

President Masoud Pezeshkian Has Sacked His Vice President for Parliamentary Affairs, Shahram Dabiri, Following an Extravagant Personal Trip by the Latter to the South Pole During the Persian New Year (Nowruz) Holidays

IRAN NEWS

Addressing “Cultural diplomacy; Art Without Borders” Meeting, Which Was Held in Moscow, Iran’s Ambassador to Russia, Kazem Jalali, Has Said That Culture and Art Help Establishment of Sustainable Relations Between Nations

VOL. XXIX, No. 8233 TEHRAN Price 50,000 Rials

www.irannewsdaily.com

SUNDAY APRIL 06, 2025 FARVARDIN 17, 1404

2

DOMESTIC



Iran’s Trade Position with Afghanistan Falls to Fifth Place

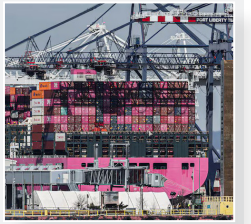
> SEE PAGE 2

3

INTERNATIONAL

Markets Plummet as Trump’s 10% Global Tariffs Take Effect

> SEE PAGE 3



Tehran Slams West’s Misuse of UN Rights Council for Political Aims



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has condemned the recent anti-Iran resolution passed by the United Nations Human Rights Council, noting that Western nations, particularly the UK and Germany, exploit the council to advance political agendas against Iran.

At the end of the UN Human Rights Council’s 58th annual session in Geneva on Thursday, the body passed a resolution, spearheaded by Western countries, against Iran with 24 votes in favor, 8 against, and 15 abstentions.

The resolution extended the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran and decided that the Fact-Finding Mission should continue with a mandate to “monitor and investigate allegations of recent and ongoing serious human rights violations in the Islamic Republic.”

In a statement on Friday, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei condemned sponsors of the resolution, including Germany, Britain, and Canada, for “misusing the human rights mechanism as a means to exert political pressure on developing countries.”

He added that the “instrumental use” of the Human Rights Council by some Western countries, especially Britain and Germany, to impose their own political stances on Iran would “undermine the credibility” of the council and disrupt the processes of human rights cooperation and synergy among countries.

He dismissed the resolution as “legally void” due to the “ill will” of its drafters, its “factually incorrect” content and “reliance on unsubstantiated claims by anonymous sources.”

Baghaei noted that supporters of the anti-Iran resolution have been supporting human rights catastrophe in the West Asia region, particularly Israel’s genocide in Gaza and the regime’s crimes against the people of Lebanon and Syria, over the past two years.

Envoy Rejects UNHRC’s False Picture of Rights Situation in Iran



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran’s ambassador to the UN headquarters in Geneva has strongly criticized the adoption of a resolution against Tehran at the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), saying the discriminatory act undermines the credibility of the 47-member body.

Ali Bahrami made the remarks to the council’s 58th regular session, which saw the anti-Iran document passed with 24 votes in favor, eight against, and 15 abstentions.

He said the resolution diminishes trust in the work of the UNHRC, exposes its inefficiency and wastes its resources.

He also urged the council to focus on the catastrophic situation of human rights in the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories.

“In a situation where the most severe rights violations are being committed in Palestine and their perpetrators enjoy the highest level of immunity and impunity, the sponsors of draft resolution A/HRC/58/L.20/Rev.1 are trying to mislead the council by portraying a false picture of the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran,” the envoy said.

He warned that the Western sponsors of the resolution, including the UK and Germany, should be held accountable for all their oppression against the Iranian people and humankind.

The resolution extended the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran and decided that the Fact-Finding Mission should continue with a mandate to “monitor and investigate allegations of recent and ongoing serious human rights violations in the Islamic Republic.”

Iranian Civil Society Activists Urge UN to Intervene Against U.S. Threats: “No to War”

TEHRAN - More than 300 Iranian civil society activists have issued a joint statement addressed to the United Nations Secretary-General, warning against the consequences of U.S. threats toward Iran. In the letter, they assert that in the face of any military aggression against their country, they will defend Iran with full force—regardless of their personal political disagreements with the ruling government.

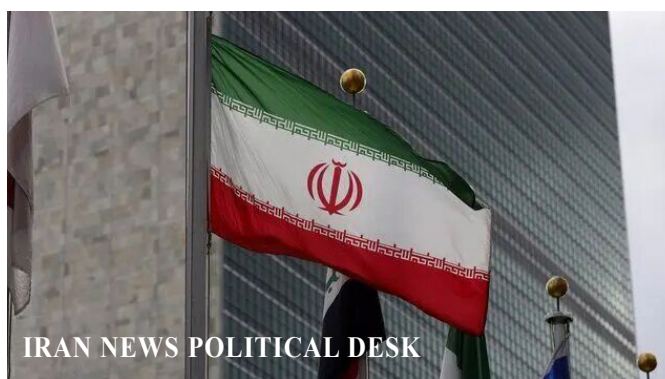
The statement, which has also been sent to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, was signed by a wide range of individuals, including university professors, lawyers, human rights defenders, journalists, and independent political activists. Among the signatories are also well-known critics of the Iranian government, many of whom have experienced imprisonment or various forms of state-imposed restrictions.

The activists draw upon Iran’s past, particularly the devastating eight-year war with Saddam Hussein’s Iraq, to underline their stance against another conflict. “We know what war means. During the Iran-Iraq war, even as Iraq used chemical weapons with support from global powers, Iran endured. Many Iranians still suffer the consequences of those attacks, many of which were facilitated by European countries such as Germany,” the statement reads.

They argue that Iran has not initiated any wars in the past century, yet history has shown that the nation is willing to fiercely resist if attacked. “An attack on Iran is no longer a strike against a government—it is a strike against its people,” the letter states.

The signatories also criticize what they describe as Western double standards in dealing with Iran’s nuclear program. They highlight that while Iran’s peaceful nuclear activities have been subject to international inspections, the nuclear arsenal of Israel—outside the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and under no international oversight—is ignored.

They note that Iran negotiated the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in good faith with the P5+1 nations, including the U.S. and European powers, only for former U.S. President Donald Trump to unilaterally withdraw from the agreement without cause. “Iran upheld its part of the deal. In return, the United States not only abandoned the agreement but also imposed crippling sanctions that have impacted essential sectors such as medicine and vital industries,” the



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

statement says.

Despite expressing criticisms of Iran’s ruling system, the activists argue that true democratic reform must come from within, not through foreign intervention. “Democracy cannot be imposed by missiles and military occupation, especially not by powers that support regimes like that of Israel, which has been condemned by international human rights organizations and the International Criminal Court for acts of genocide,” they write.

The activists stress that Iran, with a rich and ancient civilization, does not need intervention from countries that claim to bring freedom through force. Referencing philosophers like

Hegel, Kant, and Nietzsche, they affirm Iran’s longstanding cultural and intellectual contributions to global history.

The statement goes beyond national concerns, expressing broader alarm over global peace. The signatories point to what they describe as blatant violations of human rights by the Israeli government in recent conflicts and criticize the support provided by the U.S. and some European nations.

They express deep concern over the current American administration’s rhetoric and foreign policy, particularly that of former President Trump, who is again vying for influence on the world stage. “His threats toward Iran—statements such as ‘negotiate or be bombed’—are in blatant violation of the UN Charter and threaten global peace,” the activists say, referencing past behavior toward countries like Greenland, Canada, Ukraine, and Palestine as examples of a preference for coercion over diplomacy.

In closing, the activists call on the international community to oppose both the military threats against Iran and the ongoing violence perpetrated by the Israeli government. They stress that any aggression against Iran should be seen as a direct attack on its people, not just its government, and warn that such actions could trigger widespread regional instability with global repercussions.

“We, the undersigned, stand united in defending Iran, humanity, and global peace,” the statement concludes. “We urge the world to resist war-mongering rhetoric and stand against injustice—wherever it occurs.”

Over 100 New Nuclear Achievements to Be Unveiled on National Nuclear Technology Day

TEHRAN - Iran’s Atomic Energy Organization (AEOI) has announced that over 100 scientific, technological, and industrial achievements will be unveiled on April 9, coinciding with the country’s National Nuclear Technology Day. The announcement was made by Mohammad Eslami, Vice President and Head of the AEOI, highlighting a year of significant advancements in Iran’s nuclear program.

Eslami emphasized that the achievements reflect the ongoing momentum in the country’s nuclear science and technology efforts. “Thanks to divine blessings and the dedication of our scientists and specialists, the AEOI successfully maintained its scientific and technological pace in 1403 (2024-2025), recording more than 100 new accomplishments,” he stated.

According to Eslami, the consistency in output reflects the robust infrastructure the organization has built in recent years. “In 1403, we continued to build upon the capabilities we had developed for goal-oriented research. This has shaped the identity of our organization and allowed us to maintain the momentum we saw in 1402,” he noted, referring to the previous Persian calendar year.

These latest achievements are set to be officially unveiled during a ceremony on April 9, attended by top-ranking Iranian officials, showcasing advances across various scientific and industrial domains within the nuclear sector.

One of the key areas of progress has been in the nuclear fuel cycle, particularly in the exploration and extraction of uranium and related minerals. Eslami reported that these activities have doubled compared to the previous year, building upon similar growth experienced from 1401 to 1402. This ongoing expansion suggests a strategic push by Iran to bolster its domestic capabilities in sourcing raw materials critical to nuclear energy development.

“This growing momentum in our mining and fuel cycle sectors demonstrates our long-term commitment to nuclear self-sufficiency,” Eslami said in an interview with the government’s official news outlet.

Iran has also made strides in the field of radiopharmaceuticals—drugs that contain radioactive isotopes used for diagnosis and treatment, particularly in cancer care. Eslami



ISNA PHOTO
Morteza Zangene

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

noted that new research in this area has improved both the quality of diagnostic radiopharmaceuticals and the effectiveness of therapeutic ones.

“These efforts have led to the development of updated, cutting-edge products, which will soon be presented to the public,” he said, without detailing specific innovations.

The AEOI has also achieved key milestones in emerging nuclear-related technologies. Eslami highlighted significant developments in plasma physics, laser technologies, and quantum science. In the latter half of the year, the organization made major advances in quantum communications, quantum computing, and quantum sensing—fields that are at the forefront of global scientific research.

“These achievements mark a turning point in our result-driven research agenda,” he stated, suggesting that Iran is positioning itself to become a competitive player in the global race for quantum technology.

Eslami praised the Iranian government’s support and what he described as the “national unity administration.” He expressed optimism that continued backing from the state will allow the AEOI to maintain its upward trajectory in innovation and service to the nation.

“With this ongoing support, we hope to deliver even more accomplishments in the future and further contribute to the pride and prosperity of the Iranian people,” Eslami concluded.

Iran marks April 9 as National Nuclear Technology Day to celebrate the country’s nuclear achievements, particularly since its controversial 2006 announcement of uranium enrichment capability. While Western nations have raised concerns about the possible military dimensions of Iran’s nuclear program, Tehran insists its objectives are peaceful and focused on energy production, medical research, and scientific progress.

The announcement of over 100 new developments comes amid ongoing international scrutiny and negotiations regarding Iran’s nuclear activities, making this year’s showcase particularly significant both domestically and internationally.

Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan-Uzbekistan Agreement on Tripoint Will Promote Peace



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has welcomed the signing of a historic agreement by Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan on the establishment of the junction point of the three countries’ borders.

The deal was signed by Kyrgyzstan’s President Sadyr Japarov, Tajikistan’s President Emomali Rahmon, and Uzbekistan’s President Shavkat Mirziyoyev in the Tajik city of Khujand on Monday, following a trilateral summit.

The trilateral deal, as well as an agreement between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan on the state border, will “serve to ensure the goals of stability and sustainable development, increasing the international authority of the entire region,” an Uzbek presidency statement said.

In a Friday statement, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei hailed the agreement as a “significant step towards mutual respect for territorial integrity and national sovereignty” of the three Central Asian countries.

The deal, he continued, would also build trust and consolidate peace and stability in Central Asia.

The spokesperson reiterated that Iran’s principled stance is to support efforts and initiatives by the countries in the Central Asia region aimed at solving border disputes through peaceful means and improving intra-regional convergence.

Baghaei expressed hope that the trilateral pact would guarantee sustainable peace and stability in the region, prepare the ground for further understanding and cooperation in various fields, and develop economic cooperation among the regional countries.

Earlier in March, the Kyrgyz and Tajik presidents signed a long-sought agreement on the state border during a meeting in Bishkek.

For over 30 years, the two countries had been unable to finalize the border, which had led to sporadic armed conflicts. The inking of the deal brought the reopening of road, rail and air links between the two countries.

Later, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan restored flight connections that had been suspended in May 2021 following the armed conflict at the border. After four years, the first aircraft from Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan, landed in Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan.

Yemen’s Army Targets Tel Aviv, Downs Giant Shark F360 Drone



SANAA (Dispatches) - The Yemeni Armed Forces (YAF) have carried out a military operation targeting an Israeli military site in the occupied city of Yafa using a domestically developed “Yaffa” drone, and have shot down a “Giant Shark F360” reconnaissance drone in Sa’daa Governorate.

In a statement on Friday, the retaliatory operation targeting Tel Aviv was conducted in response to the continued Israeli genocide against the Palestinian people in Gaza and the daily massacres of Palestinians carried out with American support.

In a separate development, YAF air defenses shot down a Giant Shark F360 reconnaissance drone operated by the “American-Israeli enemy” while it was conducting missions over Yemen’s northern Sa’daa Governorate.

The drone was downed using a domestically produced surface-to-air missile, according to the statement.

The Yemeni forces also issued a call to action, urging “all free people of the nation” to stand against the Israeli genocidal war on Palestinians, warning of the risks of inaction and the potential expansion of Israeli aggression into other Arab and Islamic nations.

“The consequences of silence, inaction, and failure to fulfill one’s religious, moral, and humanitarian duties will be dire for all,” the statement read.

The YAF also pledged to continue operations until the Israeli regime halts its assault and lifts the siege on the Gaza Strip.

Earlier in the day, the YAF conducted a retaliatory operation against US warships in the Red Sea, including the USS Harry S. Truman aircraft carrier, thwarting two planned strikes against Yemen.

IRAN NEWS



Tehran Refinery Increases Gasoline Production by One Million Liters

TEHRAN (ILNA) - The CEO of Tehran Oil Refining Company has announced a significant boost in gasoline production, reporting an increase of one million liters per day. All gasoline produced now complies fully with Euro-5 environmental standards. Abbas Mohseni Nikogoftar explained that two projects—short-term and long-term—have been implemented to boost output. "In the short term, we utilized unused capacity within the refinery and secured additional feedstock from another facility. This enabled us to raise gasoline production by about one million liters over the past four months—equivalent to adding an entirely new gasoline production unit," he stated.

Iran Among Top 10 Countries in World Heritage Registrations



TEHRAN - Iran ranks among the top 10 countries in the world for registering UNESCO World Heritage sites, highlighting the nation's rich history and civilization, according to a senior official from the Ministry of Cultural Heritage.

Speaking at a ceremony marking National Darab Day, Ali Darabi, Deputy Minister and Acting Minister of Cultural Heritage, expressed his pride in Iran's historical legacy. "Every person takes pride in their homeland, and I am honored to be here in my hometown of Darab," he said.

During his visit to Darab's cultural and historical landmarks, Darabi was accompanied by the local parliamentary representative and the head of Fars province's cultural heritage department. Officials announced the imminent inauguration of Darab's airport, hospital, and university, significant developments expected to boost the region's progress.

Darabi emphasized Iran's deep historical roots, stating that the country has a 7,000-year recorded history and over one million archaeological sites. So far, 41,000 of these sites have been officially registered, underscoring Iran's global recognition in cultural heritage preservation.

Referring to the international significance of Iranian heritage, Darabi recounted the recent inscription of Hegmataneh on UNESCO's list, an event in India where over 100 country representatives stood in respect for Iran's civilization.

He also praised the Iranian people for celebrating the New Year (Nowruz) with reverence during the overlapping holy month of Ramadan and the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Ali (AS), highlighting Iran's deep-rooted Islamic and Shi'a faith.

In support of cultural and tourism development in Darab and Zarinadsh, Darabi affirmed that legislative initiatives are being pursued to promote cultural heritage, tourism, and handicrafts.

The event concluded with a grand celebration of National Darab Day, reflecting the region's vibrant cultural traditions and its role in Iran's historical legacy.

Iran's Trade Position with Afghanistan Falls to Fifth Place



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iran has lost its former status as Afghanistan's top trading partner, slipping to fifth place due to an imbalance in trade and growing frustration on the Afghan side over Iran's lack of interest in Afghan goods. This is according to Alireza Khomehgar, head of the South Khorasan Chamber of Commerce, who emphasized the urgent need to revise Iran's import regulations, especially regarding agricultural products from Afghanistan.

Khomehgar criticized Iran's Plant Protection Organization (PPO) for maintaining excessively strict rules that hinder agricultural imports from Afghanistan. "Although Afghanistan is currently classified by Iran as a high-risk country, it has the potential to meet a significant portion of Iran's agricultural needs," he said.

He pointed out that Iran is currently facing a shortage of cotton. With traditional suppliers like Uzbekistan no longer exporting to Iran, and Turkey becoming a cotton importer itself, Afghanistan could step in to fill this gap. Khomehgar stressed that Afghanistan's untapped land and inexpensive labor make it an ideal location for offshore farming—particularly at a time when Iran is grappling with a severe water crisis.

The border region of Farah Province in Afghanistan, adjacent to South Khorasan, is highly active in agriculture and could serve as a strategic hub for cultivating essential crops such as corn, barley, soybeans, oilseeds, and cotton for the Iranian market. "South Khorasan alone consumes 200,000 to 250,000 tons of oil annually," Khomehgar noted, "and much of the required corn is currently imported from distant countries like Russia, Brazil, and parts of Africa."

Khomehgar argued that easing restrictions and allowing Iranian-supervised offshore farming operations in Afghanistan could prevent significant capital

outflow. He urged the Plant Protection Organization to reconsider its regulations and take into account proposals from the private sector regarding cross-border agriculture.

Interestingly, while agricultural imports face regulatory hurdles, Afghan minerals such as lead, zinc, coal, and talc are imported without issue, as they are not subject to PPO regulations. This discrepancy, Khomehgar suggested, highlights the inconsistency in Iran's trade policy toward Afghanistan.

He also criticized the Iranian government's recent decision not to import potatoes from Afghanistan during a domestic shortage, opting instead for imports from Pakistan. This is despite the fact that Afghan dried fruits and nuts are being exported to European markets tariff-free and Afghanistan maintains a preferential trade agreement with India. In fact, Iranian saffron often reaches Indian markets via Afghanistan.

Khomehgar concluded that increasing imports of Afghan agricultural products could help rebalance trade between the two countries. "The sharp contrast between Iran's exports to Afghanistan and its minimal imports from the country is one of the main reasons for the decline in our trade status," he said. "Afghans are voicing dissatisfaction over Iran's unwillingness to purchase Afghan goods."

He also noted that the Iranian Ministry of Agriculture plays a key role in the Joint Economic Commission between Iran and Afghanistan and should therefore lead efforts to streamline agricultural cooperation.

As trade dynamics shift and regional needs evolve, experts like Khomehgar believe that more balanced, pragmatic policies are essential to restoring Iran's trade leadership in the region and enhancing economic ties with Afghanistan.

70% Increase in Food Industry Prices/ Packaging Costs Surge by 200%



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - A member of the Food Commission at the Iranian Chamber of Commerce has stated that the surge in packaging costs, which have risen by up to 200%, and a 55% increase in transportation costs in 2024 have contributed to a more than 70% hike in food prices this year.

In an interview with ILNA, Ahmadreza Bakhshi, a member of the Food Commission at the Iranian Chamber of Commerce, explained the reasons behind the significant price increase in the food industry in 2024. He cited several factors, including changes in the allocated exchange rate for production, the variety of systems and related issues for importers, value-added tax laws, and the dramatic rise in packaging costs—sometimes by 200%—as well as the 55% increase in transportation costs. These factors have raised the overall cost of food production and supply.

Bakhshi added that delays in securing foreign currency for the import of raw materials have also worsened the situation. This delay lengthens the time merchants' capital is tied up, leading to a decrease in the value of their money due to inflation. He pointed out that the country is losing the value of its national currency daily, and the combined factors mentioned have led to higher production costs in the second half of 2024 compared to the first half.

Iran to Expand Electricity Trade With Neighbors in 2025



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iran is set to implement three key electricity exchange projects with neighboring countries in 2025 as part of its strategy to manage peak summer demand and strengthen regional energy cooperation, according to a senior official at Tavanir, the country's main electricity company.

Mehrdad Eghlima, Director General of Tavanir's Office of Foreign Electricity Trade, announced the plans, emphasizing ongoing efforts to enhance cross-border energy infrastructure and regional collaboration.

One of the major initiatives involves completing the third 400-kilovolt Iran-Armenia transmission line. The Iranian segment of the line has already been constructed, while the Armenian segment is being built by an Iranian contractor with financing from the Export Development Bank of Iran.

Eghlima stated that negotiations are underway to finalize agreements allowing for an additional 400 megawatts of electricity imports from Armenia during peak summer months. Accelerating the completion of the Armenian section and finalizing the import agreement are currently high on the agenda.

Discussions are also ongoing with Azerbaijan for the import of 140 megawatts of electricity in summer 2025. Talks include drafting a new annex to the existing agreement to secure additional power imports in 2026.

Eghlima noted that Azerbaijan has welcomed a proposal for a trilateral meeting in Baku to discuss the possible integration of the electricity grids of Iran, Azerbaijan, and Russia. Finalizing the 2026 annex, organizing the Baku meeting, and evaluating technical capacities are key priorities in this initiative.

The third project focuses on electricity exchange with Turkey via a "Back to Back" (BtB) high-voltage direct current (HVDC) system. The experimental operation of the Van BtB substation has been successfully completed, and an agreement for operating interconnection lines has been signed.

However, Eghlima reported delays on the Turkish side, particularly in allocating capacity and requesting Iran to cover the costs of the Van HVDC station—a demand Iran has not accepted. Negotiations are ongoing to resolve the financial dispute, finalize capacity allocations, and select a trading agent from the Turkish side.

Iran is also working on putting necessary operational infrastructure in place to begin the exchanges as soon as these hurdles are overcome.

Caspian Sea Water Decline Causes Drop in Exports From Northern Iranian Ports



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The decline in the Caspian Sea's water levels has emerged as a significant challenge for Iran's northern ports, leading to a reduction in exports and hampering the movement of large cargo ships, a senior transportation official has warned.

Saeed Rasouli, Acting Head of Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization and Deputy Minister of Roads and Urban Development, stated that the drop in container operations and transit activities in northern ports during 2024 is partly due to the declining water levels. He emphasized the urgent need for large-scale dredging operations to ensure continued maritime trade.

Rasouli highlighted Iran's commitment to strengthening the North-South Transport Corridor, particularly in cooperation with Russia. As part of the 2025 roadmap, the country is prioritizing the completion of the Rasht-Astara railway connection, which is considered a crucial link in regional trade.

Additionally, he underlined the importance of other railway projects, including the Chabahar-Zahedan line and the Shalamcheh-Basra connection. Meanwhile, efforts are underway to enhance the roll-on/roll-off (Ro-Ro) fleet at Amirabad Port to improve cargo transportation efficiency.

The deputy minister stressed the necessity of optimizing existing logistics infrastructure and making full use of previous investments. He acknowledged serious logistical challenges in the Caspian region, calling for a review of current processes and policies.

Rasouli also pointed to fluctuations in international transport costs, which are influenced by varying trade volumes. For instance, the transport of commodities such as sulfur has experienced periodic declines, affecting overall freight rates. To mitigate such fluctuations, he suggested diversifying the cargo mix in transit routes.

Addressing the need for better integration of trade and logistics, Rasouli criticized the practice of delivering goods on a CFR (Cost and Freight) basis, where sellers cover transportation costs to the destination port but not beyond. He urged a shift towards logistics models that align more closely with trade demands, ensuring more efficient cargo movement.

He further emphasized that global trade requires cost-effective and high-quality transport solutions for short-haul shipments. If Iran can offer these conditions, he argued, more traders will utilize its transit routes.

According to official statistics from Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization, northern ports saw a 33% decline in container handling in 2024 compared to the previous year.

Amirabad Port: 8,947 TEU, down 26%; Anzali Port: 5,162 TEU, down 32%; Noshahr Port: 148 TEU; and Astara and Fereydunkenar Ports: Zero operations.

Doubts Over India's \$25m Investment in Chabahar

TEHRAN - Iran's Shipping Association Secretary, Masoud Palmeh, expressed skepticism about India's promised \$220 million investment in Chabahar Port, stating that reports suggest India has only invested around \$25 million to \$80 million in the port. He stressed that it's hard to believe even the lower figure of \$25 million, as significant improvements in the port are not visible.

In an interview with ILNA, Palmeh discussed the performance of Indian operators at Chabahar following a ten-year contract, as well as the potential for India to withdraw from the port due to U.S. pressures. He emphasized that increasing foreign investment in Iran's ports naturally enhances the economic security of these ports. Connecting Iran's interests with other countries in the maritime sector could provide stronger defenses against sanctions.

While Palmeh acknowledged the importance of foreign investment, he criticized the current situation. Originally, India had planned to invest \$220 million in Chabahar. However, on the ground, the actual investment appears far less, with only partial investments visible, such as the arrival of six cranes. Despite these efforts, critical infrastructure, such as "gantry cranes," which are essential for speeding up unloading and loading processes, is still lacking.

Palmeh also pointed out that Iranian private sector companies should be in charge of managing commerce, marketing, and operations at Chabahar. He highlighted the positive changes resulting from the presence of the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines at the port, which has contributed to a significant

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK



increase in container operations compared to the previous year. He stressed the need to strengthen such mechanisms to boost private investment in the port.

On the issue of monopolistic practices, Palmeh criticized the Shipping Company for not supporting the private sector in transporting containers, particularly those owned by private shipping companies and forwarders. This practice, he argued, harms the port's development and could be improved by collaborating with the private sector to optimize the use of shipping space.

Palmeh also revealed that the Shipping Company has been monopolizing the port for over a year. He hopes that within the next two weeks, the first private-sector-managed shipping service from the UAE to India via Chabahar will be launched, which could lead to reduced shipping rates and more competition.

Finally, in response to concerns about Chinese investment in Pakistan's Gwadar Port, Palmeh stated that China's presence in Gwadar does not preclude potential Chinese investment in Chabahar. He emphasized the need to make Chabahar attractive enough to incentivize China to invest, despite its significant investments in Pakistan. For China to shift its focus from Gwadar to Chabahar, Palmeh stressed that the port would need to offer substantial advantages that outweigh its investments in Pakistan.

This comes as Chabahar Port's future investment prospects remain uncertain, with ongoing geopolitical and economic challenges affecting foreign participation in the project.

Tariff Hikes Hurt the Vulnerable and the Poor

GENEVA (Dispatches) - Increased global trade tariffs will hurt the most vulnerable and poor people, the UN's trade and development agency said, after US President Donald Trump's measures sparked global alarm. The ensuing trade turbulence "hurts the vulnerable and the poor", said UNCTAD Secretary-General Rebeca Grynspan in a statement.

"Trade must not become another source of instability. It should serve development and global growth," Grynspan said. Trump unveiled a barrage of import duties against dozens of countries on Wednesday, prompting China to retaliate in kind and raising the risk that other countries will follow, hurting the world economy.



North Korea's Kim Fires New Sniper Rifle While Visiting Troops



SEOUL (Dispatches) - North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has test-fired a newly developed sniper rifle, state media said Saturday, as he inspected special forces whose training he said bolstered "actual war capability for guaranteeing victory".

Such units are among the thousands of troops that South Korea's spy agency says Pyongyang has deployed to Russia to support Moscow's war against Ukraine. During the visit to a special operations unit on Friday, Kim said the "actual war capability for guaranteeing victory in the war field is bolstered up through intensive training," the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported.

He added that their training is "the most vivid expression of patriotism and loyalty to the country," according to the agency.

Images released by state media showed Kim peering through the scope of a sniper rifle that KCNA said was going to be "newly supplied to special operation units".

Other images showed him pointing to the bullseye of a target, crouching alongside heavily camouflaged soldiers, and smiling and waving to troops.

Kim supervised "automatic rifle firing drills and sniper rifle firing drills" and, after personally test-firing the weapon, expressed "great satisfaction over the performance and power of the sniper rifle developed in our own way", KCNA said.

Kim's visit to the special forces came on the same day that South Korea's Constitutional Court upheld president Yoon Suk Yeol's impeachment over his disastrous martial law declaration, booting him from office and triggering fresh elections.

Spain Bans Golden Investor Visas for Non-EU Citizens



MADRID (Dispatches) - Spain this week stopped allowing non-EU citizens who make property investments access to residency visas, closing off a pathway to Spanish citizenship. The government said it introduced the measure to help ease Spain's housing shortage that could reach a deficit of 600,000 homes in 2025.

"Housing is a constitutional right, not a mere speculative business. That's why we're going to eliminate the golden visa," Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez announced in a news conference in April 2024.

One year later, the program accepted its last applications on April 2, after granting just under 15,000 visas mostly to nationals from China, Russia, the UK, the US, Ukraine, Iran, Venezuela and Mexico.

Spain's investor visa allowed non-EU nationals and their close relatives to obtain residency visas - and a pathway to applying for Spanish citizenship - if they invested €500,000 in Spanish real estate.

But visa holders were not obliged to live, work or study in Spain, even though they had purchased the right to do so, meaning they could just as easily use properties as personal holiday homes or to rent out to tourists.

When the golden visa scheme opened in 2013, Spain was among several EU countries that launched similar programs as a way to bolster the coffers in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis.

Markets Plummet as Trump's 10% Global Tariffs Take Effect

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Markets suffered a brutal blow as US President Donald Trump's broad-ranging tariffs came into effect on Saturday, in a move many analysts say will heighten global trade tensions, stoke recessionary fears and likely generate tit-for-tat punitive measures by trading allies. In response, Beijing has said it will sue the US at the World Trade Organization.

U.S. President Donald Trump's widest-ranging tariffs to date took effect Saturday, in a move which could trigger retaliation and escalating trade tensions that could upset the global economy.

A 10 percent "baseline" tariff came into place last night, hitting most US imports except goods from Mexico and Canada as Trump unveiled emergency economic powers to address perceived problems with the country's trade deficits.

The trade gaps, said the White House, were driven by an "absence of reciprocity" in relationships and other policies like "exorbitant value-added taxes."

Come April 9, around 60 trading partners - including the European Union, Japan and China - are set to face even higher rates tailored to each economy.

Already, Trump's sharp 34-percent tariff on Chinese goods, set to kick in next week, triggered Beijing's announcement of its own 34-percent tariff on US products from April 10.

One of your browser extensions seems to be blocking the video player from loading. To watch this content, you may need to disable it on this site.

Beijing also said it would sue the United States at the World Trade Organization and restrict export of rare earth elements used in high-end medical and electronics technology.

But other major trading partners held back as they digested the unfolding international standoff and fears of a recession.

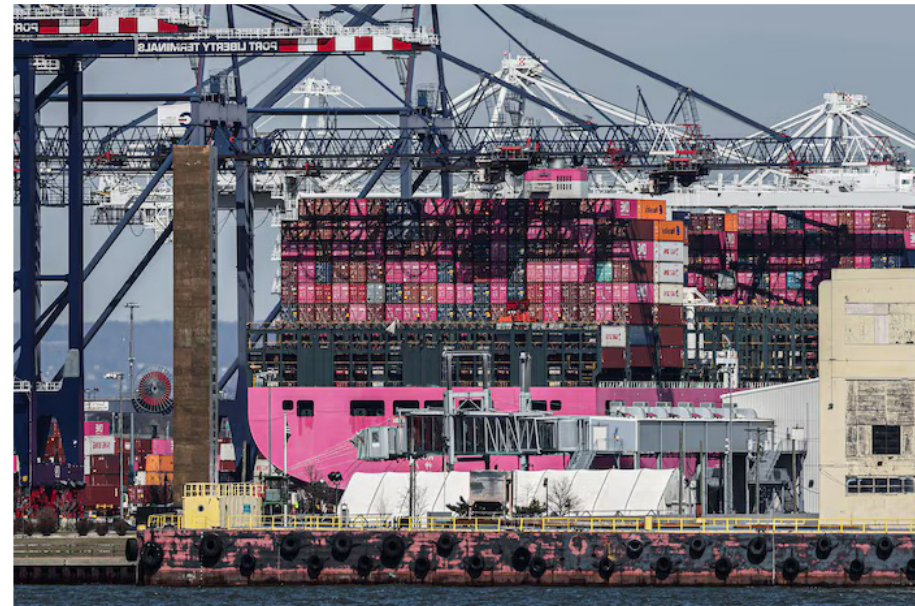
Trump warned Friday on social media that "China played it wrong," saying this was something "they cannot afford to do."

Wall Street went into freefall Friday, following similar collapses in Asia and Europe. Economists have also warned that the tariffs could dampen growth and fuel inflation.

But Trump said on his Truth Social platform that his "policies will never change."

Trump's latest tariffs have notable exclusions, however.

They do not stack on recently-imposed 25-percent tariffs hitting imports of steel, aluminum and automobiles.



Japanese-made goods.

Meanwhile, Trump said he held a "very productive" call with Vietnam's top leader, with imports from the Southeast Asian manufacturing hub facing extraordinary 46-percent U.S. duties.

Since returning to the presidency, Trump has hit Canada and Mexico imports with tariffs over illegal immigration and fentanyl, and imposed an additional 20-percent rate on goods from China. Come April 9, the added levy on Chinese products this year reaches 54 percent.

Trump's 25-percent auto tariffs also took effect this week, and Jeep-owner Stellantis paused production at some Canadian and Mexican assembly plants.

Trump's new global levies mark "the most sweeping tariff hike since the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act, the 1930 law best remembered for triggering a global trade war and deepening the Great Depression," said the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Oxford Economics estimates the action will push the average effective U.S. tariff rate to 24 percent, "higher even than those seen in the 1930s."

Russian Missile Strike Kills More Than a Dozen in City of Kryvyi Rih

KYIV (Dispatches) - A Russian ballistic missile strike on Volodymyr Zelensky's home city of Kryvyi Rih killed at least 18 people on Friday, including nine children, Ukrainian authorities said.

The missile struck a residential area near a children's playground and wounded 61 people, the Dnipropetrovsk regional governor Sergiy Lysa said Saturday after emergency operations were completed overnight.

Unverified videos on social media appeared to show bodies lying on a street, while another showed a plume of smoke rising into the evening sky.

"18... that is how many people were killed by the Russians when they launched a missile at Kryvyi Rih. Among them were nine children," Lysa said on Telegram.

He said 12 children were injured in Friday's attack.

"This is the kind of pain you wouldn't wish on your worst enemy," said Lysa.

Russia's defense ministry confirmed it had launched a missile at Kryvyi Rih but said it had struck a gathering of Ukrainian servicemen and foreign instructors, killing up to 85 people.

"As a result of the strike, enemy losses total up to 85 servicemen and officers of foreign countries, as well as up to 20 vehicles," the ministry said on Telegram.

Zelensky was born in Kryvyi Rih, which had a pre-war population of around 600,000 people.

"There is only one reason why this continues - Russia does not want a ceasefire and we see it. The whole world sees it," the Ukrainian leader said.

"And only the world's pressure on Russia, all efforts to strengthen



Ukraine, our air defence, our forces - only this will determine when the war will end."

One of your browser extensions seems to be blocking the video player from loading. To watch this content, you may need to disable it on this site.

U.S. President Donald Trump's administration has been pushing for a speedy end to the more than three-year war, holding talks with both Russia and Ukraine. Moscow has rejected a joint U.S.-Ukrainian proposal for an unconditional and full ceasefire, while Ukraine has accused Russia of dragging out talks with no intention of halting its offensive.

Kyiv is seeking security guarantees from its allies in the event of a peace agreement with Moscow to prevent a repeat of its February 2022 full-scale invasion.

Speaking to reporters in Kyiv after meeting British and French military chiefs, Zelensky said that European military planners could be ready within a month with details of a foreign troop contingent in Ukraine.

He emphasized that many other countries would also contribute to the effort, which envisages foreign troops patrolling Ukrainian land, sea and airspace.

"I think the teams need about a month, no longer, and we will be fully ready with an understanding of this infrastructure," he said.

Zelensky added that military working groups would meet weekly until then to finalise the details. He did not specify which other nations would contribute.

Kryvyi Rih, in Ukraine's central Dnipropetrovsk region, is about 60 kilometres from the front line but has regularly been targeted by Russian drones and missiles.

A previous Russian ballistic attack on the city on Wednesday killed at least four people and wounded more than a dozen others.

Oleksandr Vilkul, the head of the city's military administration, said the missile landed near a children's playground.

Five apartment buildings were damaged, interior minister Igor Klymenko said.

He said police had blocked off the area to maintain order.

One of your browser extensions seems to be blocking the video player from loading. To watch this content, you may need to disable it on this site.

Israel Hit Syrian Bases Scoped by Turkey

AMMAN (Dispatches) - Turkey scoped out at least three air bases in Syria where it could deploy forces as part of a planned joint defense pact before Israel hit the sites with air strikes this week, four people familiar with the matter said.

The bombardment signals the risks of a deepening rift between two powerful regional militaries over Syria, where Islamist rebels have installed a new government after toppling former leader Bashar al-Assad in December.

The Israeli strikes on the three sites Turkey was assessing, including a heavy barrage on Wednesday night, came despite Ankara's efforts to reassure Washington that a deeper military presence in Syria was not intended to threaten Israel.

The Islamists replacing Assad have alarmed Israel, which is wary of an Islamist presence on its border and has lobbied the United States to curb Turkey's growing influence in the country.

Ankara, a longtime backer of opposition to Assad, is positioning to play a major role in the remade Syria, including with a possible joint defense pact that could see new Turkish bases in central Syria and use of Syria's airspace.

In preparation, Turkish military teams in recent weeks visited the



T4 and Palmyra air bases in Syria's Homs province and the main airport in Hama province, according to a regional intelligence official, two Syrian military sources and another Syrian source familiar with the matter.

The sources spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the visits, which have not been previously reported.

Turkish teams evaluated the state of the runways, hangars and other infrastructure at the bases, the regional intelligence official said.

Another planned visit to T4 and Palmyra on March 25 was cancelled after Israel struck both bases just hours beforehand, according to the regional intelligence official and the two Syrian military sources.

Strikes at T4 "destroyed the runway, tower, hangars and the planes that were grounded. It was a tough message that Israel won't accept the expanded Turkish presence," said the intelligence official, who reviewed photographs of the damage.

"T4 is totally unusable now," said a fourth Syrian source, who is close to Turkey.

Clippers Blow Out Mavericks, Jockey for Playoff Berth



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Kawhi Leonard had 20 points and sparked a key early run as the Los Angeles Clippers sailed past the Dallas Mavericks 114-91 in Inglewood, Calif.

The Clippers have won 10 of their last 12 games. Ivica Zubac and Norman Powell each had 14 points for Los Angeles. The Mavericks scored their fewest points of the season.

Dallas played without Anthony Davis, who was a late scratch with an adductor strain. Dereck Lively II (injury management) also did not dress for the Mavericks, who also lost Klay Thompson to an injury in the first half after playing 12 1/2 minutes. Guard Jaden Hardy also was helped off the court with 2:13 left after rolling his ankle.

The two teams meet again, also in Inglewood.

The Clippers (45-32) pulled into a three-way tie for sixth place in the Western Conference with Memphis and Minnesota. Dallas (38-40) remained in ninth place in the West.

The score was tied at 8-8 midway through the first quarter when Leonard took over. He scored on a jumper from the elbow, a spin in the lane, two free throws and then made a 3-pointer for a personal 9-4 run that gave the Clippers a lead they did not relinquish.

Los Angeles closed the first quarter on a 19-6 run and led 29-16 at the buzzer.

The lead grew in the second quarter as the Mavericks sorely missed Davis' presence inside and outside. The Clippers went on a 10-0 run as Leonard drilled a 3-pointer, Powell made a long trey from the wing, Drew Eubanks scored inside and Leonard converted from the baseline. The lead grew to as high as 25, and Los Angeles led 58-35 at the break.

Dallas kept things around 20 points in the third quarter, but Los Angeles opened the fourth quarter on a 19-5 run, highlighted by three 3-pointers by Bogdan Bogdanovic.

In the fourth quarter, brothers Max Christie (Mavericks) and Cam Christie (Clippers) played against one another for the final six minutes.

Zubac had his 21st double-double since the All-Star break.

Meanwhile Jalen Green and Alperen Sengun combined for 65 points and the Houston Rockets rode a scorching second quarter to a 125-111 victory over the visiting Oklahoma City Thunder.

Green scored 34 points, Sengun added 31, and the Rockets (51-27) won for the 14th time in 16 games. Houston posted a 48-33 rebounding margin to maintain control after building a 23-point lead late in the second quarter.

Amen Thompson posted 16 points, eight rebounds and six assists, while Steven Adams paired eight points with 12 rebounds. Jabari Smith Jr. totaled nine points and 17 boards off the bench for Houston.

Jalen Williams paced the Thunder with 33 points on 13-for-21 shooting. Shai Gilgeous-Alexander notched 22 points and eight assists, and Chet Holmgren hit 6 of 8 3-pointers and scored 20 points for the Thunder (64-13), who had their 11-game winning streak snapped.

The Rockets capped the third quarter on a 12-3 run -- Gilgeous-Alexander scored eight during that rally -- and shaved the margin to single digits multiple times in the fourth before Green scored on a finger roll layup to push the lead to 11 with 7:09 to play.

The Rockets capped the win with a pair of emphatic plays. Thompson blocked a jumper by Gilgeous-Alexander with 3:27 left, and Sengun's spin and dunk a minute later pushed the lead to 122-108.

Ball security plagued the Thunder early, with five turnovers in the first quarter yielding 12 points for the Rockets. Gilgeous-Alexander led a rally that pulled the Thunder to within 25-22, but with Green and Sengun combining for 25 points in the frame, Houston carried a 35-28 lead into the second.

Houston seized control early in the second behind when Adams made a block on Isaiah Hartenstein and scored two second-chance baskets, to extend to a 52-37 lead. The margin reached 69-46 on Smith's 3-pointer, before the Thunder scored the final seven points of the half.

The Rockets hit 6 of 11 shots from long range in the second quarter plus 19 fast-break points in the half. Sengun and Thompson scored eight each in the second.

Man United Boss Amorim Rules Out Title Next Year



MANCHESTER (Dispatches) - Manchester United boss Ruben Amorim said it would be "crazy" to consider the Red Devils Premier League contenders next season but believe he must turn around the club's fortunes quickly.

United sit 13th in the Premier League after taking just 22 points from Amorim's first 19 games in the English top-flight.

Amorim's men are 36 points adrift of leaders Liverpool, who are on course to match United's record of 20 English top-flight titles.

United's co-owners Ineos have outlined their ambition to win a 21st league crown by the club's 150th anniversary in 2028.

However, Amorim said he has to put pressure on himself to make significant improvements heading into next season.

"It's not that next year is our goal. I am not saying that we are going to win the title next year. I am not crazy," the Portuguese coach said yesterday.

"What I am saying is I don't want this conversation to be that 'we need a lot of years, let's keep calm'. We are in a rush.

"So, we are suffering a lot to make next year so much better and that is our goal."

United have not won the Premier League since legendary former manager Alex Ferguson retired in 2013.

Ferguson made a slow start to his reign at Old Trafford before the trophies began to roll in during a glorious 27-year reign.

Amorim, though, said a repeat of the patience shown back then was no longer possible given the media spotlight on managers.

His predecessor, Erik ten Hag, was sacked in October despite winning a trophy in each of his first two seasons in charge.

"I have a lot of people saying Sir Alex Ferguson took three or four years to win something," added Amorim.

"It is not possible nowadays because you have to speak three times and give three interviews before each game, so the pressure is completely different."

One of Amorim's biggest wins since arriving in England came against local rivals Manchester City in December.

He can complete United's first league double over City since 2019/20 with victory in the Manchester derby on Sunday.

Kobbie Mainoo could make his first appearance after two months out injured, but Matthijs de Ligt is a doubt due to an issue picked up in Tuesday's 1-0 defeat at Nottingham Forest.

Paul Advances to Houston Semis

HOUSTON (Dispatches) - No. 1 seed Tommy Paul defeated qualifier Colton Smith 6-1, 7-6 (1) in the quarterfinals of the U.S. Men's Clay Court Championship in Houston.

In a matchup of the 13th and 200th-ranked players in the world, Paul dominated on his serve, winning 22 of 24 first-service points (91.7 percent) and 41 of 51 service points overall (80.4 percent). Paul had a 23-13 edge in total winners and capitalized on Smith's 31 unforced errors.

Paul's next opponent will be qualifier Jenson Brooksby, who came back to beat Aleksandar Kovacevic 2-6, 6-3, 6-4. No. 4 seed Brandon Nakashima was a 6-4, 6-4 winner over Christopher Eubanks.

All eight players still standing at the start of Friday were American. The last match of the night, between No. 2 seed Frances Tiafoe and No. 5 seed Alex Michelsen, was suspended due to rain but was expected to be played.

Dutch No. 1 seed Tallon Griekspoor hit five aces and went 4-for-4 saving break points to cruise past Italian eighth seed Mattia Bellucci 6-3, 6-4 in the quarterfinals in Marrakech, Morocco.

No. 3 seed Alexandre Muller of France wasn't as fortunate, as Polish qualifier Kamil Majchrzak cleaned up with a 7-5, 6-4 win in an hour and 36 minutes. Griekspoor and Majchrzak will square off in the semis.

Meanwhile, No. 5 seed Roberto Carballes Baena of Spain edged fourth seed Nuno Borges of Portugal 6-4, 6-4, and seventh seed Luciano Darderi of Italy beat Czech opponent Vit Koprivya 7-5, 6-2.



No. 1 Sebastian Baez survived a tough three-set encounter against Argentine countryman Francisco Comesana, prevailing 7-6 (5), 2-6, 6-1 in Bucharest, Romania.

Baez saved 7 of 10 break points while breaking Comesana on 4 of 7 opportunities. In the semifinals, he'll face Hungary's Marton Fucsovics, who beat Australia's Christopher O'Connell 6-0, 6-4.

Damir Dzumhur of Bosnia and Herzegovina continued a surprise run into the semifinals by advancing past No. 2 seed Pedro Martinez

Portero of Spain. Dzumhur led 6-1, 2-0 when Martinez Portero retired due to injury. He'll face No. 3 Flavio Cobolli of Italy, who beat Austrian qualifier Filip Misolic 7-6 (5), 6-4.

Meanwhile Russian-born Daria Kasatkina said she had mixed emotions in her first match as an Australian player at the Charleston Open, but the support of the crowd helped her overcome her nerves to make a winning start.

Kasatkina had to compete on tour as a neutral after Russian and Belarusian players were banned from playing under their own flags due to Moscow's 2022 invasion of Ukraine but was granted permanent residency by Australia last week.

The world number 12 made short work of American Lauren Davis on Wednesday with a 6-1 6-1 win.

"I felt it would be strange, obviously being called a player from Australia. I couldn't handle my smile. During the warmup it was the same," Kasatkina told reporters.

"I've got such a warm welcome from the crowd. So altogether it made for this amazing mix of emotions. It wasn't easy to step on court playing the first match with the new flag."

Kasatkina, born in the western Russian city of Tolyatti, has not returned to the country in more than two years after coming out as gay and being one of the few players to have publicly spoken out against the war.

Russia has designated the LGBT movement as extremist and those supporting it as terrorists, clearing the way for serious criminal cases against LGBT people and their advocates.

Suzuka Practice Disrupted by Fires Again



SUZUKA (Dispatches) - Championship leader Lando Norris went fastest ahead of McLaren teammate Oscar Piastri in Saturday's final practice for the Japanese Grand Prix as small trackside fires again disrupted the session.

Britain's Norris, who was also quickest in yesterday's first practice, clocked a fastest lap of 1min 27.965sec to lead Australia's Piastri by 0.026sec.

Norris is looking for his second grand prix win of the season after triumphing at the opener in Australia and finishing second behind Piastri in China.

Piastri won in Shanghai in a dominant start to the campaign for McLaren.

Mercedes' George Russell was third fastest at Suzuka ahead of Ferrari's Charles Leclerc, Red Bull's Max Verstappen and Ferrari's Lewis Hamilton.

The session was again interrupted by trackside fires as sparks from the cars ignited the grass in the dry conditions. Rain has been forecast for Sunday's race.

A small fire broke out about 10 minutes into the session and another brought out the red flags for a second time in the closing minutes.

Fires also caused Friday's second practice to be red-flagged twice.

Red Bull's Yuki Tsunoda was ninth fastest on his debut weekend for the team after replacing Liam Lawson.

Japan's Tsunoda, who has made a promising start to the weekend, said over the team radio that he was "overall very happy" with his car.

Alpine's Jack Doohan was 14th, after crashing heavily in Friday's second practice.

Guardiola Hails De Bruyne's Legacy

MANCHESTER (Dispatches) - Pep Guardiola said Kevin De Bruyne will be remembered as one of the greatest ever players in the Premier League after the Belgian announced he will leave Manchester City at the end of the season.

De Bruyne, 33, has been instrumental to City's rise as the dominant force in English football since joining from Wolfsburg for £55 million in 2015.

He has won 14 major trophies at the Etihad, including six Premier League titles and the Champions League in 2023.

De Bruyne has scored 106 goals and provided 174 assists in 413 appearances for City.

"He is one of the greatest midfielders ever to play in this country and for this club - there is no doubt," Guardiola said.

"We've won a lot of trophies and he's been



involved in every single one."

The City captain's influence has diminished in recent seasons due to injury problems.

He missed five months last season due to a hamstring tear and has started just 21 of City's 47 matches in all competitions this season despite the struggles of Guardiola's side to match the standards they have set over the past decade.

But Guardiola hailed De Bruyne's consistency and durability during his peak years that allowed City to hoover up silverware.

"For his consistency, except the last year, year-and-a-half, due to injury problems. The consistency in important games and not important games, every three days being there all the time," added Guardiola.