

The National Virtual Space Center Announced Plans to Take Legal Action Against Google for Distorting the Name of the Persian Gulf, as the Deputy Head of the Center Denounced Google's Distortion of the Historical Name of the Persian Gulf

IRAN NEWS

Majlis Lawmakers in a Statement Announced That Iran Will Never Back Down From Its Right to Use Nuclear Technology as a Member of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)

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Iran, U.S. Hold 5th Round of Talks as Tehran Asserts Nuclear Goalpost Unchanged



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iran and the United States have started a fifth round of negotiations over Tehran's nuclear program in the Italian capital of Rome, with uranium enrichment emerging as the key issue.

Just like the previous rounds, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi and U.S. President Donald Trump's regional envoy Steve Witkoff are leading the negotiating delegations in the talks which began on Friday.

The talks are mediated by Omani Foreign Minister Badr Albusaidi.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Majid Takht-Ravanchi, Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Kazem Gharibabadi, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei, and a number of other diplomats and experts were among the members of the delegation accompanying Araqchi.

Since April, Tehran and Washington have held four rounds of indirect negotiations in Rome and Muscat over Iran's nuclear program amid repeated shifts in US stances, which have prompted Iranian officials to criticize the "contradictory" statements made by their Americans counterparts.

Before departure, Araqchi reiterated Iran's resolve to continue its uranium enrichment program and stressed that there would be no deal if the US side stuck with an excessive demand to slash Iran's legitimate right to enrichment to zero.

He once again highlighted uranium enrichment as the country's red line in the upcoming nuclear talks with the United States.

Iran Blasts Outrageous U.S. Sanctions Ahead of New Talks



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran says new U.S. sanctions announced ahead of the fifth round of indirect talks between the two sides cast doubt on Washington's seriousness to follow the path of diplomacy.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei made the remarks in an X post on Friday, two days after the US State Department said people or entities that provide Iran with certain construction-related materials will face sanctions.

He condemned the coercive U.S. measures as "outrageous," "unlawful and inhuman," saying the bans are "no less than crimes against humanity" as they deprive Iranians of their basic human rights.

"The US's consecutive rounds of sanctions only reinforce our people's deeply held belief that the American decision makers are set to make every malign effort to hinder Iran's development & progress," he added.

"These sanctions, announced on the eve of the fifth round of Iran-US indirect talks, further put to question the American willingness & seriousness for diplomacy."

Baghaei also expressed the Iranian nation's resolve to "remain steadfast and strong" in the face of US animosity and hostile measures.

The remarks came hours before the fifth round of Iran-U.S. indirect negotiations, which is expected to take place in the Italian capital of Rome.

In an X post early on Friday, Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi emphasized that Washington's insistence on zero uranium enrichment will yield no deal.

However, he noted, Iran and the U.S. can reach a deal if zero nuclear weapons is discussed in the talks.

Iran Armed Forces Warns U.S. Mischief to Unleash Another Vietnam, Afghanistan

TEHRAN - Iran's Armed Forces say the United States is perpetrating miscalculations again by inciting the regional countries against the Islamic Republic, but warn that the country is well-guarded against any American missteps.

In a statement, the General Staff of the Islamic Republic's Armed Forces condemned the US's renewed provocations in the region as manifested by President Donald Trump's making unsubstantiated and inflammatory remarks about Tehran, and clinching multi-trillion-dollar arms deals with the host countries.

The statement referred to Trump as a "lying president," pointing, among other things, to his referring to the Islamic Republic as "the most destructive force" in the West Asia region, during a visit to Saudi Arabia.

Trump said Iran had to completely abandon its nuclear energy program - prospect utterly ruled out by Iranian officials on every occasion. He also said upon continuing to pursue its nuclear activities, the Islamic Republic would face, what he described as, consequences.

The Armed Forces noted that the American president's actions in the region were "designed to plunder billions of dollars from brotherly nations under the guise of Iranophobia."

Trump's tour saw him strike over \$2 trillion in military and economic deals with Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates.

"America is once again committing miscalculation," the statement said, warning that "any mischief" would lead to consequences similar to Washington's disastrous and overwhelmingly deadly military entanglements in Vietnam and Afghanistan.

The Armed Forces, meanwhile, reaffirmed Iran's commitment to regional peace, asserting that the Islamic Republic's military doctrine was defensive and rooted in preserving sovereignty and



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stability.

However, they also made clear that any threat to the country's sovereignty would be met with a "decisive and powerful" response.

The Armed Forces, meanwhile, advised Trump to rather reflect on Iran's enduring legacy, from the country's 1979 Islamic Revolution and its successful and steadfast defense of itself in the face of a heavily-Western-backed Iraqi military during the 1980s to the Islamic Republic's retaliatory anti-Israeli operations of the last year, True Promise I and II.

Paying attention to such historical context, the forces said, would make Washington ascertain the nation's resilience, the statement noted.

Concluding their message, the forces credited the country's strength to the "wise leadership" of

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, and the "vigilance and solidarity" of the Iranian people.

They underscored that Iran would advance with dignity and resolve, confronting external plots with "clarity, readiness, and unshakable power."

The statement came on the occasions of the Iranian Armed Forces liberation of the southern city of Khorramshahr during the 1980-88 war that had been imposed on the nation by Iraq under the Arab country's former dictator Saddam Hussein.

Calling the liberation a "divine victory," the Armed Forces praised the heroism of their various components, namely the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), the Army, and the Basij volunteer force, during the liberation efforts.

The statement emphasized the forces' coordination and resistance against foreign aggression during the fightback, noting that the event has become "a symbol of Iran's national steadfastness in the face of global arrogance."

Iran Says Removal of Syria Sanctions Long Overdue But Positive Step



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TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iran has described the decision by the United States, the European Union, and the United Kingdom to lift and suspend unilateral sanctions on Syria as a "long overdue" but "positive" step.

Iran's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations Amir Saïd Iravani made the remark before the UN Security Council session on "The situation in the Middle East: (Syria)" in New York.

He hailed the growing international acknowledgment that humanitarian and reconstruction aid in Syria must not be politicized, saying the suffering of the war-ravaged country's people should not be used for political purposes.

"We call for the full and unconditional lifting of all unilateral sanctions. These illegal measures violate the UN Charter and international law," he added.

He emphasized that any easing of sanctions must lead to real and immediate changes in the lives of more than 16 million Syrians who are currently in need of urgent help.

"It must also support the return of refugees and help rebuild Syria's economy and infrastructure, paving the way for lasting peace and stability," Iravani said.

The EU has also agreed to lift economic sanctions on Syria in an effort to help the war-torn country recover.

The Iranian envoy reiterated Syria's right and responsibility to maintain peace and security throughout its territory, noting that the country suffers "fragile" security given the ongoing foreign military presence and illegal occupation, especially in the northeast and south.

"The continued occupation of the Syrian Golan by Israel clearly violates international law and Security Council resolution 497 (1981)," he added.

He stressed the importance of strongly condemning Israel's repeated attacks, including the May 2 airstrike near the presidential palace.

Israeli warplanes conducted airstrikes adjacent to the presidential palace in the Syrian capital of Damascus on May 2, amid the silence of the ruling Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham-led (HTS) administration.

Since Bashar Assad's government collapsed in December, Syria has been hit by hundreds of Israeli airstrikes, mainly targeting military infrastructure that belonged to the former Syrian army.

"These acts threaten the region's peace and are made possible by US support," he said.

The diplomat once again affirmed Iran's firm stance on the need for respecting Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity and withdrawing all illegal foreign forces "immediately and

unconditionally."

"It is evident that only the Israeli occupying regime stands to benefit from the fragmentation and instability in Syria," Iravani added.

"Its persistent acts of aggression, repeated violations of international law, and continued expansion of occupation are clearly aimed at perpetuating a state of permanent instability in the country."

Iravani emphasized the need to fight all forms of terrorism in Syria, especially the threat posed by "foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs)."

He said Iran, as a close neighbor, is deeply concerned about reports that FTFs are being relocated from Syria to other conflict areas, as the move could increase instability in the region and pose serious risks to neighboring countries.

He urged the Security Council to remain alert and respond through strong and effective measures.

In his remarks, the Iranian ambassador noted that the announcement by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) militant group to disarm was a significant step

toward rejecting violence and enhancing regional stability.

He expressed hope that other affiliated armed and terrorist groups, including PJAK, will follow suit in a bid to contribute to lasting peace and security in the region.

In a significant development, the PKK announced in May that it is disbanding and formally renouncing its decades-long insurgency against Turkey, bringing an end to over 40 years of violent conflict.

The move, announced by a media outlet close to the group, will bring an end to one of the longest-running insurgencies in the region.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Iravani pointed to the suffering of the Syrian people from foreign occupation, terrorism, and economic pressure.

"We emphasize that Syria's future must be decided by Syrians alone, without outside interference or imposed solutions. Any political process must be led and owned by Syria, in line with Security Council resolution 2254," he said.

He threw Iran's full weight behind the UN Special Envoy Geir Pedersen and his efforts to promote an inclusive process that would respect Syria's sovereignty and proceed without foreign pressure.

"In this context, Iran supports the dialogue between the Syrian interim authorities and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) as an important step toward national integration," the diplomat added.

Iran encourages inclusive engagement and dialogue that ensures equal rights for all Syrians, he explained.

Iran Will Give Devastating Response to Any Foolish Act by Israel



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - A spokesman for the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) says Iran will give a devastating response to any foolish act by Israel, stressing that the Tel Aviv regime is incapable of grasping the power of the Iranian nation in supporting the Islamic Republic in times of war.

Brigadier General Ali Mohammad Naeini, the IRGC's spokesman and deputy head of the Public Relations Department, made the remarks on Thursday, in an apparent response to a CNN exclusive report on Tuesday that Israel is preparing for a potential military strike on Iran's nuclear facilities.

"They try to frighten us with the threat of war. Accusing an establishment of fearing war, an establishment that enjoys popular, military, and strong support, only stems from repeated miscalculations by an enemy that fails to grasp the power of the Iranian nation in supporting the Islamic Republic in times of war," he stressed.

The CNN report, citing multiple US officials familiar with the matter, said the US has obtained new intelligence suggesting that the occupying regime has been moving air munitions and conducting air exercises, signaling a heightened state of readiness.

"The enemy is delusional and ignorant in its assessments of the Islamic Republic's strengths, and fails to understand that if war breaks out, the power of the people will enter the scene, just as it did during the Iran-Iraq War. Enemies began the war based on similar illusions and were ultimately defeated," General Naeini emphasized.

The IRGC's spokesman also warned that if the Israeli regime commits any act of folly and aggression, "it will undoubtedly receive a devastating and decisive response within its small and vulnerable occupied territory."

General Naeini stressed that the past 46 years, since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, have conveyed a clear message that "overthrowing the Islamic Republic is impossible, and that unrests occurred during the past several years also carried the same message - that the Islamic Republic cannot be brought down."

Iran Urges UN to Condemn Israeli Plans for Unlawful Attack



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi has called on the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to urgently condemn leaked plans by "rogue" Israel to strike Iran's nuclear facilities.

Araqchi's remarks on Thursday came in response to a CNN exclusive report on Tuesday that Israel is preparing for a potential military strike on Iran's nuclear facilities.

The report, citing multiple US officials familiar with the matter, said the US has obtained new intelligence suggesting that the occupying regime has been moving air munitions and conducting air exercises, signaling a heightened state of readiness.

The Iranian foreign minister said in a post on his X account that Tel Aviv's threats against the Islamic Republic are not new, but the leaked plans are alarming.

"Threats from the rogue Israeli regime are nothing new. But the recent leak citing US officials as divulging Israeli plans for an unlawful attack on Iran and its nuclear facilities is alarming and warrants immediate and serious condemnation from the UN Security Council and the IAEA," Araqchi said.

He added that he has already written to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi, urging them to immediately condemn these threats by the Israeli regime.

"In a letter to UNSG Guterres and IAEA DG Grossi, I have called on the international community to take effective preventive measures against the continuation of Israeli threats, which if unchecked, will compel Iran to take special measures in defense of our nuclear facilities and materials," Araqchi warned.

The leaked plans come as the administration of US President Donald Trump seemingly pursues a diplomatic deal with Tehran. The two sides have already held four rounds of indirect negotiations on Iran's nuclear program mediated by Oman, with a fifth round scheduled in Rome on Friday.

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Iran Elected as Second Vice Chair of Asian Productivity Organization

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran has been elected as the Second Vice Chair of the Asian Productivity Organization (APO) during the 67th Governing Body Meeting (GBM) of the organization.

On the second day of the GBM, held in Indonesia, member states elected the new leadership for the years 2025 and 2026. India was chosen as the Chair of the APO and its Governing Body, with Indonesia elected as First Vice Chair, and the Islamic Republic of Iran as Second Vice Chair.

Mohammad Saleh Olia, President of Iran's National Productivity Organization and Iran's APO representative, assumed a prominent role in this high-level meeting as Second Vice Chair. This marks Iran's return to the top leadership level of the GBM after three years.

Iran Misses Out on \$1 Trillion Halal Market in Neighboring Countries



TEHRAN - Iran currently holds no significant share in the \$1 trillion halal market of neighboring countries, according to the Vice President of Iran's Chamber of Commerce.

Speaking at the International Halal Standards Day conference on Wednesday, Payam Bagheri emphasized that despite being located at the heart of the Islamic world, Iran lacks a meaningful presence in the global halal industry and international trade.

"The global halal industry, with a projected financial turnover of \$8 trillion in the near future, encompasses protein-based products, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, hygiene products, tourism, and financial services," Bagheri noted.

Bagheri described the halal market as a high-value sector. He explained that due to specific laws and regulatory requirements, halal products and services are, on average, 30% more expensive than their non-halal counterparts.

He named Malaysia and Indonesia as pioneers in the field, adding that many other countries have also entered this market from an economic perspective.

"Iran is geographically and culturally positioned to become a key player in the global halal industry," Bagheri stated. However, he warned that the halal products market is highly competitive, with non-Muslim countries also entering the arena.

Highlighting a trade imbalance, he said: "In 2023, the trade balance of the 57 member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) showed a deficit of \$47 billion — and Iran had no share in this market."

He projected that the halal tourism market alone could exceed \$225 billion by 2028.

One of the main obstacles, Bagheri said, is the lack of centralized policy-making and coordination in Iran: "Exporters and economic players interested in entering the halal market often don't know which authority to approach. The leadership structure for this sector is unclear."

Diversifying Economies Is Essential for a Sustainable Future in Islamic Countries



TEHRAN - The acting Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance of Iran, Seyed Rahmatollah Akrami, emphasized the urgent need for Islamic countries to move away from single-product economies and invest in innovative sectors during the 50th Annual Meeting of the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) Group, held in Algeria.

In his address, Akrami stated, "It is an honor to gather at this significant event to discuss the economic future and sustainable development paths for Islamic nations."

He noted that the central theme of the meeting—economic diversification and enriching lives—goes beyond economics, representing a strategic imperative for achieving social welfare and long-term sustainability across the Islamic world.

Referring to recent global political crises, especially the ongoing humanitarian tragedy in Gaza, Akrami stressed, "Our religious teachings obligate us to stand with the oppressed. Silence in the face of such atrocities is incompatible with human values and Islamic principles. Defending the rights of the vulnerable and taking a firm stance against injustice is both a human and religious duty aligned with international human rights."

Akrami pointed out that many Islamic economies have long depended heavily on natural resources and traditional industries, which has left them vulnerable to external shocks. "To build resilient and sustainable economies, we must break free from single-product models and prioritize investments in fields such as artificial intelligence, technology development, smart agriculture, renewable energy, tourism, and creative and digital industries," he said.

He also highlighted Iran's ongoing efforts to transition from an oil-based economy to a diversified one. "Economic diversification not only drives growth but directly improves quality of life—creating jobs, increasing household income, enhancing access to health and education services, and developing social infrastructure," Akrami noted.

Trade With the World Impossible Without Financial and Banking Relations

TEHRAN - The Governor of the Central Bank of Iran stressed the critical role of financial exchanges in achieving economic development and announced new initiatives aimed at expanding monetary ties with Eastern countries, selling foreign currency bonds, and reforming the nation's credit system.

Speaking at the Regional Economic Diplomacy Summit in Shiraz on Thursday, attended by the Foreign Minister and consuls from Gulf countries, Mohammad Reza Farzin emphasized the necessity of financial relations for international trade.

"If we want to trade with the world, we are obliged to have monetary and banking relations," Farzin stated. "No trade can happen without them. For example, last year, Iran's trade volume exceeded \$200 billion. Comparing this to our GDP, over 40% of our economy is trade-related — a ratio even higher than that of Japan."

He added that despite all the difficulties Iran faces in financial exchanges, it remains on the path of expanding its trade. "To develop our position as an open economy, given our historical and regional standing, we must expand monetary and banking relations," he said.

Farzin underscored that Iran is focusing on trade with global partners, especially its main trading allies. "To this end, we have removed the US dollar from our transactions. For instance, banking relations between Iran and Russia have already been established."

He continued, "We have implemented a model with Russia, and if we can replicate it with our other trade partners, we can introduce a new global trade framework. Even countries facing Western sanctions can benefit from this approach."

Referring to foreign currency bond sales as a modern tool for advancing the country's financial sector, Farzin noted, "We began selling foreign currency bonds at the exchange center last year. So far, \$460 million has been sold, and we plan to increase this to \$2 billion by the end of the year. We also aim to expand these sales to foreign stock exchanges."

Farzin reiterated that achieving economic development hinges on international trade, which in turn requires financial interactions. "The mechanisms we



designed during the sanctions have been highly effective," he said. "Through our tailored systems, we have created new ways of engagement. However, we still need to intensify efforts, especially in attracting foreign investment."

"To support this," he continued, "we introduced a policy last year to convert our 50 overseas branches into centers for attracting foreign resources. These branches are staffed with experienced personnel who have strong knowledge of the countries they operate in."

During the National Development Fund Conference, Farzin also highlighted a major issue in the country's economic planning. "I raised the matter of credit allocation, which has now become a pressing concern. We have not directed credit

properly, leading to unnecessary projects in certain regions. There are serious shortcomings in national land use planning and our industrial strategy."

He emphasized the need to develop an industrial strategy based on Iran's competitive advantages to properly allocate credit, funds, and resources. "The new Central Bank law views justice through the lens of equitable credit distribution — meaning banking resources and liquidity should be allocated in line with the advantages of each region across the country."

The summit, which started on Thursday and runs through Friday, is part of a series of provincial economic diplomacy events led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In addition to speeches by the Foreign Minister, provincial governors, and officials, the event features academic panels on the capacities and challenges of participating provinces.

According to the report, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs plans to host five such summits across the country to bolster regional economic diplomacy. Fars Province, given its significant potential and role as the liaison for Gulf countries, was selected as the host of the first summit.

The event is co-organized by the Fars Provincial Government in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce, Shiraz City Council, and the Municipality of Shiraz.

Serious Commitment by Iran and Afghanistan to Joint Investment in the Mining Sector

TEHRAN - The head of Iran's Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) has announced that both Iran and Afghanistan are firmly committed to joint investment in the mining sector and are now working together on an actionable plan.

In a meeting with Afghan investment officials, Mohammad Aghajanolou revealed that two joint committees will be established to drive cooperation: the "Exploration, Laboratory, and Extraction Committee," to be overseen by Afghanistan's Geological Survey and Mineral Explorations Authority, and the "Investment, Plant Construction, and Joint Special Zones Committee," under IMIDRO's purview.

"With numerous collaboration opportunities in mining," Aghajanolou said, "we must prioritize projects whose groundwork is already in place and that can be realized more swiftly." He emphasized that on-site mineral processing is more cost-effective when infrastructure exists.

Given Afghanistan's current limitations in transport and energy infrastructure near its mines, Iran has proposed setting up a cross-border marketplace for gemstones and constructing lead and zinc processing plants within the two countries' free-trade zones. Aghajanolou noted that Iran's Dogharoon zone is already classified as a free-trade area and possesses the necessary basic facilities. "We can install gemstone-processing equipment there, train local personnel, and then convert Afghan gemstones into finished products for sale at this border marketplace," he explained.

Highlighting that Iran presently imports lead and zinc concentrates, Aghajanolou pointed out Afghanistan's rich deposits of these ores. "Leveraging Iran's existing infrastructure, our initial step should be to build processing plants at the border to utilize Afghan mine output," he proposed. He assured that IMIDRO would rigorously vet investors to ensure that only capable and genuine partners take on mining operations, and noted that Afghan workers would be



employed at these new plants.

Regarding iron ore, Aghajanolou added, "We can design similar collaborative models that serve the economic interests of both countries."

Khalil-ur-Rahman Zhwand, head of Afghanistan's Investment Facilitation Unit, described the recent two-day discussions with their Iranian counterparts as "productive and hopeful." Stressing the need to implement a memorandum of understanding signed two years ago, Zhwand said, "We are eager to leverage Iran's expertise to develop our mining sector."

He called for Iranian specialists to assist in equipping Afghan laboratories and praised Iran's public and private sector experience in exploration, extraction, and processing. "Afghan law guarantees the investments of foreign companies," Zhwand affirmed, adding that investors are free to repatriate their returns at any time. "Security is our government's responsibility, and we are prepared to provide additional guarantees if necessary."

Expressing a desire to establish joint marketplaces and processing facilities on both Afghan and Iranian soil, Zhwand concluded, "We look forward to creating shared economic hubs that benefit communities in both nations."

The meeting was attended by Jamsheed Mella-Rahman, IMIDRO board member; Omid Emami, Deputy for Mine and Mineral Industry Development Plans at IMIDRO; Mohammad-Reza Karimi, Acting Head of the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade's Mineral Industries Office; Abdolsadeh Neysi, Director General for East Asia and Oceania at Iran's Trade Promotion Organization; Hamidreza Karbalaei-Esmaili, Deputy for the Indian Subcontinent at the Trade Promotion Organization; Amirnojan Younesian, Economic and Investment Development Manager at IMIDRO; and Alireza Lotfi, IMIDRO's Mining Manager.

Iran, Japan Poised to Set New Standard for Cultural Cooperation in Asia



TEHRAN - Iran and Japan can become a pioneering model for cultural cooperation in Asia through their shared civilizational heritage and tourism potential, said officials during a high-level diplomatic meeting in Tehran.

Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Seyed Reza Salehi-Amiri, hosted Japan's Ambassador to Iran, Tsukada Tamaki, in a meeting aimed at expanding bilateral ties across tourism, education, sports, and traditional arts.

Salehi-Amiri opened the meeting by praising the Japanese people as "noble, committed, peace-loving, and rational." He emphasized that the Iranian public holds a deeply respectful and positive view of Japan, calling this mutual regard a valuable social asset that can strengthen cultural and civilizational exchanges.

Highlighting Japan's experience in blending tradition with modernity, Salehi-Amiri suggested that Tokyo's model could inspire localized development strategies across Asian countries, including Iran. He also pointed out that Iran and Japan rank 10th and 11th globally in terms of UNESCO World Heritage sites, a symbolic parallel that reflects their deep-rooted civilizations and creates a platform for East-West cultural exchange.

He proposed organizing joint exhibitions in Tehran and Tokyo to showcase each country's cultural heritage, allowing citizens of both nations to gain a richer understanding of each other through art and tradition.

Salehi-Amiri noted that Iran offers all 20 globally recognized types of tourism—from health and religious tourism to ecotourism and creative tourism. He argued that with targeted marketing, Iran could become a key destination for Japanese travelers.

He criticized certain Western media portrayals of Iran, stating they do not reflect the country's realities. "Japan, with its independent and thoughtful political outlook, will not fall prey to such biased narratives," he added. "Iran remains more stable and secure than many of its regional neighbors."

Iran and Oman to Cooperate on Protein Products



TEHRAN - The head of Iran's Veterinary Organization announced the expansion of cooperation between Iran and Oman in the export of protein products.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture Jihad, Alireza Rafeipour, Deputy Minister of Agriculture Jihad and Head of Iran's Veterinary Organization, met with Ahmed Saif Al-Amri, Deputy Head of Oman's Veterinary Authority. The two sides emphasized the importance of expanding scientific, technical, and commercial cooperation in the field of veterinary medicine.

Rafeipour stated that the purpose of this visit was to evaluate the sanitary conditions of egg production and packaging units in various provinces of Iran and to assess the possibility of granting import licenses for table eggs to Oman. Welcoming the Omani delegation, he described the development of veterinary and health cooperation as a valuable opportunity to enhance service quality and facilitate livestock trade between the two countries.

The Deputy Minister added that this meeting was a valuable opportunity to expand interactions and share technical experiences in the veterinary field.

Ahmed Saif Al-Amri, Deputy Head of Oman's Veterinary Authority, noted the limitations of livestock and animal product production in Oman and expressed his country's interest in importing live animals, animal products, veterinary medicines, and vaccines from Iran.

It is expected that the Omani delegation's visit to Iran's production and health centers will pave the way for increased exports of Iranian animal products and strengthen commercial and economic ties between the two countries.

Bangladesh’s Yunus Could Quit Over Lack of Reform Progress

DHAKA (Dispatches) - Bangladesh’s de-facto prime minister has threatened to step down if political parties cannot agree on reforms that citizens await with growing impatience, a top student leader has said, deepening uncertainty in the wake of deadly protests last year.

Nobel peace laureate Muhammad Yunus, 84, took over as interim head of the South Asian nation of 173 million last August after a student-led uprising forced then Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to flee to India.

Nahid Islam, the head of the newly-formed National Citizen Party (NCP), which wants national elections held only after the completion of reforms, said Yunus was finding it difficult to work without the backing of political parties.

“He was visibly upset,” Islam told reporters after meeting the leader on Thursday.



North Korea Investigates Warship Launch Accident



SEOUL (Dispatches) - North Korea has begun a full-scale investigation into the accident that occurred during the launch of a warship this week, state media KCNA reported.

Pyeongyang has said the incident on Wednesday was caused by a loss of balance while the vessel was being launched, and sections of the bottom of the warship were crushed.

An internal inspection found that there were no holes at the warship’s bottom, but the starboard hull was scratched and seawater flowed into the stern section through the rescue channel, the report said.

The extent of damage was “not serious,” the report said, adding the investigation group was ordered to find the cause of the accident and those responsible for it. The report did not mention any injuries or deaths as a result of the accident.

The isolated state’s leader Kim Jong Un, who watched Wednesday’s launch of the 5,000-tonne destroyer at the northeastern shipyard of Chongjin, berated it as a “criminal act” that could not be tolerated, according to state media.

The mishap likely occurred in front of a large crowd, increasing the public humiliation for Kim, military analysts said.

South Korea’s military said yesterday that the ship was lying on its side in the water.

“The stern is seen swung out into the harbor as a result of the wheeled units placed under the frame sliding into the water while the bow remained on the side slipway,” said the US-based Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), citing satellite imagery from yesterday.

India, Pakistan Troops Back to Uneasy Calm After Kashmir Clashes



NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - Sometimes the only outsiders that Indian troops posted along the contested frontier in Kashmir see are Pakistani soldiers eyeballing them across the remote valley high in the rugged Himalayan mountains.

Contact between them extends to what Indian soldiers posted to the fortified concrete bunkers call “hooting” — an occasional taunting shout or whistle echoing across the divide, which can be as little as 30 meters at its narrowest point.

That’s close enough to hurl a hand grenade or, perhaps more hopefully for the arch-rivals who share a sporting passion, a well-thrown cricket ball.

“There is obviously no interaction with the enemy,” an Indian officer deployed along the de facto border, dubbed the Line of Control (LoC), told AFP in a visit to positions organised by the army.

Troops on each side are settling back down to an uneasy standoff a month after the deadly April 22 attack on tourists in Kashmir sent relations spiralling towards a war between nuclear-armed India and Pakistan.

New Delhi blamed Islamabad for backing the Islamist militants it said were behind the killing of 26 men in the deadliest attack on civilians in Muslim-majority Kashmir in decades.

Pakistan denies the charge.

G7 Ends Finance Summit With Show of Unity Amid Tariff Uncertainty

OTTAWA (Dispatches) - G7 finance ministers on Thursday ended with a joint message of reassurance and hope over ongoing global uncertainty caused by U.S. President Donald Trump’s tariff policies, showing potential for improved cooperation with the U.S. despite failing to reach any breakthroughs.

G7 finance ministers wrapped up talks in western Canada on Thursday with a show of unity, saying the economic policy uncertainty that has swept the globe was easing and vowing further progress towards stability.

U.S. President Trump’s wide-ranging tariffs have caused global economic turbulence, and this week’s meeting was seen as a test of whether the Group of Seven advanced economies could overcome tensions since Trump’s return to office.

Leaders at the talks, which included central bank governors, conceded the discussions faced challenges, including continuing disagreement over tariffs.

But in a final communique, the G7 -- comprising Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States -- said: “We acknowledge that economic policy uncertainty has declined from its peak, and we will work together to achieve further progress.”

The meeting’s host, Canadian Finance Minister Francois-Philippe Champagne, characterized the talks as “constructive and productive” and said that there was a need “to reduce uncertainty in order to increase growth.”

U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, who attended the talks at Banff National Park in the Canadian Rocky Mountains, faced consistent pushback on Trump’s tariffs, which many fear will drag down global economic growth.

“Obviously, tariffs are on all of our minds,” Bank of Canada Governor Tiff Macklem told reporters at a closing press conference.

“The communique highlights that we were pleased to see that uncertainty has come down, but we clearly have more work to do,” he added.

Bessent told AFP as he left the summit: “I don’t think there were any major disagreements, I thought the meeting went great.”

German Finance Minister Lars Klingbeil told reporters Thursday it was crucial to “resolve the current trade disputes as quickly as possible,” as tariffs had placed “a heavy burden on the global economy.”

“Our hand is extended,” Klingbeil added.

French Finance Minister Eric Lombard told AFP: “The atmosphere was warm. We spoke as friends and allies.”



While Trump’s return has rattled the G7, German finance minister Klingbeil told public broadcaster ARD that “there are always conflicting signals.”

While there may be U.S. statements that cast doubt on the extent of support towards Ukraine, “in the end, the United States has always been on Ukraine’s side,” he said.

In an additional step on Ukraine, the G7 communique condemned “Russia’s continued brutal war” and said any entity that supported Russia during the conflict would be barred from Ukrainian reconstruction contracts.

“We agree to work together with Ukraine to ensure that no countries or entities, or entities from those countries that financed or supplied the Russian war machine will be eligible to profit from Ukraine’s reconstruction,” it said.

Trump’s Golden Dome Plan Could Launch New Era of Weapons in Space

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - U.S. President Donald Trump’s Golden Dome missile defense concept revives a controversial, decades-old initiative whose ambitious construction could upend norms in outer space and reshape relations between the world’s top space powers.

The announcement of Golden Dome, a vast network of satellites and weapons in Earth’s orbit set to cost \$175 billion, could sharply escalate the militarization of space, a trend that has intensified over the last decade, space analysts say.

While the world’s biggest space powers - the U.S., Russia and China - have put military and intelligence assets in orbit since the 1960s, they have done so mostly in secrecy.

Under former President Joe Biden, U.S. Space Force officials had grown vocal about a need for greater offensive space capabilities due to space-based threats from Russia and China.

When Trump announced his Golden Dome plan in January, it was a clear shift in strategy, one that emphasizes a bold move into space with expensive, untested technology that could be a financial boon to U.S. defense contractors.

The concept includes space-based missiles that would launch from satellites in orbit to intercept conventional and nuclear missiles launched from Earth.

“I think it’s opening a Pandora’s box,” said Victoria Samson, director of space security and stability at the Secure World Foundation think tank in Washington, referring to deploying missiles in space. “We haven’t truly thought about the long-term consequences for doing so,” she added.

Samson and other experts said Golden Dome could provoke other states to place similar systems in space or to develop more advanced weapons to



evade the missile shield, escalating an arms race in space.

The Pentagon did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Russia and China reacted differently to the latest news from Trump. A Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson said it was “seriously concerned” about the project and urged Washington to abandon its development, adding that it carried “strong offensive implications” and heightened the risks of the militarization of outer space and an arms race.

A Kremlin spokesperson said Golden Dome could force talks between Moscow and Washington about nuclear arms control in the foreseeable future.

Primarily seeking to defend against a growing arsenal of conventional and nuclear missiles from U.S. adversaries Russia, China and smaller states such as North Korea and Iran, the Golden Dome plan is a revival of a Cold War-era effort by former U.S. President Ronald Reagan’s Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), better known as the “Star Wars” program.

SDI envisioned stationing a constellation of missiles and powerful laser weapons in low-Earth orbit that could intercept a ballistic nuclear missile launched anywhere on Earth below, either in its boost phase moments after launch or in its blazing-fast cruise phase in space.

But the idea never came to fruition mainly because of technological hurdles, as well as the high cost and concerns it would violate an anti-ballistic missile treaty that has since been abandoned.

Golden Dome has strong and powerful allies in the defense contracting community and the growing defense technology arena, many of whom have been preparing for Trump’s big move into space weaponry.

“We knew that this day was likely going to come. You know, we’re ready for it,” L3Harris Chief Financial Officer Ken Bedingfield said in an interview with Reuters last month.

“L3 Harris has an early start of building the sensor network that will become the foundational sensor network for the Golden Dome architecture.”

Suspect in DC Killing of Israel Embassy Aides Charged With Murder

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - A Chicago-born man arrested as the lone suspect in the fatal shooting of two Israeli embassy employees in Washington was charged on Thursday in federal court with two counts of first-degree murder in a killing widely condemned as an act of anti-Semitism.

Elias Rodriguez, 30, is accused of opening fire on a group of people on Wednesday night as they left an event for young diplomats hosted by the American Jewish Committee, an advocacy group that supports Israel and fights anti-Semitism.

Rodriguez told police on the scene, “I did it for Palestine, I did it for Gaza,” according to the charging documents. Witnesses recounted hearing him chant “Free Palestine” after he was taken into custody.

The two victims struck by gunfire and killed were identified as Yaron Lischinsky, 31, and Sarah Lynn Milgrim, 26, a young couple about to become engaged to be married.

Friends and members of advocacy groups they belonged to said the pair were committed to building bridges between Arabs and Jews in hopes of ending bloodshed in the Middle East.

After the shooting, Israeli embassies around the world immediately stepped up



security.

In addition to two counts of first-degree murder, Rodriguez was charged in a six-page criminal complaint with murder of foreign officials, causing death with a firearm and discharging a firearm in a crime of violence.

Interim US Attorney Jeanine Pirro, newly appointed by President Donald Trump as the top federal prosecutor in Washington, said at a news briefing the complaint against Rodriguez constitutes a “death penalty-eligible case.”

At his first appearance in court on Thursday, the suspect waived his right to a detention hearing, and a preliminary hearing in the case was set for June 18, Pirro said. The charges were filed in federal court as FBI and police investigators pored over apparent writings and political affiliations of the suspect.

FBI Deputy Director Dan Bongino posted on social media that investigators were “aware of certain writings allegedly authored by the suspect” and hoped to soon have updates regarding their authenticity.

Bongino’s statement appeared to refer to a manifesto signed with Rodriguez’s name that was posted to an anonymous X account on Wednesday night shortly before the shooting.



Spurs Claim First European Trophy Since 1984 With Gritty 1-0 Win Over Man United

BILBAO (Dispatches) - Brennan Johnson's scrambled goal ended a 17-year Tottenham trophy drought with a battling 1-0 win over Manchester United in the Europa League final.

Spurs, who had not won European silverware since 1984, will play in next season's Champions League, while failing to qualify for it is a severe financial set-back for Manchester United.

Despite their triumph in Bilbao, manager Ange Postecoglou's future is still on the line following a shambolic domestic campaign, with Spurs sitting a place below United in the lower reaches of the Premier League table.

The Australian furiously insisted he was "not a clown" on the eve of the final and had the last laugh on a nerve-racking night at the San Mames, as he made good on his claim to always win a trophy in his second season in charge of a club.

"This is what it's all about, this club hasn't won a trophy for 17 years, honestly, this is what it means, it means so much," Wales winger Johnson told TNT Sports.

"Ever since I came here it's been (people saying) 'Tottenham are a good team, but they never get it done' — we got it done!"

Fans came from far and wide to pack Athletic Bilbao's stadium, some taking quite preposterous routes and sleeping in cars to avoid eye-watering prices, but they could not escape a final lacking in quality.

It was a match between teams languishing in 16th and 17th place respectively after dismal Premier League campaigns and that was the essence of it too, played at high intensity but with low confidence, and a prize on the line so big it overawed.

There were a large number of turnovers, neither side keeping the ball with any ease, moves ending in panicked defending and balls being thumped to safety, or a litany of clumsy fouls.

Harry Maguire blocked well from Tottenham's Pape Sarr early on after Johnson nipped in ahead of Luke

Shaw to break in down the right.

Manchester United fans chanted Ruben Amorim's name, backing their Portuguese coach despite the club's worst Premier League season in half a century.

At the other end, 22-year-old United winger Amad Diallo, one of the few players high on self-belief, flashed a shot across goal and then left Destiny Udogie spinning, trying in vain to find him as he dribbled past.

Spurs made the breakthrough after 42 minutes and, perhaps fittingly, it came in the form of an extremely scrappy goal.

Tottenham midfielder Sarr, who had completed just a single pass to this point, curled in a cross to the near post for Johnson.

The winger's attempted flick bounced off Shaw's shoulder, brushed Johnson's boot again and crossed the goal-line in slow motion with Andre Onana unable to claw it out with a desperate arm.

Spurs sat back in the second half, trying to protect their slender advantage and look for opportunities to strike again on the counter-attack.

They nearly found one when Yves Bissouma played in Dominic Solanke, but the striker could not control the pass and the chance went to waste.

Manchester United almost equalised when Tottenham goalkeeper Guglielmo Vicario came off his line but failed to claim a set-piece pounded forward from deep.

The ball dropped for Rasmus Hojlund but his header over the stranded Spurs stopper was sensationally cleared in acrobatic fashion by Micky van de Ven.

Spurs sent on captain Son Heung-min for the ragged Richarlison, with the South Korean international a surprising non-starter.

Verstappen Returns Home for Monaco GP, Seeks Redemption



MONTE CARLO (Dispatches) - Defending four-time champion Max Verstappen heads 'home' this weekend with renewed confidence in his car and team, but aware of the pitfalls ahead at this weekend's 71st Monaco Grand Prix.

Boosted by the updates package that brought him his 65th victory for Red Bull, at Imola last Sunday, Verstappen confirmed he is a contender for a fifth title this year despite McLaren's early-season domination.

He won with ease at the Autodromo Enzo e Dino Ferrari to move within 22 points of championship leader Oscar Piastri and just nine away from Lando Norris in the other McLaren. He will now be hoping for more of the same at F1's most fabled and glamorous event.

But the two-time winner of the Mediterranean principality's often-processional harbourside street race knows that rule changes and the unique challenge of Monte Carlo, where he has a penthouse apartment a tone's throw from many of the other drivers, offer something unique to any other circuit.

The introduction of a mandatory two-stop strategy for both wet and dry conditions by ruling body, the FIA, and the confines of the unforgiving, narrow and twisting barrier-lined streets may encourage record 15-times winners McLaren to bounce back for a sixth win in eight races.

The champion team, with a fast, nimble car that has appeared to be dominant on circuits featuring slow corners, have not won at Monaco since 2008 when seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton, now at Ferrari, was en route to his first title.

Red Bull's influential team advisor Helmut Marko acknowledged their threat to his team's hopes of claiming a fourth Monaco win in five years.

"Things could look very different (at Monaco)," he said.

"The car is doing what Max wants again, due to the updates, which have worked, but that was at Imola. Monaco is completely different with only slow corners and it could be much worse."

Verstappen, too, admitted: "Last year, it was very difficult for us. I don't expect it to be a lot easier this time around."

Guardiola Draws the Line: Keep City Squad Small or I'm Gone



MANCHESTER (Dispatches) - Pep Guardiola has said he could quit his position as Manchester City manager if he is given too large a squad next season as he can no longer bear to leave out large numbers of fit players from his team.

City will head into the post-season looking to rebuild an ageing squad, with several senior players expected to follow Kevin De Bruyne out of the Etihad after the Belgian played his final home game for the club in 3-1 win over Bournemouth.

This season has seen City's unprecedented run of four successive top-flight English titles come to an end, while their defeat by Crystal Palace in last weekend's FA Cup final meant they will finish without a major trophy for the first time in eight years.

Injuries have hit City hard this season but Guardiola, always in favour of a smaller group of players, insisted: "I said to the club I don't want that (a bigger squad)."

"I don't want to leave five or six players in the freezer. I don't want that. I will quit. Make a shorter squad, I will stay."

"It's impossible for my soul to (tell) my players in the tribune that they cannot play."

The Spaniard added: "Now it happened to add players immediately. Maybe for three or four months we couldn't select 11 players, we didn't have defenders, it was so difficult. After, people come back but next season it cannot be like that."

"As a manager I cannot train 24 players and every time I select I have to have four, five, six, stay in Manchester at home because they cannot play. This is not going to happen. I said to the club I don't want that."

Despite the injury problems suffered this season — notably the lengthy absence of Rodri, who made his first appearance since September as a second-half substitute yesterday — Guardiola said he would rather bolster his squad with academy players.

Thunder Roll Again at Home, Grab 2-0 Lead on Wolves

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Shai Gilgeous-Alexander was presented with the NBA Most Valuable Player Award before Game 2 of the Western Conference finals on Thursday.

Then the Oklahoma City Thunder superstar went out and showed why he earned the award.

Gilgeous-Alexander tied his career playoff high with 38 points to help the Thunder beat the visiting Minnesota Timberwolves 118-103 Thursday to take a 2-0 lead in the best-of-seven series.

"I thought about coming out and just forcing the first couple shots," Gilgeous-Alexander said.

Instead, Gilgeous-Alexander leaned heavily on his supporting cast early, attempting just three shots through the midpoint of the second quarter.

It was far from a one-man show, as Jalen Williams finished with 26 points and 10 rebounds and Chet Holmgren added 22 points.

Midway through the fourth quarter, Gilgeous-Alexander drove past Jaden McDaniels, who fouled Gilgeous-Alexander as part of a critical three-point play in Game 1.

McDaniels extended his arms, shoving the Thunder star to the floor



for what was called a flagrant foul.

"I just wanted to foul him for real," McDaniels said. "I wasn't even mad. I just had fouls to use."

Gilgeous-Alexander finished 13 of 15 at the free-throw line and is 24 of 29 on foul shots in the series.

Minnesota cut what was once a 24-point deficit to 10 with three

minutes left, but the Thunder repeatedly answered.

Holmgren followed Anthony Edwards' jumper with a layup on the other end.

Minnesota's Nickeil Alexander-Walker made two free throws before Williams drained a 3-pointer off a feed from Gilgeous-Alexander. Then Gilgeous-Alexander hit a driving layup to extend the lead back to 15 with less than two minutes remaining.

"It's impressive how fast he's able to turn the page," Williams said of Gilgeous-Alexander's performance after the pregame MVP ceremony. "The flow of emotions that probably go through your head ... he's able to push those aside. And to have the night he had tonight is really impressive."

Gilgeous-Alexander has scored 30 or more points in five consecutive games, tying the longest such streak in franchise playoff history. He already shared the marks with Gus Williams.

Minnesota star Anthony Edwards said he needed to shoot more in Game 2 after attempting just 13 shots on Tuesday in a 114-88 loss. He was aggressive on offense from the start Thursday, attempting 10 shots in the first quarter (and making four) while adding three assists.

Sinner Handed Tough French Open Draw

PARIS (Dispatches) - World number one Jannik Sinner's Grand Slam return after a doping suspension could be a tough one after the Italian was handed a difficult draw at the French Open on Thursday.

Sinner, beaten by Spain's Carlos Alcaraz in the Italian Open final on Sunday in his comeback tournament, was drawn in the same half as 24-times Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic, last year's runner-up Alexander Zverev and several French hopefuls at Roland Garros.

Alcaraz and Sinner, who have claimed the last five Grand Slam titles between them, face potentially tricky first rounds with the Italian meeting France's Arthur Rinderknech and the defending champion playing Japanese veteran Kei Nishikori.

Former world number one Djokovic could face Sinner in the semi-finals.

Jack Draper of Britain, seeded fifth, could play Sinner in the last eight while Djokovic may face German Alexander Zverev for a place in the semis.

In the women's draw, defending champion Iga Swiatek, struggling



for form, will open her campaign against Slovakian Rebecca Sramkova and faces a potential semi-final against world number one Aryna Sabalenka, after a quarter-final clash with last year's runner-up Jasmine Paolini of Italy.

Belarusian Sabalenka takes on Kamilla Rakhimova of Russia in the opening round.

"This season has had ups and down, but I know my game is there," Swiatek said after the draw, which was made by Paris St Germain and France forward Ousmane Dembele.

A first-round match to watch will feature Japan's Naomi Osaka, a four-times Grand Slam champion, and Spanish 10th seed Paula Badosa.

On the other side of the draw, second seed Coco Gauff will start her campaign against Australian Olivia Gadecki with a possible all-American semi-final looming against Jessica Pegula, the third seed.

Another American, Madison Keys, could stand in the way of Gauff in the quarter-finals.