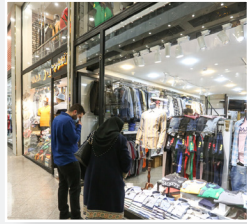


Deputy Foreign Minister Saeed Khatibzadeh and his Norwegian counterpart Andreas Motzfeldt Kravik Discussed Relations Between Iran and Norway, Emphasizing the Importance of Continued Diplomatic and Political Consultations Between the Two Sides

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Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs, Majid Takht-e Ravanchi, Says There Is "a Good Chance" of Reaching an Agreement If the United States Ceases Making Excessive Demands and Issuing Threats

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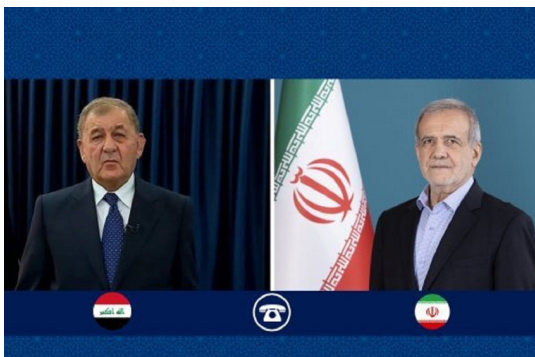
3 INTERNATIONAL



Gaza Hell on Earth as Hospital Supplies Running Out

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President Says Relations With Iraq "Priority"



TEHRAN (PressTV) - President Masoud Pezeshkian says Iran prioritizes its relations with Iraq, as the two countries are eager to enhance their bilateral ties.

"The relationship with Iraq is one of the most important arenas of the Islamic Republic's foreign ties," Pezeshkian said in a phone call with his Iraqi counterpart Abdul Latif Rashid on Friday, stressing the "brotherly" ties between the two neighboring countries.

Pezeshkian appreciated the phone call made by Rashid to congratulate the Iranian president on the occasion of Eid al-Fitr, marking the end of the holy month of Ramadan, and the Persian New Year.

The Iranian president also hoped an in-person meeting would take place with the Iraqi president so the two sides could discuss "ways to strengthen empathy and cohesion, and further expand mutual relations to ensure peace and development for the peoples of Iran and Iraq, as well as the regional nations."

In the phone conversation, Rashid said "Iraq's people and government have always wished the best for their neighbors and friends in Iran."

"Iraq is ready for any kind of cooperation and collaboration with the Islamic Republic of Iran in order to enhance the stability, security and prosperity of the two countries and other nations in the region."

Earlier this month, Pezeshkian reaffirmed the Islamic Republic's commitment to strengthening its relations with its friendly neighbor Iraq, saying Iran is determined to implement all the agreements between Tehran and Baghdad in order to thwart enemies' plots in the region.

He made the remarks in a phone conversation with Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia' al-Sudani on April 1, weeks after the administration of US President Donald Trump decided to revoke Iraq's sanctions waiver for importing electricity from Iran.

Yemen Targets Israeli Military Sites in Jaffa



SANAA (Dispatches) - The Yemeni Armed Forces (YAF) have announced that they launched a drone operation targeting two Israeli military sites in the occupied Jaffa region, citing it as a direct response to the ongoing genocide against Palestinians in Gaza.

According to a statement issued by the YAF on Friday, the attack was carried out using two "Yaffa" drones and formed part of a steadfast support for the Palestinian people and resistance fighters in Gaza.

On the same day, Israeli forces conducted a deadly airstrike on Gaza City's Shejaiya neighborhood, killing at least 29 civilians—most of them women and children. Over 50 others were injured, and dozens remain trapped under rubble, local sources reported.

The Ministry of Health in Gaza stated that since the Israeli genocidal campaign began in October 2023, more than 50,912 people have been killed and over 115,688 injured in Gaza Strip.

The Yemeni Armed Forces reiterated their commitment to standing with the Palestinian people, stating they would not retreat from their position.

"We will not stop," the statement read, "and American aggression against Yemen will not deter us from our religious, moral, and humanitarian duty toward Gaza until the aggression stops and the siege is lifted."

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK



Iran Delivers Positions to Oman Ahead of Indirect Talks With U.S. in Muscat

TEHRAN - On Saturday morning, Iranian and American diplomatic delegations arrived in Muscat, Oman, for indirect negotiations aimed at addressing key issues, primarily the nuclear file.

According to Iran's Tasnim News Agency, the indirect talks between Iran and the United States are set to be held today, April 11, in Oman's capital with mediation from Oman's Foreign Minister, Sayyid Badr Albusaidi.

The Iranian side has clarified that these talks will focus solely on nuclear issues. Tehran has repeatedly emphasized that it will not accept any threats and will engage only in win-win negotiations on nuclear matters.

Iran insists its negotiation logic is consistent with the principles of the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA): mutual trust-building in exchange for the lifting of sanctions.

Iran's Foreign Minister, Seyed Abbas Araqchi, after meeting with his Omani counterpart this morning, stated that Iran had formally handed over its negotiation positions to be conveyed to the American side.

Araqchi, accompanied by a team of seasoned nuclear negotiators, said, "We are here with full seriousness, aiming for a fair and dignified agreement from a position of equality."

He added, "If the U.S. side has also entered from this perspective, there is a chance for an initial understanding that could pave the way for future talks."

He mentioned that key foundational issues would be clarified during the initial stages. While noting it is still too early to speak of timelines, he said both sides would decide on a schedule if sufficient will is present.

He reaffirmed that the indirect nature of the negotiations is deliberate and strictly focused

on nuclear topics, with the intent of securing Iran's national interests through a balanced outcome.

Upon arrival in Muscat, Araqchi met with Oman's Foreign Minister, Sayyid Badr Albusaidi, expressing gratitude for Oman's long-standing, responsible approach to regional diplomacy.

He praised Oman's role in hosting the indirect talks as a continuation of this constructive stance and thanked the Omani side for facilitating the dialogue.

During the meeting, Albusaidi briefed Araqchi on the logistical arrangements for the day's talks. Iran then officially handed over its negotiation points to Oman for delivery to the U.S. delegation.

Reuters confirmed in a report today that the indirect Iran-U.S. negotiations in Muscat, held amid rising regional tensions, will focus on the nuclear issue.

The agency noted that high-level discussions are intended to expedite renewed negotiations over Iran's nuclear program.

Iran's delegation, led by Araqchi, includes senior officials such as Majid Takht-Ravanchi (Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs), Kazem Gharibabadi (Deputy for Legal and International Affairs), Ismail Baghaei (Foreign Ministry spokesperson), and relevant nuclear experts.

The American delegation, led by Steve Whitkoff, U.S. Special Representative for Middle East Affairs, also arrived in Muscat this morning. He is reportedly accompanied by Eric Trager of the National Security Council and nuclear experts from the U.S. State Department.

The location and indirect format of the talks were specifically chosen by Iran to ensure transparency and to test the seriousness of the U.S. intentions.

Iran Has Surpassed West's Arbitrary Redlines on Nuclear Technology

TEHRAN (PressTV) - The head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) has highlighted the endogenous capacity of nuclear science in the country, saying the West has failed to deprive the nation of the technology.

Speaking during Friday prayers in Tehran, Mohammad Eslami said the Western countries want to hold a monopoly in nuclear technology and thus they do not tolerate the development of Iran's nuclear program.

"The key point is that we have surpassed the redlines that certain powers had arbitrarily and unlawfully imposed on this region," he noted.

"Today, nuclear science and technology are not merely a scientific capability; they have evolved into a national and intrinsic asset, deeply rooted in the minds and determination of the people of this land, continuously growing and advancing," Eslami added.

Western states, he added, "do not accept or tolerate the presence of a nation like the Islamic Republic of Iran, independent and on par with them on the global stage."

"All their (the Western states') measures and efforts to stop Iran have failed by God's grace. They have not been able to achieve any results from acts of sabotage and opposition, and they will never be able to do so," he said.

Referring to Iran's nuclear products, the official said that more than 30 countries are



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seeking these products.

Eslami said while the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is tasked with supporting, encouraging, and facilitating the use of peaceful nuclear technology across the world, the US is not allowing the UN atomic watchdog to fulfill its inherent duty towards Iran.

Iran has been subject to the most IAEA inspections from its nuclear facilities, he noted.

"Despite all disruptions [the Western powers create] and pressure they put on Iran, they still claim that Iran has not accepted monitoring and is concealing its nuclear activities."

Eslami also pointed out that in recent years, whenever Iran moved closer to signing contracts with foreign countries to build nuclear power plants, the West forced companies to withdraw from the deals.

"To spite our adversaries, we will construct fully Iranian [nuclear] power plants running on Iranian fuel," he added.

Over the past years, Iran has recorded many achievements in its peaceful nuclear energy program in defiance of US sanctions as well as hurdles created by the West.

As one of the first signatories to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Iran has also been closely cooperating with the IAEA.

The agency's head, Rafael Grossi, is expected to visit Tehran later this month.

Iran Produces 900 Defense Systems Thanks to Defense Industry Experts



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The spokesperson for the Ministry of Defense announced that today, the Iranian Armed Forces are equipped with the most advanced defense and drone technology, with more than 900 defense and weapon systems being produced in the country.

In a statement delivered during the anniversary of the liberation of Qasr-e Shirin from the occupation of the Ba'athist regime of Iraq, Brigadier General Reza Talaei-Nik emphasized that this day carries a clear message that identity, security, progress, and livelihood are intertwined, and these four elements are the foundation of our worldly and spiritual well-being.

Talaei-Nik further welcomed the Iraqi guests attending the commemoration of the liberation of Qasr-e Shirin, noting that their presence sends a clear message: if a war ever occurred between the two nations, its root cause was foreign influences driven by interests and desires that led to enmity.

Highlighting the advancements in Iran's defense industry, he stated that the country has now reached a point where over 900 defense and weapon systems are being manufactured, thanks to the efforts of domestic defense industry experts. He also recalled that before the revolution, the country only had 31 basic defense systems, but now Iran's defense capabilities have significantly advanced with the support of the nation's youth in universities. He noted that Iran's scientific ranking has risen by 40 positions, reaching 16th globally, although there is still more work to be done in other areas.

Talaei-Nik also acknowledged the legitimate concerns of the people of Qasr-e Shirin regarding the clearing of mine-contaminated areas and issues related to agriculture and border trade, affirming that the government will address these concerns.

18% of People Neglect Dental Hygiene



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The Minister of Health, Treatment, and Medical Education, Dr. Mohammadreza Zafarghandi, announced that 18% of people do not adhere to any dental hygiene practices, with the figure rising to 50% in lower economic strata, underscoring a serious need for attention in this area.

Speaking at a ceremony commemorating Dentistry Day at Milad Tower in Tehran, Dr. Zafarghandi highlighted the importance of both treatment and prevention within the healthcare system, stating that the dental community must focus more on preventive measures.

He expressed concern over the state of oral health, revealing that 55% of people over the age of 65 in Iran are completely edentulous, compared to the global rate of 25-30%. This indicates the urgent need for serious action, not only in prevention but also in the area of pre-prevention.

Emphasizing the significant vertical growth of the healthcare system, Dr. Zafarghandi noted that sustainable development requires horizontal expansion and the distribution of services across the country.

The Minister also shared that, in the past, Iran had only five dental schools. Today, the country boasts 46 active dental schools, capable of conducting all specialized medical and dental procedures domestically.

Dr. Zafarghandi praised the scientific achievements in dentistry in Iran, stressing that these accomplishments are a source of national pride and should be communicated to the public.

IRAN NEWS



Iran's Gas Exports to Turkey Surge by Over 30% in 2024

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - In a new report titled "Review of Iran's Role in Supplying Natural Gas to Turkey in 2024," the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has highlighted a significant increase in gas exports to Turkey, based on data from Turkey's Energy Market Regulatory Authority (EPDK). According to the report, Iran is now the third-largest supplier of natural gas to Turkey.

The analysis shows a 30.32% increase in Iran's gas exports to Turkey, with the country's market share rising from 10% in 2023 to 13.56% in 2024. The report underscores Iran's substantial capacity to meet the energy needs of its western neighbor.

Comparing Iran with key competitors like Russia and Azerbaijan, the report stresses the need to upgrade infrastructure and strengthen export strategies to maintain and expand this market share.

Iran Sees 21% Surge in Non-Oil Trade with Neighboring Countries



TEHRAN - In a significant development for regional commerce, Iran's non-oil trade with 15 neighboring countries reached \$74.3 billion in the Iranian calendar year 1403 (March 2024-March 2025), marking a 21% increase compared to the previous year. According to Iran's Customs Administration (IRICA), Saudi Arabia recorded the most dramatic growth among Iran's neighbors.

Farouq Asgari, Deputy Minister of Economy and Head of IRICA, revealed that the total volume of non-oil trade with these 15 countries amounted to over 112.8 million tons, reflecting a 16% rise year-on-year.

The United Arab Emirates led the list of Iran's top trading partners in the region, accounting for \$29.2 billion in trade, followed by Turkey at \$19.4 billion, Iraq at \$12.5 billion, Pakistan at \$3.1 billion, and Afghanistan at \$2.5 billion.

One of the most noteworthy developments was the resurgence of trade between Iran and Saudi Arabia. After years of diplomatic estrangement, bilateral trade with Saudi Arabia in 1403 saw a staggering 6,483% increase in value, reaching 61,000 tons worth \$25 million. This spike follows a thaw in relations between the two regional powers, signaled by a China-brokered agreement to restore diplomatic ties in 2023.

Other neighbors also showed robust trade growth: Turkey's trade with Iran rose by 63%, Qatar by 46%, and Afghanistan by 28% in value terms compared to 1402 (March 2023-March 2024).

Breaking down the trade balance, Asgari noted that of the total trade volume, Iran exported 89.4 million tons of goods worth \$36 billion, while imports from these 15 neighbors totaled 23.4 million tons, valued at \$38.3 billion. Exports showed a 22% increase in volume and a 26% rise in value, while imports remained steady in weight but climbed 17% in monetary value.

These figures highlight Iran's expanding economic ties with its immediate region, despite ongoing international sanctions and geopolitical tensions. The surge in trade with Saudi Arabia, in particular, suggests that improving diplomatic relations are starting to yield tangible economic dividends.

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK



Iran's Textile Industry Eyes \$1b Investment Potential

TEHRAN - Iran's textile industry has the capacity to attract up to \$1 billion in investment, provided that key reforms are implemented to support domestic production, secure investments, and revise outdated regulations. This was the central message from Seyed Shojaeeddin Emami Raouf, Secretary of the Iran Textile Industry Association, in an interview with IRNA.

According to Emami Raouf, the textile sector has already drawn approximately \$400 million in investments. However, he emphasized that achieving the \$1 billion mark is within reach if the government ensures investor confidence and provides the necessary legislative and infrastructural support.

"The slogan 'Investment in Production' reflects one of the key pillars of Iran's Seventh Development Plan," Emami said. "Productive investments play a critical role in improving the country's economic and industrial indicators."

Highlighting the importance of a secure environment for investors, Emami stressed that capital naturally gravitates toward stable and profitable ventures. "Therefore, it is essential to reform the overall business environment to make domestic production more attractive," he added.

He expressed hope that this year would mark a turning point in efforts to attract investment, especially through legal reforms and enhanced support for domestic products and Iranian-made goods. "In previous years, slogans about supporting production were not backed by meaningful action. This year must be different," he stated.

Iran's textile industry serves a vast \$15 billion domestic market, encompassing various segments including clothing, bedding and home textiles, curtains, and other related products. Emami noted, however, that a portion of this market has been lost to smuggled goods.

"Illegally imported textiles are a serious issue. We expect stronger enforcement from the Anti-Smuggling Task Force, as past efforts have proven insufficient," he said. He called for a strategic overhaul of anti-smuggling policies and highlighted the textile industry's potential to generate jobs and create value-added products if supported appropriately.

Emami also emphasized that Iranian manufacturers are capable of producing high-quality, competitive goods, provided that operational efficiency is improved and supportive frameworks are established.

Another pressing issue, Emami explained, is the prevalence of domestic

goods being sold under foreign labels. "This undermines consumer confidence in Iranian products," he warned. "There must be cultural campaigns to promote pride in local goods. A foreign label does not necessarily mean higher quality."

He pointed out that many Iranian textile products now rival foreign counterparts in both variety and quality.

Emami attributed a large portion of unregulated imports to the gap between the free market and government-regulated exchange rates. "Many traders exploit this difference, effectively receiving indirect subsidies on foreign goods," he explained.

He noted that in 2011, Iran imported about \$300 million worth of fabric, a figure that has since tripled to \$1 billion in 2024. "There hasn't been a proportional growth in the country's economy or population to justify this spike in imports. The issue stems from inconsistent customs tariffs and exchange rate discrepancies," he said.

The textile association chief urged the government to revise customs tariffs in line with current economic realities. "The base exchange rate used in customs calculations should have been adjusted last year. We hope that this year, it will be aligned with market realities to support domestic manufacturers."

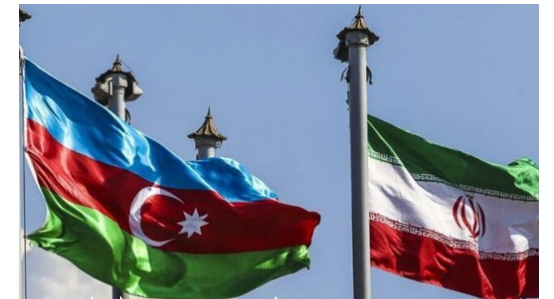
He emphasized that import policies must be reformed to encourage domestic production and draw more investment into the textile industry.

Emami also criticized special economic zones, such as free trade zones and border trade regions, which he claimed have become gateways for unregulated imports of clothing and textiles. "These zones must be reviewed and regulated in collaboration with the private sector to prevent further damage to local industry," he stated.

In conclusion, Emami Raouf emphasized that increasing investment in any sector is closely tied to government strategies. He urged the administration to revise laws, remove production barriers, implement development plans, and curb imports of foreign-made goods. "Encouraging greater participation from the private sector is essential if we are to realize the full potential of the textile industry," he said.

The message is clear: with the right policies and consistent support, Iran's textile industry could become a cornerstone of economic growth and domestic employment—unlocking its full \$1 billion investment capacity.

Iran-Azerbaijan Business Forum Held



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Minister of Roads and Urban Development announced the organization of a specialized meeting between Iranian and Azerbaijani business leaders during the Iranian President's official visit to Azerbaijan, aimed at boosting international freight transport and transit cooperation between the two nations.

According to the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development, Minister Farzaneh Sadegh highlighted the outcomes of a three-day visit to the Republic of Azerbaijan upon her return at the Jolfa border crossing in East Azerbaijan Province.

The minister noted that the visit served as a preparatory step for the upcoming trip of Iranian President Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian to Azerbaijan, with a review of bilateral cooperation under the framework of the Iran-Azerbaijan Joint Economic Commission.

During a meeting with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, both sides reaffirmed their commitment to previous agreements and cooperation in areas including transport, trade, oil, gas, energy, and other economic sectors.

Sadegh also met with Shahin Mustafayev, Azerbaijan's Deputy Prime Minister and head of the Azerbaijani side of the Joint Economic Commission. The meeting focused on refining the details of bilateral agreements and preparing the groundwork for President Pezeshkian's upcoming visit.

Key topics discussed included enhanced cooperation in maritime and port transport, increased capacity for road freight, and the facilitation of truck traffic between the two countries.

The two sides agreed to draft a memorandum of understanding on transport, border management, customs, and transit issues. The MoU is expected to be finalized and signed during the Iranian president's visit.

Sadegh emphasized both countries' commitment to accelerating the implementation of a preferential trade agreement and expressed hope that the upcoming presidential visit would lead to concrete results in this area.

Cuba Expresses Interest in Learning from Iran's Experience in Smart Gov't, Cybersecurity



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The Deputy Minister of Communications of Cuba has expressed his country's interest in benefiting from Iran's experience in implementing smart government systems and enhancing cybersecurity. He also confirmed Cuba's willingness to participate in each other's international events.

According to a Friday report from Iran's Information Technology Organization, during a meeting on the sidelines of the 28th session of the UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) in Geneva, Mohammad Mohsen Sadr, Iran's Deputy ICT Minister, emphasized the importance of expanding and deepening bilateral cooperation with Cuba.

Highlighting the history of interactions between the two nations, Sadr stated that Iran is committed to strengthening these relations. He noted that during the Cuban ICT Minister's visit to Iran, the country's capabilities in various sectors were presented. Iran is now fully prepared to collaborate further in areas such as e-government and smart governance.

Sadr also announced Iran's readiness to hold training courses and mentioned the signing of a bilateral agreement in the field of cybersecurity. He concluded by stressing the need to establish a joint committee to coordinate cooperation between the two countries.

Hernandez, Cuba's Deputy Minister of Communications, expressed satisfaction with the ongoing engagements between the two countries and stated that there is strong determination among Cuban officials to strengthen ties with Iran. He added that Cuban companies are preparing proposals to expand collaboration.

Referring to the presence of Iranian firms at Cuba's technology exhibition last year, Hernandez highlighted the positive developments in cybersecurity cooperation.

BRICS Standardization Agencies Officials Hold Virtual Meeting



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - In a continued effort to strengthen international multilateral cooperation in the field of standardization, senior officials from the BRICS member states convened for a virtual meeting hosted by Brazil's national standards agency. The gathering brought together high-ranking representatives from Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, and newly joined members, including Iran.

According to ILNA, the primary focus of the meeting was to review and evaluate the technical, professional, and executive qualifications of representatives from member organizations for participation in a joint working group. Delegates also discussed a draft memorandum of understanding (MoU) aimed at enhancing multilateral cooperation in the field of standardization.

Representing Iran, Farahnaz Ghalasi, Deputy for Standard Drafting and Promotion at the Institute of Standards and Industrial Research of Iran (ISIRI), proposed several initiatives. Her suggestions centered on enhancing coordination within the technical frameworks and governance structures of international standardization bodies. She emphasized supporting capacity-building efforts for member states, particularly those with less developed infrastructure in this domain. Her proposals were met with a positive response from other BRICS members.

Ghalasi also underscored the importance of deeper alignment and coordination among BRICS countries to strengthen their collective influence in global standard-setting organizations such as the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

During the session, participants reiterated the importance of leveraging the scientific and operational capacities of BRICS countries to achieve shared goals. There was consensus on the need to build a more unified and impactful presence in the international standardization landscape.

This initiative aligns with BRICS' broader strategy to increase autonomy and collaboration in key technical and industrial sectors. As the bloc expands its membership and global influence, efforts such as this meeting reflect a shared commitment to shaping a more inclusive and balanced international standards system.

Iran Ranks Among World's Top Five Countries in Livestock Industry

TEHRAN - Iran's livestock industry has earned a place among the top five globally, according to the country's Minister of Agriculture Jihad, Gholamreza Nouri Ghezleh.

During a visit to an industrial livestock unit in Eslamshahr, southwest of Tehran, on Friday, Nouri told reporters that Iran is now among the leading nations in animal husbandry, particularly in dairy farming. "Thanks to the tireless efforts of our livestock farmers, we are not far behind the world's top producers in this sector," he said.

He noted that Iran has come a long way from the days when it imported dairy products. "Today, Iranian dairy products are exported to European countries and global-tier companies. This is a proud and commendable achievement for all stakeholders in the livestock and dairy industry - from producers to researchers," he added.

Nouri also commented on market conditions during the New Year holiday season, stating that the food supply for late March and the end of the Iranian calendar year (1403) was stable and satisfactory. "Thanks to the efforts of producers, agricultural unions, and market regulators, we managed to maintain price stability and meet demand," he said, adding that the government aims to continue this positive trend.

The minister emphasized the need to support producers of raw



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milk, poultry, and eggs, acknowledging that a portion of production costs is tied to feed and livestock inputs, which are still being supplied at last year's preferential exchange rate. "Although this rate remains unchanged, other cost factors driven by inflation and macroeconomic indicators must be taken into account, necessitating a new pricing strategy," Nouri explained.

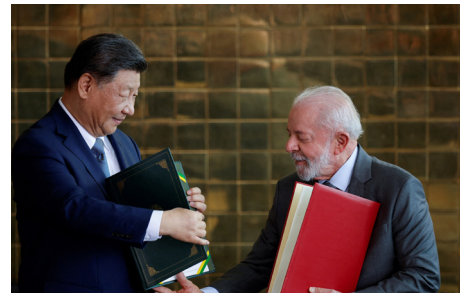
He said the pricing process is being coordinated with the Ministry of Agriculture Jihad, industry unions, and associations. Multiple expert meetings have already been held, and the updated prices for raw milk, chicken, and eggs will be announced shortly to give producers financial peace of mind.

Touching on the factors influencing agricultural pricing, Nouri stressed that President Masoud Pezeshkian has repeatedly emphasized that "imbalances must not disrupt production." He warned that energy supply disruptions - including water, electricity, and gas - could cause irreparable damage to the agricultural production chain.

He concluded by expressing hope that energy supply to the agriculture sector would remain uninterrupted in 2025, despite ongoing drought conditions. "The Ministries of Energy and Oil have cooperated effectively, and we aim to ensure that with sufficient energy provision, we can maximize productivity in agriculture and livestock farming to meet domestic market needs with local production."

Xi and Lula Firming China-Brazil Ties With Eyes on Trump

BRASILIA (Dispatches) - Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva will travel to China next month for his third meeting with President Xi Jinping since taking office in 2023, the government in Brasilia said, and a fourth meeting is already planned for July. The steady pace of bilateral meetings underscores Brazil's warming relations with its largest trading partner, which a diplomat in Brasilia called "inevitable," as the world adapts to U.S. President Donald Trump's unpredictable trade policies. "The natural path is to look for alternatives. China is one of them," said the diplomat, who requested anonymity to speak freely, adding that Brazil is also looking to close a regional trade deal with the European Union and boost cooperation among the BRICS group of major developing nations.



Mexico to Send Water to Texas Farmers as U.S. Treaty Threat Grows



MEXICO CITY (Dispatches) - Mexico will make an immediate water delivery to farmers in Texas, President Claudia Sheinbaum said, to help make up its shortfall under a treaty that has strained U.S. relations and prompted tariff threats by President Donald Trump.

Mexico is looking for alternatives to comply with the 81-year-old water-sharing treaty with the U.S., Sheinbaum said in her regular news conference. A proposal had already been sent to U.S. officials, she said.

Mexico's failure to keep up with its water deliveries has sparked a diplomatic spat with its largest trading partner.

A day earlier, Trump said he would escalate consequences, including tariffs or sanctions on Mexico. Texas Republicans have also publicly accused Mexico of flagrantly ignoring the treaty, harming farmers who depend on the water deliveries.

"For Texas farmers who are requesting water, there will be an immediate delivery of a certain number of millions of cubic meters that can be provided according to the water availability in the Rio Grande," Sheinbaum said.

Under the 1944 treaty that outlines water-sharing between the two countries through a network of interconnected dams and reservoirs, Mexico must send 1.75 million acre-feet of water to the U.S. from the Rio Grande every five years. An acre-foot of water is enough to fill about half an Olympic swimming pool.

The treaty's current five-year cycle is up in October, but Mexico has sent less than 30% of the required water, according to data from the International Boundary and Water Commission.

Gaza Hell on Earth as Hospital Supplies Running Out



GENEVA (Dispatches) - The president of the Red Cross described the humanitarian situation in Gaza as "hell on earth" and warned that its field hospital will run out of supplies within two weeks.

"We are now finding ourselves in a situation that I have to describe as hell on earth... People don't have access to water, electricity, food, in many parts," Mirjana Spoljaric told Reuters at the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva.

No new humanitarian supplies have entered the Palestinian enclave since Israel blocked the entry of aid trucks on March 2, as talks stalled on the next stage of a now broken truce. Israel resumed its military assault on March 18.

Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said 25,000 aid trucks had entered Gaza in the 42 days of the ceasefire and that Hamas had used the aid to rebuild its war machine, an allegation which the group has denied.

Spoljaric said supplies were running critically low.

"For six weeks, nothing has come in, so we will, in a couple of weeks' time, run out of supplies that we need to keep the hospital going," she said.

The World Health Organization said supplies of antibiotics and blood bags were dwindling fast. Twenty-two out of 36 hospitals in the enclave are only minimally functional, Dr. Rik Peepker told reporters in Geneva via video link in

Jerusalem.

The Red Cross president also raised concern about the safety of humanitarian operations.

"It is extremely dangerous for the population to move, but it's especially also dangerous for us to operate," Spoljaric said.

In March, the bodies of 15 emergency and aid workers, including eight members of the Palestinian Red Crescent, were found buried in a mass grave in southern Gaza.

The U.N. and Red Crescent accused Israeli forces of killing them.

The Israeli military said on Monday that an initial investigation showed that the incident occurred "due to a sense of threat" after it said it had identified six Hamas militants in the vicinity.

Spoljaric called for an immediate ceasefire in order to release the remaining hostages held by Hamas and to address grave humanitarian issues in Gaza.

Israel began its military campaign in Gaza in October 2023 after Hamas-led militants killed 1,200 people and took some 250 hostages on a raid into Israel, according to Israeli tallies.

Since then, more than 50,800 Palestinians have been killed and much of the territory has been reduced to rubble.

Denmark Inches Towards Ratifying U.S. Defense Deal



COPENHAGEN (Dispatches) - Denmark's parliament on Friday took an important step towards ratifying a defense cooperation deal with the United States that expands the U.S. military's rights in the Nordic country despite a diplomatic dispute over Greenland.

Recent opinion polls have shown significant opposition among Danes to the 10-year pact which, if ratified, would grant the U.S. military broad access to station troops and store equipment on Danish soil.

U.S. President Donald Trump's insistence that the United States take over Greenland, a semi-autonomous Danish territory, for security reasons has soured relations between the two traditionally close NATO allies.

The Danish and Greenland governments have both ruled out yielding the huge, resource-rich Arctic island to U.S. control.

But despite the dispute, the Danish government, which signed the bilateral cooperation deal in 2023, when Joe Biden was U.S. president, has said it is critical to bolstering Denmark's defenses at a time when Russia is regarded as an increasing threat to Europe due to its three-year-old war in Ukraine.

Trump Says U.S. Doing Really Well as China Hikes Tariffs to 125%

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - President Donald Trump insisted that his tariff policy was "doing really well" despite China hiking levies on US goods to 125 per cent in the spiraling trade war between the world's two biggest economies.

Investors dumped U.S. government bonds, the dollar tumbled and stocks seasawed after Beijing's retaliation against Trump deepened concerns on already traumatized global markets.

Trump sent financial markets into a tailspin by announcing sweeping import taxes on dozens of trade partners last week, only to abruptly roll them back to 10 per cent on Wednesday for 90 days—while raising levies on goods from China.

"We are doing really well on our tariff policy," Trump said in a post on his Truth Social network after China announced its latest hike.

"Very exciting for America, and the World!!! It is moving along quickly," he wrote.

The White House said later that Trump remained "optimistic" about a deal with China, and added that 15 other countries have offers "on the table" during his 90-day pause in their tariffs.

But Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt added that "the president made it very clear, when the United States is punched he will punch back harder."

The U.S. and Beijing have been trading salvos of increasingly harsh tariffs since last week.

Chinese President Xi Jinping gave his first major comments on the tensions on Friday, with state media quoting him as saying his country was "not afraid."

Xi also said the European Union and China should "jointly resist unilateral bullying practices" during talks with Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez.

Beijing announced after Xi's comments that new tariffs of 125 percent on US goods would take effect Saturday—almost matching the staggering 145 per cent level imposed on Chinese goods coming into America.

A Chinese Commerce Ministry spokesperson said the United States bore full responsibility, deriding Trump's tariffs as a "numbers game" that "will become a joke."



But China's finance ministry said tariffs would not go any higher in an acknowledgement that almost no imports are possible at the new level.

Trump had reiterated on Thursday that he was looking to do a deal with Xi despite the mounting tensions.

"He's been a friend of mine for a long period of time. I think that we'll end up working out something that's very good for both countries," he told reporters.

But American officials have made it clear they expect Xi to reach out first.

Pressure was growing on Trump, however, as markets continued to fret.

As investors fled the dollar, which is typically considered a key haven currency, Trump attempted to squelch fears on Friday.

"We're the currency of choice. We're always going to be... I think the dollar is tremendous," Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One, after the dollar plunged to its lowest level against the euro in more than three years.

Meanwhile yields on crucial US government bonds, which are normally seen as a financial refuge, were up again Friday, indicating weaker demand as investors take fright.

The White House said however that it had no evidence to support speculation by traders that China was offloading some of its vast holdings—which would increase the cost of borrowing for the US government—in retaliation.

Wall Street stocks finished higher Friday, concluding a rollercoaster week on a positive note amid hopes that the market has absorbed the worst headlines about trade conflicts.

Policymakers at the US Federal Reserve meanwhile warned of higher inflation and slower growth ahead due to Trump's tariff policy.

Economists warn that the disruption in trade between the tightly integrated US and Chinese economies will increase prices for consumers and could spark a global recession.

Ipek Ozkardeska, an analyst at Swissquote bank, told AFP the tariff figures were "so high that they don't make sense anymore," but said China was "now ready to go as far as needed."

The rest of the world is still calibrating its response.

Trump on Thursday described the European Union—which was originally hit with 20 per cent tariffs by Trump—as "very smart" for refraining from retaliatory levies.

EU trade chief Maros Sefcovic will hold talks in Washington on Monday.

But the 27-nation bloc's chief Ursula von der Leyen told the Financial Times it remained armed with a "wide range of countermeasures" including a possible hit on digital services that would strike US tech firms.

Trump Envoy Meets Putin in Moscow

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Less than 48 hours after dining with a negotiator sent by Russian President Vladimir Putin in Washington last week, Steve Witkoff, the U.S. special envoy leading talks with Moscow, sat down with President Donald Trump in the White House and delivered a clear message.

The fastest way to broker a ceasefire in Ukraine, said Witkoff, was to support a strategy that would give Russia ownership of four eastern Ukrainian regions it attempted to annex illegally in 2022, two U.S. officials and five people familiar with the situation told Reuters.

It was a point Witkoff had made previously – and publicly in a podcast interview with conservative media personality Tucker Carlson last month – but one that Kyiv has repeatedly rejected and that some U.S. and European officials have dismissed as a maximalist Russian demand.

In the meeting with Trump, General Keith Kellogg, the president's Ukraine envoy, pushed back against Witkoff, saying Ukraine, though willing to negotiate some terms related to disputed land, would never agree to unilaterally cede total ownership of the territories to Russia, said two of the sources.

The meeting ended without Trump making a decision to change the U.S. strategy. Witkoff traveled to Russia Friday to meet Putin.

Trump administration officials are increasingly at odds over how to break the deadlock between Ukraine and Russia, with Witkoff and Kellogg – who favors more direct support for Ukraine – disagreeing on the best course forward, according



to the U.S. officials and people familiar with the matter and four Western diplomats who are in touch with administration officials.

Witkoff's office, the National Security Council, the State Department, Ukraine's Foreign Ministry and the Russian Embassy in Washington did not respond to requests for comment.

In a break with normal security procedures, Witkoff had invited Kirill Dmitriev, the Russian envoy who is under U.S. sanctions following Russia's invasion, to his personal residence for dinner before the White House meeting.

That set off alarms inside the White House and the State Department, according to two people familiar with the situation. U.S. officials avoid hosting officials from Russia – which has sophisticated intelligence capabilities – to their homes.

The dinner was rescheduled and took place at the White House instead.

Witkoff, an old friend of Trump's who has helped secure key diplomatic victories for the president, has garnered some support from the Republican Party's Ukraine skeptics but his proposals have stoked outrage among other Republicans who believe the administration has turned too sharply toward Moscow.

Some Republicans on Capitol Hill were so concerned about Witkoff's apparent pro-Russia stance in the Carlson interview that several called National Security Adviser Mike Waltz and Secretary of State Marco Rubio afterward to complain, according to a person familiar with the calls.

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Alcaraz Downs Fils to Reach Monte Carlo Semis



MONTE CARLO (Dispatches) - Carlos Alcaraz huffed and puffed his way into the Monte Carlo Masters semi-finals with a 4-6 7-5 6-3 victory against local favourite Arthur Fils, who will be ruing his missed chances as holder Stefanos Tsitsipas was knocked out.

Four-times Grand Slam champion Alcaraz had to sweat but made the most of his opponent's errors in the key moments to set up a semi-final against fellow Spaniard Alejandro Davidovich Fokina, who beat Australia's Alexei Popyrin in straight sets.

Lorenzo Musetti recovered from a shaky start to beat sixth seed Tsitsipas 1-6 6-3 6-4 after the Greek served a handful of double faults, unable to finish it off when he had the upper hand.

The Italian 13th seed will play Australian Alex de Minaur, who wasted no time downing Bulgarian Grigor Dimitrov, who lost 6-0 6-0 after 44 minutes with a staggering 23 unforced errors.

Fils made a blistering start against world number three Alcaraz, surging to a 3-0 lead with two early breaks.

Alcaraz fought back to retrieve one break and had four chances to level in the fourth game, but Fils held firm. The Spaniard eventually drew level at 4-4, only for Fils to break once more and move ahead 5-4 in a rollercoaster set.

The Frenchman wrapped it up after saving another two break points.

He wasted seven break points, however, in the second set, and Alcaraz levelled the tie with a superb lob to steal Fils' serve in the 12th game.

Second seed Alcaraz remained inconsistent and dropped serve once again in the third game of the decider.

But experience eventually told as the 21-year-old broke back and got another break in the eighth game to the frustration of Fils, who smashed his racket on the clay.

World number 15 Fils could not regain his poise in the final game, allowing Alcaraz to finish it off routinely.

"I believe that true champions find the right level when necessary. Of course, I'd like to be able to play my best tennis from the first point to the last," said Alcaraz.

"But we played for almost two hours 30 minutes, and that's the hardest thing in tennis: maintaining your best level over such a long period.

"So, when necessary, it's good to get back to your best shots. And then sometimes, in certain sequences, the opponent is better than you and you have to accept that and keep fighting."

Salah Signs Liverpool Contract Extension to 2027



LONDON (Dispatches) - Liverpool forward Mohamed Salah has ended months of speculation about his future by signing a two-year contract extension at Anfield, the Premier League leaders said.

The 32-year-old, who joined the club in 2017 from AS Roma, could have left the club for free in the summer with his contract previously set to expire in June.

"I'm very excited. We have a great team now. Before also we had a great team. But I signed because I think we have a chance to win other trophies and enjoy my football," Salah said in a club statement.

"It's great, I had my best years here. I played eight years, hopefully it's going to be 10. Enjoying my life here, enjoying my football."

He paid tribute to the club's fans, and pledged to keep working hard to bring them results.

"Keep supporting us and we'll give it our best, and hopefully in the future we're going to win more trophies."

Salah is Liverpool's third-highest goalscorer of all time with 243 goals in 394 games.

In his eight years at the club Liverpool have won a Premier League title — most likely about to become two titles — as well as one Champions League crown, an FA Cup, two League Cups, the UEFA Super Cup and FIFA Club World Cup.

He has been a stand-out performer for Liverpool this season, scoring 32 goals in all competitions and leads the race for the Premier League's golden boot with 27 goals.

Liverpool are 11 points clear of second-placed Arsenal with seven games left to play.

"My family also feels at home, we enjoy every moment in this city and every moment in the club," Salah said.

"It's a special moment always when we play at Anfield. There is no place like that. The warmth you feel inside the song before the game. Every time I score a goal and they sing my song, it is something special, and the story will continue."

Nuggets Storm Back in Final Minutes, Topple Grizzlies

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Nikola Jokic had 26 points, 16 rebounds and 12 assists for the Denver Nuggets, who outscored Memphis 14-1 in the final six minutes to beat the visiting Grizzlies 117-109.

Jokic guaranteed he will be the third player to average triple-double for a season, and the first center. He has 34 triple-doubles this season and 164 in his career.

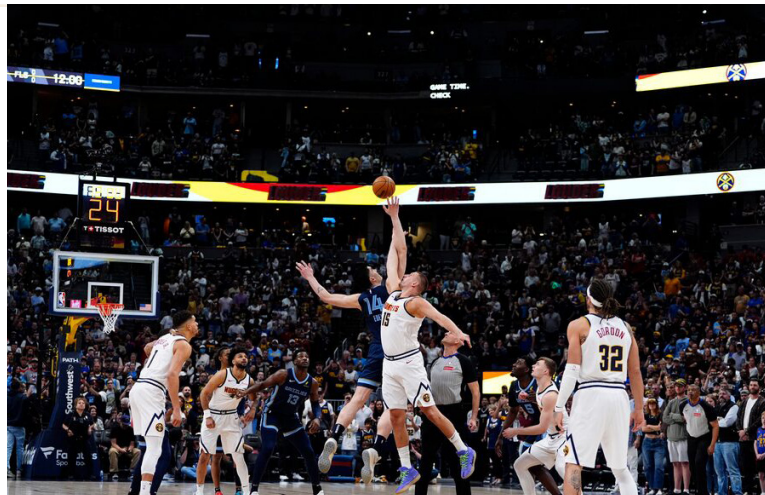
Denver (49-32) rallied from down 15 to stay the top six in the Western Conference ahead of the regular-season finale at Houston on Sunday. Nuggets interim head coach David Adelman has won his first two games since taking over for the fired Michael Malone.

Denver's Aaron Gordon had eight dunks on his way to 33 points, and Jamal Murray scored 15 in his return after missing six games with a hamstring injury. Russell Westbrook recorded 14 points, Christian Braun contributed 12 and Michael Porter Jr. finished with 12 rebounds.

The Nuggets outscored Memphis 25-14 in the fourth quarter and held the Grizzlies without a field goal after trailing 108-103 with 6:05 left.

Desmond Bane had 24 points for the Grizzlies (47-34), who lost for the second straight night and dropped to No. 8 spot with a game remaining Sunday against the visiting Dallas Mavericks.

Ja Morant scored 21 points, Jaren Jackson Jr. contributed 18 points, Luke Kennard had 12 points, Scotty Pippen Jr. added 11 and Zach Edey pulled down 16 rebounds for Memphis.



The Grizzlies missed their last 10 shots and committed four turnovers to end the game.

The game was tied at 97 early in the fourth before when Memphis went on a 6-0 run to go back in front, and the visitors led 108-103 with a chance to extend the lead before going cold.

The Nuggets got within 108-105 on a layup by Jokic. He then fed Gordon for a dunk and split a pair of free throws with 3:28 left to tie it. Jackson missed a short hook in the lane and Murray made a jumper to give Denver the lead for the first time since

7-6. Westbrook stole Bane's pass in the lane and then Jokic hit an 8-foot floater to make it 112-108 with 2:12 left, and Denver closed it out.

Meanwhile Aaron Wiggins scored 35 and Isaiah Joe drained 10 3-pointers for 32 points as the Oklahoma City Thunder defeated the Utah Jazz 145-111 in Salt Lake City.

With both teams relying on reserves, the Thunder (67-14) shot the lights out en route to a third straight win. They hit 56.0 percent from the field and made 24 of 53 3-pointers -- Joe nailing 10 of 14 from deep -- to go with 41 assists while improving to 4-0 versus Utah this season.

Svi Mykhailiuk registered a career-high with 27 points and five 3-pointers off the bench for the Jazz (17-64), who were coming off a rare win.

Utah, which went 17-for-63 from 3-point territory, lost for the 20th time in 22 games.

Jaylin Williams tallied a triple-double for the Thunder with 15 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists. Kenrich Williams added 18 points, Adam Flagler scored 17 and Utah native Branden Carlson chipped in nine points in front of his hometown fans.

Along with being the home finale for Utah, the game was the final one in retiring Jazz P.A. announcer Dan Roberts' 46 seasons. Roberts began announcing games in 1979 when the Jazz moved from New Orleans to Salt Lake City.

Rose Leads Star-Studded Masters

AUGUSTA (Dispatches) - Justin Rose topped a Masters leaderboard overflowing with star power, with Bryson DeChambeau one stroke back and world number one Scottie Scheffler and Grand Slam-seeking Rory McIlroy giving chase.

Rose, who began the day with a three-stroke lead, stayed hot with the putter to cruise through the front nine but had to work coming home as strong winds began whipping through Augusta National.

The Englishman mixed four birdies with three bogeys for a one-under-par 71 that brought him to eight under at the halfway point.

Given the glittering names atop the leaderboard, two-time Masters runner-up Rose said a fearless attitude will be required to capture the Green Jacket on Sunday.

"You're going to have to play great golf," he said. "Get out there, want it, go for it."

The 44-year-old former world number one is seeking to add a second major championship on the back end of a career that includes an Olympic gold medal and a lucrative FedEx Cup win.

LEADERS															
SCORE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
ROSE	4	5	4	3	4	3	4	5	4	4	4	3	5	4	5
DECHAMBEAU	7	8	8	7	7	7	8	8	8	8	9	8	8	9	8
SCHEFFLER	4														
MORANT	4	5	5												
MURRAY	4	4	5	5	5	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
WILSON	3	4	4	5	6	6	6	7	7	7	7				
WATSON	1	2	2	2	1	0	1	2	2	2	3	4	5	6	6
WALKER	1	1	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	3
WATSON	1	2	2	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4				
WATSON	2	3	3	3	3	3	4	5	5	5	6	6	6	6	6
WATSON	1	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4

DeChambeau (68) converted a challenging par-saving putt on 18 to stay one back of Rose.

The popular American was followed throughout his round by adoring fans, who erupted with cheers when he holed out from the bunker on the fourth for birdie.

Well-known for his power off the tee, it has been the two-time U.S. Open champion's finesse with the irons and putter that have impressed this week.

DeChambeau said he too was excited to go toe-to-toe with the game's best over the weekend.

"This is what golf is about," he said.

"We've got a lot of great names up there. I'm looking forward to an unbelievable test of golf."

McIlroy moved past the pair of double bogeys on Thursday that threatened to derail his bid for a career Grand Slam with a thrilling second-round performance.

After a steady but unspectacular start, McIlroy came alive on the back nine with back-to-back birdies on 10 and 11.

McLaren Dominate Bahrain Practice



SAKHIR (Dispatches) - McLaren were streets ahead of the pack in second practice at the Bahrain Grand Prix y leaving Max Verstappen lamenting his "too slow" Red Bull.

Oscar Piastri posted a quickest lap of 1min 30.505s with his teammate Lando Norris only a tenth of a second adrift.

Mercedes' George Russell took third, albeit over five tenths of a second back in an ominous display of force by McLaren at a track where the Bahraini-backed team have yet to win in 21 visits.

Verstappen, who moved to within one point of championship leader Norris after his win in Japan last weekend, struggled to make any significant impact, the four-time world champion trailing in seventh, close to one second back.

"We're just too slow basically every lap, and it was honestly not a lot of fun out there in the long run," lamented the Dutchman.

"The gap was quite massive," he added.

To add insult to injury immediately in front of Verstappen were two rookies - Mercedes' Kimi Antonelli and RB's Isack Hadjar, who both did brilliantly to finish fifth and sixth.

Red Bull's plight was not helped by the sight of Yuki Tsunoda coming in 18th, six places behind RB's Liam Lawson, the driver he replaced at Red Bull last time out.

Norris was keeping his feet firmly on the ground, suggesting the bare results didn't tell the whole story.

"Everyone just looks at the timesheets," the Briton said. "They have no idea on the information on who turns up (the engine)."

Russell though was in no doubt that McLaren had an edge, saying Piastri and Norris were "a big step ahead".