

Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran Mohammad Eslami Announced the Development of a 20-Year Strategic Plan for the Country's Nuclear Industry, Asserting That the Uranium Enrichment Program Is a Symbol of Both National Independence and Strength

IRAN NEWS

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei Has Strongly Condemned the Israeli Airstrikes on Yemen's Hudaydah Port and Other Infrastructures in Violation of International Law and Called It "a Crime Against Sovereignty of Yemen"

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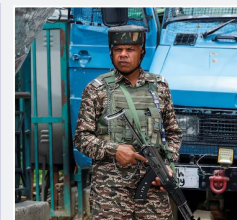


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U.S. Sanctions Harm Iranian Public Health and Undermine Trust



TEHRAN - Government Spokesperson Fatemeh Mohajerani criticized the U.S. for imposing unilateral sanctions that she said are harming the Iranian people by limiting access to medicine, healthcare, and basic living conditions.

Speaking at a press conference held at the Imam Reza Research and Treatment Center in Mashhad, Mohajerani also expressed skepticism over the sincerity of the U.S. in ongoing indirect negotiations, stating that "American dishonesty has been proven time and again."

The event marked the opening of a new center for multiple sclerosis (MS) treatment, which Mohajerani praised as a product of cooperation between philanthropists and the Ministry of Health. She stressed that the government is committed to transparency and progress, citing ongoing collaborations in the health and research sectors.

Addressing concerns over possible impeachment motions against cabinet ministers, including the energy minister, Mohajerani acknowledged the government's struggle with structural imbalances in the energy sector. "The long-standing price stabilization policy disrupted the energy market and discouraged private investment," she said. While emphasizing Parliament's right to hold ministers accountable, she warned against turning impeachment into a political tool. "We share the public's frustration over power outages, and we apologize, but resolving these issues takes time."

On the topic of nuclear talks, Mohajerani reiterated that Iran remains committed to peaceful nuclear development. "Our red lines are clear. We only negotiate on nuclear issues, and we expect the other side to demonstrate goodwill," she stated, while noting that recent delays in talks were attributed to technical and logistical issues as reported by Oman's foreign minister.

President: "If We Cannot Establish Justice, the Problem Lies Within Us"

TEHRAN - President Masoud Pezeshkian declared that the dignity and superiority of human beings stem from truthfulness and piety, emphasizing that if justice is not implemented in society, the fault lies not with the people, but with the authorities themselves.

Speaking on Monday evening at the Sixth International Congress of Imam Reza (AS) in Mashhad, Pezeshkian welcomed the participants and expressed a commitment to reviving the path of Imam Reza. "What remains in my mind about human dignity," he said, "is that God created the children of Adam as noble beings."

The president noted that Imam Reza engaged with people using logic and reasoning, adding that the congress should turn the motto "Justice for all, oppression for none" into a way of life.

Referring to a sacred narration, Pezeshkian said, "God created the Earth for humans, and the life of humans depends on knowledge, the life of knowledge depends on action, and the life of action depends on sincerity. The universe, with all its magnificence, was created for humanity."

He explained that God taught all knowledge to humanity and commanded the angels to bow before them, but Satan refused, succumbing to pride and arrogance in the face of knowledge.

Quoting verses from the chapter Ash-Shams of the Qur'an, Pezeshkian stressed that individuals grow based on the vision they pursue. "Some resort to injustice and violence, while others purify their souls and see nothing but God. Human dignity transcends race, ethnicity, and color—it is earned through knowledge, honesty, and truth."

Pezeshkian continued, "The most righteous are the most honored before God. Piety means to act without error, to walk God's path with sincerity and precision. A sinner is like one riding a wild horse without reins, destined for destruction. But piety is like a tame horse that leads one to paradise."

He stated, "If society is thirsty and parched, if we cannot implement dignity, rights, and justice as we should, the problem lies with us—not the people. We must reform ourselves to guide society in the direction the Imams desired."

Posing a rhetorical question, the president asked why Imam Reza continues to live in the hearts of people. "Because his conduct is inspiring. An Imam is not someone we merely circle in reverence but someone whose path we must keep alive. We must build a community that reflects the values of the Imam."

He urged that "dignity and justice for all, and oppression for none" should be adopted as a life



guide, emphasizing that no ethnic group or individual should be treated with anything but justice. Recalling a moment when Imam Ali refused to give his brother any more than a fair share from the public treasury, Pezeshkian challenged the audience: "Can we say the same for ourselves?"

The president insisted that Iranians must be an honor to their Imams, not a source of shame or hardship. Addressing attendees of the international congress, he said such events should lead to actionable guidelines for implementing justice in society.

"We must bring the path of piety into practical life, act on the verses of the Qur'an rather than merely reciting them while following our own desires," he added.

Pezeshkian emphasized that the role of the Imam is to act based on divine scripture, to spread justice, and to uphold truth. "Truth has a clear standard—it

is independent of personal interests. We must align ourselves with the truth, not twist it to match our own image. We must not claim to be right and declare anyone who disagrees with us as wrong."

He recalled that when Imam Reza was the crown prince and wielded political power, he engaged in debates with atheists using reason and logic, proving them wrong respectfully. "He lived in a society where even non-believers could live. Can we say the same about our society today?"

"Religion and our sacred texts are built on logic and reasoning," Pezeshkian said. "We must engage with our people, especially the youth, with reason, and prove in practice that we strive for truth—not just claim we are right."

He concluded: "As someone responsible for this country, if I err, I should be held accountable. If these meetings result in the rule of truth and justice, the world will be drawn to us."

Pezeshkian expressed hope that the presence of scholars, dignitaries, and esteemed guests would illuminate the path for humanity—one of justice for all and oppression for none.

He closed by stating, "If we wish for others what we wish for ourselves—regardless of their belief, religion, or gender—this is a lasting Islam, a lasting government, a lasting belief, and its light will shine throughout the world. Why should Muslims fight among themselves? If we are united, how could a few million in Israel oppress and humiliate the Islamic nations? We must look inward, restore unity, justice, and dignity within our societies and among Islamic countries."

Iran, Pakistan Committed to Strong Ties



TEHRAN - The top Iranian and Pakistani diplomats have agreed to build a strong foundation for "economic and strategic" cooperation in the region.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi, on an official day-long visit to Islamabad, met with Pakistani Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, on Monday, according to a press release by Pakistani Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

It added that Araqchi and Dar placed a premium on the need to continue working closely to enhance mutual understanding.

They exchanged views on major regional and international developments and reaffirmed their shared commitment to peace and stability in the region, it noted.

According to the ministry, Araqchi said Iran is keen to further deepen relations with Pakistan.

Heading a delegation, the Iranian foreign minister arrived in Islamabad on Sunday to hold talks with high-ranking Pakistani officials. His trip is taking place in line with Iran's policy to promote relations with its neighboring countries.

Speaking upon his arrival, Araqchi said Tehran and Islamabad are working to put bilateral cooperation on a "better path."

He added that Iran attaches importance to ties with Pakistan and other countries in the region, noting that during his stay in Islamabad, he would raise mutual relations and regional issues with senior Pakistani officials.

The Pakistani foreign minister, for his part, said Tehran and Islamabad are fostering unity given their historical, cultural and religious bonds.

Pointing to the positive momentum in relations between the two neighboring countries, he emphasized the need to expand cooperation in key areas including trade, energy, border security, and regional connectivity.

The top Pakistani diplomat expressed his country's serious concerns over the prevailing tensions in South Asia as a result of "India's provocative behavior".

He firmly rejected unsubstantiated attempts to implicate Pakistan in a terrorist incident in the town of Pahalgaon, saying Islamabad calls for an international, transparent, and impartial investigation to establish the facts regarding the incident.

He further noted that such allegations appear to be a tactic to divert global attention from the Jammu and Kashmir dispute.

U.S.-Israeli Airstrikes Target Yemen's Hudaydah Port



SANAA (Dispatches) - Dozens of Israeli warplanes have carried out airstrikes on targets in Yemen as the Arab nation's military forces escalate operations in response to foreign aggression and Israeli atrocities.

Local Yemeni media reports said more than 30 Israeli jets were involved in targeting the port city of Hudaydah on Monday night.

A senior U.S. official confirmed that the aerial raids were being carried out in close coordination with the U.S., Israel's biggest benefactor and a complicit in the ongoing brutal military campaign in Gaza.

Yemen's al-Masirah television channel reported the U.S. had launched 35 strikes since May 4 and targeted several Yemeni provinces, including al-Jawf and Marib.

Since March, the U.S. along with Britain and Israel have launched daily airstrikes on Yemen and claims to have struck more than 1,000 targets in the Arab country.

The campaign aims to halt the Yemeni military's strikes on Israeli and Israeli-linked vessels in Red Sea shipping lanes as well as their operations that have been hitting targets deep within the occupied Palestinian territories.

The latest Israeli-U.S. aggression comes following a ballistic missile strike from Yemen that hit the perimeter of Ben Gurion International Airport.

Iran Warns of Swift Response to Any U.S. or Israeli Military Aggression

TEHRAN - Iran has issued a stern warning to the United States and Israel, vowing to respond promptly and proportionately to any military action taken against it, following escalating tensions over recent developments in the Middle East.

In a letter addressed to United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres and the president of the Security Council, Iran's Permanent Representative to the UN, Amir Sa'ed Iravani, condemned what he described as "provocative and unlawful threats" made by U.S. and Israeli officials in the wake of a missile strike on Israel's Ben Gurion Airport, which Tel Aviv attributes to Yemeni forces.

The Israeli government, supported by statements from U.S. Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, has accused Iran of orchestrating the attack through its alleged support for Yemen's Ansarullah movement, also known as the Houthis. In response, Israel launched a wave of retaliatory airstrikes on Yemen, targeting the port city of Hudaydah and nearby industrial areas. Reports indicate that the U.S. played a coordinating role in the strikes, further intensifying regional tensions.

In his letter, Iravani categorically rejected these accusations, labeling them as "baseless, provocative, and politically motivated." He asserted that the Islamic Republic of Iran bears no responsibility for Israel's actions and condemned any attempt to link Iran to the attack as a deliberate distortion aimed at deflecting attention from what he called "ongoing crimes committed by the Israeli regime in Gaza and the West Bank."

The Iranian envoy warned that any military adventurism by the United States or its regional allies would be considered an unlawful act of aggression under international law and would provoke a swift and proportionate response from Tehran. "The United States and the Israeli regime will bear full responsibility for the consequences of such reckless behavior," he stated.

Iravani also highlighted what he described as an alarming trend of militarization in the Red Sea region, accusing the U.S., U.K., and Israel of launching "unlawful military operations" in Yemen since March. According to Yemeni sources, dozens of U.S.-led airstrikes have been carried out in various provinces, including al-Jawf and Marib, with over a thousand targets reportedly struck in



recent months.

"These attacks on Yemeni infrastructure represent a gross violation of the United Nations Charter and international humanitarian law," the letter stated. "They endanger regional peace and stability and amount to acts of aggression against a sovereign nation."

Iravani urged the UN Security Council to act decisively and condemn the "threatening and warmongering rhetoric" from Israeli and American officials. "The Council must not remain silent in the face of these clear violations of international law," he wrote, calling on the global body to uphold its mandate to maintain peace and security.

While reiterating Iran's commitment to peace and stability in the region, the envoy emphasized that the country reserves the right to defend its sovereignty and national interests if confronted with any unlawful use of force.

"It is not Iran that seeks conflict or escalation," Iravani wrote. "But let there be no doubt: any hostile action targeting Iran's sovereignty or vital interests will be met with a legitimate and immediate response in accordance with the UN Charter and international law."

The statement comes amid heightened instability across the region, fueled by the ongoing conflict in Gaza, where Israel has faced growing international condemnation over its military campaign. Iran has repeatedly accused Israel of committing war crimes and genocide against the Palestinian population and has voiced strong support for resistance movements in the region.

The developments mark a significant escalation in rhetoric between Iran and its adversaries, raising concerns among international observers over the potential for broader regional conflict. The UN has not yet issued an official response to Iran's letter, but diplomatic sources indicate that the Security Council may convene in the coming days to address the rising tensions.

As the situation unfolds, Tehran has made clear that it will not tolerate threats to its sovereignty, while also calling on the international community to hold aggressors accountable and to seek a diplomatic resolution to the crisis.

Iran Ready for Constructive, Unbiased Talks With EU troika



TEHRAN (PressTV)- Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi says Tehran is ready to hold "constructive and unbiased" talks with the European troika – France, Germany and Britain – on its nuclear program.

In a phone conversation with EU's high representative for foreign and security policy, Kaja Kallas on Monday, Araqchi informed her on the latest developments regarding indirect talks between Iran and the United States.

He said Iran is ready to continue interactions with European parties, both within the framework of the European Union and the three European countries.

He expressed hope that Iran and the E3 would resume talks based on a constructive approach free from political spite.

The top Iranian negotiator said the country has chosen a responsible approach in following the path of diplomacy to address the artificial concerns surrounding its peaceful nuclear program, stressing the need to pursue the path through serious will and realism.

If it is claimed that the possibility of Iran acquiring nuclear weapons is the sole concern of the sides in the negotiations, "this concern can be eased", Araqchi stated.

"It is quite possible to reach an agreement in this regard but it requires avoidance of unrealistic and irrational positions," he said.

In a post on his X account on Monday, Araqchi said the sole way to achieve a deal with the United States is through diplomacy based on mutual respect and mutual interests.



Official Calls for Joint Drug Control Program Between Iran and UNICEF

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Hossein Zolfaghari, the secretary general of the Drug Control Headquarters of the Islamic Republic of Iran, emphasized the need to develop a collaborative framework between Iran's Drug Control Headquarters and UNICEF to achieve common objectives and ensure their effective implementation in society.

During a meeting with Monika Oledzka-Nielsen, UNICEF's Representative in Iran, Zolfaghari expressed his appreciation for UNICEF's initiatives in Iran on parenting, addiction prevention in correctional facilities, mental health and empowerment centers (particularly for girls), and training programs for NGOs and their managers.

2.8% Economic Growth Projected for Iran in 2024



TEHRAN - According to a report by the Research Center of the Iranian Parliament, the country's economic growth for the Iranian year 1403 (March 2024-March 2025) is projected at 2.8%, with non-oil growth estimated at 2.7%.

The report states that by the end of Esfand 1403 (March 2025), the economy grew by 3.6% compared to the same month the previous year, while non-oil GDP saw a stronger growth of 4.2%.

Sector-specific estimates show that the "agriculture" sector grew by 4.6%, while the "crude oil and natural gas" sector shrank by 3.8%. The "industry and mining" sector experienced a 3.1% increase, and the "services" sector led with a 5.1% growth.

In the winter quarter of 1403, compared to the same period in the previous year, overall economic growth stood at 1.8%, and growth excluding oil was slightly higher at 1.9%.

For the full year 1403, Iran's economic growth is estimated at 2.8%, and non-oil growth at 2.7%. This figure is about two percentage points lower than the average annual growth of 4.7% recorded from 1399 to 1402 (2020-2023).

Despite modest growth of 0.1% in the oil and natural gas sector during the fall of 1403, the value added by this group in March 2025 showed a decline of 3.8% compared to the same month in 1402. According to OPEC data and other available estimates, Iran's oil production in Esfand (March) showed less growth than in previous months and compared to the same period last year.

The "industry and mining" sector posted a 3.4% growth in fall 1403. This group includes construction, industry, mining, and utilities (water, electricity, natural gas). By March 2025, the sector grew 3.1% year-over-year, mainly due to increased industrial output and higher sales of construction-related materials on the stock market.

Iran-Saudi Trade Poised for Growth Amid Renewed Diplomatic Ties



TEHRAN - The President of Iran's Export Confederation has predicted a normalization and potential increase in trade between Iran and Saudi Arabia following recent diplomatic improvements and agreements between the two nations.

In an interview with ILNA, Mohammad Lahouti stated that the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) has reported a dramatic increase—over 6,000%—in trade with Saudi Arabia in the Iranian calendar year 1403 (March 2024–March 2025) compared to the previous year. However, Lahouti noted that this figure, while impressive on paper, stems from a near-zero trade base due to past political tensions and the Saudi ban on Iranian goods.

IRICA reported that trade volume with Saudi Arabia in 1403 is projected at 61,000 tons, valued at \$25 million—figures Lahouti described as still minimal.

He added that the reestablishment of diplomatic relations began in the final months of Iran's 13th administration and continued into the 14th, marked by the reopening of the Saudi embassy in Tehran and the cautious resumption of trade. Although trade has not yet returned to pre-rupture levels, Lahouti emphasized that Saudi Arabia remains a promising market for Iranian goods such as hand-woven carpets, ceramics, cement, and agricultural products.

However, he warned that recent Saudi investments in domestic production could pose challenges for Iranian exporters trying to enter the market.

Lahouti detailed the current logistics of Iranian exports to Saudi Arabia, explaining that due to the lack of direct shipping and road transport routes, goods are exported via transshipment. In this method, Iranian goods are first sent to intermediary ports in the Persian Gulf region, then transferred by other vessels or trucks to Saudi Arabia. This differs from "re-export," as it does not require document alterations.

He noted that during the trade ban, Iranian goods likely entered Saudi Arabia under false origins, such as Emirati or Turkish, but with diplomatic relations restored, such practices have ceased—making current trade data more accurate, despite being modest.

Highlighting the need for policy action, Lahouti urged the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to adopt a more active economic diplomacy strategy. He called on the ministry's economic division to resolve logistical challenges and push for the resumption of Iran's national shipping lines to Saudi ports, which were once regularly operational.

Iran and Egypt Open New Chapter in Strategic Tourism Cooperation



TEHRAN - In a significant diplomatic development, Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Seyyed Reza Salehi Amiri, announced a new era of strategic cooperation between Iran and Egypt in the field of tourism, marking a turning point in bilateral relations between the two historically and culturally rich nations.

The announcement came ahead of the fourth D-8 (Developing-8) Ministerial Meeting on Tourism, held in Cairo on May 4-5. Speaking to reporters upon his arrival in the Egyptian capital, Minister Salehi Amiri emphasized the Iranian government's commitment to strengthening economic, cultural, and especially tourism ties with Egypt.

"This visit aims to expand our collaborations in specialized and strategic areas that benefit both nations," said Salehi Amiri. He underscored that following the landmark meeting between the presidents of Iran and Egypt last year, a new chapter in bilateral relations has begun, with tourism identified as a key sector for mutual development.

Salehi Amiri highlighted Egypt's historical and cultural importance in the Islamic and Arab world, noting that its vast civilizational heritage holds great appeal for Iranian tourists. "Iranians are eager to experience Egypt's rich religious and historical legacy firsthand, and this presents a unique opportunity to deepen cultural and tourism exchanges," he said.

On the other hand, the Iranian minister pointed to Iran's extensive cultural heritage, with numerous UNESCO-listed sites, as an attractive destination for Egyptian travelers. "Iran's wealth of historical and cultural treasures can help foster stronger ties and increase the flow of tourists between our two countries," he added.

The minister also stressed the vital role of media and digital platforms in promoting tourism. He called for the effective use of national media and social networks, as well as collaboration among intellectual and cultural elites, to showcase each country's tourist attractions and stimulate mutual interest.

Salehi Amiri further elaborated on Iran's broader vision of cultural diplomacy,

saying the administration, particularly with strong backing from President Ebrahim Raisi, is pursuing active tourism engagement with countries across the Islamic world, with Egypt being a priority. "We are committed to utilizing every available channel to build sustainable tourism partnerships," he stated.

He also expressed optimism that Iran-Egypt relations, grounded in deep cultural and historical affinities, could serve as a model for successful cooperation within the Islamic world.

During his stay in Cairo, Salehi Amiri is expected to hold bilateral meetings with tourism officials from Egypt, Turkey, and Azerbaijan. A key highlight of these talks is expected to be discussions with Egypt's Minister of Tourism regarding the implementation of Egypt's recent decision to officially grant entry permits to Iranian tourists — a move widely regarded as a potential game-changer in revitalizing people-to-people and cultural connections.

The visit, conducted at Egypt's formal invitation, is part of Iran's larger cultural diplomacy initiative and positions the country to take an active role in multilateral tourism frameworks such as the D-8. The summit brings together tourism ministers from eight major Muslim countries — Iran, Egypt, Turkey, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Malaysia, and Indonesia — to explore cooperative opportunities.

Upon arrival at Cairo International Airport, Minister Salehi Amiri was welcomed by Nasreen Osmanli, a senior advisor in Egypt's tourism sector, and Mohammad Hossein Soltani-Fard, head of Iran's Interests Section in Cairo.

As the keynote speaker at the summit, Salehi Amiri is expected to outline Iran's strategic outlook on cultural synergy, heritage diplomacy, and the role of tourism in shaping a new regional order based on dialogue, mutual respect, and shared civilizational values.

This visit not only reinforces Tehran-Cairo cultural ties but could also signal the start of a transformative phase in regional cooperation, guided by trust, heritage, and intellectual exchange.

Financial Constraints Hamper Iran's Water Projects Amid Growing Crisis

TEHRAN - Minister of Energy has raised alarm over the worsening water situation in the country, particularly in Tehran, and stressed the urgent need for timely and accurate implementation of emergency water projects. However, he acknowledged that financial obstacles are currently hindering progress.

Minister Abbas Aliabadi made these remarks during a national meeting with water and wastewater industry officials on Tuesday. Referring to a high-level government meeting attended by the First Vice President, the head of the Planning and Budget Organization, and several cabinet ministers, Aliabadi said the session focused on water issues and revealed that the Middle East is at the epicenter of a global water crisis, with Iran facing especially dire conditions.

"We must act decisively and systematically in response to this," Aliabadi urged, emphasizing the significance of water as a divine and life-giving resource that is often undervalued.

He explained that while foundational projects in the water and wastewater sectors have improved resilience, none have fundamentally resolved the industry's challenges. He called for a long-term strategic approach to achieve sustainable development in Iran.

Aliabadi expressed concern over rising population densities in major cities like Tehran and Mashhad, noting that urban and industrial expansion depends heavily on stable water supplies.

Highlighting the need for advanced water recycling, the minister said the first step in addressing the water crisis should be the serious adoption of reuse systems. "Unfortunately, water recycling is not being implemented thoroughly across the country. In many cities, treated water is still used for irrigating green spaces," he added.



He also pointed to the rising temperatures as a major factor exacerbating water consumption. As of mid-spring, Iran's average temperature has risen by 4.5°C compared to last year—a year that already saw a 2.5°C increase. "Altogether, we've seen a 7°C rise over two years," Aliabadi noted, warning that some cities have experienced temperature spikes up to double the historical average, directly impacting water use.

Aliabadi identified the drying of water wells as another major concern. Many of the country's legal wells have dried up, some even at depths of 150 meters.

He added that Iran's annual renewable water supply has dropped by 37%, falling from 103 billion cubic meters to 66 billion cubic meters. Historically, this figure was once around 130 billion cubic meters.

Emphasizing that water is an intergenerational resource, he called for strategic decisions in managing it. Currently, storage in Latian Dam stands at 47 million cubic meters, and Karaj Dam holds 64 million cubic meters—reflecting tight reserves.

To address the crisis, the minister said it is vital to limit population pressures in urban centers and ensure that all consumed water is recycled. He also highlighted the need for new technologies to produce desalinated water with minimal energy use and high quality.

Aliabadi concluded by presenting a three-pronged strategy to resolve the country's water crisis: Advancing long-term infrastructure projects; Expanding water recycling; and reducing water consumption.

He also emphasized the need to reform water economics and define a per capita water consumption limit based on Iran's climatic and water resource conditions. "Today, this is a matter of survival and public health," he said.

Iran Faces \$20 Billion Annual Loss Over FATF Non-Membership



TEHRAN - Iran incurs an estimated annual loss of \$20 billion due to its non-membership in the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), according to Hossein Salimi, Chairman of the Iranian and Foreign Joint Investment Association. Speaking with ILNA News Agency, Salimi stressed that joining the global financial watchdog is crucial for Iran's economic recovery and access to international credit.

His comments came ahead of a landmark visit by managers from the OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID, also referred to as OFIT in Persian sources), who are scheduled to arrive in Iran later this month — marking the first visit of its kind in 18 years. Salimi emphasized the significance of this visit, describing it as a potential gateway for Iran to access low-interest international loans and attract foreign investors.

Due to international sanctions and its exclusion from FATF, Iran remains cut off from the global banking system, limiting both the government's and private sector's ability to secure international loans. Salimi pointed out that other countries, such as Turkey, have benefited immensely from international credit access, supporting annual financial flows of \$300 to \$400 billion.

Iran's private sector is particularly affected, being unable to obtain large-scale funding either from international institutions or domestic banks. "The arrival of OFID managers could pave the way for external investment and facilitate Iran's entry into the international financial network," Salimi said. "Foreign investors could also act as intermediaries in attracting loans for financing domestic development projects."

When asked whether this development is connected to the ongoing indirect negotiations between Iran and the United States, Salimi confirmed the link. "International institutions will not lend to Iran while it remains under sanctions. We need to pass FATF legislation and reconnect with the international banking system," he said.

Iran–Tajikistan Joint Commission: A Strategic Bridge for Enhanced Bilateral Cooperation



SHIRAZ The 17th Joint Commission on Economic, Cultural, Social, and Commercial Cooperation between Iran and Tajikistan was held in the historic city of Shiraz. The high-level meeting yielded the signing of 23 cooperation agreements, signaling a major step toward strengthening and expanding mutually beneficial relations between the two nations.

Ties between Iran and Tajikistan, rooted in shared history, language, culture, and traditions, have experienced accelerated growth in recent years, particularly since the start of Iran's 14th administration. The recent visit of Iranian President Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian to Tajikistan received widespread domestic and international attention, further emphasizing the strategic importance of this partnership.

The Commission, chaired by Iran's Minister of Energy Abbas Aliabadi and Tajikistan's Minister of Energy and Water Resources Daler Juma, began on May 4 and will continue until May 6. The summit provides an important platform for knowledge exchange, business networking, and the promotion of Iranian technical and engineering exports.

A key highlight of the summit has been the business-to-business (B2B) meetings involving 30 Iranian and 25 Tajik entrepreneurs. Discussions focused on joint projects in sectors such as water and electricity, renewable energy, petrochemicals, textiles, food production, healthcare, medical equipment, and tourism.

Representatives from around 20 Iranian ministries and 15 Tajik agencies participated in expert working groups. The Commission will conclude with a formal closing ceremony and signing of joint cooperation documents by the two co-chairs.

Fars Province Governor Hossein-Ali Amiri emphasized the historical and cultural bonds between Iran and Tajikistan, describing the event not merely as an economic summit, but as a revival of ancient ties. He highlighted Shiraz's capacity in cultural and medical tourism and proposed the launch of direct flights between Shiraz and Dushanbe, as well as the creation of a joint airline named "Nowruz Airlines."

IMF Has Been Vocal About China's Need to Change Economic Model

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - International Monetary Fund Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva on Monday said the IMF has been vocal about its policy prescriptions for China to move away from an export-led growth model.

Asked at the Milken Institute Global conference in the Los Angeles area whether the IMF needed to get tougher on China as a result of U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent's directive for the Fund to get back to its core economic stability mission, Georgieva said the Fund has been "doing exactly that."

"For quite some time, we have been vocal that China has to deal with four problems that affect it domestically and affect it internationally. One, shift from export to more consumption. Two, fix the property sector," she said, adding that Beijing also needed to embrace the services sector for growth and reduce the state's role in the economy.



Ukraine Targets Moscow With Drones for Second Straight Night



KYIV (Dispatches) - Russian air defense units destroyed a swarm of Ukrainian drones targeting Moscow in a second night attack in a row, prompting the closure of all airports in the capital for several hours, officials said early on Tuesday.

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin said on social media that at least 19 Ukrainian drones were destroyed on their approach to Moscow "from different directions," causing no major destruction or injuries.

The consecutive attacks came ahead of Moscow marking this week the 80th anniversary of the victory of the Soviet Union and its allies over Nazi Germany in World War Two. Russian President Vladimir Putin declared last week a three-day ceasefire over May 8-10 to mark the anniversary.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called the measure pointless and offered an unconditional ceasefire over at least 30 days in line with a U.S. proposal launched in March.

Three major Telegram news channels that have links to Russian security services -- Bazaar, Mash and Shot -- said a drone struck an apartment building near a major road in the south of Moscow, smashing windows. There were no reports of casualties.

Russia's aviation watchdog Rosavia's said flights were halted at all four airports that serve Moscow for several hours overnight to ensure air safety. Airports in a number of regional cities were also closed.

On Tuesday, Russia's air defence units destroyed four Ukrainian drones on their approach to Moscow, with no damage or injuries reported.

Romania's pro-EU Prime Minister Marcel Ciolacu Announces His Resignation



BUCHAREST (Dispatches) - Romania's pro-EU Prime Minister Marcel Ciolacu on Monday announced his resignation, deepening political turmoil a day after a far-right candidate topped the first round of a tense presidential vote rerun.

EU critic George Simion topped Sunday's first round in the EU and NATO member bordering war-torn Ukraine, while the ruling coalition's candidate narrowly lost out to Bucharest's mayor for the second spot.

Ciolacu's resignation comes just two weeks before the second round scheduled for May 18 -- closely watched by Brussels and Washington -- worsening political turmoil in the eastern European country.

"I have proposed to my colleagues to leave the governing coalition, which implicitly leads to my resignation as prime minister," Ciolacu, 57, told reporters after a meeting of his Social Democrats party.

"We saw how Romanians voted yesterday (Sunday) which means that the ruling coalition has no legitimacy, at least in this formula," he added.

He said that his party's ministers would discuss with their coalition partners to decide whether they will remain in the government on an interim basis.



ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - Pakistan carried out a second missile test in three days on Monday and India said it ordered several states to conduct security drills, as fears mounted the neighbours could be heading to a confrontation over a deadly attack in Kashmir.

Moody's warned that the standoff could set back Islamabad's economic reforms as world powers called for calm.

Relations between the nuclear-armed states have nosedived since gunmen killed 26 people on April 22 in an attack targeting Hindu tourists in Indian Kashmir, the worst such assault on civilians in India in nearly two decades.

India has accused Pakistan of involvement. Islamabad has denied the allegations but said it has intelligence that New Delhi intends to launch military action against it soon.

The countries have shut their land borders, suspended trade, and closed their airspace to each other's airlines, and there have been exchanges of small arms fire across the frontier in Kashmir.

India's interior ministry has asked several states to conduct mock security drills on May 7 to ensure civil preparedness, a government source told Reuters on Monday. They did not say which states or mention Pakistan or Kashmir.

The drills will include air raid warning sirens, evacuation plans and training people to respond in case of any attacks, added the source, who asked not to be named.

Earlier, the Pakistani army said it had tested a Fatah series surface-to-surface missile with a range of 120 km (75 miles), two days after a successful launch of the Abdali surface-to-surface ballistic missile with a range of 450 km.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said the successful test launch "made it clear that Pakistan's defence is in strong hands".

Information Minister Attaullah Tarar told journalists there was no communication channel open with India at the moment.

The Himalayan region of Kashmir lies at the heart of decades of hostility, between Hindu-majority India and Islamist Pakistan, both of which claim it in full but rule it in part.

India has accused its neighbour of supporting Islamist separatists battling security forces in its part of the region. Pakistan says it only provides diplomatic and moral support for Kashmiris seeking self-determination.

Moody's said the standoff could hurt Pakistan's \$350 billion economy, which is on a path to recovery after securing a \$7 billion bailout programme from the International Monetary Fund last year and staving off a default threat.

"Sustained escalation in tensions with India would likely weigh on Pakistan's growth and hamper the government's ongoing fiscal consolidation, setting back Pakistan's progress in achieving macroeconomic stability," Moody's said.

"A persistent increase in tensions could also impair Pakistan's access to external financing and pressure its foreign-exchange reserves," it added.

The report comes two days after Reuters reported that India has asked the IMF to review its loans to Pakistan.

India's economy is not expected to see major disruptions since it has "minimal economic relations" with Pakistan - although higher defence spending could weigh on New Delhi's fiscal strength and slow fiscal consolidation, Moody's added.

Iran's foreign minister, who earlier said his country was ready to help India and Pakistan "forge greater understanding" after the attack, was in Pakistan on Monday to meet leaders. He will visit India on Thursday.

Russia said on Monday it was following the situation with great concern and that it valued its ties with both countries.

President Vladimir Putin "strongly condemned" the Kashmir attack in a call with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and expressed full support to India in its "fight against terrorism", India's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said on X.

Pakistan said on Monday it will "formally apprise" the United Nations Security Council of the situation and call upon it "to exercise its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security by taking appropriate measures".

Israel May Seize all Gaza in Expanded Operation

TEL AVIV (Dispatches) - Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Monday an expanded offensive against Palestinian militant group Hamas would be "intensive" after his security cabinet approved plans that may include seizing the Gaza Strip and controlling aid.

However an Israeli defense official said the operation would not be launched before U.S. President Donald Trump concludes his visit next week to the Middle East.

The decision, after weeks of faltering efforts to agree a ceasefire with Hamas, underlines the threat that a war heaping international pressure on Israel amid dwindling public support at home could continue with no end in sight.

A report by Israel's public broadcaster Kan, citing officials with knowledge of the details, said the new plan was gradual and would take months, with forces focusing first on one area of the battered enclave.

Netanyahu said in a video message the operation would be "intensive" and would see more Palestinians in Gaza moved "for their own safety".

He said Israeli troops would not follow previous tactics based on short raids by forces based outside Gaza. "The intention is the opposite," he said, echoing comments from other Israeli officials who have said Israel would hold on to the ground it has seized.

U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff said Israel is a sovereign state that makes its own decisions, according to Axios, which also reported that he hopes for progress on a hostage and ceasefire deal before or during Trump's visit. The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Israeli troops have already taken over an area amounting to around a third



of Gaza, displacing the population and building watchtowers and surveillance posts on cleared ground the military has described as security zones, but the new plan would go further.

One Israeli official said the newly approved offensive would seize the entire territory of the Gaza Strip, move its civilian population southward and keep humanitarian aid from falling into Hamas' hands.

The defense official said aid distribution, which has been handled by international aid groups and U.N. organizations, would be transferred to private companies and handed out in the southern area of Rafah once the offensive begins.

The Israeli military, which throughout the war has shown little appetite for occupying Gaza, declined to comment on the remarks by government officials and politicians.

Israel resumed its offensive in March after the collapse of a U.S.-backed ceasefire that had halted fighting for two months. It has since imposed an aid blockade, drawing warnings from the UN that the 2.3 million population faces imminent famine.

The defense official said Israel would hold on to security zones seized along the Gaza perimeter because they were vital for protecting Israeli communities around the enclave.

But he said there was a "window of opportunity" for a ceasefire and hostage release deal during Trump's visit.

"If there is no hostage deal, Operation 'Gideon Chariots' will begin with great intensity and will not stop until all its goals are achieved," he said.

Explosions Heard in Sudanese City of Port Sudan

KHARTOUM (Dispatches) - Multiple explosions and fires were seen and heard in Sudan's capital Port Sudan early on Tuesday, a witness said, though the exact locations and causes were unclear, as a civil war rocks the previously quiet city for the third day.

Dark plumes of smoke could be seen emerging from the vicinity of the country's main maritime port in the city where hundreds of thousands of displaced people have sought refuge.

The conflict between the army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces has created the world's worst humanitarian crisis, one likely to be worsened by the attacks on Port Sudan, where U.N. and aid agencies as well as army-aligned government ministries have set up headquarters.

The attacks which began Sunday represent a sharp escalation in fighting, as the Red Sea coastal city had remained untouched by ground or air attacks until this week.

On Sunday, a military base near Sudan's only functioning international airport, had been struck by drones followed by the targeting on Monday of fuel depots in the city.

In both cases military sources blamed the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces. The



attacks came after a military source said the army had destroyed an aircraft and weapons depots in the RSF-controlled Nyala airport. The RSF did not claim responsibility for the attacks.

The attacks this week drew condemnation from neighbors Egypt and Saudi Arabia, as well as expressions of concern from the United Nations.

Since April 2023, Sudan has been gripped by war between the army and RSF, triggered by a dispute over a transition to civilian rule. The conflict has displaced over 12 million people and pushed half the population into acute hunger, according to the United Nations.

Two years into the war, the army has succeeded in pushing the RSF out of most of central Sudan, and the paramilitary has shifted tactics from ground incursions to drone attacks targeting power stations and other facilities deep in army-controlled territory.

The army has continued airstrikes in the Darfur region, the RSF's stronghold. The two forces continue to fight ground battles for control of al-Fashir, the capital of North Darfur state, and elsewhere as the battle lines in the war harden into distinct zones of control.



Knicks Storm Back to Force OT, Take Down Celtics in Game 1

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Jalen Brunson and OG Anunoby each scored 29 points as the visiting New York Knicks earned a 108-105 overtime victory against the Boston Celtics in Game 1 of the Eastern Conference semifinals Monday night.

The Knicks overcame a 20-point deficit in the third quarter and sealed the win when Mikal Bridges stole the ball from Jaylen Brown after Boston inbounded the ball with three seconds to play.

"This team has fought all year, and been a pretty good road team," Knicks coach Tom Thibodeau said. "It's one game. There's a lot of emotional highs and lows in the playoffs, but no matter what happens you have to keep moving forward."

During the fourth quarter, Brunson tied the game at 89 with a 3-pointer and 91 on two free throws before giving the Knicks their first lead since the second. His 3-pointer put them up 94-91 with 4:07 to play, and his third triple of the period extended New York's advantage to six points, but Boston responded with a 7-0 run to take a 98-97 lead.

It was 100-100 when Brunson missed a layup with two seconds left. After a timeout, Jayson Tatum missed a 21-footer at the buzzer. The game went to overtime, where Anunoby's dunk and foul shot and Bridges' 3-pointer gave the Knicks the cushion they needed to finish the comeback.

"Your defense, your toughness, your teamwork -- I think that's paramount in a playoff game," Thibodeau said.

Karl-Anthony Towns was in foul trouble for much of the game, but had 14 points and 13 rebounds in 31 minutes. Josh Hart had 14 points and 11 boards, and Bridges recorded eight points, seven assists, six rebounds and three steals while playing 51 of the possible 53 minutes.

Brown and Tatum each tossed in a team-high 23 points for Boston. Tatum also had 16 rebounds, and Derrick White put up 19 points and 11 rebounds.

Kristaps Porzingis was scoreless in 13 minutes during the first half and didn't play in the final two quarters with what the Celtics called an "illness." Boston's Sam Hauser also went to the locker room with an ankle injury with 28.5 seconds remaining in the third quarter and didn't return to the game.

"Obviously it impacts the game with (Porzingis') ability at both ends of the floor. ... Hopefully he's ready for Game 2," Celtics coach Joe Mazzulla said.

Boston led 26-25 after one quarter and outscored New York by 15 in the second quarter to take a 61-45 halftime lead. The Celtics scored the final eight points in the first half. The Knicks were 8-of-19 from the free throw line in the half.

Towns was called for his fourth foul and went to the bench with 7:07 left in the third quarter, but the Knicks made a strong run without him. New York was within six points before Al Horford made a 3-pointer with 6.2 seconds remaining in the quarter that gave the Celtics an 84-75 lead entering the fourth.

"We left some of their good shooters open, so some personnel stuff, and they were able to get out in transition after some of our misses," Mazzulla said of the Knicks' comeback. "Detail stuff that we need to be better at."

Game 2 in the best-of-seven series will be played Wednesday in Boston.

"The biggest challenge in the playoffs (is) dealing with the emotions of the playoffs," Thibodeau cautioned. "If you feel too good about yourself you won't be ready for Game 2."

Nottingham Forest's Champions League Hopes Stall With Draw at Crystal Palace

LONDON (Dispatches) - Nottingham Forest's bid to qualify for the Champions League suffered a setback as they were held to a damaging 1-1 draw at Crystal Palace.

Nuno Espirito Santo's side needed a victory to keep pace with their top five rivals.

But Eberechi Eze's second-half penalty put Palace ahead and, although Murillo equalised soon afterwards, Forest left south London outside the Champions League places.

Sixth-placed Forest's attempt to appear in Europe's elite club competition for the first time since 1980-81 is now out of their hands.

They sit two points behind fifth-placed Chelsea and fourth-placed Newcastle, with third-placed Manchester City three points ahead of Forest.

Forest have three games left, with winnable fixtures against Leicester and West Ham before what could be a final-day shootout against Chelsea.

"We were in control of the game. We created and dominated a lot. Second half was different. Good reaction but Palace created problems," Nuno said.

"Palace are really dangerous if they have the shape. It's important not to allow too much counter-attacks. We were



positive but it's not easy to play at Selhurst Park.

"We have to do our job at the City Ground. We play Leicester and it will be tough. It's for sure going to be like that all the way."

Nuno's team were without injured winger Callum Hudson-Odoi, who instead joined the away fans in one corner of Selhurst Park.

FA Cup finalists Palace dominated the early stages, with some

eye-catching interplay between Eze and Adam Wharton in front of England manager Thomas Tuchel.

Their first chance arrived when Tyrick Mitchell whipped in a cross which fellow full-back Daniel Munoz met on the volley, forcing a save from Matz Sels.

But Forest grew into the game and Elliot Anderson hit the side netting from a deep Nicolas Dominguez cross.

They almost made the breakthrough two minutes before half-time with a trademark counter-attack as Dominguez and Wood combined to tee up Anthony Elanga, but his finish was too close to Dean Henderson.

Wood was denied the opening goal by Maxence Lacroix's block as his shot rolled narrowly wide early in the second half.

Palace went ahead on the hour after Mitchell was felled by a combination of Dominguez and Selz in the area.

Referee Andy Madley did not initially give the penalty but changed his mind after a look at the replay, with Eze tucking away the spot-kick.

Wharton went off with an ankle injury as Palace boss Oliver Glasner took no chances with his influential midfielder before the FA Cup final against Manchester City.

Sinner Happy to Return After Doping Ban



LONDON (Dispatches) - World number one Jannik Sinner said on Monday that he was heading into the Italian Open with low expectations as he makes his comeback after serving a three-month doping ban.

Sinner agreed a settlement with the World Anti-Doping Agency in February and began an immediate three-month suspension after authorities accepted that the anabolic agent clostebol had entered his system via massages from his physiotherapist.

The three-times Grand Slam champion, who has not played since winning the Australian Open in January, will now hope to leave the doping saga behind him and build momentum for the French Open, which runs from May 25 to June 8.

The Italian was cleared to return to training from April 13, with his suspension ending on May 4.

"It's a very, very low expectation tournament in general for me, it's talking also results wise," Sinner told reporters ahead of the Italian Open.

"What's missing is the complete feedback of where my level is. That's going to come then slowly with the time of playing, after the first round match I'm going to have a good picture of myself -- where I am at."

Despite missing out on three month's action, the 23-year-old was assured of retaining the top ranking for his home tournament after his closest challenger Alexander Zverev crashed to an early defeat in Monte-Carlo Masters.

"For me personally good news that the Grand Slams were not included ... This kind of agreement, I didn't want to do it in the beginning. It was not easy for me to accept it because I know what really happened, but sometimes we have to choose the best in a very bad moment," Sinner said.

"It's all over now, so I'm happy to play tennis again."

Alexander-Arnold Confirms Liverpool Exit After Hardest Decision

LIVERPOOL (Dispatches) - Trent Alexander-Arnold will leave Liverpool when his contract expires at the end of the season, saying it was the "hardest decision" of his life ahead of a widely expected move to Real Madrid.

Alexander-Arnold is out of contract at the end of June and the England right-back's future had been the subject of intense debate throughout Liverpool's charge to the Premier League title this season.

"After 20 years at Liverpool Football Club, now is the time for me to confirm that I will be leaving at the end of the season," the 26-year-old posted on X.

"This is easily the hardest decision I've ever made in my life."

Alexander-Arnold's contract talks over a free transfer switch to Real are reported to be at an advanced stage.

He will depart as a Premier League champion after the Reds moved level with rivals Manchester United on a joint-record 20 English top-flight titles.

"I know many of you have wondered why or been frustrated that I haven't spoken about this yet, but it was always my intention to keep



my full focus on the team's best interests, which was securing No. 20," Alexander-Arnold said.

"This club has been my whole life—my whole world—for 20 years. From the academy right through until now, the support and love I have felt from everyone inside and outside of the club will stay with me forever.

"I will forever be in debt to you all. My love for this club will never die."

Liverpool-born Alexander-Arnold was one of three high-profile Reds players whose deals were due to run out at the end of the season—a contract saga that provided a continuous backdrop to Arne Slot's first campaign in charge.

Top-scorer Mohamed Salah and captain Virgil van Dijk signed new deals in recent weeks but Alexander-Arnold has opted to leave.

The defender made his senior debut in 2016 and has made 352 appearances for the Reds to date, scoring 23 goals and lifting multiple trophies including the 2019 Champions League and two Premier League crowns.