

Saeed Reza Ameli, an Iranian Academic and Member of the Supreme Council for the Cultural Revolution (SCCR) Says the Islamic Republic Ranked Fifth in the World in 2023 in Terms of Number of Scientific Articles Published on Nanotechnology

# IRAN NEWS

Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi Has Warned Against the Forced Displacement of Palestinians From the Besieged Gaza Strip as Proposed by U.S. President Donald Trump, Calling It "a Colonialist Project"

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## 2 DOMESTIC

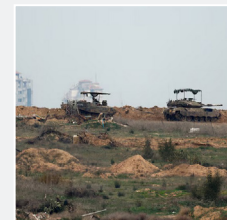


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### UN Urged to Take Firm, Clear Stance Against Displacement Plot for Gaza



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi says the United Nations, particularly its Security Council, must adopt a "firm and clear" position against the U.S.-Israeli scheme aimed at forcibly displacing Palestinians from the Gaza Strip.

In a phone conversation with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Monday, Araqchi condemned the "dangerous" US-Israeli plot, which he said poses a threat to international peace and security.

"The proposal to forcibly relocate Palestinians violates all principles and standards of international law and the United Nations Charter, and, in fact, complements the Israeli regime's plan for genocide and the eradication of Palestine," he said.

During a meeting with Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu on February 6, US President Donald Trump announced his plan to seize Gaza and evict its natives from their homeland.

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

Araqchi noted that he has recently held intensive consultations with the foreign ministers of Arab and Muslim countries about the Israeli regime's plan against the people of Gaza.

The top Iranian diplomat said Arab and Muslim countries have strongly condemned the Tel Aviv regime's forced displacement plan, which reflects their grave concern regarding the "continued gross violation of the Palestinian people's rights and their genocide in another form."

He censured the recent stance of the Israeli regime's prime minister, who had called for the displacement of Palestinians to Saudi Arabia, describing it as a clear example of the occupying regime's "brazen and audacious behavior."

The Iranian foreign minister said the international community must prevent the normalization of the lawlessness and criminality of the occupying regime.

### Caspian Sea Cooperation Key to Ensure Shared Regional Interests



TEHRAN - President Masoud Pezeshkian says the Islamic Republic of Iran supports the expansion of cooperation among the Caspian Sea littoral states to ensure common interests and protect the environment.

In a phone call on Monday with Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, National Leader of the Turkmen People, Pezeshkian hailed Turkmenistan's initiative to declare 2025 as the "International Year of Peace and Trust" in the country.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran favors the establishment of peace and friendship in the region and throughout the world, and welcomes cooperation with Turkmenistan and other countries in this regard," the Iranian president said.

Pointing to the Iran-Turkmenistan cooperation in the electricity and energy sectors, Pezeshkian said the two countries also enjoy the potential to boost interaction in several other areas such as gas swap and transportation.

Pezeshkian placed a premium on the role the Iran-Turkmenistan Joint Economic Cooperation Commission can play in further developing bilateral relations.

For his part, Berdimuhamedov invited the Iranian president to take part in a conference in honor of the International Year of Peace and Trust in Turkmenistan and called for bilateral cooperation to promote peace and friendship in the region and the world.

He said Ashgabat and Tehran should enhance economic, cultural and artistic cooperation.



TEHRAN - President Masoud Pezeshkian has reaffirmed the importance of fostering tourism and strengthening ties with neighboring and friendly nations, emphasizing that global unity and peace can be achieved through travel and friendly communication.

Speaking on the sidelines of the 18th International Tourism and Related Industries Exhibition in Tehran on Tuesday, Pezeshkian highlighted Iran's rich cultural heritage and civilization, calling for the creation of a suitable environment to promote tourism. "Iran is a land of civilization, development, art, and culture. By establishing the right conditions and enhancing our tourism sector, we can present the true image of Iran to the world," he stated.

He welcomed foreign guests attending the exhibition and reiterated that all citizens of Iran, regardless of their background, belong to the nation. "Everyone who lives in this country, no matter their taste, color, race, or ethnicity, is an Iranian. With their cooperation, we will bring honor and pride to our nation," he said.

He stressed that Iran's prosperity is deeply intertwined with its people's well-being. "We strive to restore Iran to its rightful place. Interaction and travel foster growth, experience, prosperity, unity, and cohesion among people," he added.

Highlighting the significance of exhibitions such as the International Tourism Exhibition, Pezeshkian stated that these events provide a platform for sharing experiences and achievements. "People must engage with one another, exchange cultural values, and embrace the good in each other. The world is constantly evolving, and those who are open to learning and exploring will thrive."

The president underscored Iran's commitment to developing its tourism economy. "Beyond tourism, economic, scientific, cultural, political, and governance-related exchanges are essential. Progress must be continuous in all aspects of human life," he explained.

Referring to the United Nations' annual theme of "Global Peace and Security," Pezeshkian asserted that peace and security can only be achieved through friendship and mutual understanding. "Peace and security do not come through violence, killings, or discrimination. We must create opportunities for people to connect and build friendships. When we travel and see the world, many misconceptions dissolve."

The president criticized the dissemination of false narratives about Iran. "Those who visit Iran will realize that the negative portrayals in some international media are misleading. Iran is a land of warmth, hospitality, and human connection. Every corner of this country is filled with unity and kindness, and Iranian hospitality is renowned."

He emphasized that understanding one's history is crucial for shaping the future. "Those who are

unaware of their past cannot plan for the future. Our identity is rooted in our culture, civilization, and rich historical experiences. Iran is brimming with heritage, progress, and artistic expression."

Welcoming all visitors with open arms, Pezeshkian encouraged people to witness Iran for themselves. "Those who come will see that the image portrayed by some foreign media does not match reality. We warmly welcome everyone who wishes to visit and experience the true Iran."

The president reassured international tourists and investors that the Iranian government is fully committed to the growth of tourism. "We are ready to remove obstacles and amend regulations to support tourism investment. Our doors are open to visitors from all backgrounds."

He also emphasized the equal value of all human beings. "Humans are the most honored creation, and every person on this planet deserves respect. No one is superior to another based on race or ethnicity; true merit lies in honesty, knowledge, wisdom, and humanity. We must respect scholars, artists, and ethical leaders who work towards a better world."

Pezeshkian condemned acts of violence and oppression, stressing that humanity must focus on peace. "Life is short. It is a gift from the Creator, meant to be cherished, enjoyed, and shared with kindness. Why should we waste it on war and bloodshed? Why should we fight, oppress, or displace innocent people?"

Addressing global conflicts, he criticized those responsible for atrocities, saying, "Those who commit mass killings and bomb innocent civilians claim to be defenders of human rights. They kill women, children, and the elderly in places like Gaza, yet they justify their actions as a fight against terrorism. Is this what human rights stand for? If they truly seek security, they must end the violence."

Reaffirming Iran's peaceful stance, Pezeshkian declared, "We do not seek war. We regard our neighbors as our brothers and wish to engage with the world through dialogue and peace. Those who arm aggressors with deadly weapons are the ones fueling wars."

He reiterated Iran's commitment to peaceful coexistence, saying, "We aspire to live in peace and harmony with our brothers worldwide. Only in an environment of peace can we truly welcome one another. Anyone who comes to Iran will be our honored guest. By the grace of God, we will continue to strengthen our bonds with all our neighbors."

The 18th International Tourism and Related Industries Exhibition, featuring representatives from 12 countries including the UAE, Turkey, Tajikistan, Thailand, Madagascar, Brazil, Indonesia, Qatar, and Russia, opened on February 12, 2025, in Tehran with President Pezeshkian in attendance.

## Iran Files Complaint to UNSC Over Trump's Threats



TEHRAN (PressTV) - The deputy foreign minister for legal and international affairs says Iran has complained to the United Nations Security Council over U.S. President Donald Trump's threats against the Islamic Republic.

Kazem Gharibabadi made the announcement in an X post on Tuesday, three days after Trump warned that he would prefer to make a deal with Iran instead of "bombing the hell out of it... They don't want to die. Nobody wants to die."

Gharibabadi said the huge participation of the Iranian people in Monday's march commemorating the 46th anniversary of the victory of the 1979 Islamic Revolution was "a strong response to the US president's recent threats."

"Iran will resolutely protect its security and national interests," he added.

Tehran will "legally pursue" Trump's statements that "run counter to the international law and the UN Charter," he said, noting that a letter of protest would be registered as an

official UN Security Council document.

Trump's warning came a few days after he signed an order seeking to cut Iran's oil exports to zero, while also claiming that he wanted to work towards a nuclear deal.

The directive is part of broader sanctions re-imposed after Trump unilaterally withdrew Washington from the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2018.

Also responding to Trump's threat, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Monday that the country "does not seek war... but will not yield to foreign pressure."

He further criticized US president's claim of willingness to hold talks with Iran while simultaneously restoring his so-called "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran.

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

### Netanyahu's Remarks on "Palestinian State on Saudi Territory" Condemned



TEHRAN - Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi has strongly condemned Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's remarks suggesting establishment of a "Palestinian state in Saudi Arabia," calling them an unprecedented act of aggression that threatens regional peace and security.

The top diplomat made the remarks during a telephone conversation with his Saudi counterpart Prince Faisal bin Farhan on Monday amid rising tensions over so-called U.S.-Israeli proposals for Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and the broader affairs that concern them.

Araqchi denounced Netanyahu's statement as a "brazen act of provocation" and warned that such rhetoric exemplified the expansionist ambitions of the Israeli regime.

"These remarks are a clear indication of the unprecedented recklessness of the occupying regime and pose a direct threat to peace and security in the [West Asia] region," he stated.

The official further denounced Israeli officials for seeking to erase the Palestinian identity by means of forced displacement and expansion of the regime's illegal settlements.

Netanyahu came up with the idea after US President Donald Trump said the United States was seeking Gaza's "ownership" as part of a so-called plan that he wheeled out under the guise of "rebuilding" the war-wrecked Palestinian territory.

Also on Monday, Trump insisted that Gaza's two-million-plus Palestinians had no right to return to the coastal sliver after the "takeover," claiming they would find "better housing" elsewhere.

Araqchi went on to rap the US-Israeli proposals to forcibly push Palestinians out of Gaza, calling it part of a larger colonial scheme to eliminate Palestinian sovereignty.

He urged the international community to take decisive action against, what he regretted was, a systematic attempt to erase the Palestinian cause of liberation from Western-backed deadly Israeli occupation and aggression.

Iran has also called for taking place of an extraordinary meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to address the issue.

Araqchi, meanwhile, emphasized the necessity of regional and international cooperation to prevent, what he warned was, underway attempts at "normalization" of genocide and lawlessness by the Israeli regime.

### Hezbollah Hails Iran's Islamic Revolution



BEIRUT (Dispatches) - Hezbollah has extended its congratulations to the Iranian government and nation on the 46th anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution, describing this historic event as a turning point and a beacon of resistance.

In a statement released on Monday, the Lebanese resistance movement said the Islamic Republic of Iran has been a pillar of resistance for just causes across the West Asia region since its foundation by Imam Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Revolution, in 1979.

"It has unwaveringly supported oppressed nations, emerged as a cornerstone of strength for resistance movements, and remained a resolute advocate for the Palestinian cause — now facing intensified attempts by imperialist forces to eradicate it," Hezbollah noted.

The statement continued that the current US administration enforces and advances plots aimed at erasing the Palestinian issue from the consciousness of the Muslim world.

Hezbollah also underscored Iran's vital role in backing resistance movements, particularly in Lebanon.

"Since Hezbollah's inception in 1982, the Islamic Republic has stood firmly by its side, offering extensive support to facilitate the liberation of occupied territories and the defeat of aggressors. This steadfast commitment has been instrumental in shifting power dynamics and securing pivotal victories that have redefined the region's strategic equation," the statement pointed out.

The Lebanese group went on to say that Iran's Islamic Revolution, led by Imam Khomeini, reshaped history, overturned a regime of tyranny and oppression, and laid the foundations of a strong and independent Muslim state — one that refuses to bow to global hegemonic powers and instead relies on the will of its people as well as its religious and humanitarian principles.

# IRAN NEWS



## Iran's Passport Drops One Rank to 96th

TEHRAN - Henley & Partners, a legal company, compiles the annual International Passport Index every January. This index is considered the primary and most reputable ranking system for assessing the strength of passports worldwide. According to a report from the Iran-Germany Chamber of Commerce, Henley & Partners has ranked 199 passports in 2025 based on their usefulness for international travel. The ranking indicates whether passports grant users visa-free access to 227 destinations. The German passport, which held the title of the world's strongest in 2024, has dropped two positions to share 3rd place with the passports of Finland, France, Italy, Spain, and South Korea. In this ranking, Iran's passport, which allows visa-free travel to 44 countries, has fallen one rank compared to 2024. It is now tied at 96th place with Sri Lanka and Sudan.

## FATF: The Biggest Obstacle to Trade Between Iran and Uzbekistan



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The Chairman of the Iran-Uzbekistan Joint Chamber of Commerce has announced the dispatch of a trade delegation in the construction industry to Uzbekistan, emphasizing that FATF restrictions are the greatest obstacle to trade between the two countries.

In an interview with Iran Chamber Online, Mousa Aghaei, the chairman of the Iran-Uzbekistan Joint Chamber of Commerce, highlighted the importance of technical and engineering services exports as a major advantage for the private sector. He stated that, considering Uzbekistan's 2030 strategy, this advantage should be leveraged.

Aghaei added that Uzbekistan's strategy places significant emphasis on improving infrastructure, especially in construction and road-building sectors, as well as the renovation of buildings.

He also noted the upcoming Uzbekistan Construction Industry Exhibition in March, revealing that the Joint Chamber would send a trade delegation to Tashkent from March 5 to 9, coinciding with the exhibition. The delegation will consist of key figures from the construction sector.

Aghaei mentioned that companies from various Iranian provinces including Tehran, Isfahan, Alborz, Gilan, and Mazandaran would participate in the delegation. Planned activities include B2B meetings, visits to key construction-related sectors in Uzbekistan, and meetings with members of the Uzbekistan Construction Union.

He emphasized that major cities like Tashkent, Samarkand, and others in Uzbekistan are developing new residential neighborhoods, presenting an excellent opportunity for Iran to leverage its technical and engineering services in boosting bilateral trade relations.

Acknowledging the strong presence of countries like Russia, China, and South Korea in Uzbekistan, Aghaei stressed the need for Iran to keep up with its competitors. He pointed out that Iran faces numerous challenges in foreign trade.

## Iran Expands Technical and Engineering Services to Tajikistan's Elevator Industry



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The President of Iran's Chamber of Commerce has assigned the Elevator Industry Syndicate the task of consolidating private sector capacities to facilitate the export of technical and engineering services to Tajikistan's elevator industry.

Samad Hassanzadeh, President of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture, met with the President of Tehran's Elevator and Escalator Industry Syndicate on Sunday, February 9. During the meeting, Hassanzadeh highlighted Tajikistani officials' request for Iranian technical and engineering services to assist in the modernization and renovation of over 20,000 aging elevators across the country.

Hassanzadeh stated that during a recent Iranian trade delegation visit to Tajikistan, which coincided with the Iranian President's official trip, he met with key Tajikistani economic officials, including the Minister of Economic Development and Trade and the Chairman of the Investment Committee. In these meetings, Iran's technical and engineering capabilities in various sectors were outlined.

The Iranian chamber president noted that Tajikistani officials discussed their country's urgent needs, particularly regarding outdated elevator infrastructure. He encouraged eligible Iranian elevator industry professionals to adhere to Tajikistan's regulations and standards and pursue mutually acceptable agreements and contracts to meet this demand.

To further this initiative, Hassanzadeh recommended dispatching a delegation from Iran's Elevator Industry Syndicate to Tajikistan, coordinated by the International Affairs Department of the Iran Chamber of Commerce. This delegation would conduct a technical assessment and evaluate Tajikistan's specific requirements for elevator modernization. He described the opportunity as a significant opening for Iran's private sector to expand its technical and engineering services abroad.

Mohammadreza Zohrevandi, President of Tehran's Elevator and Escalator Industry Syndicate, also attended the meeting. He noted that the syndicate was established in 1998 and operates under the Iran Chamber of Commerce, representing 1,700 companies across the country. Among them, 1,050 firms are based in Tehran and Alborz provinces, while the remaining members operate in 13 other provinces.

Zohrevandi emphasized Iran's strong global ranking in technical and engineering services, asserting that it surpasses Turkey in this sector. He pointed out that Iranian companies have previous experience installing elevators in Tajikistan and are well-positioned to address the country's modernization needs, given their expertise and skilled workforce.

## Minister of Roads and Urban Development Meets IRU Secretary-General



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Minister of Roads and Urban Development, who is in Geneva to attend the 87th session of the United Nations Committee on Inland Transport, met on Monday with the Secretary-General of the International Road Transport Union (IRU) to discuss the development of transit routes, strengthening transport cooperation, and expanding regional interactions.

Farzaneh Sadegh Malvajerd highlighted Iran's close collaboration with the IRU during the meeting. She emphasized that as a leading international organization in road transport, the IRU has maintained strong cooperation with Iran's Ministry of Roads and Urban Development. She further noted that Iran's share in transit cargo transportation along the North-South and East-West corridors could be significantly increased by utilizing IRU's advanced tools, particularly digital solutions.

Sadegh Malvajerd pointed to Iran's new record of 20 million tons of transit cargo in 2024 as evidence of the country's high capacity in international transport. She stressed that this achievement underscores the need for greater engagement with the IRU and stronger regional cooperation.

The minister also highlighted the importance of international transport cooperation, emphasizing the exchange of commercial information and transport regulations among member states of the TIR Convention. She called for the acceleration of discussions on road transport safety and the possibility of collaboration with the Road Safety Fund, recognizing IRU's role in facilitating transport cooperation and road safety.

During the meeting, Sadegh Malvajerd announced Iran's upcoming

presidency of the Intergovernmental Commission on TRACECA (Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia) in the next two weeks. She stated: "We are organizing the ministerial meeting of the TRACECA Intergovernmental Commission, and we hope this summit will create unique opportunities for expanding regional interactions and strengthening the TIR system."

IRU Secretary-General Umberto de Pretto, acknowledging Iran's role in regional road transport, described the appointment of a female minister in Iran's transport sector as an inspiring move on the global stage. He noted the underrepresentation of women in the transport industry and expressed hope that this appointment would encourage greater female participation in the sector.

De Pretto also agreed with Minister Sadegh Malvajerd's perspective on the role of transport in regional peace and stability, emphasizing that trade via road transport is a crucial tool for global stability. "Iran is a leader and pioneer in implementing the TIR Convention in the region, and Iranian road transport companies and professionals have decades of expertise in this field. Iran's cooperation in expanding regional transit through the implementation of this convention across all countries in the region could be highly effective," he stated.

The TIR Convention is an international agreement designed to facilitate international road transport and reduce trade barriers. It enables seamless door-to-door cargo transportation from origin to destination without unnecessary stops. As one of the leading countries in implementing this system, Iran plays a key role in the development of international transit routes.

## Iran, Afghanistan Strengthen Railway and Trade Cooperation



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iran and Afghanistan have intensified their railway and trade cooperation, with plans to significantly increase cargo transportation between the two nations. Currently, the volume of freight moved via this railway stands at 10,000 tons per month, but forecasts suggest this figure could rise to at least 100,000 tons per month. The overall capacity of the railway line is set at 6 million tons of cargo and 1 million passengers per year.

Morteza Jafari, Deputy of Commerce and Operations at the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways, highlighted the progress in railway collaboration between Iran and Afghanistan. He discussed the prospects of these relations following his visit to Kabul and Herat, where he met with officials from the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and key stakeholders in railway development.

During this visit, Jafari held meetings with the governor of Herat, representatives from the Chamber of Industries and Mines, and local traders. The primary goal of these discussions was to enhance exports to Afghanistan and facilitate cargo transit through Iran to neighboring countries, particularly via the Shantigh border. A key topic in the negotiations was the fourth section of the Khaf-Herat railway, a 43-kilometer stretch that currently enables the transportation of 10,000 tons of cargo per month, with potential expansion to 100,000 tons.

Further discussions took place in Kabul with Afghanistan's Minister of Industry, Mr. Azizi, and the Deputy of Railways at the Ministry of Public Works. A major agreement from these talks was the establishment of a railway route for Turkish cargo to be transported to Afghanistan via Iran, and vice versa.

Jafari explained the technical process and coordination required for Afghan traders to utilize Iran's railway network. Initially, Afghan businesses must coordinate with Iranian freight forwarders, who then liaise with Afghanistan's railway consortium to facilitate shipments. This system applies to both exports and transit cargo moving through Iran to Afghanistan. Similarly, Afghan traders exporting goods to Iran or other destinations must coordinate with Afghanistan's railway consortium. The entire process is designed to be efficient, allowing goods to be transported from Rozanak station in Afghanistan to Razi station in Iran in less than 10 days.

The Afghan Railway Consortium, responsible for the operation of the 62-kilometer railway segment within Afghanistan from Shantigh

to Rozanak, also manages coordination with freight forwarders inside the country.

Jafari noted a recent milestone in regional trade: the arrival of the first cargo train from China to Afghanistan via Iran. About a month ago, a shipment of steel sheets was transported from China to Bandar Abbas by sea and then continued via Iran's railway network to Afghanistan through the Shantigh border crossing. Efforts are ongoing to establish similar trade routes for cargo from China, India, and other regional countries.

Iran boasts a fleet of approximately 31,000 freight wagons of various types, which are fully prepared to handle a diverse range of shipments. Jafari emphasized that there are no issues regarding wagon availability, and from a logistical perspective, both freight wagons and locomotives are in place to support seamless trade between the two countries. Infrastructure-wise, conditions are favorable, with additional upgrades underway, including the extension of a 43-kilometer section to the Priyan station, which will reduce the distance to Herat—a move welcomed by traders.

The existing railway network currently facilitates the transport of 10,000 tons of cargo per month, but with trade expansion, this number is expected to increase tenfold. The long-term vision includes linking the railway line to the strategic Chabahar Port. While shipments currently move via Bandar Abbas, completing the Chabahar railway project will provide traders with an alternative maritime route for Afghan-bound shipments.

Iran is also advancing its international railway connectivity. The Sarakhs and Incheh Borun railway crossings are key links for trade with Turkmenistan and other Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) nations, as well as Russia. Additionally, the Razi railway station connects Iran to Turkey and Europe. Although Iran has extended its railway to the Shalamchek border with Iraq, a 30-kilometer gap remains to be completed on the Iraqi side. Meanwhile, goods can be transported to the border and then carried forward via a combined rail-road system.

Northern Iranian ports, such as Amirabad and Caspian on the Caspian Sea, can serve as gateways for Afghan cargo destined for CIS countries and Russia. Additionally, Afghan traders can leverage Iran's railway network via Azerbaijan for further regional trade expansion.

## Georgia Emerging as the Startup Hub of the Caucasus



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Georgia is positioning itself as a rising startup hub in the Caucasus region, with significant potential to become the focal point for startup activities, according to the President of the Iran-Georgia Chamber of Commerce, Seyedeh Fatemeh Moqimi. Speaking at a specialized gathering of business leaders, she highlighted the country's capacity to develop into a key hub in the region's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Moqimi discussed how the harsh sanctions have made international connections for Iranians more challenging and emphasized the need for specific strategies to maintain and strengthen these relationships. She pointed out that in recent years, the Iran-Georgia Chamber of Commerce has been exploring various strategies to safeguard their economic and commercial relations under these difficult conditions, with the main goal of keeping the economic ties alive. She noted the ongoing impact of politics and economics on each other.

One of the key priorities for the Chamber, she stated, is to continuously review strategies for preserving and expanding international economic relations, sharing these with members, and examining the current ecosystem.

She emphasized that today, innovation and startup activities are receiving special attention globally. Georgia has become an attractive destination for entrepreneurs due to its favorable tax policies, easy access to international markets, and government support for innovation and investment.

Referring to the 2019 World Bank report, Moqimi highlighted Georgia's ranking as 6th in terms of ease of doing business. Additionally, the 2023 Startuplink index listed the country among the top 100 startup ecosystems globally.

Moqimi identified the key players in Georgia's startup ecosystem as the government, growth centers and accelerators, investors and investment funds, and universities and research centers. She mentioned that starting a business in Georgia comes with several incentives, such as low taxes, a fast company registration process (which can take as little as two hours), access to international markets, and low operational costs.

These incentives are also available to foreign investors, she noted, adding that approved business plans from designated authorities could benefit from the outlined incentives. Furthermore, businesses can register their brands in Georgia. However, like other countries, there are challenges for businesses entering the market, including a lack of venture capital, which could restrict foreign investment, a limited domestic market, and access to a limited pool of skilled labor.

Moqimi also discussed export regulations for startups in Georgia, explaining that businesses can either establish a new company in Georgia or open a branch of a foreign company.

## Iran Ranks 10th Globally in Electricity Generation Capacity



TEHRAN - Iran's electricity industry has made significant advancements over the past four decades, increasing its power generation capacity from 7,000 megawatts in 1979 to 94,846 megawatts today. This remarkable growth has positioned Iran as the 10th largest country in the world in terms of electricity production capacity.

The Iranian electricity sector has witnessed unprecedented achievements in the past 46 years. Behrouz Moradi, Director General of Strategic Planning at the Ministry of Energy, stated that while global power plant capacity has grown 4.5 times since 1979, Iran's has expanded 13 times. During the same period, electricity production worldwide has increased by 3.4 times, whereas in Iran, it has surged 22-fold.

Moradi emphasized the vital role of the water and electricity sectors as fundamental infrastructure for economic and technical development. He noted that sustainable energy supply is essential for economic growth, particularly for industrial and agricultural sectors.

He highlighted that Iran's water and electricity industry is a key national asset and that achieving long-term goals requires attracting investment and financial support. He pointed to various funding sources, including the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), financing mechanisms, usance credit, the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), and the World Bank.

## U.S. Lifts Pause on Food Donations for World Food Program

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - The United States has lifted a pause on food donations, the U.N. World Food Program said, ending a suspension that an aid watchdog on Monday warned had left 500,000 metric tons of food currently at sea or ready to be shipped in limbo.

"We can confirm that the recent pause concerning in-kind food assistance to WFP - purchased from U.S. farmers with Title II funds - has been rescinded," WFP said in an X post on Sunday. "This allows for the resumption of food purchases and deliveries under existing USAID agreements."



## Egypt Tells Rubio That Arab States Reject Trump's Gaza Plan



CAIRO (Dispatches) - Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty told U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Monday that Arab states rejected U.S. President Donald Trump's widely condemned plan to displace Palestinians in Gaza and take control of the enclave.

Egypt's foreign ministry said Abdelatty, in a meeting in Washington, stressed the importance of expediting Gaza's reconstruction while Palestinians remained there.

A statement by the U.S. State Department after the meeting did not explicitly mention Trump's plan but added that Rubio "reiterated the importance of close cooperation to advance post-conflict planning for the governance and security of Gaza and stressed Hamas can never govern Gaza or threaten Israel again."

Abdelatty said he was looking forward to working with the new U.S. administration to achieve "comprehensive and just peace and stability" in the region, according to the Egyptian foreign ministry statement.

He also met with U.S. Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff in a separate meeting, where he echoed similar statements, the foreign ministry said.

Any suggestion that Palestinians leave Gaza, which they want as part of an independent state, has been anathema to the Palestinian leadership for generations and neighboring Arab states have rejected it since the Israel-Gaza war began in October 2023.

Trump first suggested on January 25 that Egypt and Jordan should take in Palestinians from Gaza. In the days ahead, he proposed a U.S. takeover of Gaza and a potential permanent displacement of Palestinians from the enclave with no right of return.

Trump's comments echoed long-standing Palestinian fears of being permanently driven from their homes and have been labeled by rights advocates and the United Nations as a proposal of ethnic cleansing.

Israel's military assault on Gaza, now paused by a fragile ceasefire, has killed more than 47,000 Palestinians in the last 16 months, the Gaza health ministry says, and provoked accusations of genocide and war crimes that Israel denies.

The assault internally displaced nearly all of Gaza's population and caused a hunger crisis.

## Trump Warns All Hell Will Break Out If Hamas Does Not Free Hostages

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - U.S. President Donald Trump said on Monday that Hamas should release all hostages held by the militant group in Gaza by midday Saturday or he would propose canceling the Israel-Hamas ceasefire and "let hell break out."

Trump cautioned that Israel might want to override him on the issue and said he might speak to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

But in a wide-ranging session with reporters in the Oval Office, Trump expressed frustration with the condition of the last group of hostages freed by Hamas and by the announcement by the militant group that it would halt further releases.

"As far as I'm concerned, if all of the hostages aren't returned by Saturday at 12 o'clock, I think it's an appropriate time. I would say, cancel it and all bets are off and let hell break out. I'd say they ought to be returned by 12 o'clock on Saturday," Trump said.

He said he wanted the hostages released en masse, instead of a few at a time. "We want 'em all back."

Trump also said he might withhold aid to Jordan and Egypt if they don't take Palestinian refugees being relocated from Gaza. He is to meet Jordan's King Abdullah on Tuesday.

The comments came on a day of some confusion over Trump's proposal for a US takeover of Gaza once the fighting stops. He said Palestinians would not have the right of return to the Gaza Strip under his proposal to redevelop the enclave, contradicting his own officials who had suggested Gazans would only be relocated temporarily.

In an excerpt of an interview with Fox News channel's Bret Baier broadcast on Monday, Trump added that he thought he could make a deal with Jordan and Egypt to take the displaced Palestinians, saying the US gives the two countries "billions and billions of dollars a year."

Asked if Palestinians would have the right to return to Gaza, Trump said: "No, they wouldn't because they're going to have

much better housing."

"I'm talking about building a permanent place for them," he said, adding it would take years for Gaza to be habitable again. In a shock announcement on Feb. 4 after meeting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Washington, Trump proposed resettling Gaza's 2.2 million Palestinians and the US taking control of the seaside enclave, redeveloping it into the "Riviera of the Middle East."

Trump's suggestion of Palestinian displacement has been repeatedly rejected by Gaza residents and Arab states, and labeled by rights advocates and the United Nations as a proposal of ethnic cleansing.

Senior Hamas official Sami Abu Zuhri said Trump's statement that Palestinians would not be able to return to Gaza was "irresponsible."

"We affirm that such plans are capable of igniting the region," he told Reuters on Monday.

Netanyahu, who praised the proposal, suggested Palestinians would be allowed to return. "They can leave, they can then come back, they can relocate and come back. But you have to rebuild Gaza," he said the day after Trump's announcement.

Trump's comments come as a fragile ceasefire reached last month between Israel and Hamas is at risk of collapse after Hamas announced on Monday it would stop releasing Israeli hostages over alleged Israeli violations of the agreement.

Israel's Arab neighbours, including Egypt and Jordan, have said any plan to transfer Palestinians from their land would destabilise the region.

Trump said in the Fox News interview that between two and six communities could be built for the Palestinians "a little bit away from where they are, where all of this danger is."

"I would own this. Think of it as a real estate development for the future. It would be a beautiful piece of land. No big money spent," he said.

## Romania's Outgoing President Quits to Pre-Empt Impeachment Bid



BUCHAREST (Dispatches) - Romania's outgoing centrist president Klaus Iohannis resigned on Monday to pre-empt an impeachment bid by opposition parties in parliament, with voters highly polarized and the far-right gaining ground ahead of a repeat presidential election in May.

The European Union and NATO member state, which borders Ukraine, was plunged into institutional chaos last year when little-known far-right NATO critic Calin Georgescu won the first round of a presidential election.

After accusations of Russian interference - denied by Moscow - Romania's top court voided the election and said Iohannis, whose second and last term expired on Dec. 21 would stay on until his successor was elected in a May election re-run.

But three hard-right opposition parties, which control around 35% of parliament seats, filed a motion to impeach Iohannis. The parties capitalized on popular anger directed at pro-European establishment parties mired in corruption allegations.

With the motion up for a vote, and Iohannis deeply unpopular, analysts have said some lawmakers from mainstream pro-European parties could give the hard-right's impeachment effort the required majority.

## Philippines Kicks Off Election Campaigning Amid VP Impeachment Drama

MANILA (Dispatches) - Campaigning for the Philippines' midterm elections kicked off on Tuesday against a fractured political backdrop, heightened by a high-profile row among warring elites that culminated in last week's impeachment of Vice President Sara Duterte.

The impeachment could see Duterte removed from her post and banned for life from public office and comes amid an escalating feud between her and President Ferdinand Marcos Jr, whose once-powerful alliance propelled them to a landslide election victory in 2022.

Their fallout has sent ripples through Philippine politics, turning the midterms into a high-stakes power struggle and a preview of a likely battle between their camps in the 2028 presidential race.

Marcos is limited to a single term under the constitution and is expected to groom a successor, while Duterte would be eligible to run in 2028 if she survives the impeachment.

"The ones fighting in open warfare during the midterms are the same ones who won the historic unity victory in 2022. That's very significant," said political analyst and former presidential adviser Ronald Llamas.

"They secured the highest vote count in our history, and yet, almost immediately after winning, they began to unravel. This impeachment is just one episode in an unfolding saga that could rival any Netflix series."

Up for grabs in the May elections are 317 congressional seats and thousands of local posts. But the biggest battle will be for 12 spots in the 24-seat Senate, a chamber packed with political heavyweights and wielding



outsized influence.

For Marcos, the elections are widely seen as a referendum on his leadership as he seeks to secure a legislative majority to push forward his administration's agenda.

But the stakes are equally high for Duterte, who faces an impeachment trial in the Senate expected in June. The election for the upper house will feature allies of Marcos and Duterte and will effectively decide half of the jurors in that Senate trial.

For Duterte to be removed, at least 16 senators, or two-thirds of members, must vote to convict her.

A survey by independent pollster Pulse Asia last month showed nine of Marcos' senatorial bets leading the race, but two Duterte loyalists were in the top 12, keeping the vice president's camp in contention.

The trial looms as a pivotal moment not just for Duterte but for the political dynasty of her family, whose influence skyrocketed after father, Rodrigo Duterte, won the presidential election in 2016 on a promise to tackle crime and drugs.

Rodrigo Duterte, 79, remains a formidable political figure and is running for mayor in his hometown Davao City, where his two sons are also running, for vice mayor and for a seat in Congress, hoping to bolster the family's southern stronghold.

The latest bout of drama erupted on February 5, when the lower house, led by Speaker Martin Romualdez, a cousin of Marcos, impeached Sara Duterte on charges that stemmed from accusations that included budget anomalies, amassing unusual wealth and an alleged threat to the lives of Marcos, the first lady, and Romualdez.

Duterte has denied wrongdoing, while Marcos, for his part, has said he does not support her impeachment.

Duterte led opinion polls last year on preferred candidates for the next presidency, so her removal, according to analyst Llamas, could be a boon for Marcos' chances of deciding his succession.

"If you're able to convict Sara ... in a way, you level the playing field," he said. "There's no longer any dominant candidate."

## U.S. Will Push European Allies to Buy More Arms for Ukraine

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The Trump administration plans to push European allies to buy more American weapons for Ukraine ahead of potential peace talks with Moscow, said two people with knowledge of the matter, a move that could improve Kyiv's negotiating position.

The plan, if formalized, will offer some reassurance to Ukrainian leaders who have worried that President Donald Trump might block further aid to the country, whose military has been slowly losing territory under fierce Russian assault in the east.

European countries previously had purchased American weapons for Ukraine during the Biden administration.

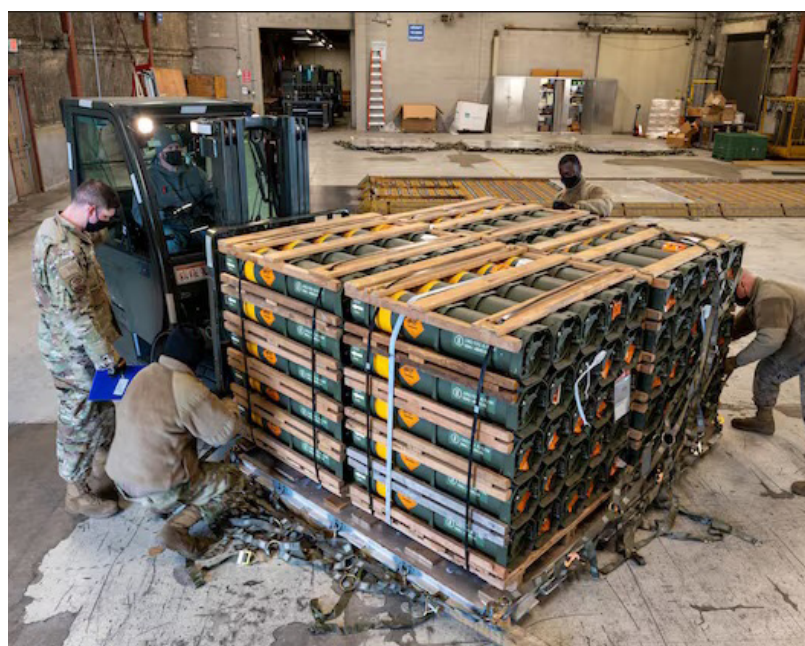
U.S. officials, including Trump's Ukrainian envoy, retired Lieutenant General Keith Kellogg, will discuss the possible weapons purchases with European allies this week during the Munich Security Conference, the sources said.

It is one of several ideas the administration is discussing to potentially continue U.S. weapons shipments to Kyiv without expending significant U.S. capital, they added.

In an interview on Monday with Reuters, Kellogg declined to confirm the plan but said, "The U.S. always likes selling weapons made in America because it strengthens our economy."

"There are a lot of options out there. Everything is in play right now," Kellogg said, adding that the shipments previously approved by former President Joe Biden still were flowing into Ukraine.

"There's not necessarily any need in the next 24 hours to it any different," he said. U.S. officials have said in recent days that the Trump administration wants to recoup the billions Washington has spent on the war in Ukraine and that Europe needs to do more to help.



"I think an underlying principle here is that the Europeans have to own this conflict going forward," U.S. national security adviser Mike Waltz said in an interview with NBC News on Sunday.

The Ukrainian embassy in Washington did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

It's unclear if the U.S. plans to ask European countries to purchase American arms through commercial contracts or directly from the American stockpile. Some commercial contracts can take years to complete.

The Trump administration has for weeks debated whether and how to continue arming Ukraine.

Trump vowed during his presidential campaign to cut off all aid to Ukraine. But some of his advisers have argued behind the scenes that Washington should continue to support Kyiv militarily, especially if the peace talks are delayed until later this year.

Biden approved more than \$65 billion in security assistance to Ukraine during his time in office, including billions in the final months of his administration.

But officials in Kyiv, including President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, have said Ukraine needs more security guarantees before entering into talks with Moscow.

The Trump White House would likely face significant pushback from some Republicans if it moves forward with asking for additional funding from Congress.

Administration officials view an arms purchase deal with Europe as a potential workaround, allowing Washington to support Kyiv without spending U.S. taxpayer dollars. NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte said last month that Europe would pay for U.S. arms for Ukraine.

## Nets Hold Off Injury-Plagued Hornets



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Nic Claxton scored 16 points as the Brooklyn Nets took control in the third quarter and earned a 97-89 victory over the Charlotte Hornets in New York.

Cameron Johnson and Day'Ron Sharpe added 14 apiece as the Nets won for the fifth time in six games since enduring a seven-game losing streak and 12 losses in 13 games. Trendon Watford contributed 13 points, while Ziaire Williams and D'Angelo Russell chipped in 11 apiece to help the Nets beat the Hornets for the third time this season. Brooklyn outscored them 51-35 in the second and third quarters.

Charlotte's Moussa Diabate scored a career-high 21 points to go along with 10 rebounds but exited after the third quarter due to a right eye abrasion.

LaMelo Ball scored five points in 10 minutes and exited in the second quarter because of right ankle soreness. On Sunday, he sat out of Charlotte's loss to the Detroit Pistons due to a sore left ankle.

Rookie Tidjane Salaun added 16 points off the bench, while Nick Smith Jr. added 13. Charlotte was held under 90 points for the second time against the Nets this season.

Miles Bridges was held to only seven points on 3-of-11 shooting as the Hornets shot 41 percent from the field, missed 25 of 31 3-point tries, and lost for the eighth time in nine games.

After a slow start, the Nets held a 34-30 lead through the opening quarter by making nine of their final 12 shots of the period. Williams, Watford, and Keon Johnson hit 3s in a span of 1:40 to give the Nets a 47-36 lead with about 7 1/2 minutes left before the Nets took a pair of 15-point leads en route to a 61-49 halftime lead.

Johnson and Claxton converted dunks on consecutive trips to push Brooklyn's lead to 76-59 with 5:34 left in the third quarter. A 3-pointer by Tosan Evbuomwan with 2:41 left gave the Nets their first 20-point lead and they held an 85-65 lead into the fourth.

Brooklyn upped its lead to 22 early in the fourth and pulled most of its starters for good a few minutes later before Charlotte made the final score respectable in the final minutes.

Meanwhile Victor Wembanyama produced a 31-point, 15-rebound double-double and De'Aaron Fox added 30 points, 12 of them in the fourth quarter, as the visiting San Antonio Spurs defeated the Washington Wizards 131-121.

The Spurs were up by three points at halftime, by four heading into the final quarter and never gave up the lead down the stretch. Wembanyama's driving layup with 2:40 left in the game stoked the San Antonio advantage to 124-115, and the Spurs cruised to the finish line to snap a two-game losing streak.

Stephon Castle added 16 points, Jeremy Sochan had 14 and Harrison Barnes tallied 12 for the Spurs, who also got 10 assists from Chris Paul.

All nine players who saw the court for Washington scored in double figures, but that could not stop the Wizards from dropping their third straight game and 19th in the past 22 outings.

Tristan Vukcevic scored 18 points to lead the balanced Washington attack, with Richaun Holmes adding 17, Jordan Poole hitting for 16 and Corey Kispert and Justin Champagnie racking up 14 apiece.

The Spurs roared out of the gate, grabbing a 28-10 lead after a Fox dunk at the 5:11 mark of the first quarter. Washington fought back, drawing within 37-30 when Vukcevic nailed a running 3-pointer with 33.9 seconds left in the frame, and the hosts trailed 40-30 after 12 minutes of play.

The Wizards moved in front on Malcolm Brogdon's layup with 8:37 remaining in the second period, and the game was tied at 57 when Castle smashed home a dunk with 2:43 to play until halftime. Another dunk by Castle with 28.2 seconds left put San Antonio up 63-60 before a 3-pointer by Paul with 1.5 seconds remaining allowed the Spurs to take a 66-63 advantage into the break.

## Ronaldo Reaches Deal to Extend Saudi Club Al Nassr Contract



RIYADH (Dispatches) - Portuguese football star Cristiano Ronaldo has reached an agreement with Al Nassr to extend his contract by another year until June 2026, an official with the Saudi club told AFP.

The official said the sides have agreed on the renewable extension of Ronaldo's contract, "but it has not been signed yet. An announcement will be made over the coming days".

Ronaldo turned 40 last week with his current contract due to end in June 2025.

The former Manchester United, Real Madrid and Juventus star joined Al Nassr in January 2023 and has since scored 82 goals in 90 matches.

In August, Ronaldo said he would stay with Al Nassr through the end of his professional career, which may be "soon or in two or three years".

"But it'll most likely happen with Al Nassr, in the team that makes me happy... and where I feel good."

The Portuguese great appeared to trade an end-of-career payday for football obscurity when he moved to Riyadh's Al Nassr two years ago in a deal said to be worth US\$250 million.

But his influence became clear when he was followed by a parade of ageing superstars to the big-spending Saudi Pro League.

Saudi Arabia was then awarded the 2034 World Cup in December, the crowning glory for the oil-rich kingdom's strategy of revamping its image through sports, tourism and culture.

When Ronaldo launched his YouTube channel in August, he gained one million subscribers in just 90 minutes and 20 million within 24 hours. He currently has 73.5 million.

Although World Cup glory has probably eluded him, unlike his Argentine rival Lionel Messi, records still dangle in front of the five-time Ballon d'Or and Champions League winner.

## Korda Stunned in Marseille Opener

MARSEILLE (Dispatches) - Finland's Otto Virtanen brought down No. 5 seed Sebastian Korda 6-7 (3), 7-6 (4), 6-4 in the first round of the Open 13 Provence in Marseille, France.

Virtanen, 23, had never beaten an opponent ranked top-30 in the world before defeating the American in two hours and 32 minutes. Virtanen fired 19 aces, saved 6 of 8 break points and broke Korda in the first game of the third set to take control.

No. 7 seed Lorenzo Sonego of Italy fared better than Korda, but he also needed three sets before beating Dutch opponent Botic van de Zandschulp 6-1, 3-6, 6-3. Serbia's Hamad Medjedovic moved past Belgium's Raphael Collignon 6-3, 6-4.

Thiago Seyboth Wild of Brazil rallied past Argentina's Facundo Diaz Acosta, 3-6, 6-2, 6-3, in first-round action in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Diaz Acosta out-aced Seyboth Wild 10-4 and saved 7 of 11 break points, but Seyboth Wild went up a break in the sixth game of the final set and hung on to defeat the home-crowd favorite.

Dusan Lajovic of Serbia beat Spaniard Roberto Carballes Baena 7-6 (8), 7-5, while Serbian qualifier Laslo Djere swept Frenchman Alexandre Muller 6-3, 6-3. The final match scheduled for Monday night pitted Argentine countrymen Mariano Navone and Francisco Comesana.

No. 7 seed Miomir Kecmanovic of Serbia won 32 of 37 first-service points (86.5 percent) and defeated Croatia's Borna Gojo 6-4, 6-4 in the opening round in Florida.



Great Britain's Cameron Norrie, unseeded this week but ranked as highly as No. 8 in his career, also advanced in straight sets with a 7-5, 6-4 victory over American qualifier Zachary Svajda. Lucky loser Ethan Quinn took down qualifier Tristan Boyer 6-2, 6-7 (5), 7-6 (2) in an all-American battle in three hours and 12 minutes.

Two matches were on the night slate, with Kazakhstan's Alexander Shevchenko facing Michael Mmoh of the United States and James Trotter of Japan playing No. 6 seed Brandon Nakashima of the U.S. 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.

## Shiffrin to Partner Johnson at World Championships



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - American ski great Mikaela Shiffrin will partner newly-crowned downhill champion Breezy Johnson in the women's team combined at the Alpine world championships in Austria after deciding on Monday she was not mentally ready for the giant slalom.

Shiffrin, who has a world championship medal haul of 14 which includes a record seven golds, returned to racing at the end of January two months after a ski crash during a giant slalom race left her with a puncture wound in her abdomen.

"The long-story-short is...I'm not there. Right now, I feel quite far away," Shiffrin posted on Instagram.

"I'm currently working through some mental obstacles in order to return to the GS start with the intensity required for racing."

"Honestly, I really didn't anticipate experiencing so much of this kind of mental/PTSD struggle in GS from my injury in Killington."

Last week, Shiffrin announced her withdrawal from the team combined event in order to focus on the giant slalom and slalom races, but her change of heart will not bring her together with 40-year-old Lindsey Vonn, which many saw as the dream team.

"I'd feel lucky and grateful to partner with any of my incredible Speed teammates—and our coaches have now informed us that Breezy and I will be paired together for the event," Shiffrin said.

"Breezy and I have been racing together since we were 11. We've been roommates, competitors, friends. It will be so cool to bring this full circle."

Vonn, who came out of retirement last November after more than five years away from competitive skiing, finished 15th in Saturday's downhill won by Johnson, and will partner AJ Hurt in the team combined event.

"Always been a team player and I support my team no matter what," Vonn posted on X.

"I'm not surprised by the decisions made but at least now it's clear that it's not my decision. I have always been supportive and respectful and that will never change."

The team combined event, where each nation can field up to four teams, is scheduled for Tuesday, while the slalom takes place on Saturday.

## Philadelphia Eagles Quarterback wins Super Bowl MVP

NEW ORLEANS (Dispatches) - A poised performance earned Philadelphia Eagles quarterback Jalen Hurts his first Super Bowl MVP award on Sunday, after leading his team to a 40-22 revenge win over the Kansas City Chiefs in New Orleans.

Hurts left the NFL title game two years ago in a flurry of Chiefs red and gold confetti and refused to let history repeat itself at the Superdome, throwing for 221 yards and two touchdowns with another score on the ground as well.

"I took great pride in never backing down from a challenge, always turning my negatives into positives," said Hurts, who has led the Eagles to the playoffs in all of his four seasons as a starter in Philadelphia.

"In the end, things come right on time. Last time around, it wasn't our time. It wasn't my time. Sometimes you have to wait your turn."

The two-time Pro Bowler plowed into the end zone behind his powerful offensive line to get the scoring started in the first quarter with his team's signature move - called the "brotherly shove" in reference to Philadelphia's "City of Brotherly Love" nickname.

Hurts' only real blunder of the evening came early in the second quarter, as he threw a goal-line interception, but it had no real impact on the game as the Chiefs were forced the punt on the next possession.

Hurts connected with receiver A.J. Brown for another score with less than two minutes left in the first half and threw a 46-yard dime



to DeVonta Smith to make it 33-0 late in the third quarter.

Hurts was nimble against the blitz and slipped 17 yards past the Kansas City defense to set up the third of kicker Jake Elliott's four successful field goal attempts early in the fourth.

Hurts' Kansas City counterpart Patrick Mahomes heaped praise on the versatile playmaker, as the Eagles celebrated their second Super Bowl title following a win against the New England Patriots in 2018.

"If he needs to run the ball, he'll run it; if he needs to throw the ball, he will throw it. And if he needs to make a big play, he will make the big play," Mahomes told reporters.

"In the first Super Bowl we played against, I said he will be back, and he was."

Hurts, a 26-year-old former second-round draft pick, shook off a frustrating 2-2 start to the regular season before winning a franchise-record 10 straight games.

His postseason campaign appeared in trouble after he suffered a worrisome knee injury in the second half of the Eagles' Divisional Round win against the Los Angeles Rams.

But he quashed fans' concerns with a 55-23 win over the Washington Commanders in the NFC Championship the following week and on Sunday appeared to be in pristine condition.