

Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi Reiterates His Country's Determination to Maintain "Brotherly" Ties With Saudi Arabia, Saying Tehran Will Not Allow Anyone to Disrupt the Relationship

IRAN NEWS

Iran Rejected a "False and Baseless" Report by Austria's Domestic Intelligence Agency About the Country's Peaceful Nuclear Activities, Calling on Vienna to Provide an Explanation for Levelling "Irresponsible" Accusations at Tehran

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Leader Urges Use of Capacities of Iran's Neighbors



TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei emphasized the necessity of employing the capacities of numerous neighboring countries around Iran.

Ayatollah Khamenei had a meeting with the Iranian Minister of Interior and the provincial governors in Tehran on Wednesday.

In this meeting, the Leader emphasized that governors are the comprehensive managers of their respective provinces and referred to the favorable public atmosphere in the country for serving the people.

"Officials must go among the people, be present at their gatherings, listen patiently to their concerns, even if expressed harshly, and provide the necessary explanations," Ayatollah Khamenei stated.

The Leader pointed to Iran's vast opportunities and added, "The country benefits from an immense capacity in its young human capital. Wherever an institution has recognized and utilized this potential, tangible progress has been achieved."

The Leader also referred to Iran's membership in key regional and international organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRICS, as well as the appointment of a Minister of Interior with in-depth knowledge of the country's diverse regions, as further valuable opportunities, Khamenei.ir reported.

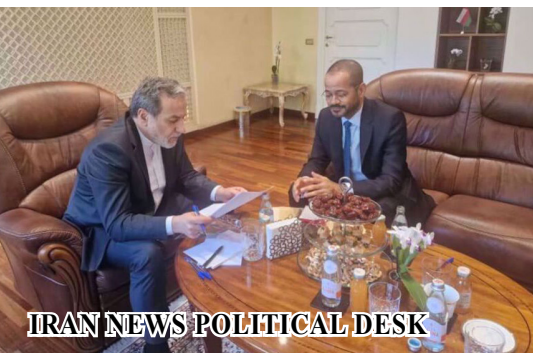
The Leader also stressed the necessity of preserving the integrity of the country and confronting corruption, calling the fight against corruption a definitive duty of senior officials.

Ayatollah Khamenei also emphasized, "The first condition for combating corruption is that officials and their families must remain distant from corruption-inducing elements."

"Given the sensitive position of public officials, any involvement in corruption inflicts far greater harm and its punishment in the sight of God will be significantly more severe," he underlined.

The Leader also advised governors to uphold religious obligations, avoid what is forbidden in Islamic law, be attentive to religious observances, strive for the realization of the year's slogan, and engage in a serious, coordinated effort to combat the smuggling of goods.

Iran Plays Down Speculation on Imminent U.S. Deal



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi has stressed Iran's commitment to diplomacy, slamming media disinformation aimed at derailing the ongoing negotiations between Iran and the United States over the Islamic Republic's nuclear program.

Araqchi made the remarks in a post on his X account on Thursday, responding to growing media speculation about an alleged imminent agreement between Tehran and Washington.

"Media is speculating about an imminent Iran-U.S. deal. Not sure if we are there yet. Iran is sincere about a diplomatic solution that will serve the interests of all sides. But getting there requires an agreement that will fully terminate all sanctions and uphold Iran's nuclear rights—including enrichment," he said.

Araqchi reiterated that meaningful progress can only be achieved through negotiations, not media narratives, in response to a report by FOX News.

The report cited a new intelligence assessment claiming that Iran is continuing its active nuclear weapons program and that the program could be used to launch long-range missiles.

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK



Islamic Countries Poised to Shape a New World Order

TEHRAN - In a televised interview during his official visit to Oman, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian declared that Islamic countries have the capacity to become influential players in the emerging global order.

Speaking to Oman's state television, President Pezeshkian emphasized that Islamic nations are rich in natural resources, human capital, cultural heritage, and a long-standing civilization. "We are not destined to be spectators in a world stage designed by others," he said. "We possess the potential to shape the global narrative and be decisive, active players."

His comments were made during a visit aimed at reinforcing Iran-Oman bilateral relations and discussing broader regional and global issues. President Pezeshkian met with Omani Sultan Haitham bin Tariq and several Omani officials to deepen cooperation across a wide spectrum of sectors.

President Pezeshkian hailed the longstanding historical relationship between Iran and Oman, describing it as deeply rooted, brotherly, and culturally aligned. "Our ties extend beyond centuries—possibly over a millennium," he said. He noted that both countries have consistently supported one another throughout history and reiterated Iran's commitment to nurturing this bond.

The two sides signed agreements in several fields, including industry, trade, tourism, healthcare, education, and clean energy. Pezeshkian underscored that these agreements would not remain symbolic. "We are committed to implementation," he stressed, "and we aim to deepen this partnership stronger than ever."

Addressing Oman's mediatory efforts between Iran and the United States, especially in the context of recent indirect talks in Muscat and Rome, Pezeshkian expressed gratitude to the Omani leadership. "The Supreme Leader of Iran has long supported engaging Oman in such efforts," he noted.

He specifically commended Oman's Foreign Minister, saying he carried the "heavy burden" of facilitating negotiations due to their indirect nature. He called Oman's role pivotal in creating a platform for dialogue based on mutual benefit.

On the future of Iran-Oman relations, Pezeshkian identified substantial political alignment between the two nations, particularly on regional issues like Palestine and peace in the Gulf. Economically, he acknowledged existing challenges such as sanctions and logistical hurdles but announced plans to resolve these issues.

He said the two countries are working to remove customs and transportation barriers to facilitate trade and investment. According to Pezeshkian, trade volume could potentially reach \$10-20 billion. Oman, he suggested, could become a logistics hub linking Iran to Russia, Central

Asia, and even Africa.

When asked how Iran-Oman ties could contribute to Gulf stability, Pezeshkian pointed to Islamic teachings on unity. Quoting the Quran and Prophet Muhammad, he emphasized that Muslims are brothers and should work toward reconciliation and peace.

"Our enemies want to divide us to plunder our resources and sell us weapons so we fight among ourselves," he warned. "But we can flip the equation. With unity and dialogue among Muslim countries, we can build a peaceful, secure region."

Regarding nuclear negotiations, Pezeshkian reiterated that Iran's stance is rooted in international law. "Every country has the right to pursue peaceful nuclear activities, including enrichment," he stated.

He reaffirmed that Iran is not seeking nuclear weapons, citing a religious decree by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei banning them. "Even if some individuals in Iran claim otherwise, our official policy is clear—we oppose nuclear arms on moral and religious grounds."

Pezeshkian also criticized the West's double standards, highlighting the assassination of Iranian scientists and the bombardment of civilians in the region by actors who claim to champion human rights. "Who is truly threatening peace—Israel or the Islamic countries?" he asked.

The president also touched on developments in Gaza and their impact on Iran's foreign policy. Condemning Israeli actions, he said, "No conscience can accept the bombing of hospitals, schools, and civilians. The so-called civilized world watches in silence. We must raise our voices."

He stressed that Islamic nations must unite in support of Palestine and Lebanon, calling for an international campaign against such injustices. "Even people in Europe and the U.S. are protesting these atrocities. Those who speak of human rights while bombing women and children have lost credibility."

Pezeshkian concluded by emphasizing that Iran's foreign policy is grounded in Islamic values. In light of shifting global dynamics, he urged Islamic nations to realign themselves based on Quranic teachings of unity and justice.

"All humans are created from one pair—man and woman—and have been made into nations and tribes to know one another," he quoted from the Quran. "The most honorable among you in God's eyes is the most righteous."

He said that the fragmentation of the Muslim world is not the will of God but a human-made division, encouraged by those who seek to dominate. "We are one Ummah, and we must act as one," he concluded.

Yemen and Thousand Years of Resistance



By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

The resistance of the Yemeni people is rooted in a deep combination of cultural, historical, religious, and social factors that have developed over centuries.

Yemen, as one of the oldest civilizations in the region, has always had a spirit of independence and resistance against foreign occupiers (such as the Ottoman Empire and British colonialism).

In Persian and Arabic literature, Yemen is described as the land of "Agate and Paint" and the cradle of ancient civilizations.

Due to its tribal structure, the Yemeni people have consistently preserved a warrior spirit and loyalty to collective values.

Zaydi Shi'ism (especially the Jarudi branch), which is close to Twelver Shi'ism, has provided an ideological foundation for resistance. This sect emphasizes uprising against oppression (uprising with the sword).

Slogans such as "Death to America," "Death to Israel," and "Curse on the Jews" reflect the influence of the discourse of the Iranian Islamic Revolution.

Ceremonies like Ashura and Ghadir are held with great grandeur among Yemenis, signifying deep religious ties.

The Yemeni resistance is popular in nature and is not limited to political movements alone. It permeates various social classes, including tribes, students, and scholars.

Justice-seeking and anti-arrogance (anti-imperialism) are key principles of Yemeni culture and political religion, which have manifested in opposition to Saudi Arabia and its Western allies.

Yemenis view the issue of Palestine as a "religious principle" and have always supported the people of Gaza.

Yemen's strategic location controlling the Bab al-Mandab Strait (through which more than ten percent of global trade passes) has given the country's resistance global significance.

The economic blockade and Saudi attacks on Yemen's infrastructure have, instead of weakening the people's spirit, strengthened their determination to resist.

Figures like the martyr Hussein al-Houthi and his brother Abdul-Malik al-Houthi, combining religious and political leadership, have become symbols of resistance.

These leaders, by emphasizing Islamic and national values, have been able to create significant unity among various Yemeni groups.

In conclusion, the culture of Yemeni resistance is a unique combination of a proud history, deep religious beliefs, tribal spirit, and geopolitical awareness. This culture has not only resisted foreign aggression but also inspired resistance movements across the region.

Iran Determined to Preserve Nuclear Fuel Cycle, Enrichment



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iran welcomes negotiations on the removal of Western sanctions on the country over its nuclear work but insists on retaining its atomic independence and its fuel cycle and enrichment capabilities, according to the top Iranian security official.

Ali Akbar Ahmadian, the secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, made the remarks on Wednesday at the 13th International Meeting of High Representatives for Security Issues in Moscow, in a speech focused on shaping an equal and sustainable security architecture.

The official criticized the West's hegemonic policies worldwide, saying that dominant countries, by using tools such as sanctions and technology, try to deprive nations of their inherent rights, as exemplified in their push to restrict Iran's right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

The official said unilateralism in international politics and the imposition of the will of arrogant powers on nations have created countless tragedies worldwide, and today the West Asia region stands as a showcase of these atrocities.

Ahmadian, referring to the bitter events in Yemen, Lebanon, Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq, said, "the foundation of the Western policy of unilateralism is built on the oppression and exploitation of nations, and the whole world is witnessing an unprecedented crime in Gaza, where, in addition to inhumane killings, women and children are enduring a gradual death by starvation."

Turning Water Challenges into Opportunities Through Strengthened International Cooperation



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - First Vice President, Mohammad Reza Aref, emphasized the need for innovative and equitable solutions to global water challenges, highlighting Iran's achievements in integrating indigenous knowledge with advanced technologies for water management. Speaking at the International Conference on Glacier Preservation held Friday, May 30, 2025, in Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan, Aref stressed that addressing these issues is crucial to ensuring water security and preventing social tensions, forced migration, and livelihood instability.

Aref opened his remarks by referencing the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, condemning the actions of the Israeli regime and criticizing the silence of human rights organizations. He called on global institutions and intellectuals to unite in condemning the aggression and work toward a logical and just ceasefire that ensures the rights of the Palestinian people.

Shifting to environmental concerns, Aref identified climate change, biodiversity loss, and environmental pollution as the three major crises facing the world. He noted that these challenges can significantly affect ecosystems and human health. Glaciers, as hidden reservoirs of freshwater, are vital to global water security and must be preserved.

He warned that rising global temperatures are threatening these critical freshwater sources, and their preservation requires comprehensive diplomatic, environmental, and social strategies. The melting of glaciers poses serious risks, including flooding, soil erosion, and the destruction of vital infrastructure.

Aref praised international efforts to protect glaciers, including the UN General Assembly's

resolution designating a "Year of Glacier Preservation" and the declaration of 2025-2034 as the "Decade for Cryosphere Science Support" following a proposal by the President of Tajikistan.

Referring to Iran's arid climate, Aref noted that the country has historically relied on snowmelt and glacial waters. As one of the world's oldest civilizations, Iran developed traditional water management systems such as qanats—underground aqueducts designed to transport water without evaporation—as well as irrigation networks and water storage solutions.

He added that Iran has successfully bridged traditional methods with modern technologies, implementing large-scale development projects that include dam construction, advanced irrigation systems, water recycling technologies, and desalination plants.

Highlighting the need for global cooperation, Aref reiterated that water management must be based on fair and innovative strategies that not only prevent social unrest and displacement but also transform challenges into opportunities. He stressed that by strengthening international collaboration, the global community can ensure sustainable water management that supports thriving societies, resilient food systems, and healthy ecosystems.

Aref concluded by expressing hope that the Dushanbe conference would lead to enhanced multilateral cooperation, knowledge exchange, and urgent practical action—particularly in bolstering resilience to droughts and floods and empowering local communities to cope with glacier melt and dwindling water resources.

IRAN NEWS



Review of Establishing Direct “Homa” Flights to Indonesia

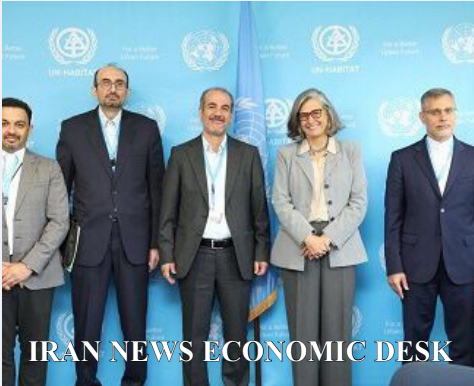
TEHRAN (IRNA) - In a joint meeting between representatives of Iran’s national airline “Homa” and the chargé d’affaires of the Indonesian Embassy in Tehran, the possibility of establishing direct flights between the two capitals was discussed. According to the Civil Aviation Organization, the talks aimed to develop aviation cooperation, facilitate tourism travel, and strengthen economic and trade relations. Establishing economic ties with Indonesia, the largest Muslim country in East Asia, and creating a direct air route with this country could be an important step in enhancing cultural connections and mutual access between the two nations.

Achievements of Farzin’s Trip to Muscat Revealed



TEHRAN - The Governor of Iran’s Central Bank, during his visit to Muscat, announced that joint monetary activities and the establishment of a joint bank between Iran and Oman were discussed in bilateral talks. Both sides reached solutions to implement these measures aimed at enhancing banking and trade relations. Mohammad Reza Farzin stated during his trip to Oman that trade between Iran and Oman is closely linked to monetary and banking sectors, and cooperation in these areas requires reviewing commercial mechanisms as well. He pointed out that there are challenges faced by Iranian traders and the Central Bank in Oman, which are currently being examined and addressed. He emphasized that facilitating the issuance of bank guarantees for Iranian and Omani traders has been prioritized. Additionally, significant agreements were made regarding a shipping line from the port of Chabahar to Oman, which is a vital step in easing trade and reducing transportation costs. Farzin added that both parties have reached an initial agreement on allocating a dedicated space, such as a specialized port, for Iranian commercial activities. Highlighting that one of the major obstacles for Iranian traders in Oman is the issue of bank guarantees, he announced plans to hold a joint meeting with Iranian and Omani traders to find practical solutions. The Central Bank Governor also mentioned ongoing discussions with Omani counterparts about the possibility of establishing a bank and expanding joint monetary activities. This could pave the way for easier financial settlements and direct currency exchanges, and positive progress has been made in these talks.

Iran, UN-Habitat Expand Cooperation in Urban Regeneration



TEHRAN - The CEO of Iran’s Urban Regeneration Company emphasized the expansion of cooperation between Iran and UN-Habitat during a meeting on the sidelines of the second UN-Habitat General Assembly held in Nairobi. Abdolreza Golpayegani, Deputy Minister of Roads and Urban Development and head of the company, led a delegation from the Islamic Republic of Iran to the assembly. On the first day of the event, he met with Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director of UN-Habitat. The meeting, attended by Iran’s ambassador to Kenya and the Secretary of Iran’s National Habitat Committee, focused on strengthening and continuing joint efforts in the fields of urban regeneration and sustainable development. Golpayegani conveyed greetings from Iran’s Minister of Roads and Urban Development to the UN-Habitat leadership, and outlined Iran’s strategies for addressing deteriorated urban areas. He also presented different policy and planning approaches for upgrading and revitalizing various urban zones. Highlighting Iran’s past and future housing initiatives, he noted that 500,000 housing units have been built annually over the past two decades, with plans underway to construct an additional 4 million units—a key move in tackling the country’s housing shortage. He described the establishment of the National Urban Regeneration Headquarters as a major institutional innovation, enabling inter-agency coordination through a bottom-up approach across multiple working groups focused on urban renewal. UN-Habitat Executive Director Maimunah Sharif praised Iran’s efforts in managing deteriorated urban areas, stating that the country’s policy-to-practice model aligns with UN-Habitat’s strategic goals. Emphasizing the complexity of housing issues and the need for a comprehensive perspective, she invited the Iranian delegation to take part in the Intergovernmental Working Group on Adequate Housing for All, to share Iran’s experiences internationally. During the meeting, Sadeqh Sadeghpour Aghdam, advisor to the Minister and Secretary of Iran’s National Habitat Committee, reaffirmed the importance of deepening bilateral ties with UN-Habitat and reiterated Iran’s support for the agency’s office in Tehran.

Iran Tops Region in Drug Seizures



TEHRAN - Iran has set a regional record in narcotics seizures, announced the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), Faroud Asgari, during a key summit of Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) customs chiefs held in Tehran. Asgari underscored the need to streamline trade across ECO member states through technological innovation and deeper inter-agency coordination. He proposed critical initiatives including the implementation of Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) systems, expansion of a unified customs window, and integrated operations between border and economic authorities. “The era of traditional trade is over,” Asgari told participants. “We are now in the fourth generation of commerce—an era driven by advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, blockchain, and data-driven decision-making.” He emphasized that such innovations are transforming global trade logistics, allowing for faster, more transparent, and cost-effective transactions. Customs agencies, he said, are no longer just regulatory bodies but must evolve into smart, data-savvy trade facilitators. Asgari also urged ECO countries to embrace modern infrastructure and smart customs tools, including AI-powered cargo detection, electronic documentation, and digital risk management systems. He noted that these advancements not only expedite clearance processes but also significantly reduce the financial and time burdens of cross-border trade. According to the IRICA chief, Iran’s geopolitical position enables it to act as a vital corridor linking landlocked Central Asian nations to international markets. This positioning, combined with advanced customs capabilities, allows Iran to serve as both a trade hub and a stabilizing force in global supply chains. Asgari highlighted Iran’s efforts to modernize its customs infrastructure, improve

data exchange with neighboring countries, and implement new digital processes at key terminals. These measures, he said, aim to transform Iran into a long-term strategic asset for the entire ECO region. In addition to trade facilitation, Asgari noted Iran’s strong performance in combating narcotics smuggling. “Iran, in collaboration with the anti-narcotics police and using advanced inspection tools, drug-sniffing dogs, and risk analysis systems, has achieved significant and effective results in seizing narcotics, precursors, and psychotropic drugs,” he said. He stressed that drug trafficking is a regional and global issue requiring shared responsibility, information exchange, and comprehensive technical support. Iran, he added, is fully prepared to share its experiences and jointly develop operational frameworks under the ECO and international institutions such as the World Customs Organization (WCO). Asgari called the 10th meeting of ECO customs chiefs a “strategic milestone” and emphasized its potential to shape the future of customs cooperation across the region. “This summit is not just about reviewing past achievements,” he said, “but a platform to draft a roadmap for future collaboration.” The high-level gathering brought together customs officials, international organizations, and key players in regional trade to discuss joint projects, integration strategies, and the path toward a modern, smart, and unified regional customs system. According to IRNA, trade between Iran and other ECO member countries reached 36.2 million tons in volume and \$27.6 billion in value during the Iranian year 1403 (2024–2025). These figures underscore the growing importance of regional economic cooperation in the face of global trade challenges. Asgari concluded by calling for continued collective will, political commitment, and technical cooperation to realize a brighter future for regional trade, security, and economic development.

Iran, Oman Discuss Joint Investment Fund, Trade Facilitation Mechanisms



TEHRAN - In a high-level meeting held in Muscat, Samad Hassanzadeh, President of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture, proposed the establishment of a joint Iran-Oman investment fund aimed at supporting industrial projects in both countries. The proposal was presented during a meeting between Hassanzadeh and Qais Mohammed Al-Yousef, Oman’s Minister of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion. The Iranian official expressed satisfaction that bilateral trade between the two countries has surpassed \$2 billion and emphasized that the potential exists for this figure to grow significantly. Hassanzadeh underlined the necessity of streamlining banking relations between Iran and Oman to facilitate private sector trade. He suggested the establishment of licensed exchange offices approved by the central banks of both countries and the implementation of a barter mechanism as practical steps toward improving trade relations. He further noted the potential for Iranian and Omani companies to collaborate in supplying industrial goods to Iran and in re-exporting Iranian products to African and East Asian markets through Oman. The President of Iran’s Chamber of Commerce proposed the formation of an industrial and investment committee involving both countries’ ministries and chambers of commerce. He highlighted the value of leveraging Iranian technical expertise and knowledge-based companies to generate mutual economic benefits. Potential areas of cooperation identified include transit collaboration, joint investment ventures, the export of technical and engineering services, agriculture, and food security. Hassanzadeh emphasized the importance of utilizing free trade zones, ports, and both countries’ road and rail transport infrastructure. He also proposed joint investment in two major infrastructure projects: The North-South International Corridor through Iran for rail and road transit access to Central Asia and Northern and Eastern Europe. Development in the Makran coastal regions of Jask and Chabahar, positioning them as strategic transportation and transit hubs for accessing Eurasian and Caucasian markets.

According to Hassanzadeh, Iranian private investors are keen to pursue joint ventures with their Omani counterparts in areas such as petrochemicals, hospitality and tourism, power generation, transport and transit logistics, aquaculture, and agriculture. He added that Iranian companies are ready to participate in modernizing Oman’s infrastructure and industrial sectors, including through construction, road-building, and engineering services. He also noted Iran’s capacity to support Oman with industrial plant construction, irrigation systems, and the export of processed agricultural products. In response, Minister Al-Yousef praised the efforts of both countries’ chambers of commerce and highlighted the recent high-level visit of Iranian Speaker of Parliament Masoud Pezeshkian to Oman, during which 18 cooperation agreements were signed. The most prominent among them was a preferential trade agreement aimed at enhancing bilateral trade relations. Al-Yousef encouraged a shift from general trade delegations to more specialized and agile business missions, noting this would yield better results. He also expressed Oman’s readiness to support Iranian investors and traders and proposed the creation of an online platform showcasing trade data, tenders, and investment opportunities in both countries. The platform would also feature information on health tourism and other economic sectors. The Omani minister proposed that, instead of Omanis traveling to Iran for medical and educational services, top Iranian universities and hospitals establish branches in Oman. He suggested that skilled Iranian doctors could serve patients at these Omani-based facilities. He also indicated that Oman’s knowledge-based institutions are open to transferring expertise and collaborating on joint projects with their Iranian counterparts. Both parties agreed on the urgent need to operationalize identified opportunities and advance cooperation across sectors. The proposed Iran-Oman Joint Investment Fund and the suggested mechanisms for trade facilitation mark a significant step toward stronger economic ties between the two Gulf neighbors.

Tokyo Expresses Interest in Expanding Bilateral Cooperation with Tehran



TEHRAN - The Japanese Ambassador to Iran, Tamaki Tsukada, stated that Tokyo is interested in strengthening bilateral cooperation with Tehran and will relay opportunities related to the development of marine-based economic activities to the Japanese government. According to a report from Iran’s Ministry of Roads and Urban Development, Ambassador Tsukada made the remarks during a meeting with Gholamreza Kazemian, Deputy Minister for Urban Development and Architecture, and Saeed Rasouli, Deputy Minister and CEO of Iran’s Ports and Maritime Organization. The discussion focused on enhancing marine-based economic activities and the Makran coastal development project. Ambassador Tsukada emphasized that investment opportunities and proposals for cooperation in marine economic development will be conveyed to Tokyo for further consideration. During the meeting, Deputy Minister Kazemian outlined two major development initiatives: the marine-oriented development strategy and the Makran coastal expansion. He highlighted goals such as establishing industries, advancing agriculture, improving transportation and infrastructure, and increasing population settlements based on national spatial planning. He described the marine development policy as a strategic opportunity to boost trade, economic, and commercial ties, and to bridge regional development gaps. Kazemian also stressed the need to formulate a local development roadmap, draft a strategic spatial development plan for the Makran coasts, and define high-priority mega-projects in the area. In the continuation of the session, Saeed Rasouli, head of the Ports and Maritime Organization, presented the capacities of Iran’s ports and the integration of various transportation and logistics systems through the country’s ports. He also referred to the government’s responsibilities under the Seventh Development Plan, the upgrading of three ports to third-generation standards, massive investment opportunities, port digitization, and environmental cooperation efforts, including marine pollution management.

Iran Opens New Chapter in Tourism Diplomacy With Egypt, Turkey, Vatican



TEHRAN - Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts has announced a new phase in the country’s international tourism relations, highlighting recent negotiations with officials from Egypt, Turkey, and the Vatican. He also revealed five newly-approved strategic directives aimed at facilitating tourism infrastructure investment across Iran. Seyed Reza Salehi Amiri, speaking on the sidelines of a cabinet meeting, described tourism diplomacy as a vital arm of Iran’s foreign policy. He stated that during his recent trip to Cairo, highly positive discussions were held with senior Egyptian officials. “The tone of the talks reflected a mutual willingness to expand cultural and tourism exchanges between the two nations,” Salehi Amiri said. “The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has already begun implementing practical steps in this direction.” He announced that reciprocal tourism trips between Iran and Egypt will soon begin, with Iranians expected to visit cities like Cairo and Alexandria, while Egyptian tourists will have opportunities to explore Iran’s historical cities including Tehran, Isfahan, Shiraz, and Mashhad. Salehi Amiri also spoke of a new chapter in tourism relations with Turkey. Over the past two weeks, two major expert-level meetings were held with the Turkish Minister of Tourism, resulting in important agreements to expand tourism exchanges. He emphasized the need to balance the flow of tourists between the two countries, noting that approximately 3.5 million Iranians travel to Turkey annually, while the number of Turkish tourists visiting Iran is less than a third of that. “We are working on mechanisms to increase the number of Turkish visitors to Iran, and the Turkish side has expressed full readiness to enhance cooperation.”

China, Japan Reach Deal to Restart Seafood Trade

TOKYO (Dispatches) - China has agreed on procedures to resume imports of Japanese seafood products, Japan's government said on Friday, marking a step towards ending a nearly two-year trade ban.

Officials from Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and China's Customs reached the agreement during a meeting in Beijing on Wednesday, the ministry said, adding that China-bound seafood exports were expected to resume after China completes "necessary procedures".

China's General Administration of Customs said that the two countries made "substantial progress" following another round of talks on the trade of Japanese aquatic products.



Zelenskiy Accuses Russia of Another Deception by Holding Back Peace Memorandum



KYIV (Dispatches) - Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said on Thursday that Russia was engaging in "yet another deception" by failing to hand over its peace settlement proposal ahead of a potential meeting between Moscow and Kyiv.

"Even the so-called 'memorandum' they promised and seemingly prepared for more than a week has still not been seen by anyone," Zelenskiy said in his nightly video address.

"Ukraine has not received it. Our partners have not received it. Even Turkey, which hosted the first meeting, has not received the new agenda.

"Despite promises to the contrary, first and foremost to the United States of America, to President (Donald) Trump: Yet another Russian deception."

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Wednesday that Moscow had drafted a memorandum outlining a settlement position in the three-year-old conflict in Ukraine.

He suggested a second round of direct talks take place on Monday, again in the Turkish city of Istanbul.

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan, who has maintained good ties with both sides, told reporters that Russia's invitation for more talks had heightened Ankara's hopes for peace.

"The road to a resolution goes through more dialogue, more diplomacy. We are using all our diplomatic power and potential for peace," Erdogan's office quoted him as saying.

Macron Calls Recognizing Palestinian State a Moral Duty

PARIS (Dispatches) - French President Emmanuel Macron said Friday that European countries should "harden the collective position" against Israel if it does not respond appropriately to the humanitarian situation in Gaza.

With international pressure mounting on Israel over the deepening hunger crisis in Gaza, Macron said action was needed "in the next few hours and days".

He also asserted recognition of a Palestinian state with conditions was "not only a moral duty, but a political necessity".

If there was no response in line with the humanitarian situation in Gaza "in the coming hours and days ... we will have to harden our collective position," Macron said on a visit to Singapore.

This meant dropping an assumption that human rights were being respected "and apply sanctions", the French leader said hours before addressing a defence summit in the city-state.

Macron and US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth are among the world leaders, diplomats and top defense officials in Singapore this weekend for the Shangri-La Dialogue security forum. The French president will open the conference with a keynote address Friday night.

In its published Indo-Pacific strategy, France has underscored the need to "preserve a rules-based international order" in the face of "China's increasing power and territorial



claims" and its global competition with the United States.

France's own ties to the Indo-Pacific are strong, with more than 1.6 million of its citizens living in the region in French overseas territories.

Macron is on a diplomatic tour in Southeast Asia that also saw him visit Vietnam and Indonesia earlier this week.

While in Jakarta, Macron and Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto issued a joint statement condemning Israeli plans to take control of Gaza and any moves to "forcibly remove the Palestinian population from their homeland".

Paris hoped to "trigger a movement of recognition for a Palestinian state under certain conditions", including the demilitarisation of Hamas and recognition of Israel's right to exist and protect itself, Macron said in the Indonesian capital.

The humanitarian situation in Gaza remained dire despite aid beginning to trickle back into the territory after a more than two-month Israeli blockade.

Food security experts said starvation was looming for one in five people.

Israel has also intensified its military offensive in what it said was a renewed push to destroy Hamas, whose October 7, 2023 attack triggered the war.

Trump's Tariffs to Remain in Effect After Appeals Court Grants Stay

UN Secretariat Faces Potential 20% Job Cuts in Sweeping 2026 Budget Reform



WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The cash-strapped United Nations could slash 20 percent of jobs—or thousands of positions—in its executive arm under ongoing reform plans, according to an internal memo seen Thursday by AFP.

"The Secretary-General has set an ambitious target, to achieve a meaningful reduction (between 15 per cent and 20 per cent) of the regular budget for 2026, including a reduction of 20 per cent of posts, for the UN Secretariat," UN controller Chandramouli Ramanathan wrote in a message this week to dozens of department heads.

The UN's budget for 2025 totals \$3.7 billion.

The Secretariat, one of the main bodies tasked with carrying out the decisions of the Security Council and the General Assembly, employed about 35,000 people as of late 2023 — most of them in New York, but also in Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi.

The UN 80 reform initiative launched by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in March aims to streamline operations at the world body amid budgetary constraints.

Guterres recently warned of "painful" changes ahead, including staff reductions, and did obliquely raise the specter of a 20-percent cut in staffing.

The memo seen by AFP, dated May 27, asks all department heads to prepare lists of posts to eliminate by June 13, focusing on "redundant, overlapping or non-critical functions."

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - A federal appeals court temporarily reinstated the most sweeping of President Donald Trump's tariffs on Thursday, a day after a U.S. trade court ruled that Trump had exceeded his authority in imposing the duties and ordered an immediate block on them.

The United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit in Washington said it was pausing the lower court's ruling to consider the government's appeal, and ordered the plaintiffs in the cases to respond by June 5 and the administration by June 9.

Wednesday's surprise ruling by the U.S. Court of International Trade had threatened to kill or at least delay the imposition of Trump's so-called Liberation Day tariffs on imports from most U.S. trading partners and additional tariffs on goods from Canada, Mexico and China. The latter was related to his accusation that the three countries were facilitating the flow of fentanyl into the U.S.

The trade court's three-judge panel ruled that the Constitution gave Congress, not the president, the power to levy taxes and tariffs, and that the president had exceeded his authority by invoking the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, a law intended to address threats during national emergencies.

Senior Trump administration officials had said they were underpinned by the trade court's ruling, saying they expected either to prevail on appeal or employ other presidential powers to ensure the tariffs go into effect.

Trump has used the threat of charging U.S. importers costly tariffs for goods from almost every other country in the world as leverage in international trade talks, a strategy the trade court's ruling would upend. The trade court ruling had not interfered with any negotiations with top trading partners that are scheduled in the days ahead, Trump's administration said.

Trump himself wrote in a statement shared on social media that he hoped the U.S. Supreme Court would "reverse this horrible, Country threatening decision" of the trade court, while lambasting the judicial branch of government as anti-American.

"The horrific decision stated that I would have to get the approval of Congress for these Tariffs," Trump wrote on Thursday evening. "If allowed to stand, this would completely destroy Presidential Power — The Presidency would never be the same! This decision is being hailed all over the World by every Country, other than the United States of America."

Many U.S. trading partners offered careful responses. The British government said the trade court's ruling was a domestic matter for the U.S. administration



and noted it was "only the first stage of legal proceedings." Both Germany and the European Commission, the European Union's executive arm, said they could not comment on the decision.

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said the trade court's finding was "consistent with Canada's longstanding position" that Trump's tariffs were unlawful.

Financial markets, which have whipsawed in response to the twists and turns in Trump's chaotic trade war, reacted with cautious optimism to the trade court ruling, though gains in stocks on Thursday were largely limited by expectations that the court's ruling faced a potentially lengthy appeals process.

Indeed, analysts said broad uncertainty remained regarding the future of Trump's tariffs, which have cost companies more than \$34 billion in lost sales and higher costs, according to a Reuters analysis.

Some sector-specific tariffs, such as on imports of steel, aluminum and automobiles, were imposed by Trump under separate authorities on national

security grounds and were unaffected by the ruling.

The Liberty Justice Center, the nonprofit group representing five small businesses that sued over the tariffs, said the appeals court's temporary stay was a procedural step.

Jeffrey Schwab, senior counsel for the center, said the appeals court would ultimately agree with the small businesses that faced irreparable harm of "the loss of critical suppliers and customers, forced and costly changes to established supply chains, and, most seriously, a direct threat to the very survival of these businesses."

A separate federal court earlier on Thursday also found that Trump overstepped his authority in using the International Emergency Economic Powers Act for what he called reciprocal tariffs of at least 10% on goods from most U.S. trading partners and for the separate 25% levies on goods from Canada, Mexico and China related to fentanyl.

That ruling was much narrower, however, and the relief order stopping the tariffs applied only to the toy company that brought the case. The administration has appealed that ruling as well.

Following a market revolt after his major tariff announcement on April 2, Trump paused most import duties for 90 days and said he would hammer out bilateral deals with trade partners.

But apart from a pact with Britain this month, agreements remain elusive, and the trade court's ruling on the tariffs and the uncertainty of the appeals process may dissuade countries like Japan from rushing into deals, analysts said.

"Assuming that an appeal does not succeed in the next few days, the main win is time to prepare, and also a cap on the breadth of tariffs - which can't exceed 15% for the time being," said George Lagarias, chief economist at Forvis Mazars international advisers.

The trade court ruling would have lowered the overall effective U.S. tariff rate to about 6%, but the appellate court's emergency stay means it will remain at about 15%, according to estimates from Oxford Research. That is the level it has been since Trump earlier this month struck a temporary truce that reduced punishing levies on Chinese goods until late summer. By contrast, the effective tariff rate had been between 2% and 3% before Trump returned to office in January.

Trump's trade war has shaken makers of everything from luxury handbags and sneakers to household appliances and cars as the price of raw materials has risen.

U.S. Proposes 60-Day Ceasefire for Gaza; Hostage-Prisoner Swap

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - A U.S. plan for Gaza seen by Reuters on Friday proposes a 60-day ceasefire and the release of 28 Israeli hostages alive and dead in the first week, in exchange for the release of 1,236 Palestinian prisoners and the remains of 180 dead Palestinians.

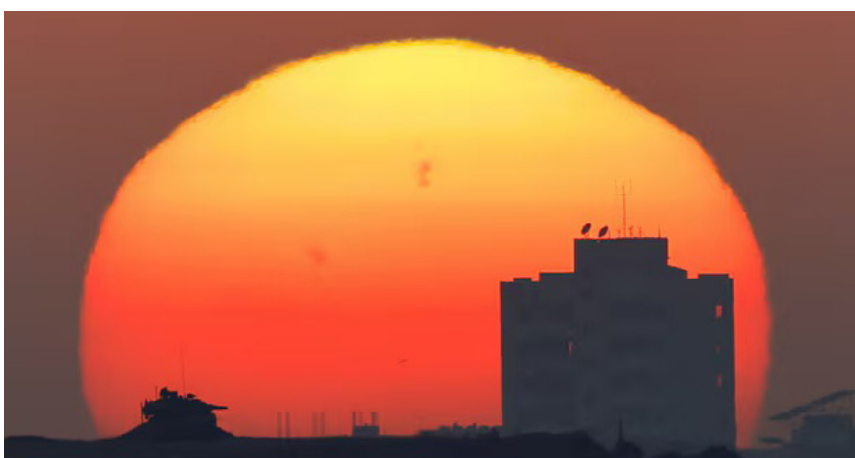
The document, which says the plan is guaranteed by U.S. President Donald Trump and mediators Egypt and Qatar, includes sending humanitarian aid to Gaza as soon as Hamas signs off on the ceasefire agreement.

The aid will be delivered by the United Nations, the Red Crescent and other agreed channels.

On Thursday, the White House said Israel had agreed to the U.S. ceasefire proposal. Israeli media said Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told the families of hostages held in Gaza that Israel had accepted the deal presented by President Trump's Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff.

The Palestinian militant group Hamas told Reuters it was reviewing the plan and would respond on Friday or Saturday.

The U.S. plan provides for Hamas to release the last 30 of the 58 remaining Israeli hostages once a permanent ceasefire is in place. Israel will also cease all military



operations in Gaza as soon as the truce takes effect, it shows.

The Israeli army will also redeploy its troops in stages.

Deep differences between Hamas and Israel have stymied previous attempts to restore a ceasefire that broke down in March.

Israel has insisted that Hamas disarm completely, be dismantled as a military and governing force and return all 58 hostages still held in Gaza before it will agree to end the war.

Hamas has rejected the demand to give up its weapons and says Israel must pull its troops out of Gaza and commit to ending the war.

Israel launched its campaign in Gaza in response to the Hamas attack in its south on October 7, 2023, that killed some 1,200 people and saw 251 Israelis taken hostage into Gaza, according to Israeli tallies.

The subsequent Israeli military campaign has killed more than 54,000 Palestinians, Gaza health officials say, and left the enclave in ruins.

Israel has come under increasing international pressure, with many European countries usually reluctant to criticize it openly demanding an end to the war and a major relief effort.



Sinner Sends Gasquet Into Retirement, Djokovic Marches On

PARIS (Dispatches) - French Open veteran Richard Gasquet's career ended in defeat by Jannik Sinner while seasoned campaigner Novak Djokovic continued his bid for a record 25th Grand Slam title by battling into the Roland Garros third round on Thursday.

Third seed Alexander Zverev, teenager Mirra Andreeva and American title contenders Coco Gauff, Jessica Pegula and Madison Keys all won on a windy afternoon but former champion Barbora Krejčíková and ninth seed Alex De Minaur crashed out.

Top seed Sinner brought the curtain down on Gasquet's long professional journey, hammering the 38-year-old 6-3 6-0 6-4 for his second win over the local favourite in as many editions of Roland Garros and then led the tributes.

"We're different generations, but it's your moment. You played in such an incredible era of tennis and everyone will recognise you, even after retirement," said Sinner, before a touching video tribute featuring Gasquet's peers.

Gasquet's compatriot Gael Monfils, also 38, lit up the evening session on Court Philippe Chatrier as he pushed fifth seeded Briton Jack Draper in a sensational match that had a partisan crowd screaming for more.

Draper eventually won 6-3 4-6 6-3 7-5 but had to battle back from 5-2 down in the fourth set to avoid a decider.

"My brain was fried out here. I'm not sure if I am going to go to sleep tonight because my brain is just all over the place with what he was doing out here," Draper said of the man he described as a magician.

While Sinner and Gasquet showcased clean hitting in their match, third seed Alexander Zverev had to chase down dozens of drop shots from Dutchman Jesper de Jong before securing a 3-6 6-1 6-2 6-3 victory.

Surprise 2024 semi-finalist Andreeva took apart the powerful Ashlyn Krueger 6-3 6-4 with her inventive approach and confirmed her calibre on the sport's slowest surface after runs to the Madrid and Rome quarter-finals this season.

"This match wasn't easy, I'd lost to her at the U.S. Open," Andreeva said, reflecting on her second-round

defeat by Krueger in New York last August.

"She's a powerful and aggressive player. I knew I had to play well ... I suffered and struggled with my serve, but I'm happy I found a way to stay calm."

Pegula, Krueger's frequent doubles partner this season and the third seed, had to battle against fellow American Ann Li but found her best level when it mattered to prevail 6-3 7-6(3).

Up next for the 2024 U.S. Open runner-up is former Paris finalist Marketa Vondroušová, after the Czech sent 25th seed Magdalena Frech packing 6-0 4-6 6-3.

Gauff moved ahead by beating unseeded Czech Tereza Valentová 6-2 6-4 while fellow Grand Slam champion Keys overcame Briton Katie Boulter 6-1 6-3 but it was the end of the road for 2021 champion Krejčíková who fell 6-3 6-3 to Veronika Kudermetova.

Three-time French Open champion Djokovic had to work but the 38-year-old continued his quest for more history after his 100th title in Geneva last week as he beat Frenchman Corentin Moutet 6-3 6-2 7-6(1).

The Serbian's sixth victory in a row marked his longest winning streak since his run to the Paris Olympics gold at the same venue last year.

"Mentally you have to be concentrated throughout such a match. Corentin is very quick, he is a fighter, especially in the third set," said Djokovic, who came close to losing the third set.

"He had set point. At that moment anything could happen but I stayed in the set. At the right time I found a good serve."

Teen sensation Joao Fonseca beat Pierre-Hugues Herbert 7-6(4) 7-6(4) 6-4 in a clash where French and Brazilian fans competed for vocal superiority at a packed Court 14.

Up next for Fonseca is a mouth-watering clash with Draper.

Czech Jakub Mensík, who at 19 is a year older than Fonseca but equally talented as confirmed by his Miami triumph, failed to conjure up any magic and fell 2-6 1-6 6-4 6-3 6-3 against Henrique Rocha of Portugal.

Palmer Pulls Strings as Chelsea Crush Real Betis to Win Conference League



WROCLAW (Dispatches) - Chelsea roared back to beat Real Betis 4-1 in the UEFA Conference League final in Wroclaw, becoming the first club to complete a clean sweep of European trophies.

Manuel Pellegrini's enterprising Betis caught the favourites cold with an early goal from Abde Ezzalzouli against a flat-footed and listless Chelsea.

But Enzo Maresca's second-half substitutions injected energy and Cole Palmer changed the complexion of the game in a five-minute spell, setting up Enzo Fernandez and Nicolas Jackson to score.

Substitute Jadon Sancho made the game safe in the 83rd minute as the Spanish side faded in their first European final and Moises Caicedo added gloss to the scoreline.

Chelsea are the first club to win the full set of five UEFA club tournaments — the Champions League, Europa League, Conference League, Super Cup and the now-defunct Cup Winners' Cup.

They have also won their first silverware since Todd Boehly's consortium took over from former owner Roman Abramovich in 2022, following an era of unprecedented success for the club.

Boehly was on the pitch at the end, savouring the win that seemed unlikely when Betis were in control in the first half.

Chelsea have ended the season with a flourish after also securing a place in next season's Champions League following a fourth-placed finish in the Premier League.

Maresca, in his first season at Stamford Bridge, said he hoped Conference League glory would be a launchpad for the club.

"The club have invested lots of money in the last three or four years, so they are also waiting for results," Maresca told TNT Sports.

Wily Inter Aim to Stop PSG Juggernaut in Champions League Final



BERLIN (Dispatches) - The climax to the European season has thrown up a mouthwatering clash of opposing styles and ideas of how to build a team. It is a contest between one of the continent's old guard and one of the state-owned modern superclubs.

Despite enormous spending, PSG have never won the most glamorous prize in European club football and this is just their second final since the transformative Qatari takeover of the team from the French capital in 2011.

In 2020, during the pandemic, they lost the final to Bayern Munich behind closed doors in Lisbon, despite the presence of Kylian Mbappé and Neymar up front.

Adding an ageing and unmotivated Lionel Messi to that front line took them further away from European glory than at any point in the last decade and their thrilling run to Munich has come in the season after Mbappé followed the South American superstar duo out of the exit door.

Mbappé thought a move to last year's Champions League winners Real Madrid would improve his chances of getting his hands on the trophy. Instead Luis Enrique's thrilling young Paris side -- average age under 24 -- has taken Europe by storm.

When they last came to Munich in November and lost 1-0 to Bayern, they were in danger of being knocked out during the league phase in the first season since the competition's new format was introduced.

A brilliant comeback win in January against 2023 champions Manchester City was the catalyst for a superb run as PSG eliminated three more Premier League sides -- Liverpool, Aston Villa and Arsenal -- en route to the final.

Ousmane Dembélé has been the standout with 33 goals in all competitions, ably assisted by fellow forwards Desire Doué, Bradley Barcola and January signing Khvicha Kvaratskhelia.

Others like Achraf Hakimi, formerly of Inter and perhaps the world's best full-back, and Italy goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma have also been superb for the French league and cup double winners.

Thunder Thrash Wolves in Game 5, Storm Into NBA Finals

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Even before the basket went in, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander spread his arms wide to his side in celebration.

Cason Wallace left his right arm high in the air, just waiting for the ball to drop through the basket.

Soon enough, inevitably, it did.

Wallace's corner 3-pointer at the buzzer was the exclamation point on a dominant first quarter for Gilgeous-Alexander and the Oklahoma City Thunder, who rode the hot start to a 124-94 home win that ended the Western Conference finals in Game 5 on Wednesday.

Gilgeous-Alexander finished with 34 points, eight assists and seven rebounds as the Thunder closed out the best-of-seven series.

"I didn't want to go back to Minnesota travel-wise and I wanted the fans to enjoy the moment with us," Gilgeous-Alexander said.

The Thunder are headed to the NBA Finals for the first time since 2012 and the fifth time in franchise history. The first three appearances came when the club was based in Seattle.

Oklahoma City will host Game 1 of the Finals against either the



Indiana Pacers or the New York Knicks on June 5.

"Happy for this moment, but this isn't our goal," Gilgeous-Alexander said. "This isn't the end of our road."

The Wednesday outcome was evident early, as the Thunder buried the Timberwolves under the weight of a stifling defense and playmaking by Gilgeous-Alexander, Jalen Williams and Chet

Holmgren.

Oklahoma City put the game away quickly, leading by 17 after the first quarter and 33 at halftime.

The Timberwolves saw their season end in the Western Conference finals for the second consecutive year.

"I'm going to work my butt off this summer," Timberwolves star Anthony Edwards said. "Nobody's going to work harder than me this summer, I'll tell you that much."

Gilgeous-Alexander dished out five of his assists in the opening quarter as he again showed why he was selected the NBA's Most Valuable Player.

After the Timberwolves scored the game's first hoop, Gilgeous-Alexander had a hand in all five Oklahoma City baskets during an 11-0 run that started the Thunder's march toward the blowout.

In that stretch, Gilgeous-Alexander had four assists -- three on Holmgren buckets -- and drained a finger roll to start the separation.

On Monday, the Timberwolves started Game 4 red hot from the field but ultimately fell 128-126.

On Wednesday, Minnesota struggled on offense from the start, going just 1-for-11 from the field over the first five minutes.

Ronaldo's Saudi Exit Looms, Officials Scramble to Keep Him From Walking

RIYADH (Dispatches) - Saudi Arabian officials are in "difficult" talks to keep Cristiano Ronaldo in the country, a source with knowledge of the negotiations told AFP on Thursday, after the star footballer suggested he was leaving Al Nassr.

There is an ongoing difficult negotiation to convince Ronaldo to stay and play" in the Saudi Pro League next season, said the source from the Public Investment Fund (PIF), a major investor in Saudi football.

"First option is a transfer to Al Hilal with an opportunity to feature in the FIFA Club World Cup or to Asia champion Al Ahli," the source added.

Ronaldo posted "This chapter is over" overnight Monday, hours after the Saudi Pro League wrapped up with Al Nassr finishing third



and trophyless once again.

A special transfer window opens from June 1-10 to allow the 32 teams involved in the Club World Cup to sign players.

FIFA president Gianni Infantino last week said "there are discussions" over the former United, Real Madrid, Juventus and Sporting Lisbon star playing at the enlarged tournament in the United States starting on June 14.

Portuguese forward Ronaldo, 40, joined Al Nassr in 2022 from Manchester United and his contract expires at the end of next month.

"Ronaldo's presence is a key factor in developing the Saudi league in the last two years and a half. He opens the door for elite and young players to come to Saudi Arabia," the source added.