

Russian President Vladimir Putin Has Signed a Bill Ratifying the Strategic Partnership Treaty With Iran Which Had Been Approved by Russia's State Duma Earlier This Month

IRAN NEWS

Iran's Agriculture Minister Gholamreza Nouri Says the Country Is Seeking to Expand Its Exports to Brazil to Balance Its Trade With the South American Country

2 DOMESTIC



Russian VTB Bank's Services for Iranians Signal Step Toward Global Banking Reintegration

> SEE PAGE 2

3 INTERNATIONAL

Death of Pope Francis Prompts Wave of Mourning Worldwide



> SEE PAGE 3

Iran Condemns Baseless Claims of PGCC Countries on 3 Persian Gulf Islands



TEHRAN - Iran has strongly condemned baseless claims raised during the foreign ministerial meeting of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council about three Iranian islands.

The country's UN ambassador said such allegations amount to a flagrant violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

Amir Saied Irvani made the remarks on Monday in a letter to the UN chief and the president of the Security Council.

He reaffirmed Iran's full and unquestionable sovereignty over the islands of Abu Musa, Greater Tumb, and Lesser Tumb in the Persian Gulf.

The ambassador added that any claim to the contrary is considered an unacceptable interference in Iran's internal affairs.

In their final statement, the council's foreign ministers questioned Iran's sovereignty over the three islands, claiming that they belonged to the United Arab Emirates.

Irvani also denounced the use of a falsified name for the Persian Gulf in the meeting's statement.

He emphasized that "Persian Gulf" is the only historically and legally recognized name for the body of water between Iran and the Arabian Peninsula.

Irvani said that the council's foreign ministers' statement includes assertions on three Iranian islands in the Persian Gulf that constitute a clear and unacceptable interference in the internal affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in flagrant violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

Iran Announces Readiness to Attract Major Oil and Gas Investors



TEHRAN - Iran has declared its readiness to welcome major international investments in its oil and gas sector, offering attractive investment packages, innovative partnership models, and special incentives to facilitate foreign participation in large-scale energy projects.

In a keynote address at the "Transformation in Investment and Development in the Upstream Oil and Gas Sector" conference, Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref emphasized the country's strategic approach toward securing long-term, mutually beneficial partnerships.

"We are not merely seeking financial investment; we are looking for stable, strategic collaborations based on shared long-term interests," Aref stated. He praised the efforts of the National Iranian Oil Company for organizing the event and underlined the importance of the oil and gas industry in shaping both Iran's economic future and regional energy security.

Iran, holding the world's second-largest natural gas reserves and third-largest oil reserves, is not just a significant player but a pillar in the global energy equation, Aref asserted. He added that what transforms these vast resources into a real advantage is not only their volume but also Iran's highly skilled workforce, extensive infrastructure, and the political will for constructive international cooperation.

Gov't Spokeswoman Emphasizes Lifting of Sanctions as Core Demand in Indirect Talks With U.S.

TEHRAN - Iran's government spokesperson announced Tuesday that the primary objective in indirect negotiations with the United States is the effective lifting of sanctions.

In a weekly press briefing, Fatemeh Mohajerani highlighted that a significant portion of foreign exchange rate fluctuations stems from market expectations and psychological factors. She emphasized that expanding international cooperation would enhance economic stability, and it is within this context that negotiations are taking shape. "Our two key goals in these talks are the effective removal of sanctions and improving the well-being of the people," she said.

Addressing the vacancy at the Ministry of Economy, Mohajerani noted that the government has a legal three-month window to nominate a new minister and is carefully evaluating candidates to select the most capable person to manage the country's economic conditions. While the interim head is experienced, a final candidate will be announced in due course.

Responding to rumors about the transfer of enriched uranium out of Iran, Mohajerani firmly stated that such action remains a red line for the Islamic Republic. She also underlined Russia's significant role in the ongoing talks due to its position as a permanent UN Security Council member and its close nuclear cooperation with Iran.

Mohajerani reaffirmed the administration's commitment to strengthening ties with neighboring countries, particularly Saudi Arabia. She pointed to the recent release of an Iranian prisoner by Saudi Arabia as a sign of goodwill and highlighted shared interests between the two Muslim nations. "As two major Islamic countries in the region, we can have a positive impact together," she said.

She added that the strategic priority of the 14th government is to deepen political and diplomatic relations with regional and Muslim countries.

On foreign investment, Mohajerani stated that Iran has never placed restrictions on investors from any country, including the U.S. However, she noted that American laws have often prevented U.S. investors from entering the Iranian market. "We are committed to transparency and creating an open environment for investors, as it benefits the Iranian people," she said.

Commenting on the recent visit of Saudi Arabia's Defense Minister, Prince Khalid bin Salman, Mohajerani described the trip as more than a routine visit, signaling a serious intention from the Saudi government to deepen cooperation with Iran.

Addressing concerns over extended talks, Mohajerani said the current negotiations are progressing



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

constructively, with the government aiming for a solid agreement that safeguards national interests. While not in a rush, she stressed that Iran does not support drawn-out negotiations.

Mohajerani also paid tribute to Iran's "martyrs of service" and detailed plans for a week-long national commemoration. She discussed Iran's environmental challenges, particularly dust storms originating from outside its borders, naming Saudi Arabia as a primary source. To combat this, she announced strengthened environmental diplomacy and collaboration with international organizations, including the UNDP.

Mohajerani highlighted a government bill to reintroduce daylight saving time, estimating electricity savings equivalent to a 1,200 MW power plant. "The adjustment could cut energy

consumption by 1,000 to 1,500 MW," she said.

She confirmed that Iran's electronic ration card program will continue as part of broader efforts to reduce economic pressure on citizens. "This policy has proven effective in supporting household needs," she said.

In response to questions about administrative changes, Mohajerani explained that following the departure of former officials, Mohsen Esmaceli has been appointed to oversee two strategic deputy roles in the president's office to streamline decision-making.

Mohajerani extended condolences on the passing of Pope Francis, praising his efforts to promote peace and end bloodshed in Gaza and elsewhere. "He worked tirelessly to prevent the killing of women and children worldwide," she said.

She also commemorated National Guard Day, Earth Day under the theme "Clean Energy, Clean Earth," and the upcoming martyrdom anniversary of Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq, lauding his contributions to Islamic scholarship.

Looking ahead, Mohajerani announced that Tehran will host a major economic summit with African nations from April 27 to May 1. Over 55 African countries will participate, along with thousands of international investors. She expressed hope that this event, along with the upcoming Iran Expo 2025, will significantly advance Iran's trade and investment opportunities.

She concluded by noting that commercial talks during the expo will occur on multiple levels: government-to-government, government-to-business, and business-to-business. "This is a unique opportunity to expand our markets and boost the national economy," she said.

President Criticizes Lack of Comprehensive Vision for National Development



TEHRAN - President Masoud Pezeshkian has criticized past approaches to development in Iran, saying they lacked a comprehensive and accurate vision, particularly in leveraging the country's international potential and southern coastal regions. "What has happened so far under the name of development has not been rooted in a proper and comprehensive perspective," he stated. "We have merely gone through the motions of living, neglecting the real development of the country."

The remarks came during a high-level meeting held Monday morning under the title "Maritime-Based Development," which focused on reviewing the draft statute for the newly proposed Maritime Development and Makran Region Organization. The session, chaired by President Pezeshkian and attended by key ministers and officials, emphasized the importance of strategic planning for Iran's southern and northern coasts.

Engineer Abdol-Ali Zadeh, the President's representative for coordinating maritime development policies, presented the revised statute. He highlighted significant changes, including shifting the government's role from direct executor to facilitator and increasing public and private sector participation instead of relying solely on government agencies. The plan centers on boosting development in the Makran coastal region.

President Pezeshkian expressed appreciation for the draft but stressed that any action in this field—especially concerning the Makran region—must align with a comprehensive master plan. "Without such a roadmap, our efforts may stray from the intended objectives or fail to meet them fully, necessitating future revisions," he warned.

He also emphasized that the statute must clearly define the responsibilities and roles of both governmental and non-governmental sectors—public, cooperative, and private. "Identifying these roles is dependent on preparing the master plan," he said.

The President criticized delays in appointing an experienced international consultant to develop the master plan. He called on the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development and other relevant bodies to expedite the selection of the most qualified global experts for the task.

Iran Ready to Negotiate All Types of Contracts to Attract Investment



TEHRAN - In a move signaling Iran's strong push to attract private and international investment into its strategic oil and gas sector, Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad announced the launch of more than 200 new investment opportunities and financial incentive packages, including the establishment of an Oil Guarantee Fund. The minister emphasized the government's readiness to negotiate with the private sector on all types of contracts.

Speaking at the inauguration of the "Transformation in Investment and Upstream Oil and Gas Development" event in Tehran, Paknejad highlighted the importance of national synergy in realizing the country's economic slogan of the year, "Investment for Production." He stated, "This slogan is not merely a motto—it serves as a comprehensive roadmap for all sectors of the economy, especially the oil and gas industry."

The minister explained that the event was centered around three key pillars: investment, production, and structural transformation. He revealed that the Oil Ministry has already signed 16 contracts under the IPC (Iran Petroleum Contract) model for the development of 23 oil and gas fields, totaling over \$27 billion in investment. Nine of these contracts, worth \$13 billion, are currently under execution, with the remainder nearing finalization.

Paknejad described the recently signed pressure-boosting contract for the South Pars joint gas field, valued at approximately \$17 billion, as the largest recent project. He expressed optimism that this contract will soon be ratified and enter the implementation phase with the involvement of major domestic contractors.

Certain Groups Manipulating Iran-U.S. Talks

TEHRAN - Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi has denounced certain Special Interest groups for attempting to derail the ongoing diplomatic efforts between Tehran and Washington by promoting "maximalist demands" and smearing negotiators.

In a post published on his official X account on Tuesday, the top diplomat emphasized that these groups were laboring to manipulate the course of diplomacy and goad the US administration into making excessive demands.

Araqchi's remarks were made after cancellation of his scheduled keynote address at the Carnegie International Nuclear Policy Conference.

The cancellation followed, what turned out to be, an "orchestrated pressure" campaign from "Israeli-affiliated hawkish elements" and officials from administrations of former US presidents Joe Biden and Barack Obama.

The official clarified that his intention was not to use the speech to address the nuances of ongoing indirect talks between the two sides in public, but to explain Iran's mindset and aspirations.

He expressed regret over the decision, attributing it to a lack of understanding of the sensitive dynamics involved in the diplomatic process.

Iran and the United States held their first round of indirect talks during US President Donald Trump's second tenure, in the Omani capital Muscat on April 13, with the Persian Gulf state serving as the mediator.

The talks were followed by another round in Rome, which were likewise mediated by Muscat. The process will continue at the expert level on Wednesday and at the principals' level on Saturday.

The post also featured the complete text of the foreign minister's speech, in which he reiterated Iran's longstanding commitment to the principles of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). He emphasized the country's opposition to nuclear weapons on moral and religious grounds.

"As one of the founding signatories of the NPT back in the 1960s, Iran has long been committed to the principles of universal access to peaceful nuclear technology and rejection of atomic weapons," the official wrote in the speech.



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

"We are also the only country on the planet that officially opposes nuclear arms on moral and religious grounds," through a religious decree (fatwa) by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

Araqchi further highlighted Iran's advocacy for a nuclear weapon-free zone in the West Asia region and criticized Western countries for turning a blind eye to the Israeli regime's expansive nuclear arsenal, calling for an end to this double standard.

The foreign minister stressed that any future agreement had to guarantee Iran's economic benefits, besides addressing "concerns of all parties."

Accordingly, he underlined that talks had to remain focused solely on the removal of the US's illegal and unilateral sanctions against the Islamic Republic as well as the nuclear issue.

The Islamic Republic's security would, therefore, never be subject to negotiation, he asserted. "In a region as rough and volatile as ours, Iran will never put its security up for negotiation."

The official pointed out that Iran's pursuit of civilian nuclear energy aligned with its national developmental and economic goals.

He emphasized that the Islamic Republic had never opposed economic and scientific collaboration with the United States, noting that previous American administrations had been the obstacle, often influenced by Special Interest groups.

Araqchi, however, mentioned that Iran's economy presented significant opportunities for U.S. enterprises, particularly in generating clean electricity from non-hydrocarbon sources.

He concluded by emphasizing the need to respect Iran's civilizational past and cultural and political identity.

He argued that threats and pressure against the Iranian nation had been counterproductive throughout history, closing avenues for compromise.

The official called for constructive engagement rooted in mutual respect and equal standing, asserting that Iran should not be treated as an exception within the global nonproliferation framework, and that nuclear-armed states also had to accept elimination of their non-conventional arsenals.

IRAN NEWS



Iran Deported Over 1.2m Undocumented Immigrants Last Year

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran deported more than 1.2 million undocumented immigrants over the past calendar year up to late March, according to Minister of Interior Eskandar Momeni.

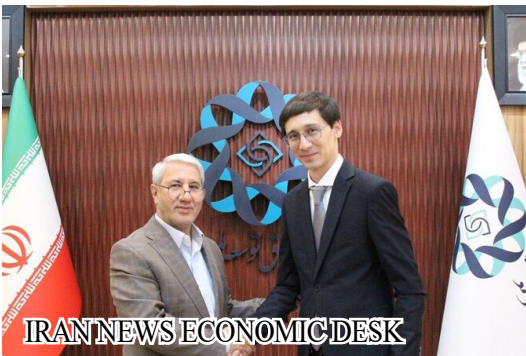
The minister, addressing a meeting in Tehran with governors from across Iran, said that unauthorized immigrants in the country have taken many job opportunities.

"We always emphasize our close relations, historical ties, and religious bonds with our neighbors, but we have no more capacity," he said.

The minister added that Iran has no choice but to deport undocumented immigrants, as other countries do.

By deporting these immigrants, Iran can restore the lost job opportunities, Momeni said.

Iran, Uzbekistan Strengthen Economic Ties with Focus on Joint Investment Fund



TEHRAN - A high-level economic delegation from Uzbekistan met with officials from Iran's National Development Fund (NDF) to discuss enhancing bilateral economic cooperation. Iran's proposal to establish a joint investment fund was warmly received by the Uzbek side, signaling a new chapter in economic collaboration.

The Uzbek delegation, led by Shakhrokh Gholamreza, Deputy Minister of Investment, Industry, and Trade, held talks with Seyed Mostafa Seyed Hashemi, Deputy Chairman of the NDF, and Reza Abbasgholi, NDF's Deputy for International Affairs Coordination, at the NDF headquarters, according to an NDF statement.

Seyed Hashemi highlighted the deep cultural, historical, and geographical ties between the two nations, emphasizing the importance of expanding economic cooperation and fostering good neighborly relations. He noted that bilateral trade reached approximately \$450 million last year, with Iran exporting \$368 million to Uzbekistan and importing \$81 million, resulting in a positive trade balance of \$287 million for Iran.

However, with Iran accounting for less than 1% of Uzbekistan's \$36 billion in imports, Seyed Hashemi underscored the significant potential for increasing Iranian exports and developing joint supply chains. He called for a detailed roadmap and coordination between public and private sectors to boost Iran's market share in Uzbekistan.

Introducing the NDF's expertise in financing major projects in energy, transportation, and infrastructure, Seyed Hashemi announced the fund's readiness to support joint economic initiatives in Iran, Uzbekistan, and third countries. "Our concrete proposal is to establish a joint Iran-Uzbekistan investment fund, which could serve as a bilateral financial institution to drive industrial, export-oriented, and technology-focused projects," he said.

He also referenced a proposed petrochemical project in Uzbekistan, expressing hope that, with NDF support and bilateral cooperation, it would move from feasibility studies to implementation. Seyed Hashemi stressed the need for a joint economic commission to follow up on proposals and agreements.

Russian VTB Bank's Services for Iranians Signal Step Toward Global Banking Reintegration



TEHRAN - In a significant development for Iran's economic landscape, the Tehran Chamber of Commerce's Money and Capital Market Commission convened to discuss the expanding financial services offered by Russia's VTB Bank to Iranian businesses. The collaboration, seen as a pivotal step toward reintegrating Iran into the international banking system, was the focus of the commission's 22nd session, attended by representatives from VTB Bank, Iranian banks, and economic stakeholders.

Ferial Mostofi, head of the commission, opened the session by highlighting the critical need to resolve financial transfer challenges faced by Iranian traders. She noted that VTB Bank, Russia's second-largest financial institution, has initiated cooperation with Iranian banks and established a representative office in Iran. This partnership has already facilitated services, including the issuance of a letter of credit (LC), marking a breakthrough for Iranian businesses long isolated from global banking networks. "Access to these services enhances transparency and reduces commercial risks for traders," Mostofi stated, emphasizing the potential for greater financial stability.

Mohammadreza Rajaei, VTB Bank's official representative in Iran, provided context on the bank's operations, which began laying groundwork in Iran three years ago. He underscored Russia's economic significance, with annual trade volumes of \$700-\$800 billion, contrasted by the relatively modest \$3 billion trade between Iran and Russia. "Iran has yet to secure a prominent position in Russia's economic dealings," Rajaei remarked, advocating for stronger banking infrastructure to elevate bilateral trade. He revealed that VTB has established correspondent relationships with 12 Iranian banks, enabling services through these local partners. Rajaei also hinted at plans to open a full branch in Iran next year, a move that could further streamline financial operations.

VTB's services are designed to operate through Iranian banks, ensuring that transactions remain rial-based for local businesses, shielding them from the complexities of foreign currency transfers. Rajaei explained that the availability of services depends on financial resources and active correspondent relationships, with mechanisms already in place to support trade settlements between the two nations. With assets valued at \$260 billion, VTB's scale rivals the combined asset value of all Iranian banks, positioning it as a robust partner for Iran's financial ecosystem.

Andrei Konstantin, a VTB project manager, elaborated on the bank's global footprint, boasting \$439 billion in financial assets, 1,600 branches across Russia, and a customer base of 24 million. Despite some branches being inactive due to sanctions, VTB

maintains an extensive network in CIS countries and is eager to deepen ties with Iranian firms. Konstantin confirmed the bank's commitment to opening its first Iranian branch in 2026, a development anticipated to bolster economic cooperation.

Representatives from Iranian banks, including Bank Saderat, Bank Melli, and Bank Middle East, outlined their roles in facilitating VTB's services. Samad Ahangar, deputy international affairs officer at Bank Saderat, noted that businesses in Russia or Iran could secure bank guarantees through VTB and his bank, with LC issuance also feasible. Tania Yaghmaei from Bank Middle East added that the Central Bank of Iran would soon allocate funds to support VTB-related operations, enabling LC issuance upon currency allocation approval. Mehdi Azizi of Bank Melli highlighted the banks' presence in Armenia as an additional avenue for supporting traders, offering services like guarantees and remittances.

The session also addressed challenges in Iran-Russia trade. Ali Reza Kiani, deputy head of the commission, pointed out that Turkey's trade with Russia is 20-25 times larger than Iran's, and even Armenia's trade surpasses Iran's by fourfold. He criticized the inefficiencies of funds held by trustee companies, which lack productive use, and proposed redirecting even a fraction of these resources to VTB to expedite financial transfers. Kiani noted that deposits with VTB could yield 13-14% returns, offering a financial incentive.

Concerns about service costs were raised by Roshanali Yekta, vice president of the Iran-Russia Joint Chamber, who highlighted that small and medium-sized enterprises, which drive over 60% of Iran-Russia trade, operate on razor-thin margins. High service fees could render VTB's offerings inaccessible, he warned. Rajaei acknowledged that negotiations on fee structures are ongoing, with the collaboration still in its early stages.

The session concluded with a resolution for the commission to draft a comprehensive proposal on VTB cooperation, to be submitted to relevant authorities. Stakeholders, including Amirabbas Mahdavimehr of Persian Gulf Industry Trade Holding, expressed readiness to support infrastructure development for VTB's Iranian branch, underscoring the potential for enhanced trade facilitated by VTB's ties with Chinese banks.

This partnership marks a cautious but promising step for Iran's reintegration into global finance, offering businesses new tools to navigate international trade with greater ease and security.

Iran Trade Volume With BRICS Around \$13b



TEHRAN - Minister of Agriculture, Gholamreza Nouri Ghezjelreh, announced that Iran's trade with BRICS member states in agriculture and food exceeds \$13 billion, with Brazil accounting for approximately \$7 billion. Speaking at a meeting reviewing Iran's participation in the 15th BRICS Agriculture Ministers' Summit held in April 2025, Nouri emphasized the significance of the BRICS pact, noting that its members' agricultural trade totals around \$160 billion annually.

Nouri highlighted that BRICS nations, home to nearly 50% of the global population and a third of the world's economy, play a critical role in countering unilateralism. During the summit, Iran's proposals, including the establishment of a fisheries working group, collaboration on agricultural research, vaccine production, financial mechanisms, and investment development, were approved and incorporated into the final statement.

Food security was a key focus, with Iran's initiatives receiving strong support from BRICS members. Nouri underscored the bloc's importance in fostering multilateral cooperation and economic resilience.

However, challenges loom for Iran's agricultural sector. Nouri warned that ongoing drought and a 26% reduction in rainfall could lead to a 20% drop in wheat production this year. While the government's push for higher productivity in rain-fed farmlands may offset some losses, Iran may need to import wheat, prioritizing BRICS partners for these purchases.

On a positive note, Nouri expressed optimism about achieving self-sufficiency in red meat production soon, a goal Iran has communicated to Brazil, a major meat exporter. This aligns with Iran's broader strategy to deepen agricultural ties with BRICS nations, leveraging their collective economic weight to enhance food security and trade.

The minister's remarks underscore Iran's growing integration into the BRICS framework, positioning the country as a key player in global agricultural cooperation despite domestic challenges posed by climate and resource constraints.

Iran to Strengthen Economic Ties With Azerbaijan During Presidential Visit



TEHRAN - In a significant step toward enhancing economic diplomacy, a 120-member Iranian economic delegation, led by the President, will travel to Azerbaijan on April 27 to lay the groundwork for future agreements and collaborations. The announcement was made by Hossein Pirmoazen, Vice President of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, during a meeting of the Ardabil Province Government and Private Sector Dialogue Council.

The delegation, comprising private sector representatives, members of the Iran-Azerbaijan Parliamentary Friendship Group, and four northwestern provincial governors, aims to bolster economic ties with Azerbaijan. Key objectives include reopening the Astara and Bileh Savar border crossings for land transit and establishing a dry port to serve as a critical trade link between the two nations.

Pirmoazen emphasized that strengthening economic relations with neighboring countries is a top priority, aligning with Iran's strategy to boost economic diplomacy. He also highlighted preparations for the Iran Expo 2025 in Tehran, which will showcase Iran's economic potential and facilitate direct negotiations with international business leaders.

In addition, a Chinese economic delegation is scheduled to visit Ardabil from April 28-29, 2025, to explore investment opportunities. Pirmoazen urged provincial officials to engage actively in these talks to attract Chinese investment.

Ardabil's Governor, Masoud Emami Yeganeh, stressed the need to resolve delays in issuing investment permits and to clarify the status of unutilized lands allocated for investment. He called for streamlined processes through the National Permits Portal and enhanced training for staff to position Ardabil as an attractive investment destination.

Iran's Electricity Consumption 2.5 Times Higher Than Turkey and Portugal



TEHRAN - Mostafa Rajbi Mashhadi, CEO of Tavanir, Iran's state-owned power company, revealed that the country's per capita electricity consumption is 2.5 times higher than nations like Turkey and Portugal. Speaking at the Shahid Rajai Festival, he highlighted that energy and fuel consumption in Iran's building sector is five times higher than comparable countries.

Mashhadi noted a 75% surge in energy consumption over the past three decades, with Iran's energy intensity index rising from 130 to 227. He emphasized the strain on power infrastructure, stating that to meet annual demand, 45 new power plants are now needed each year, up from 30 previously. In 2023, demand grew by 6,500 megawatts, exacerbating the energy imbalance.

The CEO pointed out seasonal challenges, with summer demand spiking from 45,000-50,000 megawatts to 70,000-80,000 megawatts, worsened by drought limiting hydroelectric output. Winter imbalances stem from insufficient fuel for power generation despite available plant capacity. To address this, Tavanir has launched 14 mega-projects, including 5,000 megawatts of renewable energy, some of which will be operational this summer.

Mashhadi also highlighted excessive cooling consumption, noting that Iran's 3,200 megawatts used for air conditioning in administrative buildings surpasses the total cooling consumption of seven West Asian countries and Egypt combined, despite Egypt's 110 million population.

To curb consumption, a government mandate requires a 30% reduction in administrative electricity use during working hours and a 60% cut during off-hours. Summer heating loads increase network demand by 35,000 megawatts, with Khuzestan's consumption tripling in the season.

Mashhadi raised concerns about illegal cryptocurrency mining, which significantly drives up electricity use. He revealed that some miners hide devices underground or in wells to evade detection, urging stricter enforcement to prevent such practices.

4,000 Traders From 110 Countries Registered for Iran Expo 2025

TEHRAN - Iran is gearing up for its largest economic and political event of the year, the Iran Expo 2025 and the Iran-Africa Cooperation Summit, with over 4,000 traders from 110 countries registering to participate, according to Mohammad Ali Dehghan Dehnavi, head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization. The events, set to take place from May 7 to 12, are expected to draw unprecedented international attention and foster significant trade opportunities.

Speaking at a press conference, Dehnavi emphasized the global scale of the upcoming expo, noting that registered participants hail from 41 Asian, 21 European, 39 African, eight American, and one Oceanian country. "This year's expo has seen a remarkable surge in interest compared to last year's 95 countries," he said, highlighting the challenge of accommodating the influx of visitors. Tehran's four- and five-star hotels can currently host around 2,500 guests, prompting organizers to carefully screen applicants to ensure the most impactful business connections are made.

The Iran-Africa Cooperation Summit, running concurrently, is poised to be a landmark political event. Dehnavi revealed that 30 to 40 foreign ministers, including several from African nations, are expected to attend, engaging in high-level discussions with their Iranian counterparts and private-sector representatives. "This summit is among the most significant annual events for Iran, offering a platform for robust political and economic dialogue," he said.

The expo itself will feature approximately 1,000 companies across 800 booths, though demand far exceeds available space, with 400 additional firms awaiting confirmation. Dehnavi expressed optimism about the political climate, describing the events as a catalyst for transformative economic developments. "These gatherings mark the beginning of a movement that will continue until next year's expo. Our focus will be on specialized negotiations and ensuring agreements are followed through," he said, underscoring the government's full support, including backing from the President, Vice President, and ministries such as Foreign Affairs, Oil, Agriculture, and Transport.

Sadif Beykzadeh, CEO of the Iran International Exhibitions Company, outlined extensive preparations, including infrastructure upgrades and a focus on facilitating business-to-business (B2B) negotiations. "We've added 6,000 square meters of covered exhibition

space and equipped all halls with high-speed internet to support real-time data exchange," he said. Beykzadeh noted that this year's expo will differ significantly from 2024, with enhanced content and alignment with global exhibition standards. Virtual access to the expo's content will also be available post-event, allowing ongoing trade discussions.

Mohammad Sadegh Ghanadzadeh, deputy head of the Trade Promotion Organization, highlighted the growing interest in the Iran-Africa Summit, with 800 registered participants compared to 340 last year. The summit will focus on four key sectors: petrochemicals, mining, healthcare, and agriculture. Spanning five days across Tehran and Isfahan, the event will also spotlight tourism and handicrafts in Isfahan. "This is a unique opportunity to leverage provincial capabilities and strengthen ties with African markets," Ghanadzadeh said.

Majid Takbiri, chairman of the Iran Expo organizing committee, described the event as a flagship collaboration between the government and private sector. "Iran Expo 2025 is not just a trade show but a comprehensive ecosystem of commercial, cultural, and economic opportunities," he said. Over 800 export-oriented companies will showcase products across six categories, with 4,030 traders registered and 2,540 invitations issued. The event will also feature 300 translators fluent in six languages to facilitate negotiations.

Takbiri emphasized the expo's role in boosting non-oil exports and foreign exchange earnings, citing its track record of increasing export contracts. "This platform allows Iranian producers to showcase innovations and connect with global markets while enabling foreign traders to tap into Iran's dynamic market," he said. Industrial site visits for foreign delegates and cultural displays will further highlight Iran's heritage and economic potential.

The simultaneous hosting of the Iran-Africa Summit and Iran Expo is expected to amplify opportunities for trade with African nations, fostering new partnerships and market access for Iranian firms. With robust media support and meticulous planning, organizers aim to position Iran Expo 2025 as a cornerstone of the country's economic strategy, driving exports, attracting investment, and showcasing Iran's vibrant economy to the world.

Haiti Is Nearing the Point of No Return as Gang Violence Surges

PORT-AU-PRINCE (Dispatches) - Haiti, where rampant gang violence has surged in recent weeks, is approaching a "point of no return" leading to "total chaos," the UN special representative to the troubled Caribbean nation warned Monday.

"As gang violence continues to spread to new areas of the country, Haitians experience growing levels of vulnerability and increasing skepticism about the ability of the state to respond to their needs," Maria Isabel Salvador told the UN Security Council. "Haiti could face total chaos," she said, adding that international aid was desperately needed to avoid that fate. "I urge you to remain engaged and answer the urgent needs of the country and its people."

Salvador cited cholera outbreaks and gender-based violence alongside a deteriorating security situation, particularly in capital Port-au-Prince, with authorities struggling to cope.



Trump Approval Rating Dips



WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - President Donald Trump's public approval rating edged down to its lowest level since his return to the White House, as Americans showed signs of wariness over his efforts to broaden his power, a Reuters/Ipsos poll that closed on Monday found.

Some 42% of respondents to the six-day poll approved of Trump's performance as president, down from 43% in a Reuters/Ipsos poll conducted three weeks earlier, and from 47% in the hours after his January 20 inauguration.

The start of Trump's term has left his political opponents stunned as he has signed dozens of executive orders expanding his influence over both government departments and over private institutions such as universities and law firms.

While Trump's approval rating remains higher than the ratings seen during most of his Democratic predecessor's presidency, the results of the Reuters/Ipsos poll suggest many Americans are uncomfortable with his moves to punish universities he sees as too liberal and to install himself as the board chair of the Kennedy Center, a major theater and cultural institution in Washington.

Some 83% of the 4,306 respondents said that the U.S. president must obey federal court rulings even if he doesn't want to. Trump administration officials could face criminal contempt charges for violating a federal judge's order halting deportations of alleged members of a Venezuelan gang who had no chance to challenge their removals.

Fifty-seven percent - including one-third of Republicans - disagreed with the statement that "it's okay for a U.S. president to withhold funding from universities if the president doesn't agree with how the university is run."

Carney Ahead in Polls as Canada Enters Last Week of Election Campaign



CHARLOTTETOWN (Dispatches) - Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, ahead in polls in the run-up to an April 28 election, renewed calls on Monday for voters to give him a strong mandate to deal with U.S. President Donald Trump's tariff threat.

Carney says Trump's tariffs and talk of annexation pose a huge threat and mean that Canada needs to reduce its reliance on the United States and restructure its economy.

The Reuters Tariff Watch newsletter is your daily guide to the latest global trade and tariff news. Sign up here.

"We need a government that has a strong mandate, a clear mandate. We need a government that has a plan that meets the moment," Carney said during a campaign event in Charlottetown in the Atlantic province of Prince Edward Island.

The 60-year-old ex-central banker, who had no prior political experience before running to become Liberal leader earlier this year, billed himself as "someone who knows how to negotiate ... (and) how to manage a crisis."

The Liberal platform, which promises additional spending of around C\$130 billion over the next four years, predicts that the 2025/26 deficit will be C\$62.3 billion, far higher than the C\$42.2 billion forecast in December.



Death of Pope Francis Prompts Wave of Mourning Worldwide

ROME (Dispatches) - Pope Francis died on Monday aged 88, prompting mourning across the Christian world for the energetic reformer who inspired devotion from Catholics but riled traditionalists during a 12-year papacy.

Mourners gathered, many in tears, in St Peter's Square, where just a day earlier the frail-looking pontiff had greeted worshippers on Easter Sunday, having recently left hospital following a 38-day battle with double pneumonia.

World leaders paid tribute to the pope's moral and spiritual leadership and countries began preparations to mark his death, which will now set off a succession scramble among Cardinals to see who next will lead the world's 1.4 billion Catholics.

"Dearest brothers and sisters, it is with deep sorrow that I must announce the death of our Holy Father Francis," said Cardinal Kevin Farrell in a Vatican statement.

"This morning at 7:35 am (0535 GMT) the Bishop of Rome, Francis, returned to the home of the Father.

"His entire life was dedicated to the service of the Lord and His church," said the statement, released shortly before 10am.

His death sets in motion centuries-old traditions that will culminate in the gathering of a conclave of cardinals to choose a successor.

In the next four to six days the Vatican's cardinals will decide on the pope's funeral date, which must take place between four and six days after his death.

In the meantime, the day-to-day running of the tiny Vatican City state will be handled by the Camerlengo, a senior cardinal, who is currently Dublin-born Cardinal Farrell.

Francis died in his apartment at the Saint Martha residence where he had lived since his election in March, 2013, the Vatican said.

The cause of his death would "probably" be shared after the pope's body is laid in its coffin in the Saint Martha chapel at 8pm (1800 GMT) on Monday, the Vatican said.

Just before that, a public Rosary prayer was to be held in St Peter's Square, the Vatican said, adding that his body would likely be transferred to St Peter's Basilica on Wednesday to lie in state.

At the Vatican on Monday, a hush seemed to descend on the normally boisterous Saint Peter's Square as the death knell rang out.

"He lived this Easter and then he went," Cesarina Cireddu from Sardinia said with tears in her eyes. "He's actually returned to the Lord - and godspeed."

Tour groups continued to walk through the sprawling plaza as quiet groups of people leaned against a barricade to pray. Venezuelan Ricardo Vielma, 31, who is studying to be a priest, said that "we have lost our spiritual father".

"He was everyone's pope," said Maria Chiorazzo, 59, who paid a visit to the square with her husband. "He was the only man of peace, in contrast to our rulers at this time."

Francis, born in Argentina as Jorge Bergoglio, was the first Jesuit to lead the Catholic world and the first from the Americas.

He took over after Benedict XVI became the first pontiff since the Middle Ages to step down - and cut a sharply different figure from the German theologian.

A football-loving former archbishop of Buenos Aires who was often happiest among his flock, Francis sought to forge a more open and compassionate Church.

World leaders praised him for having strongly defended social justice and the rights of migrants. King Charles, who met Francis during a state visit earlier this month, said the pope had "served with such devotion".

Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said "a great man has left us" in a statement.

Argentina's President Javier Milei pointed to his compatriot's "goodness and wisdom" despite their "differences".

US President Donald Trump wrote "Rest in Peace" on his Truth Social platform, and his predecessor Joe Biden, a Catholic, hailed "one of the most consequential leaders of our time" on X.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said he was grieving and Russian President Vladimir Putin praised the pope's promotion of dialogue between the Orthodox and Catholic churches.

Italy's Serie A football league called off all the day's matches and the country's Olympic committee called for all sporting events due to take place there on Monday to be postponed.

Champions League holders Real Madrid held a minute's silence during training on Monday.

Spain declared three days of mourning with Argentina announcing a full week.

The bells at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris rang out 88 times and the city said the lights would be turned off at the Eiffel Tower on Monday evening.

His pontificate was also marked by pushing through governance reforms and tackling the scourge of clerical sex abuse of children.

But critics accused him of creating doctrinal confusion and failing to defend traditional Catholic beliefs on key issues such as abortion and divorce.

He will become the first pope in more than 100 years to be laid to rest outside the Vatican.

Francis also rejected the tradition of popes having three coffins, choosing instead to be buried in just one.

Francis, who had part of his lung removed as a young man, had maintained a busy schedule before his latest hospital admission.

Even after he was released from hospital and ordered to rest for two months, Francis, known for being stubborn, did not wait long before making public appearances, meeting King Charles and visiting a prison.

Despite a growing number of health problems, he never took a day off and made frequent trips abroad, including a four-nation Asia-Pacific tour only last September.

Huge crowds gathered wherever he went, a testament to his popularity and human touch.

Vance, Modi Report Significant Progress in U.S.-India Trade Talks

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - U.S. Vice President JD Vance met with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi after a red carpet welcome in New Delhi on Monday, as India bids for an early trade deal to stave off punishing tariffs.

Modi's office said that there had been "significant progress in the negotiations" with the two countries negotiating the first tranche of a trade deal.

New Delhi hopes to secure relief within the 90-day pause on tariffs announced by US President Donald Trump this month.

Vance's office similarly reported "significant progress" in the talks and said the two men had established a roadmap for how economic discussions will proceed.

His four-day visit comes two months after Modi held talks at the White House with Trump, who unveiled 26 percent tariffs on India.

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.

An honour guard and troupes of folk dancers greeted Vance after he stepped out into the sweltering sunshine of New Delhi on Monday morning, the start of a four-day tour that will include trips to the historic fort city of Jaipur and the Taj Mahal.

"Ad-Vance-ing" US-India ties, broadcaster NDTV headlined its stories.

Modi, who welcomed Vance to his residence on Monday evening with a bear hug, photographs released by the Indian government showed, later hosted



Vance and his family for dinner.

The men discussed boosting "cooperation in energy, defence strategic technologies and other areas", Modi's office said, without giving further details.

Vance's visit comes during an escalating trade war between the United States and China. India's neighbour and rival faces US levies of up to 145 percent on many products.

Beijing has responded with duties of 125 percent on US goods. New Delhi has reacted cautiously so far.

India's Department of Commerce said after the tariffs were announced it was

"carefully examining the implications", adding it was "also studying the opportunities that may arise".

The two leaders were also expected to discuss China, seen as a challenger in different domains by both governments. The two democracies are also a part of the "Quad" group with Australia and Japan.

The US vice president is accompanied by his wife Usha, the daughter of Indian immigrants.

Together with their three children, dressed in traditional flowing Indian attire, they visited the Hindu Akshardham Temple in New Delhi.

Modi said during his visit to Washington that the world's largest and fifth-largest economies would work on a "mutually beneficial trade agreement".

The United States is a crucial market for India's information technology and services sectors but Washington in turn has made billions of dollars in new military hardware sales to New Delhi in recent years.

Modi said he "looks forward" to a visit by Trump to India later this year, New Delhi said in a statement, with a potential Quad summit slated.

Vance, 40, a devout Catholic convert, arrived in New Delhi a day after meeting Pope Francis in the Vatican.

The vice president said his "heart goes out to the millions of Christians all over the world who loved him", after the Vatican announced the death of the pope on Monday.

Putin Is Open to Direct Peace Talks With Ukraine

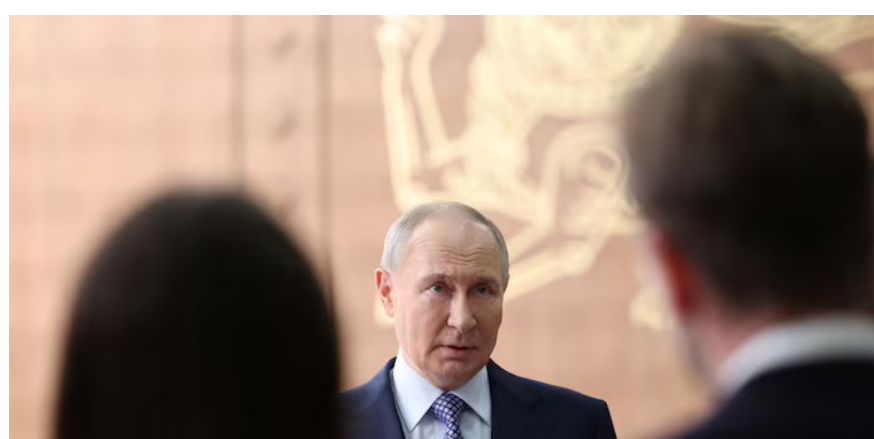
MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russian President Vladimir Putin proposed bilateral talks with Ukraine for the first time since the early days of the war, and his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelenskiy said Kyiv was eager to discuss a halt to attacks on civilian targets.

While Zelenskiy did not respond directly to Putin's proposal, he emphasized in his nightly video address that Ukraine "was ready for any conversation" about a ceasefire that would stop strikes on civilians.

The two leaders face pressure from the United States, which has threatened to walk away from its peace efforts unless some progress is achieved.

Russia and Ukraine have said they are open to further ceasefires after a 30-hour Easter truce declared by Moscow at the weekend. Each side accused the other of violating it.

Ukraine will take part in talks with the U.S. and European countries on Wednesday in London, Zelenskiy said. The discussions are a follow-up to a Paris meeting last week where the U.S. and European states discussed ways to end the more than three-year-old war.



Putin, speaking to a Russian state TV reporter, said fighting had resumed after the Easter ceasefire, which he announced unilaterally on Saturday. And Moscow, he said, was open to any peace initiatives and expected the same from Kyiv.

"We have always talked about this, that we have a positive attitude towards any peace initiatives. We hope that representatives of the Kyiv regime will feel the same way," Putin told state TV reporter Pavel Zarubin.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov, quoted later by Interfax news agency, told reporters: "When the president said that it was possible to discuss the issue of not striking civilian targets, including bilaterally, the president had in mind negotiations and discussions with the Ukrainian side."

There have been no direct talks between the two sides since the early weeks after Russia's February 2022 invasion.

Zelenskiy, in his nightly video address, said Ukraine stood by its proposal for an end to attacks on civilian targets and was ready for any form of discussion to achieve it. Previously, the U.S. and Ukraine had framed this as a 30-day ceasefire.



Forest Beat Spurs to Boost Champions League Hopes

LONDON (Dispatches) - Nottingham Forest beat struggling Tottenham 2-1, bouncing back from two defeats to strengthen their push for a Champions League spot and heap the pressure on Spurs boss Ange Postecoglou.

Forest came into the game at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium in sixth spot in the table after losses to Aston Villa and Everton.

But early goals from Elliot Anderson and top-scorer Chris Wood settled their nerves and they held on tenaciously despite a late goal from Richarlison to climb to third in the table.

Leaders Liverpool have one hand on the Premier League title and Arsenal are likely to finish second.

But behind them the competition is fierce for the top five places that will guarantee qualification for the Champions League next season.

Just three points separate Forest from Aston Villa in seventh spot, with five games remaining for all the contenders.

Nuno Espirito Santo's visitors took the lead in the fifth minute following a corner when Anderson's deflected shot beat Guglielmo Vicario.

Wood had the ball in the net five minutes later but it was ruled out by VAR for offside.

But the New Zealander doubled Forest's lead in the 16th minute, nodding a cross from Anthony Elanga past Vicario.

Spurs dominated possession and had more shots on goal but provided little threat.

Forest had a chance to make it 3-0 10 minutes into the second half when Wood cushioned the ball into the path of Morgan Gibbs-White but the midfielder skewed his shot wide.

Forest defender Harry Toffolo produced a spectacular overhead goal-line clearance to keep out Dejan Kulusevski's header shortly after the hour mark.

Postecoglou brought on former Forest winger Brennan Johnson and forward Dominic Solanke

with a quarter of the match to go.

Matz Sels produced a superb fingertip save low down to his right from a Richarlison header with about 10 minutes to go as Tottenham upped the pressure.

The Brazilian did get on the scoresheet in the 87th minute, powering a header home from a Pedro Porro cross but the visitors held on.

Nuno said his team had toughed it out against the home side, who he admitted had his men "against the ropes".

"It is about getting through it, especially in these moments of the season when there is fatigue, not only physical but mental, anxiety—all these things made the team go back a bit," he told Sky Sports.

Nuno, whose side play Manchester City in the FA Cup semi-finals this weekend, said his team had a big week ahead of them.

"You don't get these moments often, especially in this league when we are fighting for something nobody expected," he added.

Forest, who finished 17th last season, are two-time European champions but have not played in the continent's top club competition since the 1980/81 season.

Spurs' 18th defeat of a miserable Premier League season leaves them just two places above the relegation zone.

But Postecoglou still has a chance to win silverware in his second season at the club.

Spurs face Bodo/Glimt in the semi-finals of the Europa League next month, with the winner of the competition guaranteed a place in next season's Champions League.

A disappointed Postecoglou said his side had dominated Monday's game but had "conceded poor goals and given ourselves a mountain to climb".

The Australian, whose team travel to face Liverpool on Sunday, admitted the Europa League was now his priority as he tries to achieve momentum and protect his players.

Zverev Puts Lean Spell in Rear-View Mirror



LONDON (Dispatches) - Alexander Zverev arrived at the Munich Open on the back of his "worst period" since a career-threatening ankle injury in 2022 and it was little surprise the German was beaming from ear to ear after winning his first title of the season on Sunday.

After failing to go past the quarter-finals in his last six events, Zverev sealed a 6-2 6-4 victory over Ben Shelton in the final in Bavaria and leapfrogged Carlos Alcaraz into second in the world rankings after the Spaniard lost the Barcelona final.

Zverev also collected the keys to a shiny new BMW on his 28th birthday and will now look to leave his disappointing spell in the rear-view mirror.

"It's extremely special," said Zverev, who has won 24 titles on the elite men's tour including six on home soil.

"I always love winning tournaments in Germany. It's probably the most special thing that I can do.

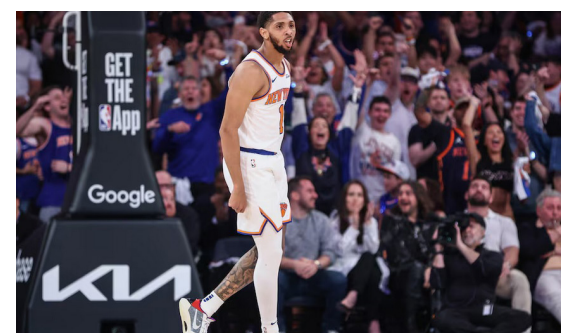
"It's definitely a great birthday present. I knew I had to play my best tennis, Ben has been playing extremely well," added Zverev, who got off to a fast start this year by reaching the Australian Open final.

Zverev had banished memories of his brutal ankle injury at the French Open in 2022 by reaching last year's title clash and he will be primed to challenge holder Alcaraz again at Roland Garros when the year's second Grand Slam begins on May 25.

"This was one of the best weeks you can have as a tennis player," Zverev added.

"I don't think we need to talk about the last few weeks anymore. I'm just so happy with the title and with the level that I managed to play at."

Pistons Halt Playoff Skid in Game 2



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Cade Cunningham scored 33 points and Dennis Schroder hit the tiebreaking 3-pointer with 55.7 seconds left as the visiting Detroit Pistons evened their Eastern Conference first-round series, escaping with a physical 100-94 Game 2 victory over the New York Knicks on Monday night.

Game 3 is Thursday in Detroit. "He's played in so many big games," Pistons coach J.B. Bickerstaff said about Schroder. "When you go back and watch his history, he's clutch in big games. We talked about it earlier on when he got here, he's just fearless. There's no moment, no crowd, no noise that's too big that's going to rattle him."

After struggling through a rough playoff debut on Saturday when the Pistons blew an eight-point lead in the fourth quarter and were outscored 40-21, Cunningham delivered a masterful performance with 11-of-21 shooting from the field and helped Detroit overcome 37 points by New York star Jalen Brunson.

"We did what we were supposed to do and that was it: to win on the road and get homecourt, that's what we came here for," Bickerstaff said. "We approached it with a business-like mentality and learned from the fourth quarter the other night, but we just did what we were supposed to do."

Even with Cunningham's big showing, the Pistons nearly did not do enough to avoid folding down the stretch as they blew a 13-point lead, getting outscored 19-6 in a span of 5:55.

The Knicks roared back from an 88-75 deficit and forged a 94-94 deadlock with 1:15 remaining when Brunson passed out of a double team to a cutting Josh Hart, who converted a dunk.

On the next possession, the Pistons regained the lead when Schroder hit a 3 from the left side over Brunson late in the shot clock.

"We just didn't switch up on the Dennis 3," Brunson said. "I just didn't put myself in position to help the team win in that aspect. So it's tough."

Brunson missed a potential tying 3 with 46.5 seconds left and Mikal Bridges was off on another 3-pointer with 11 seconds left. Detroit finished it off by sinking three free throws in the final 8.1 seconds.

Curry Pours in 31 to Propel Warriors Past Rockets

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Stephen Curry scored a game-high 31 points and Jimmy Butler III added 25 as the Golden State Warriors held off the Houston Rockets 95-85 in Game 1 of this Western Conference first-round series.

Curry, who shot 1-for-10 and scored three points in a home loss to the Rockets on April 6, was brilliant throughout. He finished 12-for-19 overall, drilled five 3-pointers and grabbed six rebounds. Butler added seven rebounds and six assists to his ledger as the visiting Warriors grabbed a 1-0 series lead with Game 2 set for Wednesday in Houston.

Houston shaved a 23-point deficit to 76-73 on an Amen Thompson floater with 6:49 left to play. But Curry pushed that advantage back to 82-75 with a 3-pointer with 5:11 remaining. Butler and Brandin Podziemski (14 points, eight rebounds, five assists) kept the Rockets at bay down the stretch.

The Rockets shot just 39.1 percent and committed 17 turnovers that the Warriors converted into 25 points. Alperen Sengun



posted 26 points and nine rebounds, but Jabari Smith Jr. was the first teammate to join him in double figures with 11 points, doing so via a corner 3-pointer with 7:34 left.

Jalen Green and Fred VanVleet shot a combined 7-for-34 and totaled 17 points for Houston.

The Rockets were energized early behind Sengun, who had eight points and six rebounds in the first quarter. Houston led 19-12 when Tari Eason converted a steal into a fast-break dunk with 3:20 left in the period, but Curry engineered a brief run to close that gap.

Curry followed his assist to Butler with a pair of drives that pulled the Warriors to within 21-18 entering the second. Butler then supplied the Warriors their first lead at 24-23 with a free throw at the 9:16 mark of the second quarter, and Golden State later seized its first double-digit advantage with an 11-0 run capped by a Curry reverse layup with 6:08 remaining in the first half.

The Rockets briefly stemmed the tide and pulled to within four points only for the Warriors to close the half with a 9-0 burst that featured two Curry 3-pointers and three points from Butler. Meanwhile, the Rockets missed their final five shots and committed two turnovers during that stretch, and entered the intermission trailing 47-34 after shooting 6 of 18 in the second period.

Korir Wins Boston After Early Tumble

BOSTON (Dispatches) - Kenyan John Korir overcame a tumble near the starting line to win the Boston Marathon, finishing in two hours four minutes and 45 seconds, while his compatriot Sharon Lokedi denied Hellen Obiri a third straight title in a course record.

The 2024 Chicago winner Korir recovered quickly from the fall and pulled away at the 20-mile mark, building a minute cushion between himself and the rest of the field with two miles to go, before jogging through the finish.

Tanzanian Alphonse Simbu eked out a second-place finish in 2:05:04, battling Kenyan Cybrian Kotut down the final straight.

Korir, who appeared to lose his bib in his early fall, had the paper in his hands as he held his arms out wide to break the tape in the second-



fastest time in Boston.

With the victory, he and his older brother, 2012 winner Wesley Korir, became the only two siblings to win the oldest annual marathon, and the former champion was there to offer John a hug at the finish line.

It was a memorable day on the women's side, too, as last year's runner-up Lokedi had revenge on her mind while Kenyan Obiri sought a rare Boston "three-peat".

The 2022 New York winner Lokedi and Obiri had pulled away from the rest of the field and were locked in a tense battle with less than two miles to go before Obiri, who won bronze in Paris, began to lose energy.