 late in the third quarter before Kansas City finally grabbed three late consolation touchdowns. Eagles kicker Jake Elliott bagged four field goals.

Sunday's extravaganza was watched by a star-studded 65,719 crowd bristling with celebrities and VIPs headed by Trump, who became the first sitting US President to attend the Super Bowl after jetting into New Orleans from Florida on Air Force One earlier in the day following a round of golf with Tiger Woods.

Trump has had an uneasy relationship with the NFL over the years, triggering uproar in 2017 after attacking players for kneeling in protest against racial injustice during renditions of the US national anthem. But the US leader was given a broadly positive reception at the Superdome after arriving at the venue shortly before kick-off.

Soon after arriving, Trump met with first responders and family members of victims of the January 1 attack in New Orleans that left 14 people dead and dozens wounded.

Later, loud cheering could be heard among the crowd when the Superdome's giant screen showed Trump saluting during the national anthem.

That warm applause was in stark contrast to the booing that rang around the venue early in the first quarter when the same screen showed pop icon Taylor Swift sitting in the VIP seats.

Swift, watching boyfriend and Chiefs ace Travis Kelce, was among a galaxy of stars crowded into the venue, with the likes of Beatles legend Paul McCartney rubbing shoulders with Hollywood actors Kevin Costner, Paul Rudd and Anne Hathaway and soccer star Lionel Messi.

The catcalls for Swift – who backed Trump's opponent Kamala Harris in last year's election – were not lost on the US President.

Trump later shared a post on his TruthSocial network which read: "Trump gets massive cheers at the Super Bowl while Taylor Swift gets booed – the world is healing!"

The star wattage meanwhile was ramped up before kick-off with singer Lady Gaga making a surprise performance in New Orleans' famous Bourbon Street in a segment paying tribute to victims of recent tragedies around the US.

The 14-time Grammy winner was flanked by seven-time Super Bowl winner Tom Brady and former New York Giants ace Michael Strahan.

"The resilience of New Orleans is matched by the resolve of our country," said Brady, wearing a Los Angeles Fire Department shirt.

Trump meanwhile expressed hope the nation could come together for the Super Bowl, which is by far the biggest annual event on the American sporting calendar.

Trump left the stadium early in the third quarter after a half-time concert headlined by rapper Kendrick Lamar that included a cameo appearance from singer-songwriter SZA while tennis legend Serena Williams was also seen bopping along with dancers on a makeshift stage.

Liverpool and Tottenham Face Setbacks in FA Cup



LONDON (Dispatches) - Liverpool suffered a stunning FA Cup exit in a 1-0 defeat to Championship strugglers Plymouth, while Aston Villa inflicted another damaging 2-1 defeat on Tottenham boss Ange Postecoglou.

Ame Slot's decision to field a weakened team came back to haunt him, with Ryan Hardie's second-half penalty sealing Plymouth's epic upset and ending Liverpool's quest for a quadruple at Home Park.

Virgil van Dijk, Mohamed Salah, Andrew Robertson and Cody Gakpo were among the stars rested as Slot made 10 changes from the team that thrashed Tottenham 4-0 in the League Cup semi-final second leg on Thursday.

In a remarkably successful first season in charge of the Reds, it was a rare blunder by the former Feyenoord boss.

It was only the fourth time that a team top of the Premier League had been eliminated from the FA Cup by a lower division club.

"We were not having a very good day. A result like this is the outcome," Slot said.

Masterminding a famous victory over Liverpool while fighting to haul Plymouth off the bottom of the Championship was no hardship for Argyle manager Miron Muslic, who was a refugee from war-torn Bosnia as a child.

Muslic – hired by Plymouth to replace the sacked Wayne Rooney in January – was forced to move to Austria aged nine after escaping his home town of Bihac after it fell under siege by Serbian forces in 1992.

Barcelona's 4-1 Win Over Sevilla Boosts La Liga Title Hopes



SEVILLE (Dispatches) - Barcelona cut the gap on La Liga's top two with an entertaining 4-1 win over Sevilla, despite playing out the final half-hour with 10 men after Fermin Lopez's red card.

Robert Lewandowski, Lopez, Raphinha and Eric Garcia struck for the Catalans, who were able to capitalise on leaders Real Madrid's 1-1 draw with second-placed Atletico Madrid on Saturday.

Hansi Flick's Barca climbed within two points of Los Blancos and moved one behind Atletico to crank up the tension in the title race.

"I really appreciate our performance, we did well in the first half and in the second half we fought for these three points," Flick told DAZN.

"We pressed high, the intensity was really good from us... and in the end it was a good lesson to play in a 4-4-1 and defend like that."

Lewandowski's early strike was cancelled out by Sevilla's Ruben Vargas, with Lopez and Raphinha pouncing early in the second half.

Lopez was sent off for a high tackle but Barcelona held out and extended their lead when Garcia nodded home late on.

"Today we had to win to stay in the title race and now we're putting the pressure on," Barca defender Inigo Martinez told DAZN.

"I think the team played a brilliant match and this is the way forward. If we stay secure and solid at the back, up front we all know what our forwards are capable of."

The match at Sevilla's Ramon Sanchez-Pizjuan stadium got off to an explosive start with teenage winger Lamine Yamal forcing Sevilla goalkeeper Orjan Nyland into a superb save with a curling effort.

Barcelona took the lead moments later from the resulting corner, played short, with Raphinha eventually crossing for Martinez to nod the ball across goal.

Veteran Polish striker Lewandowski prodded home from close range after seven minutes to reach 19 league goals and extend his lead as the division's top goalscorer.

Sevilla were level almost instantly, with Ronald Araujo playing Saul Niguez onside and the Spaniard crossed for Vargas to turn home in the eighth minute.

Araujo's unfortunate evening was compounded by an injury sustained when fouled by Saul, with Pau Cubarsi replacing him in the 22nd minute.

Barca stopper Wojciech Szczesny made a good save from an acrobatic Dodi Lukebakio effort as the hosts, 13th, gave as good as they got in the first half.

Lillard's 43 Powers Bucks Past Sixers



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Damian Lillard scored a season-high 43 points to lead the Milwaukee Bucks to a 135-127 victory over the visiting Philadelphia 76ers.

Lillard added seven rebounds and eight assists for Milwaukee, which played without All-Star Giannis Antetokounmpo (strained left calf). Six other Bucks scored in double figures, led by 23 from reserve Gary Trent Jr., who shot 7-of-15 from 3-point range.

Lillard went 8-of-15 from distance as Milwaukee made a season-high 24 3-pointers on 55 attempts (43.6 percent).

Tyrese Maxey led Philadelphia with 39 points and Joel Embiid bundled 27 points with 12 rebounds and six assists. Guerschon Yabusele added 18 points, while Paul George contributed 12 points, six assists and three steals.

Pistons 112, Hornets 102: Cade Cunningham recorded a triple-double with 19 points, 12 assists and 10 rebounds and Detroit never trailed while earning a victory over visiting Charlotte.

Tobias Harris had 20 points and Malik Beasley supplied 17 as the Pistons won their second straight game after two consecutive losses. Jalen Duren racked up 16 points, 12 rebounds and six assists.

Miles Bridges led the Hornets with 30 points and nine rebounds. Seth Curry supplied 26 points, and Isaiah Wong tossed in 17. Charlotte was without LaMelo Ball (ankle).

Rockets 94, Raptors 87: Dillon Brooks scored a team-high 19

points, Jalen Green added 18 and short-handed Houston rode a strong performance from its reserves to a victory over visiting Toronto, snapping a six-game skid.

Already down four rotation players -- Fred VanVleet, Jabari Smith Jr., Tari Eason and Steven Adams -- the Rockets lost All-Star center Alperen Sengun to back spasms at the 8:44 mark of the first quarter. But the Rockets posted a 43-31 edge in bench points with reserves Jeff Green (season-high 14 points), Jock Landale (11 points, 10 rebounds) and Cam Whitmore (11 points) all contributing to the cause.

Immanuel Quickley paired a game-high 20 points with eight rebounds while Scottie Barnes tallied 15 points, nine rebounds and

seven assists for the Raptors. Rookie Jamal Shead added 14 points off the bench.

Meanwhile Philadelphia 76ers center Joel Embiid said that he might have to undergo another surgery on his troublesome left knee.

Embiid's knee has never been fully healthy since he injured it against the Golden State Warriors on Jan. 30, 2024. He underwent surgery to repair a torn meniscus seven days later but the problems have lingered.

Embiid played in his 16th game of the season on Sunday when he had 27 points, 12 rebounds and six assists during a 135-127 road loss to the Milwaukee Bucks. It was his third game in six days -- he did sit out on Wednesday -- after missing 15 straight games due to the knee.

"Every day, take it day by day," Embiid said after the loss to Milwaukee. "If it gets worse, then you've got to do something about it. If it's not consistent enough, then that's not good enough."

Embiid, who turns 31 next month, is hoping the knee will hold up through the remainder of the season, but the 2022-23 NBA MVP indicated offseason surgery is possible.

Embiid has been productive when able to get on the floor and is averaging 24.8 points, 8.3 rebounds and 4.5 assists. But his unavailability for most of this season has derailed the 76ers, who are just 20-32 and stand 11th in the Eastern Conference.

Alcaraz, Shapovalov Win Titles

ROTTERDAM (Dispatches) - Top seed Carlos Alcaraz of Spain outlasted third seed Alex de Minaur of Australia 6-4, 3-6, 6-2 to win the ABN AMRO Open on Sunday in Rotterdam, Netherlands.

It marks the World No. 3's first tournament win of the new year and his 17th ATP singles title.

In a tightly contested match, Alcaraz won two-thirds of his first-service points (34 of 51) but also 64 percent of his second serves (16 of 25). He saved 3 of 5 break points while breaking de Minaur's serve on 4 of 8 opportunities.

It stood at 2-2 in the third set before Alcaraz broke de Minaur's serve in the sixth and eighth games, winning on his second match point.

Unseeded Canadian Denis Shapovalov took down No. 2 seed Casper Ruud of Norway 7-6 (5), 6-3 in the final in Texas.

Shapovalov won just his third career ATP singles title, but it was his second in less than four months after he broke through in Belgrade last November. It's his first victory above the ATP 250 level; the Dallas Open is an ATP 500 event.

He fired 13 aces with just two double faults on Sunday and won 36 of 50 first-service points (72 percent). The first-set tiebreaker was knotted 4-4 before Shapovalov won three of the final four points to earn the set; he then ran out to a 4-1 lead in the second set on his way



to victory.

Meanwhile top seed Anastasia Potapova of Russia claimed the Transylvania Open title in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, defeating unseeded Italian Lucia Bronzetti 4-6, 6-1, 6-2 for her third career WTA title.

Ranked No. 32 in the world, Potapova rebounded from losing the first set to win the two-hour, two-minute match and is 5-0 against Bronzetti, ranked No. 72.

Potapova hadn't dropped a set in the tournament, but Bronzetti

broke her serve in the first set for a 5-4 lead before consecutive forehand winners sealed the set win.

In the second set, Potapova bounced back, winning the final five games of the set to even the match. After committing 25 unforced errors in the opening set, the Russian cut that number to 11 while notching 12 winners to just four for Bronzetti.

Trailing 5-2 in the decisive third set, Bronzetti managed to stave off three championship points, but Potapova eventually put the match away.

Ekaterina Alexandrova of Russia avenged her Australian Open loss to Emma Raducanu of Great Britain, posting a 6-3, 7-5 victory in the opening round at Doha, Qatar.

Raducanu, the No. 2 British player, has lost in the first round three straight weeks after falling in Singapore and Abu Dhabi. Coming off a Linz Open title last week, Alexandrova recovered from 3-1 deficits in both sets to earn the victory. She will face World No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus on Tuesday.

American qualifier Alycia Parks pulled off a 6-4, 7-6 (2) upset of No. 11 Diana Shnaider of Russia. Poland's Magdalena Frech took down No. 13 seed Beatriz Haddad Maia of Brazil 6-4, 3-6, 6-2, while Cristina Bucsa of Spain defeated No. 14 seed Anna Kalinskaya of Russia 6-7 (3), 7-5, 6-4.