

The Chief of Staff of Iran's Armed Forces Has Reaffirmed the Country's Readiness to Safeguard Its National Interests and Protect the Persian Gulf, Stating That His Forces Remain "Fully Prepared" for Any Scenario

# IRAN NEWS

Majlis Lawmakers, in Reaction to Reports Suggesting U.S. President Donald Is May Misname the Persian Gulf, Issued a Statement Reaffirming the Country's Historical and Geopolitical Rights Over the Persian Gulf

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## Iran Serious in Talks and Seeks Deal



TEHRAN - Iran's president has emphasized that the Islamic Republic is "serious" in its indirect talks with the U.S. in pursuit of an agreement based on peace, underlining the country's continued all-out determination to pursue peaceful nuclear activities.

"We are negotiating [seriously] because we desire peace," Masoud Pezeshkian said on Sunday, while underscoring that the country would not give up its nuclear achievements, particularly in the realm of peaceful energy. "We will continue to pursue these peaceful activities in a powerful manner," he added, addressing a cabinet meeting.

Pezeshkian, meanwhile, clarified that the Islamic Republic found the demand for dismantlement of its entire nuclear infrastructure "unacceptable."

For years, the United States and its allies have sought to accuse the Islamic Republic of pursuing "nuclear weapons," despite Iran's consistent and unwavering declarations that it does not seek, develop, or stockpile such weaponry in line with its moral and religious principles.

As per the claims, the US and its allies have targeted the Islamic Republic with a whole host of illegal and unilateral sanctions.

The US and the Israeli regime, Washington's most cherished regional ally, have also been issuing recurrent threats of attacking Iran's nuclear sites, and calling for wholesale elimination of the nation's nuclear facilities -- a demand that was most recently reiterated by US President Donald Trump.

## Iran Warns JCPOA Signatories Against Consequences of Misusing Snapback Mechanism



TEHRAN - Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi has warned that invoking the so-called snapback mechanism by signatories to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) could lead to consequences and irreversible tensions.

In a post on his X account on Monday, Araqchi said abuse of the snapback mechanism would not only end Europe's role in the JCPOA but would also escalate tensions that could become irreversible.

The so-called snapback mechanism allows for the return of anti-Iran sanctions that were suspended under the JCPOA.

The Iranian foreign minister added that the three European signatories to the 2015 nuclear agreement -- Britain, France and Germany -- need to ask themselves how the situation reached this impasse.

He added that following recent consultations in Russia and China, he also expressed his willingness to travel to Paris, Berlin, and London to begin a new chapter in ties.

This initiative has led to preliminary discussions at the deputy foreign minister level—a fragile but promising start, Araqchi said, warning that time is running out.

The way that the parties to the JCPOA will behave at the current sensitive moment will determine the future of Iran-Europe relations far more profoundly than many imagine, he added.

The top Iranian negotiator expressed the country's readiness to turn the page and hoped that the European partners will also demonstrate the same determination.

# Iran Determined to Expand Comprehensive Relations with Uzbekistan

TEHRAN - First Vice President, Mohammad Reza Aref, announced the country's strong commitment to boosting bilateral relations with Uzbekistan across all sectors. His remarks came during a high-level meeting between Iranian and Uzbek delegations held in Tehran on Sunday.

Speaking at the session, Aref highlighted the steady momentum of Tehran-Tashkent relations, noting that cooperation between the two nations has significantly improved under the current Iranian administration, the 14th government.

"There is a clear and shared will on both sides to enhance ties, and this has been firmly endorsed by the Presidents of Iran and Uzbekistan," he stated. "The Government of Iran is resolutely focused on upgrading relations in every possible domain."

Aref underlined that Iran and Uzbekistan share deep-rooted historical and cultural connections, which he described as a valuable asset in fostering stronger bilateral relations. "These ancient bonds can serve as a solid foundation for expanded cooperation in a wide array of areas—economic, energy, tourism, culture, science, commerce, and especially private sector engagement," he said.

He expressed hope that the comprehensive ties between the two nations would reach new heights, with Iran viewing Uzbekistan as a "brotherly country" due to their common civilizational and linguistic heritage. Aref emphasized that the two countries possess numerous areas of mutual interest and potential for collaboration.

The First Vice President pointed to the 16th session of the Iran-Uzbekistan Joint Cooperation Commission, held in conjunction with the visit of Uzbekistan's Prime Minister Abdulla Aripov, as a significant opportunity to further boost the relationship. He voiced confidence that the commission would lay the groundwork for broader and deeper cooperation in the near future.

Highlighting Iran's strategic position, Aref described the country as the most efficient and shortest transit route connecting Central Asian nations to open seas and the Persian Gulf. "We have equipped our southern ports with advanced logistical infrastructure," he said. "Iran stands ready to offer Uzbekistan full access and operational support to utilize these facilities."

The Iranian official underscored the practical goals Tehran has set for increasing trade with Uzbekistan and stressed the need for mutual awareness of each other's capabilities. "This requires enhanced technical exchanges, particularly involving private sector stakeholders," he said.

He noted that the Iranian government's regional diplomacy strategy prioritizes strengthening ties with neighboring and regional countries, with Uzbekistan playing a key role. According to Aref, Iran and Uzbekistan could act as complementary forces in promoting economic integration throughout the region.

He also outlined specific areas where Iran is prepared to collaborate with Uzbekistan, including engineering and technical services, agricultural equipment and products, pharmaceuticals, mining technology, medical devices, and cultural heritage restoration.



Speaking during the same meeting, Uzbek Prime Minister Abdulla Aripov affirmed that Iran is a "close friend and reliable partner" of Uzbekistan in the region. He referred to the recent uptick in high-level visits between officials of the two countries as evidence of their growing political and economic ties.

Aripov emphasized the significance of 2022 marking the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Iran and Uzbekistan. "Our bilateral ties have made meaningful progress in recent years," he said. "The strategic meetings between our Presidents have outlined a clear path forward, and we are confident that this cooperation will continue to grow in all dimensions."

The Uzbek leader pointed to the current bilateral trade volume of approximately \$500 million and emphasized the need for a long-term, strategic vision for developing economic relations. "It is essential that the private sectors in both countries seize available opportunities and contribute actively to this shared vision," Aripov concluded.

The joint meeting of Iranian and Uzbek officials in Tehran has reaffirmed the mutual commitment to advancing multifaceted cooperation. With political alignment at the highest levels, enhanced connectivity, and shared cultural and historical foundations, both countries appear poised to deepen their partnership significantly in the coming years.

Meanwhile later in the presence of Iran's First Vice President and the Prime Minister of Uzbekistan, four joint cooperation documents and memoranda of understanding were signed between senior officials of the two countries.

Four cooperation agreements and memoranda of understanding were signed between high-ranking officials of Iran and Uzbekistan.

The three agreements signed by the ministers and officials in the presence of Vice President Aref and Prime Minister Aripov include: An intergovernmental protocol on the implementation of the provisions of the preferential trade agreement between Iran's Minister of Industry, Mining, and Trade and Uzbekistan's Minister of Investment, Industry, and Trade; A memorandum of understanding on cooperation in plant quarantine and protection between the head of Iran's Plant Protection Organization and the head of Uzbekistan's Plant Quarantine and Protection Agency; and a memorandum of understanding on cooperation in the field of halal standardization between the head of Iran's National Standards Organization and the head of Uzbekistan's Technical Regulations Agency.

Additionally, an intergovernmental roadmap for cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Uzbekistan for the 2025-2027 period was signed by the First Vice President of Iran and the Prime Minister of Uzbekistan.

Prime Minister Aripov invited officially by Aref, arrived in Tehran on the morning of Sunday, leading a high-ranking delegation. He was welcomed at Mehrabad Airport by Seyed Mohammad Atabak, Iran's Minister of Industry, Mining, and Trade.

## Oil Turbulence Amid Political Currents



By: Hamid Reza Naqashian

May 2025 proved to be a turbulent month for the global oil market, marked by significant fluctuations driven by a combination of economic concerns and geopolitical tensions. Brent crude, which had traded above \$82 per barrel in January, fell sharply to approximately \$63.91 in early May.

This downturn was largely attributed to rising oil production by the OPEC+ alliance and mounting fears of a global economic slowdown—particularly in key markets like China and the United States.

Saudi oil giant Aramco announced a decline in its net profit for the second quarter of 2025, down to \$26 billion—a 4.6% drop compared to the same period last year. As a result, the company reduced its performance-based dividends by \$10 billion.

In parallel, the U.S. Energy Information Administration projected that the average price of West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude for 2025 would hover around \$61.81 per barrel. Similarly, HSBC revised its forecast for Brent crude to \$68.50 for the year, reflecting a bearish outlook amid growing supply.

Increased output from both OPEC+ and the U.S. shale industry has contributed to a surplus in the oil market. Meanwhile, geopolitical tensions have added to market anxieties. American airstrikes on oil infrastructure in Yemen earlier this month stoked fears of potential supply disruptions.

However, a ceasefire agreement between the United States and Houthi forces, reached on May 6, helped ease some of the immediate geopolitical tensions. Still, the oil market remains on edge.

The volatility seen in May may just be a prelude to further instability if ongoing negotiations between Iran and the United States fail to yield meaningful results. Should diplomacy falter, we may well see even greater emotional and financial turbulence ripple through oil markets in the months ahead.

## Economic Pressure Driving Iran's Scientific Elites Toward Emigration



TEHRAN - Ahmad Saeedi, head of the Statistical Research Department at the Institute for Research and Planning in Higher Education, has issued a stark warning about the impact of economic hardship on Iran's academic community, stressing that growing financial pressures are pushing the country's scientific elites to consider emigration.

Saeedi emphasized that Iran's higher education system—long regarded as a cornerstone of the nation's scientific and technological advancement—is now under threat due to deepening economic and livelihood challenges. Among the most concerning outcomes is the increasing migration of university faculty members, who play a vital role in both teaching and research. This trend not only undermines the quality of Iran's academic institutions but also endangers the nation's long-term competitiveness in regional and global scientific arenas.

Saeedi highlighted discussions with university professors, noting that many have warned they may leave academia altogether if no significant improvements in their financial conditions are made within the next three years. "If these conditions persist," he stated, "up to 20% of technical experts could abandon university projects in favor of the private sector—or leave the country entirely." The trend is also evident among recent graduates. Many top-performing students, despite excelling in the demanding national entrance exams, now see little incentive to pursue academic paths within Iran due to limited career prospects and economic uncertainty.

# Majlis Speaker Calls for Grassroots Movement to Boost Public Participation in National Affairs

TEHRAN – Majlis Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf has called for a national grassroots movement aimed at increasing public involvement in key national issues. Speaking at the Alavi Empowerment and Entrepreneurship Festival on Monday, Qalibaf stressed that the country's progress hinges on meaningful public participation and a shift away from overly centralized governance.

"We need a national movement toward people-centered governance," Qalibaf stated. "One of the serious challenges we face today is the minimal or even non-existent participation of the people in major national matters."

Addressing an audience of entrepreneurs and social facilitators, Qalibaf emphasized the central role of work and service in human dignity and development. "Work is not only the essence of life and spirituality, but it also shapes material well-being and personal character," he said. "Especially when that work serves deprived and underserved communities—many of whom are disadvantaged due to systemic barriers created by us, the officials."

He defined the term *mustaz'af* (oppressed or underprivileged) as individuals who possess potential but lack the opportunities and resources to realize it due to external obstacles. "Today, we are engaged in an economic war imposed on us," Qalibaf added. "Resisting this enemy, who respects no moral boundaries, is a form of jihad. Every one of you who brings livelihood to the disadvantaged is part of this sacred struggle."

Qalibaf criticized the current overreliance on government bureaucracy, noting that systems handed over to the state tend to become inefficient and, eventually, corrupt. "If we want a strong Iran, it must be rooted in strong Iranian families. And strong families require the active participation of citizens in all aspects of national life," he said.

Highlighting economic debates in recent decades, Qalibaf pointed out the futility of what he called "false dichotomies," such as the debate between wealth creation and wealth distribution. "During the early 2000s, Iran's revenues soared to \$119 billion in some years, yet we failed to see



lasting economic growth or reduced inflation. The problem is not a lack of money but a lack of collective will and strategic thinking."

He announced Parliament's efforts to reform legislative inefficiencies, aiming to reduce the number of existing laws from 12,500 to about 3,000 over the coming year. "The sheer volume of regulations has created administrative bottlenecks, forcing people to bounce from office to office just to complete basic tasks," he said.

Qalibaf also touched on the recently passed "Financial System for Production" law, which focuses on channeling public and communal assets into productive economic cycles. He stressed that people's assets, often locked away in bank reserves, could be unlocked by providing proper economic incentives.

"We must motivate citizens to voluntarily and securely bring their capital into the economic cycle," he said. "Unlocking this potential is key to transforming the nation's production landscape." Reiterating his core principles of smart governance, transparency, and people-centeredness, Qalibaf urged the Alavi Foundation and other similar organizations to align their initiatives with these goals. He also lamented the delay in drafting the executive bylaws for the financial system law, despite its approval in May 2024.

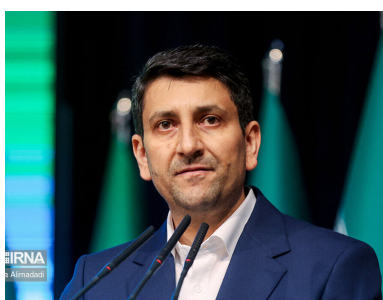
In a message directed at social facilitators, he emphasized focusing on five pillars: family, neighborhood, mosque, school, and cyberspace. "These five elements must work together to create synergy. If we aim to be an independent country, we must become a productive one—producing power, wealth, knowledge, and dignity."

Concluding his remarks, Qalibaf praised grassroots facilitators for their independence and innovation. "You may not have formal job titles, but you are working. You're not reliant on anyone—you create with your own effort and share your ideas for the betterment of all."

He also encouraged the Foundation of the Oppressed (*Bonyad-e Mostazafan*) to restructure its companies to include more public participation in both management and ownership.



# IRAN NEWS



## ICT Minister Travels to Beijing to Expand Tech Diplomacy

TEHRAN (IRNA) - In a move to enhance technological diplomacy, Iran's Minister of Communications and Information Technology, Seyed Sattar Hashemi, departed for Beijing on Sunday night.

According to the Ministry of Communications, Hashemi's visit comes at the formal invitation of China's Minister of Industry and Information Technology. This trip marks a continued effort to implement Iran's strategic "Technology Diplomacy" initiative—one of the top priorities of the 14th administration.

The visit aims to deepen strategic cooperation with the People's Republic of China in key areas including information and communications technology, digital infrastructure, and artificial intelligence.

## Iran Ready to Cooperate with Zimbabwe in All Fields



TEHRAN - Minister of Cooperatives, Labor, and Social Welfare, Ahmad Meydari, announced the upcoming midterm session of the 9th Joint Commission between Iran and Zimbabwe, emphasizing Tehran's readiness to collaborate with Harare across all sectors.

Speaking on Sunday during Zimbabwe's National Day celebration, Meydari expressed hope that, through the efforts of the embassies in Tehran and Harare, as well as the relevant ministries, the meetings will lead to the implementation of previously signed agreements.

He congratulated Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa, the people of Zimbabwe, and the country's ambassador on the 45th anniversary of Zimbabwe's independence.

Highlighting the longstanding relationship between the two nations, Meydari noted that Iran and Zimbabwe share common views on international issues and support each other's positions in international forums and organizations.

"I am pleased that political relations between our countries have always been friendly and constructive," the minister stated. However, he acknowledged that the current level of economic exchange is unsatisfactory and called for measures to boost economic ties. He stressed the need to enhance interactions between private companies in both nations to strengthen trade.

Meydari also pointed to the significant economic potential within the holdings affiliated with Iran's Ministry of Welfare, expressing readiness to cooperate with Zimbabwe in all relevant areas.

He added that, thanks to the determination of both nations' leaders, economic relations have recently gained momentum. He highlighted broad areas for cooperation, including pharmaceuticals, mining, agriculture, processing industries, health, and energy, as key to accelerating this progress.

## Iran's Travel Agencies Ready to Launch Tourism Corridor With Egypt



TEHRAN - The Iranian Association of Travel Agencies has announced its full readiness to swiftly launch tourism tours between Iran and Egypt, following recent diplomatic efforts to revive tourism ties between the two countries after nearly five decades of severed relations.

According to ILNA, quoting the public relations office of the Iranian Association of Air Travel and Tourism Services Offices, Hormatollah Rafiei, President of the Association, expressed optimism about the renewed possibility of establishing tourism connections. Rafiei has traveled to Cairo three times under the 13th government to represent Iran's tourism sector and sign a comprehensive tourism agreement with Egyptian travel agencies.

"Everything was prepared for reopening the tourism route between Iran and Egypt. We even signed a complete memorandum of understanding," said Rafiei. "However, at that time, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not approve of the private sector initiating tourism relations and effectively blocked the process."

Rafiei criticized the previous foreign ministry for repeatedly giving interviews that prevented the agreement from being implemented. He welcomed the recent visit of Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Seyed Reza Salehi Amiri, to Cairo to attend the D-8 summit, during which the minister discussed visa waivers and establishing tourism links with Egyptian authorities.

He noted that Egyptian nationals have long enjoyed visa-free access to Iran, and the only remaining hurdle to tourism exchanges is the absence of direct flights. "If tourism relations resume, they won't face visa issues — just the lack of direct air routes," he said.

Rafiei emphasized that the private sector is not concerned with who facilitates the reestablishment of tourism ties, as long as it benefits the country and the tourism industry. He also highlighted the cultural, religious, and historical similarities between the two nations, adding that many Egyptians feel a close affinity toward Iran.

# Uzbekistan Urged to Lift Visa Requirements for Iranians as Bilateral Trade Targets \$1b

TEHRAN - In a significant diplomatic and economic development, the President of Iran's Chamber of Commerce has called on Uzbekistan to lift visa requirements for Iranian citizens, aiming to strengthen commercial and tourism ties between the two nations. The appeal was made during the Iran-Uzbekistan Business Forum held at Tehran's Sa'dabad Palace, coinciding with the joint commission meetings between the two countries.

Speaking at the event, Samad Hassanzadeh, President of Iran's Chamber of Commerce, described the forum—attended by high-ranking officials and business leaders from both countries—as a pivotal step toward deepening bilateral relations. "Over the past year, we've seen serious, responsible, and close cooperation between both public and private sectors of Iran and Uzbekistan," he said, adding that a new era of mutual partnership is underway.

Hassanzadeh emphasized the cultural affinity and longstanding friendship between the Iranian and Uzbek peoples, suggesting that visa-free travel for Iranians should be implemented soon to ease the movement of people and goods. He also highlighted the need for more accessible and affordable flight options between the two countries.

He revealed that the initial target for boosting bilateral trade is to double the current \$500 million to \$1 billion, expressing hope that this goal can be achieved by the end of the calendar year.



Highlighting the vast economic potential in both countries, Hassanzadeh called on policymakers to match the enthusiasm shown by business communities by creating necessary infrastructure. One major area of focus, he said, should be joint investments by the private sectors of both nations. "I urge entrepreneurs and businesspeople to form industrial committees to identify shared opportunities and invest in projects where we hold a comparative advantage," he said. The Iranian Chamber of Commerce, he added, is ready to facilitate such efforts.

Touching on recent talks over a preferential trade agreement, Hassanzadeh voiced optimism that the agreement would soon be finalized. "For two countries committed to expanding ties, high or discriminatory tariffs are unacceptable. I believe many of these barriers will be resolved shortly," he noted.

Hassanzadeh also underlined the need for smoother financial exchanges and the removal of trade restrictions, stressing the role of sustained engagement and private-sector collaboration in overcoming these challenges.

Despite international sanctions, Iran has made notable advances in fields such as machinery manufacturing, food processing, construction materials, and industrial equipment, which he said present "golden opportunities" for regional markets, including Uzbekistan.

He noted the synergy between Uzbekistan's large-scale infrastructure projects—especially in railways, highways, and transport systems—and Iran's strong capabilities in technical and engineering services. Strengthening land, rail, and air transport links is a mutual priority that requires focused effort from both governments.

Hassanzadeh encouraged Uzbek investors to participate in Iran's North-South International Corridor and the development of the Makran coast, citing Iran's strategic location at the crossroads of East-West and North-South trade routes. He also highlighted recent progress in transport cooperation and called for a joint committee of officials from both countries to advance transport and logistics infrastructure development.

He concluded by highlighting the importance of mutual trade and exhibition delegations, saying such exchanges, along with joint seminars and exhibitions, would pave the way for increased trade and greater familiarity with each country's economic potential. "Uzbekistan is a key trading partner for Iran," he said, expressing hope that the forum would yield tangible results in trade, industry, and joint investment initiatives.

Meanwhile in the event, the Prime Minister of Uzbekistan declared that Iranian investors operating in Uzbekistan will be exempt from taxes and customs duties. This promise comes as the number of joint Iranian-Uzbek factories in the country surpasses 210.

During a business forum between Iran and Uzbekistan, Prime Minister Abdulla Aripov emphasized the deep cultural and historical ties between the two nations, asserting that global developments have made it increasingly important for both sides to strengthen their economic cooperation.

"Events in today's world call for stronger collaboration," Aripov stated. "Organizing such business forums allows both countries to better understand each other's investment capacities and opens up new avenues for cooperation."

He highlighted that during meetings with Iranian officials, the two sides identified the expansion of industrial collaboration and the activation of technological exchanges as top priorities. He stressed the importance of private sector engagement in realizing these objectives.

Aripov noted that while trade between Iran and Uzbekistan has reached a relatively stable level of \$500 million, this figure remains below its full potential. "Despite this, we are proud that more than 210 joint Iranian-Uzbek factories are now operating in Uzbekistan—a significant achievement," he said.

The Prime Minister also shared ambitious economic goals for his country, revealing that Uzbekistan's GDP is projected to reach \$160 billion within the next five years. In 2024 alone, the country attracted \$70 billion in foreign investment—a testament, he said, to Uzbekistan's stable and secure investment environment.

Highlighting his government's commitment to open markets and foreign investment, Aripov mentioned that Uzbekistan exported over \$2.5 billion worth of agricultural products last year and has signed numerous free trade and preferential trade agreements worldwide.

Reaffirming his country's support for Iranian investors, Aripov stated: "We assure Iranian businesspeople that if they invest in our industrial zones, they will be exempt from taxes and customs duties. The government will also provide necessary infrastructure and guarantee the repatriation of their investment profits."

This announcement underscores the growing economic partnership between Iran and Uzbekistan and sets the stage for deeper integration between their private sectors.

# Seven Countries Request Joint Civilization Exhibits

TEHRAN - Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts has finalized its five-year strategic roadmap with a strong focus on provincial development and regional cooperation. The plan includes ambitious goals for expanding museum infrastructure, heritage restoration, and international cultural diplomacy.

Ali Darabi, Deputy Minister and Acting Minister of Cultural Heritage, announced the completion of the five-year roadmap during a press conference held on the occasion of International Museum Day and Cultural Heritage Week. The comprehensive plan, which began in February 2024, includes operational strategies for 31 provinces, five deputy ministries, affiliated organizations, and 12 specialized departments.

The roadmap is built upon three main pillars: the Ministry's 10-year vision statement, the mandates of Iran's Seventh National Development Plan, and the unique priorities of each province. Darabi highlighted the plan's goal to launch 200 new museums by 2029, increasing the national total from 800 to 1,000. Museum sites have been identified and details are expected to be revealed soon.

In 2024 alone, over 1.5 trillion rials (approximately \$3 million USD) were allocated for the acquisition and restoration of historical structures. Projects include restoration work in Alamut, flood-damaged buildings in Sistan and Baluchestan, and heritage sites in Ilam province. Some renovations are being funded through social responsibility contributions and private donors.

Darabi also announced that over 1,000 "Nowruz Hubs" operated during the 2025 New Year celebrations, enhancing public engagement. Next week, the Ministry will honor 30 museums and historical sites with the highest visitor numbers to promote healthy competition and benchmarking across the sector.

The Deputy Minister confirmed that two national documents — one on cultural heritage and one on museum management — are under review by the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution and are expected to be ratified soon. A separate legislative bill outlining the Ministry's duties is currently under discussion in



Parliament's Cultural Commission.

Darabi also addressed human resources reforms, noting the establishment of 4,200 new positions for cultural heritage guards, museum curators, and technical staff, aimed at improving staffing and recruitment nationwide.

Significant institutional changes include the relocation of the Quran Museum to the premises of the Water Museum in Sa'dabad, previously managed by the Ministry of Energy, to improve public accessibility. Additionally, negotiations are underway to transfer oversight of several palace-museums from the Presidential Office to the Ministry.

Highlighting international outreach, Darabi revealed that seven countries within the cultural sphere of Nowruz have requested to host joint exhibitions with Iran. He cited the success of the "Glory of Ancient Iran" exhibition — which featured 216 artifacts spanning the Sassanid to Qajar periods and attracted over 50 million visitors — as a milestone in Iran's cultural diplomacy efforts.

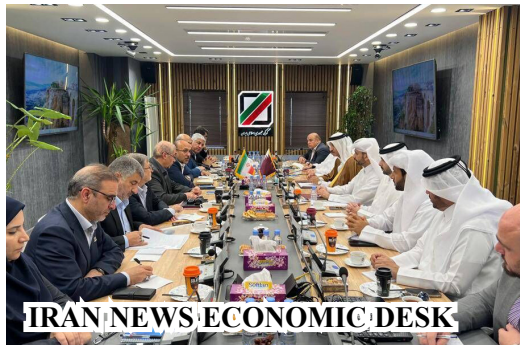
He also referred to a recent exhibition in Guangzhou, China, where 151 artifacts from the National Museum of Tehran and the University of Tehran are on display with a six-month permit. Talks are underway for its extension.

Efforts to combat the smuggling of antiquities were also discussed. Darabi reported active investigations, legal complaints, and arrest warrants issued for several traffickers. Three of seven ongoing repatriation cases are in active status, though high legal costs pose challenges. Discussions with the Presidential Office's Legal Affairs Department are planned to address the issue at the national level.

Finally, Darabi announced a 200-billion-rial budget allocation for the restoration of major palace-museums, including Sahebqaraniyeh, Golestan, and Sa'dabad. The new roadmap mandates cross-border collaboration for provinces bordering neighboring countries in the fields of cultural heritage, tourism, and handicrafts.

The event concluded with the unveiling of the official poster for International Museum Day and National Cultural Heritage Week.

## Iran and Qatar Customs to Expand Cooperation



TEHRAN - The Director General of Qatar's General Customs Authority met in Tehran with the Head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) and other senior Iranian customs officials to discuss expanding bilateral cooperation and sharing expertise in facilitating and enhancing trade.

According to IRNA, the meeting focused on exploring strategies for boosting customs cooperation between the two countries.

Faroud Asgari, Iran's Deputy Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance and Head of IRICA, emphasized the importance of friendly relations between the neighboring nations and described the visit of Ahmed bin Abdullah Al-Jamal and his accompanying delegation as highly significant.

At the start of the meeting, Asgari presented an overview of the operational procedures at Iranian customs to the Qatari delegation, noting that all formalities in Iran's customs are now conducted through electronic systems.

Al-Jamal, Director General of Qatar's General Customs Authority, praised Iran's digital customs infrastructure and expressed Qatar's strong interest in expanding relations with Iran. He highlighted that higher-level political and diplomatic ties present an excellent opportunity to deepen customs collaboration.

The Qatari official also showed particular interest in Iran's risk management procedures in customs, which were subsequently detailed by his Iranian counterpart.

During the meeting, Asgari urged the Qatari side to expedite the clearance of Iranian shipments—especially perishable goods—at the port of Ruwais. He also reaffirmed IRICA's readiness to cooperate in resolving any logistical or procedural challenges.

## Tajikistan, Qazvin Chamber of Commerce Sign Economic Agreement



TEHRAN - In a significant move to bolster bilateral economic relations, a comprehensive economic cooperation agreement was signed between the Qazvin Chamber of Commerce and representatives from the Republic of Tajikistan during a meeting held in Tehran.

The session brought together top economic players and officials from Qazvin Province alongside Tajikistan's Ambassador to Iran, Mr. Zahidi Nizomiddin Shamsiddinzoda. Presided over by Qazvin Governor Mohammad Nozari, the event included the participation of Mehdi Abdeyan, President of Qazvin Chamber of Commerce, provincial officials, and key figures from Iran-Tajikistan economic and cultural committees.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Abdeyan highlighted the industrial strengths of Qazvin Province, which hosts over 3,700 active industrial units, including a leading role in the production of strategic goods such as detergents (producing 100% of raw materials and 60% of national detergent products), glass, ceramics, and high-value agricultural products like grapes, raisins, olives, and pistachios. He emphasized the potential for exporting engineering services and construction materials, as well as the existence of 274 active mines, notably in silica.

Abdeyan also proposed holding the first Iranian Export Capabilities Exhibition in Tajikistan, spearheaded by Qazvin, with plans to dispatch trade delegations in the coming months.

Ambassador Shamsiddinzoda expressed optimism about deepening economic ties, noting that Tajikistan shares both language and culture with Iran. "There are few countries in the world with such shared identity," he said.

Tajikistan's economy, growing at 8% annually with moderate inflation, has seen trade with Iran rise from \$57 million to nearly \$400 million over the past five years. The ambassador projected this could climb to \$1 billion in the near future, supported by high-level commitments from the presidents of both nations.

He welcomed the idea of Iranian detergent manufacturing facilities in Tajikistan, either through joint ventures or fully Iranian ownership, offering strong investment incentives. According to Shamsiddinzoda, company registration in Tajikistan takes just three days, and a "single window" system exists to streamline industry and trade operations.



## Japan's Ishiba Open to More Stimulus But Rules Out Sales Tax Cut

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba said the government was ready to take further steps to cushion the economic blow from higher U.S. tariffs, but signalled caution on cutting the country's consumption tax rate. Opposition and some ruling party lawmakers have called on the government to cut Japan's consumption tax rate, set at 10% except for food items that are charged 8%, to help households cope with the rising cost of living. Speaking in parliament, Ishiba said the government "won't hesitate to take additional measures" to ease the pain on the economy from higher U.S. tariffs. But he said any steps must be targeted to households hardest hit rather than those covering the broad population, suggesting that a cut to Japan's consumption tax rate was unlikely.



## Pope Leo XIV Appeals for No More War in First Sunday Message



VATICAN CITY (Dispatches) - Pope Leo XIV appealed to the world's major powers for "no more war" in his first Sunday message to crowds in St. Peter's Square since his election as pontiff.

The new pope, elected on May 8, called for an "authentic and lasting peace" in Ukraine, a ceasefire in Gaza, and the release of all Israeli hostages held by militant group Hamas.

Speaking in fluent Italian, Leo also welcomed the recent fragile ceasefire between India and Pakistan, negotiated overnight, and said he was praying to God to grant the world the "miracle of peace."

"No more war!" the pope said, repeating a frequent call of the late Pope Francis and noting the recent 80th anniversary of the end of World War Two, in which some 60 million people were killed.

Leo said today's world was living through "the dramatic scenario of a Third World War being fought piecemeal," again repeating a phrase coined by Francis.

Tens of thousands of people in St. Peter's Square and on the Via della Conciliazione leading to the Vatican broke into applause at the call for peace on what was a joyous occasion despite Leo's solemn message.

The new pope said he carries in his heart the "suffering of the beloved people of Ukraine."

Hours after Russian President Vladimir Putin proposed direct talks with Ukraine aimed at ending the bloody three-year war, Leo appealed for negotiations to reach an "authentic, just and lasting peace".

## 23 Killed in Multiple Attacks by Gunmen in Central Nigeria



BENUE (Dispatches) - Gunmen killed 23 people in four separate attacks in central Nigeria's Benue state, a Red Cross official said Sunday, the latest flare-up of unrest in the region.

The attacks happened in four villages.

Clashes between nomadic cattle herders and farmers over land use are common in central Nigeria.

"Reports from the field have confirmed the killings of at least 23 people from different attacks," Red Cross secretary in Benue state Anthony Abah told AFP.

Eight people were killed in Ukum, nine in nearby Logo, three each in Guma and Kwande, he said, citing data from the organisation's field disaster officers. Several others were wounded, he added.

A police spokeswoman said she was unaware of the attacks.

Cephas Kangeh, a retired general manager with a state electricity company who recently relocated to his home village near one of the affected areas told AFP he had heard of three killings, including a couple ambushed while riding a motorcycle which "was taken away by the herdsmen".

# Zelenskiy Tells Putin to Come to Turkey If He Wants Talks

KYIV (Dispatches) - Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said he was ready to meet Vladimir Putin in Turkey on Thursday after U.S. President Donald Trump told him publicly to immediately accept the Kremlin leader's proposal of direct talks.

Zelenskiy's suggestion of a meeting with Putin capped a dramatic 48 hours in which European leaders joined Zelenskiy in demanding a 30-day ceasefire from Monday, only for Putin to make a counter-proposal to instead hold the first direct Ukraine-Russia talks since the early months of the 2022 invasion.

It was far from clear, however, that Putin meant he would attend in person. Putin and Zelenskiy have not met since December 2019 and make no secret of their contempt for each other.

"I will be waiting for Putin in Türkiye on Thursday. Personally," Zelenskiy wrote on X. "I hope that this time the Russians will not look for excuses."

On Telegram, his chief of staff, Andriy Yermak, added: "What about Putin? Is he afraid? We'll see."

The Ukrainian leader had responded guardedly earlier on Sunday after the Russian president, in a night-time televised statement that coincided with prime time in the U.S., proposed direct talks in Istanbul next Thursday, May 15.

Putin's suggestion came hours after major European powers demanded on Saturday in Kyiv that he agree to an unconditional 30-day ceasefire or face "massive" new sanctions, a position that Trump's Ukraine envoy Keith Kellogg endorsed.

Zelenskiy too had said Ukraine was ready for talks, if Moscow agreed to the 30-day ceasefire.

Yet Trump, who has the power to continue or sever Washington's crucial supply of arms to Ukraine, took a different line.

"President Putin of Russia doesn't want to have a Cease Fire Agreement with Ukraine, but rather wants to meet on Thursday, in Turkey, to negotiate a possible end to the BLOODBATH. Ukraine should agree to this, IMMEDIATELY," Trump wrote on Truth Social.

"At least they will be able to determine whether or not a deal is possible, and if it is not, European leaders, and the



Trump, who says he wants to be remembered as a peacemaker and has repeatedly promised to end the war, earlier responded to Putin's address by saying that this could be "A potentially great day for Russia and Ukraine!"

Though Russia did not commit to it, Zelenskiy said Ukraine's ceasefire plan for Monday still stood.

"We await a full and lasting ceasefire, starting from tomorrow, to provide the necessary basis for diplomacy," he wrote on X.

Speaking in his nightly address, Zelenskiy said he was still waiting for a response from the Russian side - and that Ukrainian forces would respond in kind if Russian troops did not observe a truce.

# Fragile Ceasefire Between India and Pakistan Holds Despite Overnight Clashes

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - A fragile ceasefire was holding between India and Pakistan on Sunday after hours of overnight fighting between the nuclear-armed neighbours.

The arch rivals were involved in intense firing for four days, the worst in nearly three decades, with missiles and drones being fired at each other's military installations and dozens of people killed.

A ceasefire agreement was reached after diplomacy and pressure from the United States, but within hours, artillery fire was witnessed in Indian Kashmir, the centre of much of the fighting.

Blasts from air-defence systems boomed in cities near the border under blackout, similar to the previous two evenings, according to authorities, residents and Reuters witnesses.

Late on Saturday, India said Pakistan had violated the understanding arrived to stop firing and that the Indian armed forces had been instructed to "deal strongly" with any repetition.

In response, Pakistan said it was committed to the ceasefire and blamed India for the violations.

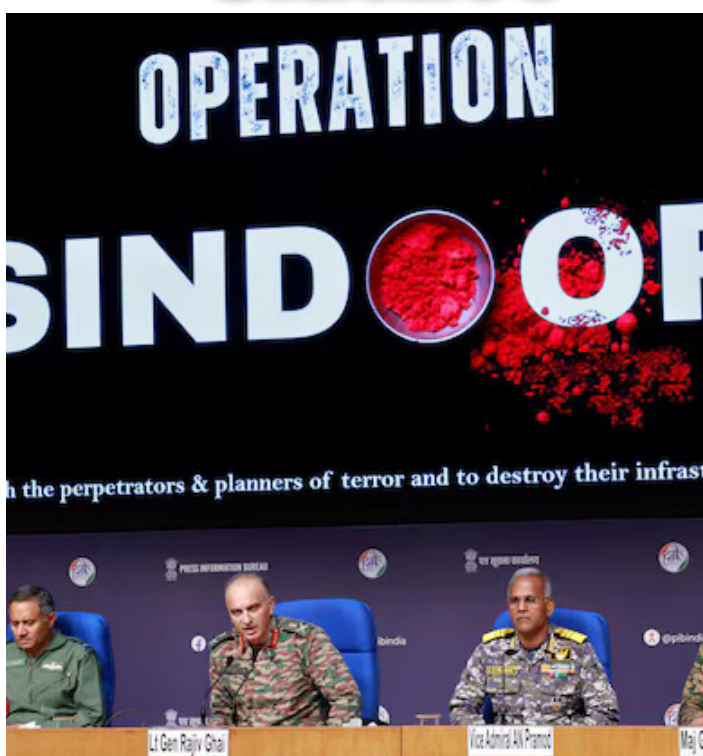
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By dawn, the fighting and explosions reported overnight had died down on both sides of the border, according to Reuters witnesses.

Power was restored in most areas along India's border towns after a blackout the previous night.

In the border city of Amritsar, home to the Golden Temple revered by Sikhs, a siren sounded in the morning to resume normal activities brought a sense of relief and people were seen out on the roads.

The fighting started on Wednesday, two weeks after 26 men were killed



in an attack targeting Hindus in Pahalgam in Indian Kashmir.

"Ever since the day terrorists attacked people in Pahalgam we have been shutting our shops very early and there was an uncertainty. I am happy that at least there will be no bloodshed on both sides," Satvir Singh Alhuwalia, 48, a shopkeeper in Amritsar told Reuters.

Officials in Pakistan said there was some firing in Bhimber in Pakistani Kashmir overnight but nowhere else, and there were no casualties.

The two countries, born out of British colonial rule in 1947, have gone to war three times - twice over the region of Kashmir.

Hindu-majority India and Muslim Pakistan both rule part of Kashmir but claim it in full.

India blames Pakistan for an insurgency in its part of Kashmir that began in 1989 and has killed tens of thousands. It also blames Pakistani Islamist militant groups for attacks elsewhere in India.

Pakistan says it provides only moral, political and diplomatic support to Kashmiri separatists.

The combined death toll in the recent skirmishes has reached nearly 70, officials have said.

"More than me, my family is happy because my children and wife have been calling me every hour to check on me. Thank God the ceasefire happened," Guruman Singh, a security guard in Amritsar told Reuters.

Trump praised leaders of both countries for agreeing to halt the aggression.

"While not even discussed, I am going to increase trade, substantially, with both of these great nations. Additionally, I will work with you both to see if... a solution can be arrived at concerning Kashmir," Trump said in a post on Truth Social.

# Hamas, U.S. Announce Deal to Release Israeli-American Hostage Held in Gaza

GAZA (Dispatches) - Hamas said it would release a U.S.-Israeli hostage held in Gaza as the group revealed it was engaged in direct talks with the United States towards a ceasefire in the war-battered territory.

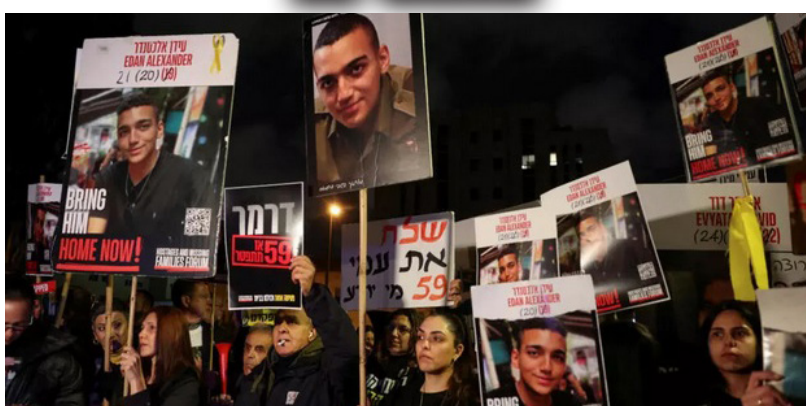
"Israeli soldier Edan Alexander, a dual U.S. national, will be released as part of efforts towards a ceasefire" and the reopening of aid crossings, the Palestinian militant group said in a statement.

The family of 21-year-old Alexander said they had been informed that he might be released "in the coming days".

U.S. President Donald Trump hailed the "monumental news" in a post on social media, describing it as a "good faith gesture".

"Hopefully this is the first of those final steps necessary to end this brutal conflict," he added.

In a joint statement Egypt and Qatar, who along with the U.S. have mediated talks between Hamas and Israel, also welcomed the development as a "a gesture of goodwill and an encouraging step toward a return to the negotiating table".



Earlier, two Hamas officials told AFP that talks were ongoing in the Qatari capital of Doha with the United States and reported "progress" had been made.

Israeli strikes meanwhile continued, with Gaza's civil defence agency reporting that at least 12 people were killed on Sunday including four young children.

One Hamas official, speaking of the talks with the United States, said there was "progress made... notably on the entry of aid to the Gaza Strip" and the potential exchange of hostages for Palestinian prisoners in Israeli custody.

A second official also reported progress "on the ceasefire in the Gaza Strip".

Israel again vowed to keep fighting despite the talks.

The office of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that any future "negotiations will take place under fire with a commitment to achieving all the objectives of the war".

Israel ended the last ceasefire, which lasted two months, on March 18, launching a major offensive in Gaza and ramping up its bombardment of the territory.





LONDON (Dispatches) - Newcastle United beat Chelsea and Nottingham Forest dropped points again as a gripping battle for a top-five finish in the Premier League took more twists and turns on Sunday.

Champions Liverpool were given a guard of honour by second-placed Arsenal before the sides played out a 2-2 draw at Anfield, but the real intrigue was to be found elsewhere.

Newcastle took full advantage of Manchester City's failure to beat bottom club Southampton on Saturday as they enjoyed a 2-0 win over Chelsea to move into third place with 66 points.

With two games left Eddie Howe's side are now two points behind Arsenal and three points above sixth-placed Aston Villa. Newcastle face Arsenal away next Sunday.

The top five in the Premier League are all guaranteed to qualify for next season's Champions League.

Defeat for Chelsea, who played more than half the match with 10 men after Nicolas Jackson was sent off, left them in fifth place with 63 points, ahead of Villa only on goal difference.

Forest conceded late to draw 2-2 at home to already-relegated Leicester City and while that point guaranteed them European football next season, their hopes of playing in the Champions League are faltering. They have 62 points.

Newcastle have already ended a 70-year wait for a domestic trophy this season by winning the League Cup and are closing in on a return to the Champions League after a priceless victory against Chelsea at St James' Park.

Sandro Tonali's goal after two minutes put Newcastle ahead and a late Bruno Guimaraes effort wrapped up the victory.

While Newcastle were good value for their win, it was Jackson's moment of madness that robbed Chelsea of their best goal-scoring option in a game the UEFA Conference League finalists could not afford to lose.

Jackson had his initial yellow card upgraded to a red in the 35th minute after a long VAR review, with the replay showing that the striker had looked in the direction of Newcastle's Dan Burn before leading with his elbow towards the defender's face.

"I think sometimes it's hard when they go down to 10 men because you should feel like you dominate

but there's always that little bit of you that doesn't want to let them back into it," Burn said. "The crowd were a bit nervous, I think we felt a bit nervous as well."

Nottingham Forest have now won only one of their last six in the league and were left crestfallen on Sunday as Facundo Buonanotte scored a late equaliser for Leicester.

Conor Coady had given Leicester the lead but goals by midfielder Morgan Gibbs-White and forward Chris Wood appeared to have secured a vital victory for the hosts.

After the final whistle, Forest's owner Evangelos Marinakis came on the pitch and remonstrated with manager Nuno Espirito Santo despite Forest securing a return to Europe after a 30-year absence.

Espirito Santo said the emotional outburst had been because Marinakis could not understand why Taiwo Awoniyi had not been substituted despite being clearly injured.

Arsenal could have secured Champions League qualification with victory at Liverpool but were off the pace in the first half and trailed to goals by Cody Gakpo and Luis Diaz.

"We reacted, great, but the standards in the first 20 minutes was unacceptable," Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta said.

His team improved in the second half and Gabriel Martinelli headed home just after the restart before Mikel Merino headed in a rebound after Martin Odegaard's shot hit the woodwork. Merino was later sent off for a lunging tackle on Dominik Szoboszlai.

Tottenham Hotspur and Manchester United will contest the Europa League final on May 21 when a Champions League spot will also be at stake but their lamentable Premier League seasons plumbed new depths of mediocrity on Sunday.

Tottenham's 2-0 home defeat by Crystal Palace, for whom Eberechi Eze scored twice, was their 20th league reverse this season and left them 17th in the table. It was Palace's first win at Tottenham for 28 years and means they have 49 points, equalling their best Premier League haul with two games left.

Manchester United are 16th after a 2-0 home defeat by West Ham United -- their 17th league loss this season. Goals by Tomas Soucek and Jarrod Bowen earned West Ham a first win in 18 years at Old Trafford.

## Alcaraz Defeats Laslo Djere to Reach Rome Round 4

ROME (Dispatches) - Carlos Alcaraz shook off some early cobwebs to break new ground at the Internazionali BNL d'Italia in Rome.

The No. 3 in the PIF ATP Rankings pulled through to a 7-6(2), 6-2 triumph against Laslo Djere to reach the fourth round at the Italian ATP Masters 1000 for the first time. In his second Lexus ATP Head2Head clash with Djere in the space of four weeks, Alcaraz was slow to get going on Campo Centrale, but he dug deep before accelerating past an opponent who struggled with a right arm injury for much of the match.

"It was a really tough beginning, honestly, to find a good rhythm, to find the good path in the match," said Alcaraz. "He played really solid in the first set. I didn't find the way to [stop him], that's how tough it was at the beginning. He was serving for the first set and I just thought that I had to stay there, mentally strong, and wait for my chances... I was just happy to get the first set.

"In the second set I think I was playing better. He made a few



mistakes that I tried to make the most of, and I am really happy."

Alcaraz, who also defeated Djere in April en route to the final in Barcelona, converted four of nine break points he earned in an ultimately comfortable one-hour, 44-minute victory. With his Tour-leading 26th win of the season, the 22-year-old booked a

fourth-round meeting with 23rd seed Karen Khachanov, who earlier sunk home favourite Francesco Passaro 6-3, 6-0. Alcaraz will hope to build on his solid-yet-unspectacular start in Rome after he missed Madrid due to an adductor injury.

"I was trying to come back from the injury as good as I can and then I got a cold," said Alcaraz, who wore a nasal strip against Djere, as he had in his opening-round win against Dusan Lajovic. "But once you are on the court you try not to think about those things and just keep going. Sometimes it is difficult, but it's great having matches in straight sets to save energy for the next matches."

A curious first set in Sunday's third-round encounter featured Djere unleashing a barrage of forehand winners to go 3-1 up early, before the Serbian appeared to start complaining to his coach Mario Tudor of a problem with his lower right arm. Alcaraz continued to struggle for consistency in his groundstrokes but nonetheless twice reclaimed a break, including when Djere served for the set at 6-5, to force a tie-break.

## Barca Edge Real Madrid in Thriller to Move to Brink of Liga Title



BARCELONA (Dispatches) - Barcelona mounted a spectacular comeback to beat Real Madrid 4-3 in La Liga on Sunday and move to the brink of the title after overcoming a hat-trick from Kylian Mbappe.

The France striker threatened to haul Madrid back into the title race but Raphinha's double and goals from Lamine Yamal and Eric Garcia gave Barcelona a seven-point lead on the reigning champions with three matches remaining.

Hansi Flick's side were knocked out of the Champions League in the semi-finals by Inter Milan on Tuesday and risked their season collapsing if they were beaten by Madrid, but they resisted after Mbappe's early brace.

Barcelona battled back to claim a fourth Clasico victory from four meetings this season, showing their dominance over Carlo Ancelotti's side.

"We've opened up an important gap, it was key to win this game after the Champions League (defeat), the fans have forgotten it and so have we, let's enjoy this," Yamal told Movistar.

"It was important to win today to bring the league title closer and it went very well, we're very happy."

Real Madrid are set to finish the season without a major trophy.

"We have to defend better, that is quite evident from today's game, we defended badly and that's that," said Ancelotti.

"Mbappe did well... in an attacking sense the team had clear ideas, but we could have defended better."

Madrid had made the perfect start to what is expected to be the Italian coach's final Clasico at the helm.

Mbappe earned a penalty when he was scythed down by Barcelona goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny, although the Catalans complained in vain the forward was offside in the build-up.

The striker beat Szczesny, who dived the right way and got his fingers to it, but could not keep it out.

## Napoli Give Inter Scudetto Hope After Being Held by Genoa



NAPLES (Dispatches) - Napoli's bid for a second Serie A title in three seasons was hit by 2-2 home draw with Genoa which allowed Inter Milan to move to within a point of the league leaders thanks to their dramatic 2-0 win at Torino.

Antonio Conte's team's destiny is still in their hands with two matches remaining in the season, and two wins against Parma and Cagliari will secure the Scudetto.

But Inter will have hope of retaining their league crown after Johan Vasquez's thumping header gave Genoa a late draw at a packed Stadio Diego Armando Maradona.

"They had two shots on target and scored two goals. These things happen," said a visibly irritated Conte to DAZN.

"It's annoying because we should have won given what we created and how we played. It's disappointing to not win like this at the start of the season, forget about it with three matches remaining.

"But I can't complain about the performance, we had 11 shots on target, all of the ball... We have to go and win the other two matches, that's all there is to do it."

Giacomo Raspadori thought he had won the game and all but secured the title for Napoli in the 64th minute after a wonderful piece of skill to control Scott McTominay's pass.

McTominay also set up Romelu Lukaku's 15th-minute opener which was cancelled out in the 32nd minute when Napoli goalkeeper Alex Meret inadvertently diverted Honest Ahanor's header into his own goal.

And Vasquez piled the pressure on Napoli who also lost Stanislav Lobotka early on after Conte selected the key midfielder even though he hadn't recovered from an ankle injury.

## Thunder Rally in 4th, Knot Series With Nuggets at 2-2

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 25 points as the visiting Oklahoma City Thunder rallied from eight down in the fourth quarter to beat the Denver Nuggets 92-87 in Game 4 to even the Western Conference semifinal series.

Oklahoma City regained home-court advantage in the best-of-seven series and will host Game 5 on Tuesday night.

Despite 27 points and 13 rebounds from Nikola Jokic, Denver missed an opportunity to put a stranglehold on the series. Christian Braun and Jamal Murray had 17 points each and Aaron Gordon finished with 15 points and 16 rebounds for the Nuggets.

"This isn't a funeral," Murray said. "It's 2-2. It's a three-game series."

Aaron Wiggins and Cason Wallace scored 11 each, Alex Caruso and Jaylen Williams scored 10 apiece, Isaiah Hartenstein had 14 rebounds and Chet Holmgren grabbed 13 boards for the Thunder.

"Kind of lost our way defensively, especially in the third, but did a great job of course-correcting to start the fourth," said Thunder coach Mark Daigneault. "That group to start the fourth was huge to give us



a lead, and then the defense down the stretch was really, really good."

Oklahoma City trailed 71-63 early in the fourth, but hit a trio of 3-pointers during a 14-3 run that gave them a 77-73 lead. Denver missed eight straight shots before Murray hit a 19-foot fadeaway jumper with 6:17 left.

Down 84-80, Jokic missed a pair of free throws and Williams and Gilgeous-Alexander made layups to stretch the advantage to 88-81. Jokic cut it to five with 1:25 left and the Nuggets had a chance to make it a one-possession game, but Michael Porter Jr. missed an 11-footer.

Murray airballed a 3-pointer with 23 seconds left and the Thunder closed it out.

"Give their team credit," said Nuggets interim coach David Adelman. "In a disgusting basketball game, they did enough to win."

Sunday's game tipped off approximately 38 hours after Denver's Game 3 overtime win. The collective fatigue showed early when the teams combined to shoot 18.2 percent in the first quarter.