

Iranian Army Has Debuted a New Advanced Jet During Major Joint Maneuvers Enlisting the Force's Various Divisions in the Country's Southern Coastline and Waters as Well as Part of the Indian Ocean

# IRAN NEWS

Foreign Ministry Has Summoned the Polish Chargé d'Affaires to Tehran to Protest Warsaw's "Biased and Baseless" Remarks Regarding Military Cooperation Between Iran and Russia in the Ukraine War

## 2 DOMESTIC



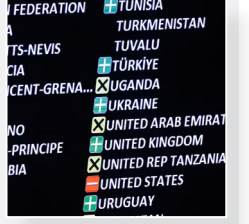
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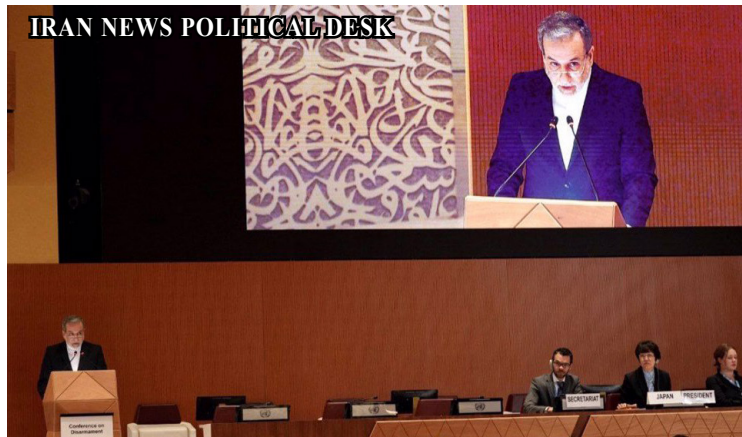
### Iran Needs No Country



TEHRAN - In a ceremony inaugurating development projects by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) in Shiraz, Major General Hossein Salami, the IRGC's Commander-in-Chief, declared that Iran has no need for any foreign nation, emphasizing the country's rich land and capable people. "We are not dependent on any country in the world because we possess a prosperous land and a talented population. The spirit of faith flows through our society, and this is an unparalleled asset," he stated, adding, "The IRGC sacrifices its life for the people."

## Israel's Nukes Endangering World, Blasts U.S. Nuclear Spending Spree

TEHRAN - Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi says the international community must push the Israeli regime to join the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and put all its nuclear facilities under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Safeguards.



eliminating Hamas despite killing more than 48,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, in Gaza. After 15 months of war, Israel was forced to accept a ceasefire agreement with Hamas to end the war and exchange prisoners. Elsewhere in his address, the top Iranian diplomat warned against the dangerous consequences of unilateralism for international peace and security.

"The international community must hold this regime accountable, and demand that it renounce the possession of nuclear weapons, accede to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon party, and subject all its nuclear facilities and activities to the comprehensive IAEA Safeguards," he said. He said the weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons possessed by the Israeli regime, continue to pose a grave threat to regional and global peace and security. The minister emphasized that the Israeli regime is hindering the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in West Asia and continues to threaten others with nuclear annihilation. Israel is estimated to possess 200 to 400 nuclear warheads in its arsenal, making it the sole possessor of non-conventional arms in West Asia. It has refused to either allow inspections of its nuclear facilities or sign the NPT. Araqchi cited the vivid suggestion of using nuclear weapons against the people of Palestine in the Gaza Strip as a vivid example of the Israeli regime's outlawed action. "We categorically condemn this illegitimate, illegal, and irresponsible action and position," the Iranian foreign minister said. Araqchi added that the Israeli regime inflicted the most horrifying record of aggression, genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity in the 21st century in the occupied Palestinian territory, which no human conscience should tolerate. "The deliberate war crimes, ethnic cleansing, mass starvation, and collective punishment exercised by the Israeli regime shall not remain unpunished." Israel unleashed its brutal Gaza onslaught on October 7, 2023, after the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas carried out a historic operation against the occupying entity in retaliation for its intensified atrocities against the Palestinian people. However, the Tel Aviv regime failed to achieve its declared objectives of freeing captives and

Simultaneously, he added, countries like Britain are expanding their nuclear stockpiles and lowering the threshold for possible nuclear weapon use. The Iranian foreign minister said the world is currently witnessing increased resort to the use of threat or force, military intervention, unilateral coercive measures, and political pressure, in disregard to the longstanding commitments to disarmament and arms control. "This is an alarming trend that must be reversed immediately," he said. The Iranian minister pointed to the erosion of key nuclear arms control agreements and warned against widespread non-compliance with legally binding obligations related to nuclear disarmament, particularly under Article VI of the NPT. "Regrettably, there is no promising prospect for change in the foreseeable future. The international community rightfully expects the nuclear-weapon states to be held accountable for their obligations," he said. Araqchi said nuclear weapons "continue to be an existential" threat to humanity, explaining that their use would result in catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences. The minister stressed that the United Nations must put nuclear disarmament high on its priority, saying, "To this end, the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons must remain a taboo." "The only guaranteed safeguard against their use or threat lies in their complete and verifiable elimination, accompanied by legally binding assurances of non-production, avoidance of nuclear sharing, as well as non-formation of nuclear military alliances," Araqchi stated.

### Impeachment of Economy Minister Fuels Market Instability



TEHRAN - In a meeting with members of the Hamedan Province parliamentary delegation, President Masoud Pezeshkian addressed the proposed impeachment of the Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance, warning that such a move has already contributed to market instability. "Changing people won't solve the problem," he stated, emphasizing that economic turbulence is heavily influenced by news and events. "I've always stressed that quarrels resolve nothing." Pezeshkian underscored his administration's commitment to empowering provincial governors, noting that local officials and representatives can make decisions more effectively and at lower costs. "We've formed a task force to expand governors' authority within the framework of the law and the Supreme Leader's general policies," he said, adding that the matter is under review. Highlighting the 14th government's principle of honesty, the president admitted to resource limitations: "We can only fulfill a specific number of requests. If I promised to solve all the issues you've raised, I'd be lying—and I won't say that." On the impeachment issue, Pezeshkian reiterated that economic stability is sensitive to external decisions and global developments. "Even a decision in another country can shake markets. In this context, news of the economy minister's impeachment has added to market unrest," he remarked. The president also outlined ambitious plans for renewable energy, stating, "I'm personally overseeing the development of solar, wind, and thermal power plants as a top priority." In foreign policy, he emphasized dialogue as a cornerstone of his administration's strategy. "We're open to talks and are currently negotiating with various countries, including neighbors. Dr. [Abbas] Araqchi is traveling for discussions with Europeans. But we cannot negotiate with someone who openly threatens us and holds a chokehold over us."

### Unjust Sanctions Inflict Suffering on Innocent Iranians



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi says Iran has faced various challenges, including "unjust economic sanctions and terrorism," over the past decades. "For decades, the Iranian people have faced grave challenges, including unjust economic sanctions and terrorism, which have had many a devastating impact on their social and economic rights," Araqchi said at the 58th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council in the Swiss city of Geneva on Monday. However, he said Iran has managed to overcome these challenges and made "notable achievements" including the improvement of health services, education, and women's rights, and the development of the country's industries and economy. "One of the greatest obstacles to the realization of human rights at the global level is the recourse to unilateral coercive measures. Such measures have destructive ramifications on ordinary people while oppressively affecting the more vulnerable groups." "Iran has long fallen victim to such misguided policies." Noting that sanctions restrict the targeted countries' access to basic necessities such as medicine, Iran's top diplomat called for the "immediate removal of all unilateral sanctions." These sanctions "not only violate the fundamental human rights of the Iranian people but also inflict suffering on millions of innocent individuals." Elsewhere in his remarks, Araqchi referred to Israel's crimes against Palestinians. "Iran unequivocally condemns the genocide perpetrated by the occupying regime in Gaza," he said.

## Hezbollah's Display of Power Proved Resistance Cannot Be Eliminated

TEHRAN - Majlis Speaker has reaffirmed that the Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah's strength and popularity have made it impossible for enemies to eliminate resistance from Lebanon's political and security landscape. In a speech delivered during Tuesday's session of the legislature, Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf praised Hezbollah's power and unity, adding that the recent display of Hezbollah's power made it evident that enemies cannot remove or marginalize the resistance from Lebanon's political and security landscape.



The official was pointing to the movement's determined and successful defense of Lebanon during more than a year of Israeli escalation, which eventually forced Tel Aviv into accepting a ceasefire agreement. "Hezbollah is an integral part of Lebanon's national strength and a guarantor of the country's security and territorial integrity," the official noted. He highlighted Hezbollah's commitment to Lebanon's national interests and sovereignty, stressing that the movement did not brook foreign intervention in the country's internal affairs. "Hezbollah prioritizes Lebanon's national interests and insists on the non-interference of any foreign power." Qalibaf, meanwhile, emphasized that the recent large-scale funeral of the movement's revered former secretary general Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah and Sayyed Hashem Safieddine, who used to head Hezbollah's Executive Council, was a testament to the group's unbreakable popular support. Nasrallah and Safieddine were assassinated during the Israeli escalation last year. Further discussing the historic funeral that took place in the Lebanese capital Beirut on Monday, Qalibaf described the monumental participation by Lebanese and foreign national in the event as a clear display of Hezbollah's strength and growing power. "The massive and dignified funeral of Martyr Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah and Martyr Sayyed Hashem Safieddine showcased the unity of the resistance and the firm popular support behind

Hezbollah," he stated. The top parliamentarian continued to emphasize that Nasrallah's influence used to shine like a "radiant sun" among his followers. "His message to the world was clear: Standing firm against oppression, occupation, and the crimes of the Zionist regime is a deeply rooted ideology. Such a belief cannot be extinguished by terrorism or assassination." The official shared his observations from Lebanon, describing the unshakable faith and commitment of its people as witnessed during Nasrallah and Safieddine's funeral procession and laying to rest ceremony. "I saw men and women in Lebanon, who deeply loved their late leader, and without exaggeration, not a single one of them feared the enemy. They harbored no doubt or despair." "They held sincere and unshakable faith in Islam, the teachings of Imam Hussein (AS) (the third Shia Imam), Zainab (SA) (Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)'s eldest daughter), and the resistance's cause [of liberation from Israeli occupation and aggression]," Qalibaf said. "When I saw the steadfast crowds in Lebanon, standing firm like mountains, I was once again certain that no tyrant or criminal can extinguish the light of God. Ultimately, the truth will prevail." Qalibaf addressed Hezbollah's powerful political and military role further, emphasizing that the Lebanese resistance was central to the country's national strength and territorial integrity. In a final tribute to the martyrs, Qalibaf expressed deep admiration for those who had sacrificed their lives in pursuit of justice. "We envy the martyrs who, in the school of Imam Hussein (AS), achieved final salvation. Through their blood, they separated truth from falsehood. May we also be granted honor, dignity, divine favor, and martyrdom in the path of God," he said.

### Iran Has Attracted \$8.2b of Foreign Investment Since August



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's incumbent administration says that the amount of foreign investment attracted into the country since it came to office in August has exceeded \$8.2 billion. A Monday report by the semi-official Tasnim news agency said that projects in Iran's petroleum and energy sector were responsible for some \$5.5 billion worth of foreign investment between August and January. It added that foreign investment in Iran's manufacturing sector had exceeded \$2 billion over the same period, adding that investors from other countries had also committed to some \$128 million worth of projects in Iran's agriculture and mining sectors. Foreign investment contracts approved for other sectors of the Iranian economy reached \$459 million over the six months to late January, the report said. Investors from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) were responsible for 64.9% of the foreign investment contracts signed and finalized in the past six months, said the report, adding that UAE investors would provide \$5.4 billion worth of funding to 35 projects in Iran based on the contracts. The report said that Chinese investors had been approved for \$805 million worth of funding in 30 projects in Iran based on decisions adopted in the six months to late January, adding that investors from the Iranian diaspora would provide \$763 million worth of investment to 97 projects. The report cited figures from the Organization for Investment & Economic and Technical Assistance of Iran which vets foreign investors seeking to contribute to projects in the country. Iran has sought to relax its rules on foreign investment in recent years amid efforts to offset the impacts of foreign sanctions on its economy.

# IRAN NEWS



## Tehran to Host 17th TRACECA Intergovernmental Commission Meeting

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - The Head of the International Affairs Center at Iran's Ministry of Roads and Urban Development, Amin Taraffo, announced that Tehran will host the 17th session of the TRACECA Intergovernmental Commission on March 8.

Taraffo stated that this marks the first time Iran will host the meeting of the Europe-Caucasus-Asia Corridor (TRACECA) Intergovernmental Commission.

Taraffo explained that on March 7, a preparatory meeting of TRACECA national secretaries will take place to review and finalize documents slated for definitive decisions during the main session on March 8.

Highlighting the benefits for Iran, Taraffo noted, "This meeting provides an opportunity to pursue inter-regional initiatives multilaterally, given the participation of 14 member states. It aims to boost transit growth for Iran in collaboration with other regional countries."

## Iran-Japan Cultural Week Proposed by Iran Chamber of Commerce Carpet Commission



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TEHRAN - The Carpet, Art, and Handicrafts Commission of the Iran Chamber of Commerce recently convened to explore avenues of collaboration between Iran and Japan amidst ongoing sanctions. The meeting emphasized cultural, educational, and environmental initiatives as key areas of focus to strengthen ties between the two nations.

During the session, members proposed organizing an Iran-Japan Cultural Week in collaboration with the Iran-Japan Joint Chamber and the Carpet Commission, citing the cultural proximity between the two countries as a foundation for enhanced cooperation.

Hossein Salahvarzi, President of the Iran-Japan Joint Chamber, opened the meeting by highlighting the historically amicable relations between Iran and Japan. "There is no negative memory of Japan in the historical consciousness of Iranians," he stated, noting Japan's potential to meet Iran's technological and technical needs. Despite sanctions, Salahvarzi emphasized that trade between the two nations has not entirely ceased, and a broad range of non-trade activities—such as cultural and humanitarian exchanges—are feasible and included in the Joint Chamber's agenda for the coming year.

Acknowledging the challenges posed by sanctions, Salahvarzi suggested redirecting cooperation toward non-sanctioned sectors, including pharmaceuticals, humanitarian efforts, environmental projects, education, and research. He stressed the critical need to secure OFAC (Office of Foreign Assets Control) permits to facilitate collaboration with Japan, adding that the Joint Chamber is prepared to work closely with the Carpet Commission and specialized associations on initiatives involving carpets and handicrafts.

## Tourism Plays Significant Role in Boosting Iran's Economy

TEHRAN - Judiciary Chief, Hojatoleslam Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei, emphasized the vital role of tourism in strengthening the country's economy and creating sustainable employment during a speech at the closing ceremony of the 9th Fajr International Handicrafts Festival (Silver Cypress) on Monday evening. Speaking to attendees, he urged authorities to maximize the potential of the tourism industry to increase foreign currency reserves.

Mohseni Ejei highlighted the unparalleled contribution of cultural heritage and handicrafts to elevating Iran's Islamic civilization.

"We, as officials and servants of the system, need to listen more than we speak. Today, we must better understand our society, its capacities, talents, and innovations," he said. He stressed that recognizing the challenges faced by all segments of society is essential for officials to fulfill their responsibilities effectively.

Addressing the significant role of Iranian women, Mohseni Ejei noted, "Women make up half of our society. Do we, as system officials, fully recognize their talents and capabilities?" He underscored their importance as a key and influential demographic in the country.

The Judiciary Chief also called for greater efforts to introduce Iran's rich cultural and civilizational heritage—spanning thousands of years and encompassing over a million cultural and archaeological artifacts—to both the Iranian people and the global community. "We must protect and preserve our rich cultural heritage more diligently so that future generations take pride in our stewardship," he added.

Mohseni Ejei identified the economy and people's livelihoods as the nation's top priority, asserting that tourism is a key industry capable of bolstering economic foundations and generating sustainable jobs. "We must leverage tourism's potential to boost the country's foreign exchange resources," he said, while cautioning that this development should not come at the expense of Iran's cultural and religious values or allow foreign cultural infiltration.

He further explained that a thriving tourism and handicraft sector could lead to sustainable employment, which in turn would help reduce social issues. "The prosperity of tourism and handicrafts can create lasting jobs, significantly contributing to alleviating social anomalies," he remarked.



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Turning to handicrafts, Mohseni Ejei described them as a blend of art, talent, knowledge, and human virtues, suggesting that the term "handicrafts" might undervalue their significance. "Perhaps we should choose a more exalted name for this art," he proposed. Drawing from personal experience, he recalled weaving carpets with his sisters during childhood, noting how artisans, like engineers or mathematicians, perfect their craft with precision and creativity.

He emphasized the grassroots nature of the handicraft economy, stating, "We constantly stress that the economy must be people-driven—what could be more people-centric than handicrafts? It requires minimal investment, and most importantly, it strengthens family foundations."

Mohseni Ejei praised the potential of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, suggesting it could be harnessed to better showcase Islamic Iran and counter "Iranophobia." "As more tourists visit Iran, the negative propaganda of enemies and adversaries is neutralized," he said.

He pledged the Judiciary's support for the tourism and handicraft sectors, stating, "We are prepared to collaborate with relevant authorities to remove obstacles and address challenges facing these industries. We also stand ready to enhance efforts to protect our rich cultural and civilizational heritage."

Highlighting the need to resolve issues faced by foreign tourists, Mohseni Ejei noted that visitors unfamiliar with Iran's laws and norms might encounter legal difficulties. "We are willing to work with the Ministry to address these legal challenges," he said, adding that initial steps should include familiarizing tourists with Iran's regulations. He also committed to bolstering security measures for foreign visitors.

The Judiciary Chief urged stakeholders in the tourism and handicraft industries to appoint representatives for brainstorming sessions with judicial officials to tackle sector-specific problems collaboratively.

In closing, Mohseni Ejei reiterated that resolving Iran's economic challenges is nearly impossible without private sector and public participation. "The Judiciary considers it a duty to assist the private sector, remove production barriers, and support a production leap," he said, extending this commitment to those active in handicrafts and tourism.

## Tehran and Islamabad Pursue Free Trade as Pakistan



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Abdul Hakim Rigi Mirjaveh, President of the Iran-Pakistan Joint Chamber of Commerce, revealed that Pakistan has expressed dissatisfaction with Iran's preference for importing Brazilian meat over Pakistani meat, despite Pakistan being a significant market for various Iranian goods.

Rigi Mirjaveh emphasized the need for free trade between the two nations. "Iran and Pakistan have signed a preferential trade agreement, under which approximately 650 items are exempt from up to 30% of tariffs in bilateral trade. Our next step is to establish free trade with Pakistan," he said. He noted that achieving free trade requires parliamentary approval from both countries, with ministries currently reviewing sensitive items—textiles for Iran and steel for Pakistan. "Ultimately, a free trade agreement must be signed," he added.

He contrasted Pakistan's openness to free trade with Afghanistan's reluctance, explaining, "Unlike Afghanistan, which relies on customs revenue and sees little benefit in zero tariffs due to Iran's dominant exports, Pakistan's government welcomes free trade with Iran. While Iran's trade balance with Pakistan remains positive, the gap between exports and imports is small, making free trade feasible. Both parliaments recognize its importance."

Rigi Mirjaveh listed rice, mangoes, and heavy livestock meat as Pakistan's primary exports to Iran. Addressing meat imports, he said, "Pakistan complains that Iran favors Brazilian meat over Pakistani meat, even though Pakistan consumes a wide range of Iranian products. Iran spends dollars on Brazilian frozen meat, while it could trade barter-style with Pakistan for fresh meat, delivered faster due to proximity. The Veterinary Organization confirms the safety of Pakistani meat, yet it's unclear why Brazilian meat takes priority."

He also stressed the need for economic stability in Iran, warning, "Without government support, many small and medium enterprises face bankruptcy, potentially increasing unemployment and worsening livelihood challenges."

## Iran Boosts Tourism with Credit Cards for Foreign Visitors, Infrastructure Upgrades



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran is tackling barriers to tourism growth head-on, with Deputy Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Anoushirvan Mohseni Bandpey, announcing innovative solutions in an IRNA interview. A key move includes negotiations with the Central Bank to provide foreign tourists with credit cards upon arrival, simplifying financial transactions and enhancing their experience.

Mohseni Bandpey underscored the 14th administration's dedication to expanding tourism, stating, "We're collaborating with the Central Bank chief to ensure foreign visitors have seamless access to funds." The strategy goes beyond convenience, involving international exhibitions to spotlight Iran's diverse attractions and encouraging private agencies to draw tourists from across the globe.

The 18th International Tourism and Related Industries Exhibition, held February 12-15, 2025, at Tehran's Imam Khomeini Mosalla, was a standout success, reinforcing Iran's global appeal. Visa waivers are also in play, with a recent deal secured with Tajikistan and more in the pipeline. "Our focus is on three pillars: attractions, infrastructure, and security," Mohseni Bandpey said, highlighting Iran's unique four-season climate and rich geography as major draws.

Under the Seventh Development Plan, the Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts is spearheading infrastructure upgrades, working with other ministries to support the effort. Addressing Iranophobia, Mohseni Bandpey noted, "Despite misinformation, tourists feel safe here—a strength we need to amplify."

Iran's advantages in health tourism, coupled with its cultural heritage, culinary delights, and stunning landscapes, make it a compelling destination. The deputy minister emphasized eliminating entry obstacles and boosting promotion to capitalize on these assets. For domestic travelers, affordable packages have been rolled out, while the Central Coordination Headquarters for Travel Services—comprising 27 agencies—gears up for safe, enjoyable Nowruz holiday trips.

"We're showcasing Iran's potential through seminars and exhibitions," Mohseni Bandpey concluded. "By addressing challenges and highlighting our strengths, we're poised to elevate tourism significantly." This push signals Iran's intent to position tourism as a vital driver of economic growth and cultural connection on the world stage.

## Agricultural Trade Balance Remains Negative Amid Smuggling of American Almonds

TEHRAN - Seyed Reza Nourani, President of Iran's National Agricultural Products Union, stated that statistical data reveals a persistent dominance of agricultural imports over exports, signaling that Iran's agricultural trade balance remains negative this year, as it was in the previous year.

Nourani provided an overview of Iran's agricultural trade status. He reported that over the first 10 months of 2025, Iran exported 778,000 tons of fresh tomatoes, 646,000 tons of apples, 632,000 tons of watermelons, and 407,000 tons of potatoes—making these the top exported agricultural goods. In terms of export value, pistachios led with \$1.286 billion, followed by powdered milk at \$361 million, tomatoes at \$354 million, apples at \$285.5 million, and dates at \$286 million.

He noted that during the same period, Iran exported 8.356 million tons of agricultural products valued at \$6.662 billion, compared to 6.834 million tons worth \$4.946 billion in 2024. This reflects a 22% increase in export volume and a 34% rise in value year-over-year.

On the import side, Nourani detailed that over the first 10 months of 2025, Iran imported 20.224 million tons of agricultural products valued at \$13.117 billion, down from 21.229 million tons worth \$14.914 billion in 2024—a decrease of less than 5% in volume and 12% in value. "The figures clearly show that imports outweigh exports, confirming a negative trade balance for agricultural products this year, consistent with last year," he remarked.

Addressing recent potato shortages, Nourani cited production estimates of 5.5 million tons this year against a national consumption of 4.8 million tons. "Given these numbers, we shouldn't face shortages, yet the Ministry of Agriculture has planned to import 50,000 tons," he said, questioning the necessity of such measures.

Nourani refuted claims of Iranian agricultural exports being



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

returned due to quality issues, asserting, "Over the past two years, no exported agricultural products have been sent back." He addressed a single exception involving European claims of aflatoxin contamination in some pistachio shipments, which was resolved in a joint meeting with the Dried Fruit Exporters Union, the Ministry of Agriculture, and European counterparts, allowing exports to continue.

He listed Russia, Eurasian Union countries, Persian Gulf nations, East Asia, and Europe as key export markets, while noting Iraq's

unreliability due to unpredictable import restrictions, reducing its appeal for Iranian exporters.

Nourani criticized the import licensing process, recalling a time when kiwi, apple, and citrus exporters were granted banana import permits. "This made sense when we had surpluses—like when apples were used as animal feed—but now that surpluses are gone, the system needs reform," he said.

He pointed to regulatory weaknesses that led to a ban on cashew imports, yet the market saw widespread availability through smuggling. "This prevented oversight by the Plant Protection Organization, deprived the government of customs revenue, and blocked legitimate sourcing," he explained. After years of prohibition, the Ministry of Agriculture lifted the cashew import ban four months ago. However, tree almonds remain banned, with American and Canadian products entering via smuggling, alongside prohibited walnut kernels from Turkmenistan and other Central Asian countries.

Nourani's remarks underscore ongoing challenges in Iran's agricultural trade, from negative balances and regulatory inefficiencies to the persistent issue of smuggled goods undermining legitimate markets.

## Iran's Petrochemical Industry Reaches 100m Ton Capacity Milestone



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The Managing Director of the National Petrochemical Company (NPC), Hassan Abbas-Zadeh, announced that Iran's petrochemical production capacity has reached approximately 100 million tons annually.

Speaking at the specialized session "The Future of the Petrochemical Industry" during the third PetroTech conference on Monday evening, he revealed that 60% of this output consists of key base products such as methanol, ammonia, ethylene, and other significant compounds.

Abbas-Zadeh acknowledged certain production gaps, particularly in propylene, stating, "By completing the value chain for this critical product, we can manufacture high-value-added goods, meeting domestic needs while also exporting surplus abroad." He emphasized that development hinges on adopting new technologies, with the Seventh Development Plan outlining a clear roadmap for progress across various dimensions.

Highlighting the industry's energy contributions, Abbas-Zadeh noted that three utility-producing petrochemical complexes generate around 4,000 megawatts of electricity, with surplus power supplied to the national grid. He added, "The petrochemical sector uses just 4% of the country's gas production as feedstock for its complexes."

Stressing the importance of optimizing Iran's oil and gas reserves, he said, "By diversifying feedstock options, leveraging modern technologies, and incorporating renewable energy, the petrochemical industry can achieve production growth in line with strategic planning."

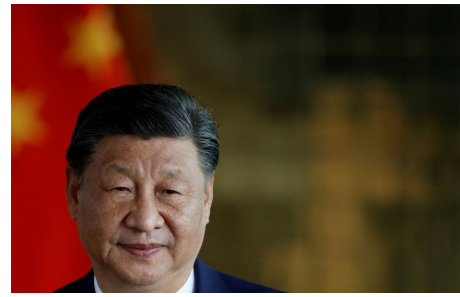
Abbas-Zadeh underscored the NPC's regulatory role as a government representative, fostering collaboration, convergence, production growth, and balanced industry development.

## Xi Jinping Calls Russia a True Friend

BEIJING (Dispatches) - President Xi Jinping said China and Russia are "true friends" who "support each other", state media reported today.

Xinhua reported Xi as saying that "history and reality show that China and Russia are good neighbours that cannot be moved away, and true friends who share weal and woe, support each other and achieve common development".

The state news agency earlier reported that Xi and Putin held a phone call today "upon invitation" with the Russian leader. Moscow and Beijing have strengthened military and trade ties since Russia sent troops into Ukraine, though China has sought to depict itself as a neutral party amid the nearly three-year conflict.



## Ukraine Marks Russia Invasion Anniversary



KYIV (Dispatches) - Ukraine hosted European leaders to mark three years of all-out war with Russia since Moscow's invasion, while top U.S. officials stayed away in a clear illustration of President Donald Trump's lurch towards Moscow since returning to power.

Still reeling from Trump falsely calling President Volodymyr Zelenskyy a "dictator", Kyiv said it was in the final stages of reaching a deal with Washington to provide U.S. access to its mineral wealth.

After meeting with French President Emmanuel Macron at the White House, Trump said Zelenskyy could travel to Washington this week or next to seal the minerals agreement, which he called "very close," and suggested the war in Ukraine could end within weeks. But he did not elaborate.

"Our focus is on achieving a ceasefire as soon as possible, and ultimately a permanent peace," Trump said during a joint press conference with Macron.

Macron, in a later interview with Fox News, said he believes a truce in Ukraine is feasible in the next few weeks. A U.S. minerals deal with Kyiv would be one of the best ways to ensure a commitment from Washington, he said.

Trump stopped short of saying, however, that the minerals agreement would contain the explicit U.S. security guarantees that Ukraine has sought and put the onus on Europe for the "central role" in assuring the country's long-term security.

A Ukrainian government source said the U.S. did not like the idea of including wording about providing security guarantees.

The minerals deal is at the heart of Kyiv's bid to win U.S. support, but officials have negotiated in the shadow of an extraordinary war of words between Trump and Zelenskyy, who said the U.S. leader was living in a "disinformation bubble".

Trump's rush to impose an end to Russia's war in Ukraine - and his seeming embrace of part of the Kremlin narrative - have stoked fears of far-reaching U.S. concessions to Russian President Vladimir Putin that could undermine security in Ukraine and Europe and alter the geopolitical landscape.

## Germany's Merz Warns It's Five Minutes to Midnight for Europe



BERLIN (Dispatches) - Germany's election winner Friedrich Merz warned the United States on Monday against turning its back on allies but also urged Europeans to build up their own defence capabilities, saying it was now "five minutes to midnight for Europe".

His comments underscored the turmoil engulfing the transatlantic alliance since the re-election of U.S. President Donald Trump and fears he could strike a deal with Russia over Ukraine while Kyiv and Europe just watch from the sidelines.

Merz's conservatives are looking to quickly form a government after winning a national election on Sunday but face tricky coalition talks and the prospect of an obstructive parliament after far-right and far-left parties surged.

Time is pressing for Europe's ailing largest economy. German businesses are demanding help to remain globally competitive, society is split over migration and the new government must also deal with a confrontational Trump administration threatening tariffs as well as a hostile Russia and an assertive China.

"And what we also see with the greatest concern, of course, is the attempt (by Trump) to make a deal with Russia on Ukraine over the heads of the Europeans, over the heads of Ukraine," Merz told a press conference.

"It will come as no surprise to you when I say that this is unacceptable both for Ukraine and for Europe," Merz said, adding it would be difficult if those who put "America First" actually made their motto "America Alone".

His conservative bloc wants to ally with Olaf Scholz's Social Democrats (SPD), who came in third, after the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) surged to a historic second place.

# Ukraine Rupture Grows as U.S. Sides With Russia at UN



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - The United States sided with Russia twice at the United Nations, as they sought to avoid any condemnation of Moscow's invasion of its neighbor three years ago.

The two votes highlighted a seismic shift in the balance of power at the UN, where Washington had steadfastly voted for resolutions that favoured Ukraine and condemned Russia, until the abrupt rupture with Kyiv.

As U.S. President Donald Trump stakes out a new position on the Ukraine war, Washington and Russia aligned first at a morning vote at the General Assembly and again at an afternoon vote of the Security Council.

A European-backed text won 93 votes for at the General Assembly and 18 votes against, with 65 abstentions and Washington sided with Moscow and Russian allies Belarus, North Korea and Sudan to vote against the text.

The resolution - which won far less support compared to previous ones on the war - strongly criticises Russia, and emphasises Ukraine's territorial integrity and inviolability of its borders.

Washington drafted a rival resolution amid an intensifying feud between Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

But Ukraine's European allies pushed to heavily reword the US text to say that the "full-scale invasion of Ukraine" had been carried out by Russia, meaning Washington ultimately did not vote in favour of its own text.

Undeterred, the United States brought the earlier, unchanged text to a vote at the Security Council in the afternoon, securing its passage with 10 votes for and none against - alongside five abstentions.

The abstentions were France, Britain, Denmark, Greece, and Slovenia.

France and Britain notably could have vetoed the resolution, which merely "implores a swift end to the conflict" without blaming Russia.

Several amendments, brought respectively by Russia and European nations, did not pass.

"We acknowledge the constructive changes in the United States position when it comes to the Ukrainian conflict," said

Russia's UN envoy Vassily Nebenzya following the vote.

Relations between Washington and Kyiv have rapidly deteriorated following Trump's return to the White House, with the US president claiming Zelenskyy is highly unpopular and a "dictator".

Trump's growing rupture with Ukraine has caused panic on a continent that has relied on US security assurance for 80 years.

The International Crisis Group's Richard Gowan said the EU won a "moral victory" in the General Assembly, but warned European diplomats will "worry that Russia and the US will route more resolutions on Ukraine through the Security Council - potentially including asking for an endorsement of whatever deal Trump and Putin cook up."

Ahead of the Security Council vote, there was speculation on whether France or Britain would be prepared to wield their first vetoes in more than 30 years.

Their respective leaders, Emmanuel Macron and Keir Starmer, are visiting the White House this week for key talks on Ukraine.

The inviolability of Ukrainian territorial integrity was a cornerstone of previous resolutions passed at the UN, with the United States under former president Joe Biden among its strongest supporters.

"Neither these amendments, nor the resolution offered by Ukraine will stop the killing. The UN must stop the killing. We urge all Member States to join us in returning the UN to its core mission of international peace and security," said Washington's envoy to the UN, Dorothy Shea, ahead of the votes.

She later hailed the Security Council's passage of "an historic landmark agreement on Ukraine."

"We call on all other UN member states to join the United States in pushing for a durable peace that will bring stability to Europe and deter further aggression," said Shea.

UN chief Antonio Guterres on Sunday called for a peace that "fully upholds Ukraine's territorial integrity" and respects the UN Charter.

# Macron Says Peace Cannot Mean the Surrender of Ukraine

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - French President Emmanuel Macron told President Donald Trump on Monday that Europe was ready to "step up" defense spending but said he hoped for "strong" U.S. involvement in securing any peace settlement in Ukraine.

"As Europeans, we have committed to being stakeholders in these security guarantees," said Macron at a joint press conference with Trump at the White House. "And we are well aware that Europeans need to do more for security in Europe, for defense in Europe and to more fairly share the security burden that your country has been carrying for so many years."

The Oval Office meeting came during Macron's visit to Washington, which coincided with the third anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine amid fears that Trump's transformation of American foreign policy is effectively cutting out European leadership as he looks to quickly end Russia's war in Ukraine.

The French president was the first European leader to visit Trump since he regained power a month ago.

Trump said he was hopeful that Russia's war in Ukraine was nearing an endgame, and stressed that "the cost and burden of securing the peace must be borne by the nations of Europe and not, alone, by the United States".

Macron welcomed Trump's efforts to bring an end to the war, but he noted that, "this peace cannot mean the surrender of Ukraine".

Ukraine "fought over these past few years for its independence and for its sovereignty, but also for our collective security", Macron said. "I think that no one in this room wants to live in a world where it's the law of the strongest and international borders can be violated from one day to the next."

During a meeting with Trump ahead of bilateral talks in the White House Oval Office, Macron said he and Trump would discuss "long-lasting peace" in



Ukraine. But he stressed that Kyiv "must be involved" in talks to end the war.

Trump said Russia was ready to accept European troops deployed in Ukraine as guarantors of a deal to end fighting, and said Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy could visit the White House as early as "this week or next".

Trump, a Republican, expressed optimism that the US and Ukraine were nearing a deal that would give the US access to Ukraine's critical minerals to help repay the more than \$180 billion in American aid delivered to Kyiv since the start of the war in 2022.

Ukraine is also looking for future security guarantees as part of any agreement.

"It looks like we're getting very close," Trump told reporters at the start of his bilateral meeting with Macron.

Trump, however, did not say whether the emerging deal would include American security guarantees. "Europe is going to make sure nothing happens," he said.

Macron later agreed that a truce was possible in "weeks," in an interview with Fox News's Bret Baier.

Macron was at the White House for a morning session that lasted an hour and 45 minutes, which included both leaders participating in a video conference with other G7 leaders about Ukraine.

Trump sent shockwaves around Europe when he declared his readiness to resume direct diplomacy with Russian President Vladimir Putin and hold talks on Ukraine's future without the involvement of European nations or Kyiv.

Trump has repeated Russian talking points, including falsely accusing Ukraine of bearing responsibility for starting the war, raising concerns in Europe that he would eventually agree to Moscow's terms for peace.

Macron has tried to coordinate a European response to Washington's sudden policy shift, hosting two meetings with key leaders last week. Russia is "an existential threat to Europeans", he said at the time.

"You have a power that has overly armed itself ... and continues to arm itself," Macron said before departing for Washington.

"We don't know where it will stop today. So we must all act to contain it."

Macron is representing Europe as a whole during his visit, following his meetings with leaders across the continent, including Moscow-friendly Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, an advisor to the president said.

"He is going to Washington with proposals for action that reflect the convergences that emerged" from the talks, said a French presidential advisor.

Macron aims to persuade Trump to continue U.S. support for Ukraine, respecting its sovereignty and ensuring that European interests are fully considered, the advisor noted.

He also seeks to convince Trump that Russia represents an "existential threat" to Europe, and that Putin "will not respect" a ceasefire, he added.

# Global Security Arrangements "Unravelling"

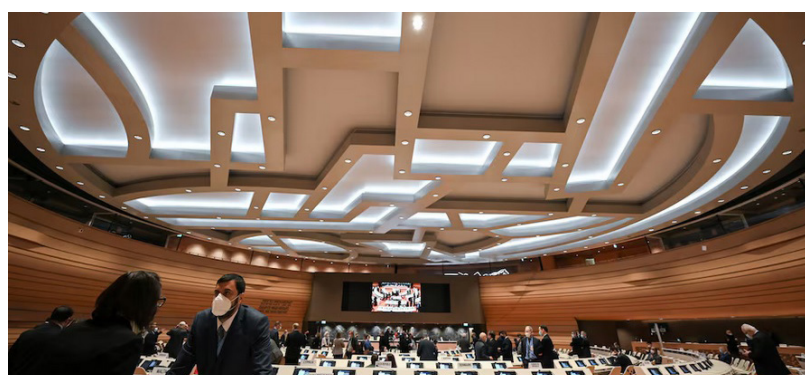
GENEVA (Dispatches) - Security arrangements that have supported global peace for decades are unravelling, the head of the United Nations warned on Monday as he urged countries to work together towards a nuclear free world.

"The bilateral and regional security arrangements that underwrote global peace and stability for decades are unravelling before our eyes," UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres told the Conference on Disarmament that gathered in Geneva.

"Trust is sinking, while uncertainty, insecurity, impunity and military spending are all rising," Guterres added.

Such factors were weakening the spirit of "mutual restraint", he said, as he called on countries to implement nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation commitments agreed at a summit in New York last September.

Sixty-five states, including the United States, China and Russia, are members of the Conference which was established in 1979 and is overseen by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs.



It focuses on negotiating deals to end the nuclear arms race and stop countries building up weapons in space, on top of pursuing general disarmament.

Artificial Intelligence was becoming weaponized at an alarming pace and there were signs of new arms races, including in outer space, Guterres warned.

He condemned countries that "outrageously rattle the nuclear sabre as a means of coercion".

In September last year Russian President Vladimir Putin told the United States and its allies that Moscow could respond with nuclear weapons if they allowed Ukraine to strike deep inside Russia with long-range Western missiles.

Earlier this month Moscow said the outlook for extending the New Strategic Arms Reduction agreement with the U.S. did not look promising.

The agreement, which caps the number of strategic nuclear warheads that the two biggest nuclear superpowers can deploy, is due to expire on February 5, 2026.



## Poole Guides Wizards to Skid-Ending Win Over Nets

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Jordan Poole scored 26 points, Bilal Coulibaly added 20 points and the Washington Wizards snapped a six-game losing streak with a 107-99 win over the Brooklyn Nets.

Washington closed the game on an 11-2 run and held Brooklyn without a field goal for the final 4:45. That stretch included a Nets scoring drought of more than four minutes.

The Wizards took the lead at 98-97 when Coulibaly attacked the rim for a layup with 2:12 remaining. After a Brooklyn turnover, Poole connected on a 3-pointer that gave Washington all the cushion it needed. Poole and Coulibaly shot a combined 8-for-12 from beyond the arc, with Poole sinking 5 of 8.

Washington's Kyshawn George and Richaun Holmes added 12 and 11 points, respectively, and both contributed to the team's stifling defensive effort with three blocks each.

George also came away with three steals. The Wizards swiped seven steals as a team, part of the Nets' 18 turnovers.

Brooklyn responded by forcing 24 Wizards turnovers, which the Nets converted into a 30-22 advantage for points off takeaways.

Brooklyn used its ability to generate takeaways to rally after trailing throughout the first half. The Nets opened the second half on a 22-7 run that spanned nearly eight minutes, grabbing an 81-74 lead.

The score was close through most of the fourth quarter. Washington leveraged its 50 percent shooting on the night, holding Brooklyn to 39.3 percent, to eventually pull away.

With the win, the Wizard bookended their skid with defeats of the Nets. Brooklyn came into the Monday contest having won seven of the past nine, including four of the past five.

Ziaire Williams' 19 points led Brooklyn. Cameron Johnson added 17 points, and Tyrese Martin scored 15 points off the bench.

Nets reserve Trendon Watford chipped in 11 points and seven rebounds. Marcus Smart scored 10 points in reserve duty for Washington, while Justin Champagnie amassed six points and seven rebounds off the

bench.

Meanwhile Trae Young posted his 34th double-double of the season and the Atlanta Hawks ended a three-game losing streak with a 98-86 win over the visiting Miami Heat.

The Hawks have won the first two games in the four-game season series against Miami. The teams play each other again on Wednesday in Miami when the Heat begins a four-game homestand.

Young scored 11 points -- one of six Atlanta players with double figures -- and had 14 assists. Onyeka Okongwu had 17 points and eight rebounds, Caris LeVert and Terance Mann each scored 15, Georges Niang scored 11 and Dyson Daniels had 10 points, 11 rebounds and seven steals.

Miami's Andrew Wiggins scored 23 for his third straight 20-point game. Bam Adebayo and Kyle Anderson both scored 14. Rookie Kel'el Ware matched his career high with 15 rebounds.

The Heat struggled from outside, making only 7 of 40 3-point tries (17.5 percent). Tyler Herro scored 11 points and was a team-worst 0-for-9 from beyond the arc.

The teams, playing the second half of a back-to-back, got off to sluggish starts. Atlanta led 50-42 at halftime, outscoring the Heat 14-7 over the last 3:13. Miami shot just 29.8 percent (14 of 47) in the first half and made only 3 of 23 3-point shots (13 percent).

The Hawks led by 13 at 6:26 in the third quarter, but Miami had a 10-0 run that reduced the deficit to 66-63 at 2:51 on an alley-oop dunk by Ware. The Hawks responded with a 7-2 run and led 73-65 going into the fourth quarter.

The Heat cut the lead to 90-84 on a bucket by Adebayo with 3:52 left in regulation and appeared ready to get closer when Young was called for a foul with 3:25 on the clock. But the Hawks challenged the play and the call was reversed. Mann followed with a 3-pointer and the Heat never got closer than seven.

The Heat announced that sixth man Nikola Jovic would miss extended time with a right hand fracture he suffered on Sunday against Milwaukee.

## Tsitsipas Wins Opener in Dubai

DUBAI (Dispatches) - Fourth-seeded Stefanos Tsitsipas won points on 81 percent of his first serves in his 7-6 (4), 6-3 defeat of Italian Lorenzo Sonego in the opening round of the Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships.

Spain's Roberto Bautista Agut came from behind to defeat Hungary's Fabian Marozsan 3-6, 6-3, 7-6 (4), in the only three-set match of the day.

Winning in straight sets were Alexei Popyrin of Australia, Russia's Karen Khachanov, Zizou Bergs of Belgium and Giovanni Mpetshi Perricaud of France.

Cristian Garin gave his hometown fans something to cheer about, rallying for a 2-6, 6-4, 6-4 win over Argentine qualifier Juan Pablo Ficovich in the first round at Santiago, Chile.

Garin took advantage of just three of his 16 break-point opportunities, but he wound up with a 9-3 edge in aces.

In other opening-round action, qualifier Gustavo Heide downed Thiago Seyboth Wild 7-5, 6-2 in an all-Brazilian matchup. Germany's Yannick Hanfmann topped Argentina's Facundo Diaz Acosta 7-5, 6-3, and Serbia's Laslo Djere eliminated Peru's Ignacio Buse 6-4, 6-3.

Meanwhile former world number one Venus Williams will not compete at next month's Indian Wells tournament despite the WTA



1000 event giving the 44-year-old American a wild card.

Williams, who played only two tournaments last season, said at a speaking event in Denmark that she had not been told of the wildcard before the tournament announced it on Wednesday and added that she was unable to compete due to prior commitments.

"I found the announcement super amusing because, I don't know, people seem to be happy, so I was like, 'Maybe I'll just go with it, I don't know'," Williams said at the event in the city of Naestved.

"I'm actually not going. I'm going to be overseas."

Tournament director Tommy Haas later released a statement confirming that Williams would not be playing at the March 2-16 event in Southern California.

"Our team has been informed that Venus is not accepting the wild card this year," it read. "We wish Venus all the best and hope to see her back in Indian Wells in the future."

Williams boycotted the event for 15 years after fans booed and heckled her younger sister Serena during her 2001 final victory over Kim Clijsters, apparently in response to Venus withdrawing injured from their semi-final.

"I love Indian Wells, I would love to be there and if I could have accepted it, I would have been like, 'Yes', but I already made commitments," Williams added.

Meanwhile Argentina's Sebastian Baez retained his title at the Rio Open by beating France's Alexandre Muller 6-2 6-3 to claim his seventh ATP title.

The 24-year-old Baez quickly found his rhythm, breaking Muller in the seventh game to take a 5-2 lead before closing out the first set to love.

## Man United Announce Up to 200 Fresh Job Cuts



LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester United said they expect to make up to 200 fresh job cuts as part of a "transformation plan" to improve the club's financial sustainability.

Around 250 employees were made redundant last year in a first wave of cost-cutting measures after INEOS chairman Jim Ratcliffe bought a stake in the Premier League club.

United have also increased ticket prices despite a backlash from supporters.

They said in a statement yesterday that the plan "aims to return the club to profitability after five consecutive years of losses since 2019".

"This will create a more solid financial platform from which the club can invest in men's and women's football success and improved infrastructure," the statement said.

"As part of these measures, the club anticipates that approximately 150 to 200 jobs may be made redundant, subject to a consultation process with employees. These would be in addition to the 250 roles removed last year."

United CEO Omar Berrada said the wide-ranging measures were being implemented to "transform and renew" the club.

"Unfortunately, this means announcing further potential redundancies, and we deeply regret the impact on those affected colleagues. However, these hard choices are necessary to put the club back on a stable financial footing," he said.

"We have lost money for the past five consecutive years. This cannot continue."

"Our two main priorities as a club are delivering success on the pitch for our fans and improving our facilities. We cannot invest in these objectives if we are continuously losing money."

## Alonso Expects Aston Martin to Start F1 Season in a Better Place



SILVERSTONE (Dispatches) - Fernando Alonso expects Aston Martin to start the Formula One season in a much better place after learning some hard lessons last year.

The Silverstone-based team, who showed off their new Mercedes-powered AMR25 car online on Sunday before testing in Bahrain starts on Wednesday, finished fifth for the second year running in 2024.

Expectations had been high after double world champion Alonso took six podiums in the first eight races of 2023 but the Spaniard failed to finish higher than fifth last year while team mate Lance Stroll had a best of sixth.

Dan Fallows, who was technical director, was moved aside last November with the team bringing in former Ferrari technical director Enrico Cardile and Red Bull's title-winning designer Adrian Newey, who starts on March 3.

The season starts in Australia on March 16.

"I think we did learn a lot last year. The second part of the season was sort of experiments going on just in the way of learning even more things into the 2025 car," Alonso told reporters.

"The simulator has been updated as well, so we've been working a lot in the sim to be able to develop the car a little bit more precisely than in the last few seasons."

"We have new tools. We have new organization. We have new people in place to tackle some of the weaknesses that we for sure identified last year. So I think we start in a much better place."

"We still need to work a lot, for sure. We lost a little bit of time and months last year and we think we will catch up very soon."

Stroll agreed: "There was a lot of experimenting through the course of last year and I think we learnt a lot why some of the upgrades didn't bring us what we wanted."

"Everything that has gone into the development of this year's car has really taken a lot of the lessons we learned from last year."

Team principal Andy Cowell, who took over from Mike Krack in January, declined to set a time frame for success and said there would be no cutting corners.

He said work had been done to make the new car more stable through corners and more predictable to drive. Cowell hoped also for better correlation, matching the data from the wind tunnel to what the car was doing on track.

## Ravindra, Bracewell Star as New Zealand Make Champions Trophy Semis

RAWALPINDI (Dispatches) - New Zealand powered into the semi-finals of the Champions Trophy, taking India along with them after Rachin Ravindra's century and inspired bowling from Michael Bracewell ensured a five-wicket win over Group A opponents Bangladesh.

Chasing 237 for victory thanks to Bracewell's four-wicket haul, New Zealand lost Will Young for a duck in the opening over and Kane Williamson for five shortly after but Ravindra's classy 112 and Tom Latham's 55 secured the victory in 46.1 overs.

Bangladesh earlier squandered a good start and made 236-9 in 50 overs thanks to Najmul Hossain Shanto's 77 and Jaker Ali's 45 but paid a heavy price for 178 dot balls in their innings.

The result meant that defending champions Pakistan joined Bangladesh in being knocked out of the tournament after losing their opening two matches against New Zealand and India. "Yeah, that's nice (to go through). We knew Bangladesh were a tough challenge on this wicket," New Zealand captain Mitchell Santner said.

"The way we were able to pull it back in the middle with the ball was pleasing. It's probably the hardest thing to do in one-day cricket, take wickets in the middle and I think Bracewell was outstanding."

Ravindra, who came into the side in place of the ill Daryl Mitchell, was nearly run out while on 25 but settled his nerves with delightful



boundaries on the off side and brought up his half century with a driven four behind the bowler.

After Devon Conway was castled by Mustafizur Rahman for 30, Ravindra continued to grind and made the most of being dropped on 93 by Mehidy Hasan Miraz before scoring his fourth one-day international century.

The left-hander, who forged a 129-run partnership with the in-form Latham, was handed another lifeline after being dropped by Mahmudullah on 105 before finally departing with the job all but done.

Glenn Phillips made an unbeaten 21 and Bracewell scored 11 not

out to take their team home.

Earlier, Bangladesh made a solid start after being asked to bat first but poor shot selection by their middle order batsmen meant they ended up with a modest total.

The introduction of spinner Bracewell in the ninth over gave New Zealand the breakthrough as opener Tanzid Hasan departed for a run-a-ball 24, before seamer Will O'Rourke had Miraz caught for 13 to leave Bangladesh at 64-2.

Shanto looked to steady the ship but New Zealand's bowlers applied the squeeze and Bracewell provided the cutting edge to finish with 4-26 after getting rid of Towhid Hridoy for seven, Mushfiqur Rahim for two and Mahmudullah for four.

Bracewell then pulled off a fine running catch to dismiss Shanto in the 38th over bowled by O'Rourke, leaving Bangladesh desperate for a strong finish to add some respectability to their total.

Ali laid the platform with his rearguard effort but he was run out by wicketkeeper Tom Latham in the penultimate over, as Bangladesh limped to a below-par score.

"It was a pretty good wicket to bat on. We needed two big partnerships but the way we batted was really disappointing," said Shanto.

"The batting unit needs to improve a lot."