

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei in His Message for Hajj Pilgrims Said Muslim Countries Must Cut Off All Aid to the Zionist Regime and Prevent It From Committing Further Savage Acts Against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip

IRAN NEWS

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi Have Expressed Their Eagerness to Enhance Bilateral Relations Between Their Countries

VOL. XXIX, No. 8283 TEHRAN Price 50,000 Rials

www.irannewsdaily.com

SATURDAY JUNE 07, 2025 KHORDAD 17, 1404

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Russia Confirms \$5b Investment in Iran's Gas Sector

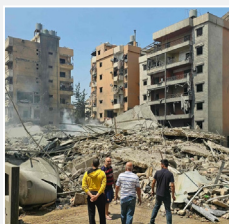
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INTERNATIONAL

Israel Strikes South Beirut, Vows to Keep Hitting Lebanon

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Iran Blasts U.S. Veto on Gaza Ceasefire Resolution



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - The spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry has denounced the United States for vetoing a UN Security Council resolution that called for an immediate ceasefire and full humanitarian access in Gaza, where the Israeli regime has killed more than 54,000 Palestinians during the past 20 months.

Esmail Baghaei stated on Thursday that the U.S. move to block the draft resolution, which was supported by 14 of the 15 members of the council, marks a blatant disrespect by the US government for the global and regional demand to end Israeli brutalities.

"This action also clearly represents the moral decline of American policymakers, and constitutes evidence of their complicity and partnership in the massacre and infanticide in occupied Palestine," he noted.

Baghaei then recalled the extensive record of the US in preventing any serious action by the UN Security Council to hold the Zionist regime to account.

"Over the past few decades, the U.S. government has vetoed Security Council resolutions more than 50 times, standing against the international community's demand to enforce law and prevent gross violations of international law by the Zionist regime, thereby consolidating the occupying regime's impunity.

"This is undoubtedly one of the main factors in the continuation of the occupation and colonial genocide by Israel, making the US a direct accomplice in the crimes of the Israeli regime," the Iranian diplomat said.

The spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman also emphasized the responsibility of all governments and international organizations to confront the Zionist regime's war crimes and genocide, calling upon regional and Muslim states to utilize all their individual and collective capacities to force Israel and its allies to stop the massacre in Gaza and confront the growing threat of the Zionist entity against regional and global peace and security.

Iran Will Never Abandon Enrichment



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - A political advisor to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has reaffirmed Iran's right to enrich uranium, saying the country is drafting a counter-proposal to the latest US nuclear offer.

"After receiving the American proposal regarding the Iranian nuclear program, we are now preparing our new counter-proposal," Ali Shamkhani said in an interview with Lebanon's al-Mayadeen television network.

He added that the US proposal for a nuclear agreement was not well thought out and made no mention whatsoever of lifting the sanctions.

He criticized the omission of sanctions relief in the US offer, describing it as a "fundamental" issue for Tehran.

"There is no mention whatsoever of lifting sanctions in the latest American proposal, even though the issue of sanctions is a fundamental matter for Iran," the Leader's aide said.

Shamkhani underlined, "Iran will never relinquish its natural rights."

He said Iran will not allow the United States to achieve its objectives regarding the elimination of Tehran's peaceful nuclear program and reduction of the level of uranium enrichment to zero.

Meanwhile Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi strongly dismissed the notion of military aggression's being capable of "eliminating" Iran's nuclear energy program, highlighting the invulnerable nature of the country's nuclear facilities to such attacks.

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK



U.S. Cannot Do a Damn Thing on Nuclear Issue

TEHRAN - Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei says uranium enrichment is the key to Iran's nuclear issue, dismissing U.S. proposals for Tehran to ultimately stop all enrichment in the country.

"The first word of the U.S. is that Iran should not have a nuclear industry and should rely on the United States," the Leader said in a televised speech from the mausoleum of Imam Khomeini in southern Tehran.

"Our response to the U.S.' nonsense is clear: they cannot do a damn thing in this matter," the Leader said as Iran marked the 36th anniversary of the passing of the founder of the Islamic Republic.

His remarks came after President Donald Trump outlined his administration's position when it comes to nuclear negotiations with Iran and said Tehran will not be allowed "any enrichment of uranium."

U.S. media reports said Tuesday the Trump administration is proposing an arrangement that would permit "limited low-level uranium enrichment on Iranian soil for a to-be-determined period of time."

"Under the proposal, the United States would facilitate the building of nuclear power reactors for Iran and negotiate the construction of enrichment facilities managed by a consortium of regional countries," The New York Times wrote. "Once Iran began receiving any benefits from those promises, it would have to stop all enrichment in the country."

Ayatollah Khamenei said, "Uranium enrichment is the key to the nuclear issue, and the enemies have also put their fingers on enrichment."

He cited the 1980s experience of U.S. unreliability in providing fuel to Iran, when the United States and Europeans denied 20% enriched uranium to the Islamic Republic.

"Why are you interfering? Whether Iran has enrichment or not, what does it matter to you? Who are you? the Leader said, addressing the U.S.

Ayatollah Khamenei said Iran has achieved a complete nuclear fuel cycle with great efforts, adding the nuclear industry is not just for energy.

"The nuclear industry is a parent industry. Numerous scientific fields are affected by the nuclear industry."

Ayatollah Khamenei said Iran, with a growing, stable and authoritative political system born of a great revolution under the leadership of Imam Khomeini, surprised the Western world.

"The leader of our revolution is a great man whose presence in the world is still tangible after thirty-odd years since his passing, and the impact of his revolution is clearly visible to people around the world," Ayatollah Khamenei said.

"The sharp decline in America's position in the world is due to his presence, and hatred of Zionists is due to his revolution," he added.

Ayatollah Khamenei touched on "a movement towards aversion to Western values" in the world, saying it is rooted in the revolution created by Imam Khomeini.

Iran's Ambassador to UN Condemns Unfounded U.S. Allegations



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has categorically condemned the latest allegations made against the Islamic Republic by the United States as "unfounded."

Iran's ambassador to the United Nations, Amir Saeid Iravani, commented in a letter to the UN chief and the president of the Security Council on Thursday.

The United States on Wednesday vetoed a UN Security Council resolution calling for an "immediate, unconditional and permanent" ceasefire in Gaza. The US was the only nation to oppose the resolution. Fourteen others, including the United Kingdom, voted in favor. There were no abstentions.

Iravani said US' allegations against Iran during the meeting on the UN Security Council "were entirely unfounded, devoid of credibility, or legal foundation."

He stressed that Washington's anti-Iran allegations were aimed at shielding the Israeli regime from accountability for its ongoing violations of international law in Gaza.

"At a time when the Security Council must act with unity and urgency to end the unparalleled suffering of the Palestinian people, enduring relentless bombardment, forced displacement, famine, and the systematic destruction of civilian infrastructure, it is regrettable and shameful that the United States has once again chosen to obstruct the Council from fulfilling its mandate and to divert attention through politically motivated accusations against others," he wrote.

"This calculated deflection serves a single, cynical purpose: to shield the occupying and illegitimate Israeli regime from accountability for its ongoing and egregious violations of international law," the Iranian diplomat said.

"Even more egregiously, the United States' veto of the draft resolution, proposed by the Council's elected members and intended to establish an immediate, permanent, and unconditional ceasefire, as well as to ensure unimpeded humanitarian access, represents a blatant dereliction and

abuse of the responsibilities entrusted to the Security Council under the UN Charter," Iravani stated.

"This is not an isolated incident, but rather a continuation of a deeply troubling pattern we have witnessed throughout the past 19 months of Israel's genocidal war against the people of Gaza," he noted.

"By once again shielding the occupying regime from accountability, the United States has actively enabled the continuation of a catastrophic military campaign that has already killed tens of thousands of civilians, most of them women and children, and driven Gaza to the edge of absolute collapse," he continued.

Iravani emphasized that Iran's principled position in support of the Palestinian people and their legitimate resistance against occupation is fully grounded in the UN Charter, international law, and relevant UN resolutions.

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Iravani said blaming others for the consequences of Israel's unlawful and brutal campaign is nothing but a willful distortion designed to absolve the Israeli regime of its crimes.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran's principled position and support for the Palestinian people and their legitimate struggle and resistance against occupation are fully grounded in the United Nations Charter, international law, and relevant UN resolutions, in particular numerous Security Council resolutions. Blaming others for the consequences of Israel's unlawful and brutal campaign is nothing but a willful distortion designed to absolve the Israeli regime of its crimes," he pointed out.

Why Imam Khomeini Became the Imam



By Hamid Reza Naghashian

Faced with the question of why Imam Khomeini (may God's mercy be upon him) became the Imam, we can consider a reverse argument: why didn't others become the Imam?

Answering why others did not become the Imam is neither simple nor entirely possible, because many of those who didn't become Imam were actually preparing the ground for him to become who he was. At the same time, it's undeniable that many others failed to recognize him, were preoccupied with their own narrow expectations of religion, or let their worldly desires shape their religious understanding.

In other words, the uniqueness of Imam Khomeini plays a central role here. The fact that the Imam looked at religion through the lens of the Prophet's mission, while others behaved like followers of the Prophet's companions—passive, submissive, and sometimes seeking ease—is, in my view, the heart of the matter.

Imam Khomeini saw humiliation and exile not as misfortunes, but as integral to his mission, and he prepared his chest to face them. The foundation of what made him who he was lay in his perception of duty—awakening the people. This was the very duty the Holy Prophet received under the phrase "clear delivery (balagh-e mubin)", and Imam Khomeini did the same. The false front opposing him crumbled, as he put it, the moment the chant "Allahu Akbar" (God Is Great) rose—the phrase did its work.

One must understand that the Pahlavi regime, even with the support of the royal court, never held all the power in Iran. In fact, they were more aware of this reality than anyone else. From the moment Reza Shah was chosen by the British due to the country's instability—to serve their interests and create security for them—up to the era when modernization clashed with traditional and native Iranian culture, and the regime responded to the people's attachment to tradition with bayonets and massacres, any thoughtful person could see that continuing British goals in Iran meant pursuing Reza Shah's path under the guise of modernity.

Furooghi, acting as a British agent, legitimized and implemented this plan, putting Mohammad Reza on the throne—a throne that essentially served only as a watchdog to ensure the Iranian people wouldn't challenge foreign interests.

Look at the Tehran Conference: the leaders of the major world powers—Soviet Russia, Britain, and America—held a meeting in Tehran without even informing the Shah and made decisions about Iran's future. Or take the Shah's own memoirs, where he writes: "My mother asked me why I was upset, and I told her: for example, I'm the king of this country, and yet without my permission, the Americans command our air force to go help them in Vietnam and fight the Vietnamese people." Or when, during the Dhofar Rebellion in Oman, the British ordered the Shah to deploy Iran's helicopter forces to crush the rebels, and he complied without question.

Analyzing the political climate between 1963 and the years 1977-78 shows that the country was effectively controlled by three major powers with varying shares. These figures may help to better grasp the distribution of power: the Shah and the royal court held no more than 20% of the power. The remaining 80% was divided between post-1953 America—with its formal advisory dominance over Iran—and Britain, which, although less than the U.S., still had significant control through its anti-Soviet communication network, influence in Iran's intelligence service, SAVAK, and Freemason networks.

In my view, of the 80% of power beyond the court, about 50% belonged to the Americans, and about 30% to the British. Minor powers like France, the Soviet Union, the Zionist regime, and the Baha'is—through their parties at the time—also held small 1-2% shares and shouldn't be ignored.

This power estimate is what enabled the Imam to be exiled. It was this understanding of power distribution that made the Imam's critical stance toward the Shah and the court's subservience to foreign powers so influential in the minds of the people. It was this very lack of independence that resonated with the Shi'a Iranian spirit of Ashura and Imam Hussein (AS). The Imam, knowing his people well, identified this emotional chord and struck it from his pulpit in Najaf, Iraq.

His strategy focused on the people, presenting Pure Islam—an Islam capable of shaping the country's governance. The Provisional Government after the Revolution failed to grasp the Founder's vision, and in their negotiations with Brzezinski in Algiers tried to befriend America, which led to the embassy takeover—seen as the den of spies. The Imam seized the moment and transformed the successful struggle against the royal court into a victorious battle against the remaining 50% of power in Iran, thereby shifting the fight from domestic tyranny to anti-colonial resistance—a struggle that intelligently continues to this day.

Without a doubt, the indirect negotiations with Trump's team in Oman will mark another golden chapter in confronting the U.S. And Imam Khomeini's becoming the Imam will ultimately be demonstrated through his close bond with the people and his life-giving leadership in securing true independence—culminating in the continued guidance of his worthy successor, the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei (may his shadow be extended).

Certainly, the time will come to confront the remaining 30% of power—those who have taken hold of the country's mismanagement—and after this victory, the groundwork will be laid for the reappearance of the Divine Proof, Imam Mahdi (may God hasten his reappearance), God willing.

IRAN NEWS



Tehran, Tashkent Sign MoU to Boost Transit Cooperation

TEHRAN - Iran and the Republic of Uzbekistan have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) aimed at enhancing transportation and transit cooperation, in the presence of Iran's Minister of Roads and Urban Development.

The MoU was signed during a meeting attended by Iranian Minister Farzaneh Sadek, Uzbek Minister of Transport and Communications Ilhom Makhkamov, and Deputy Minister of Roads and Urban Development and Head of Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization Saïd Rasouli.

The agreement on transit and investment cooperation was signed by Bekzod Nurmatovich Kholmatov, Director General of Strategic Policy at Uzbekistan's Ministry of Transport, and Kazem Salehi, Director General of Transit, Logistics, and Agreements at Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization.

Italian Republic Day Celebrated in Tehran



By: F. Taherpoor

TEHRAN - The Italian Embassy in Tehran, on Monday June 2, marked Italy's Republic Day with an official celebration attended by prominent Iranian dignitaries, underscoring the strong and long-standing ties between the two nations.

The event was graced by the presence of Seyed Abbas Araghchi Takht-Ravanchi, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs; Maryam Jalali-Dehkordi, Deputy Minister of Cultural Heritage; and Seyed Reza Salehi Amiri, President of the Iranology Foundation.

Italian Ambassador Paola Amadei opened the event with a speech emphasizing Italy's unwavering commitment to peace and international dialogue. She highlighted that dialogue remains a cornerstone of the historic bilateral relations between Italy and Iran—an essential value now more than ever in an increasingly turbulent global context.

As part of the celebration, a special exhibition was unveiled showcasing the achievements of Italian women scientists. The exhibition aimed to spotlight their contributions to scientific research and innovation for the benefit of all humanity.

Italy's Festa della Repubblica, held annually on June 2nd, commemorates the 1946 referendum in which Italians chose to abolish the monarchy and establish a republic. The occasion is celebrated worldwide by Italian embassies and consulates as a symbol of democratic values and national unity.

Iran Shares Urban Regeneration Initiatives With Malaysian Minister of Housing



TEHRAN - On the sidelines of the Second Session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly, Iranian officials, led by Deputy Minister of Roads and Urban Development and CEO of the Urban Regeneration Company of Iran, Abdolreza Golpayegani, held bilateral meetings with representatives from various countries.

According to a statement from the Urban Regeneration Company of Iran, the high-level UN-Habitat Assembly took place at the organization's headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. The event drew over 1,200 senior delegates from UN member states, including 42 ministers, 14 deputy ministers, as well as mayors, governors, civil society organizations, and regional groups, all gathered to address some of the most complex urban challenges of the modern era.

During the event, Golpayegani met with Nga Kor Ming, Malaysia's Minister of Housing and Local Government. At the start of the meeting, Minister Nga emphasized the significance of the current year due to Malaysia's presidency of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). He also thanked Iran for its support of Malaysia's candidacy to chair the UN-Habitat Assembly for the 2025–2027 term and requested continued guidance and experience-sharing from Iran.

Minister Nga also highlighted Malaysia's upcoming role as host of the 7th Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (APMCHUD) later this year. He invited Iran to actively participate and contribute to the success of the conference.

In response, Golpayegani conveyed greetings from Iran's Minister of Roads and Urban Development and presented an overview of Iran's initiatives in land provision and affordable housing development over recent years. He outlined the Iranian government's ongoing commitment to these efforts.

The deputy minister also provided insights into the current state of informal settlements, deteriorated urban fabrics, and historical-cultural urban zones in Iran. He detailed the Urban Regeneration Company's strategies for improving living conditions in these areas.

Russia Confirms \$5b Investment in Iran's Gas Sector

TEHRAN - Kazem Jalali, Iran's Ambassador to Russia, announced that Moscow has finalized nearly \$5 billion of an expected \$8 billion investment in Iran's gas industry. The remaining agreements are progressing toward finalization, he said during a meeting with prominent Russian Iranologists at the Iranian Embassy in Moscow.

According to the embassy's report, participants in the meeting included Vladimir Sazhin, senior researcher; Nina Mamadova, head of Iran studies; and experts Irina Fyodorova and Anastasia Abukhova from the Institute of Oriental Studies at the Russian Academy of Sciences. Professors Arabajan and Lana Ravandi also joined the exchange, which focused on cultural, economic, and political issues.

Jalali emphasized Russia's growing role in Iran's energy sector, especially in gas field development, stating, "In 2024, Russia became Iran's largest foreign investor."

Highlighting recent progress in Iran-Russia relations, Jalali noted that a comprehensive strategic partnership agreement between the two nations has been signed. Additionally, a free trade agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) has come into effect. These developments have elevated bilateral ties to a strategic level, with regular high-level exchanges expected to continue—including an imminent visit to Tehran by Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Among other updates, Jalali revealed that 50,000 hectares of land have been acquired to advance the Rasht-Astara railway project, a crucial section of the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC). This land will be transferred to Russia to begin geological studies.

He also mentioned progress in financial cooperation, stating that Iran's "Shetab" and Russia's "Mir" banking networks are now connected. This allows for transactions by Iranian students in Russia, tourists, and small-scale traders, with further integration planned.

Jalali described Iranologists as vital assets in bilateral relations, asserting that understanding between the peoples of both countries is essential for strengthening ties.

Marking the 36th anniversary of the death of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini,



Jalali cited recent remarks by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, calling Khomeini a transformative figure both inside Iran and globally. Referring to Khomeini's famous letter to Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, Jalali highlighted the late leader's deep insights and prescient critique of both capitalist and communist systems.

"This letter reflected his unique interest in Russia and Eurasia," Jalali said, noting that such outreach to Soviet leadership was rare in global diplomatic norms.

He added that today's Russian leadership appears increasingly aligned with Khomeini's vision, especially in opposition to Western monopolistic behavior, which Jalali cited as a root of both countries' friction with the West—particularly over Iran's nuclear rights.

Responding to questions about indirect talks with the United States, Jalali stressed that Iran is firm in defending its right to enrich uranium. "If the Americans insist on removing this right, the negotiations will stall," he warned. "But if they accept this right, progress can be made over time."

Ali Mohaqqueq, research counselor at the Iranian embassy, called for a reevaluation of archival documents from the October Revolution through the formation of the Soviet Union, noting their historical significance.

Vladimir Sazhin recalled his experience witnessing the funeral of Ayatollah Khomeini in Tehran, describing it as a monumental moment. "I saw millions of mourning Iranians dressed in black. It seemed as though the entire nation had gathered in the capital."

Sazhin criticized former U.S. President Donald Trump's stance on Iran's nuclear program, particularly his demand for zero enrichment, calling it a strategic mistep.

Nina Mamadova, head of Iran studies at the Institute of Oriental Studies, stated, "Regardless of politics, Iran itself is what matters to us as scholars of the country."

Throughout the session, the Russian Iranologists posed various questions and suggestions related to cultural and economic cooperation, all of which were addressed by Ambassador Jalali.

Economic Capacities of Iran Provide a Strong Foundation for Expanding Iran-Germany Relations

TEHRAN - The head of Iran's Chamber of Commerce and the German Ambassador to Tehran recently met to discuss strengthening bilateral economic relations between the two countries.

Samad Hassanzadeh, President of Iran's Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, expressed his satisfaction with the positive outlook of the German ambassador on enhancing ties between Iran and Germany. He emphasized that Iran's economic capacities offer a suitable foundation for the development of relations between the two nations. Hassanzadeh also noted that the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance has established the necessary frameworks and guarantees to attract foreign investments, signaling Iran's readiness to welcome foreign capital.

Highlighting Germany's prominent role in the industrial sector, Hassanzadeh pointed out that many of the first industrial machines and equipment installed in various Iranian factories—such as in machinery manufacturing, tractor production, automotive, and food industries—were imported from Germany. However, these facilities now require modernization and upgrading.

He stressed the importance of advancing technology levels in Iranian industries to boost the competitiveness of Iranian products. Currently, Iranian products have the quality to be marketed in Europe, but increasing competitiveness hinges on industrial renewal.

Acknowledging the eagerness of Iranian and German economic actors to expand cooperation, Hassanzadeh cited sanctions and financial exchange restrictions as significant obstacles to broadening these ties. He added that efforts to lift sanctions would further facilitate industrial modernization.

Hassanzadeh described global peace and stability as vital needs today, urging governments to ensure that all people can optimally benefit from their own and each other's capacities. He expressed confidence that Iranian goods and services can capture a strong



market share in Europe if conditions for expanding bilateral trade are enabled.

Markus Potzel, Germany's Ambassador to Tehran, echoed the positive sentiments, saying, "We are pleased that despite all challenges, economic relations between Iran and Germany continue, with Germany remaining Iran's largest European economic partner."

Acknowledging sanctions as undeniable barriers to trade, Potzel expressed optimism that Iran-U.S. talks would soon yield positive results, ideally leading to sanction relief.

The ambassador highlighted Iran's considerable economic potential in mining, industry, and agriculture, noting that Iran ranks among the top ten countries worldwide in terms of resource diversity. Beyond natural resources, he praised the high level of knowledge and expertise among the Iranian people.

Potzel referenced the recent AgroFood exhibition, which saw the participation of several German companies, describing Iran's growing food industry as a promising sector for expanding cooperation.

Shahin Asghari, head of the Iran-Germany Joint Chamber of Commerce, emphasized the importance of groundwork for readiness to expand international trade opportunities in the event of sanctions being lifted. He called for the design of joint projects and the development of viable economic cooperation packages.

Asghari also underscored the necessity of removing restrictive regulations to create favorable conditions for foreign companies' presence in Iran.

The meeting between Iran's Chamber of Commerce and the German ambassador highlighted the strong economic potential of Iran as a platform for deepening Iran-Germany relations, with a focus on industrial modernization, foreign investment attraction, and overcoming sanctions to unlock further cooperation opportunities.

Preferential Trade Terms Established With Many Neighboring Countries



TEHRAN - Minister of Industry, Mine, and Trade, Seyyed Mohammad Atabak, announced that preferential trade agreements have been established with many of Iran's neighboring countries, allowing for imports at zero or significantly reduced tariffs.

Speaking on Wednesday evening during a meeting with economic actors and industry representatives in Kurdistan Province, Atabak emphasized that no previous administration has signed as many international agreements as the current 14th administration. One of its major achievements, he noted, is the implementation of preferential trade terms enabling zero-tariff exports to many neighboring states.

Atabak stated that 87% of the goods Iran can export to the Eurasian region are now eligible for zero tariffs. Additionally, 414 product categories are being exported to Oman under zero-tariff terms, while 290 categories are imported from Oman under similar conditions.

He pointed out that Kurdistan enjoys strategic advantages, such as extensive borders with Iraq and a favorable climate, but still faces economic challenges. He emphasized the need to capitalize on the province's strengths, particularly in mining. He criticized the ongoing practice of raw material exports and called for investment in value-added mineral processing.

Noting Kurdistan's prominence in agriculture, the minister argued that investing in agricultural processing industries would be economically efficient and asked the Iranian Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization to prioritize this within local industrial zones.

Atabak also announced plans to delegate decision-making authority to the provincial Mining Council in order to revive inactive mining operations.

He acknowledged that imbalances in the national energy grid pose challenges, but noted that the ministry has submitted a plan to the Ministry of Energy to adopt a more region-specific approach, in coordination with local governors and officials. As part of an agreement with the energy ministry, nighttime power restrictions on industrial and mining units will be lifted.

Iran to Send Trade Delegation to China Soon



TEHRAN - The Chairman and executive board of the Iran-China Joint Chamber of Commerce recently met with the President and Vice President of Iran's Chamber of Commerce to discuss the upcoming official visit of the Iranian President to China, accompanied by a large trade delegation.

Majid Hariri, head of the Iran-China Joint Chamber of Commerce, emphasized the significant economic and political importance of this forthcoming trip. He highlighted China's role as Iran's largest trading partner, noting that trade between the two countries reached approximately \$56 billion last year. A substantial portion of Iran's exports, particularly to the Emirates, were destined for China.

Hariri further underscored the vast potential for expanded cooperation between Iran and China. He pointed out that the Joint Chamber actively participates in all major trade events held in China and stressed the importance of leveraging the capacities of joint chambers of commerce. "The Iran Chamber and all its bodies must work collaboratively with synergy," he said.

Referring to upcoming economic events in China scheduled for July and September, Hariri announced that the Iran-China Joint Chamber will maintain a strong presence with active pavilions at these events. Representatives from regional chambers across Iran will also participate.

The meeting also addressed plans for a 200-member trade delegation to accompany the President on his trip to China, discussing the general agenda for the visit.

Samad Hassanzadeh, President of Iran's Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, drawing on the experience of the Iran-China Joint Chamber, stated that this chamber should coordinate the composition of the trade delegation due to its expertise and deep understanding of Iranian traders and business environments in China.

Bolivia Leftist Rodriguez Back in Presidential Race

LA PAZ (Dispatches) - Bolivian Senate leader Andronico Rodriguez is eligible to run in the nation's presidential elections later this year, a constitutional court confirmed on Thursday, while former President Evo Morales remains out of the running. Rodriguez, a leftist with roots in Bolivia's fractured ruling Movement for Socialism party, initially faced difficulties registering his own party for the race. Morales, meanwhile, is constitutionally barred from running, though he has called for his supporters to take to the streets to demand his eligibility.



EU Voices Support for ICC After U.S. Sanctions Judges



BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - The European Union strongly supports the International Criminal Court, the head of the bloc's highest political body said on Friday, after U.S. President Donald Trump's administration imposed sanctions on four judges at the court.

Antonio Costa, president of the European Council, which represents national governments of the 27 member states, said the court is "a cornerstone of international justice" and said its independence and integrity must be protected.

Costa spoke a day after Washington imposed sanctions on four judges at the ICC in unprecedented retaliation for the war tribunal's issuance of an arrest warrant for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and a past decision to open a case into alleged war crimes by U.S. troops in Afghanistan.

The order names Solomy Balungi Bossa of Uganda, Luz del Carmen Ibanez Carranza of Peru, Reine Adelaide Sophie Alapini Gansou of Benin and Beti Hohler of Slovenia.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said these judges had "actively engaged in the ICC's illegitimate and baseless actions targeting America or our close ally, Israel".

The ICC and some of its member states are urging the European Union to use its blocking statute, which bans any EU company from complying with U.S. sanctions, to counter the sanctions.

"Due to the inclusion of a citizen of an EU member state on the sanctions list, Slovenia will propose the immediate activation of the blocking act," Slovenia's foreign ministry said in a post on social media site X, late Thursday.

ICC president Judge Tomoko Akane had urged the EU already in March this year to bring the ICC into the scope of the EU's blocking statute.

Hungary's Orban Lauds MAGA Advance After Nawrocki's Win in Poland



BUDAPEST (Dispatches) - Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban said on Friday that nationalist Karol Nawrocki's victory in Poland's presidential election was "fantastically good", hailing the success of an ally of U.S. President Donald Trump.

Euro-sceptic Karol Nawrocki narrowly won the Polish presidential election on Sunday, delivering a big blow to the efforts of Donald Tusk's centrist government to cement Warsaw's pro-European orientation.

"From a Hungarian perspective, I think the outcome is fantastically good, as there is a pro-Ukrainian, pro-war, pro-Brussels liberal government operating in Poland," Orban said in an interview on state Kossuth radio.

Orban, also an ally of Trump, said he interpreted Nawrocki's victory as the "continuation of the patriot's advance."

"One could also say that the 'Washington Express' has arrived in Warsaw," Orban said, alluding to Nawrocki's election as a victory for European conservatives inspired by Trump and his Make America Great Again (MAGA) movement.

Both Tusk's government and its conservative nationalist predecessor have been staunch supporters of Ukraine in the war triggered by Russia's 2022 invasion and have been critical of Orban's tilt towards Moscow.

Nawrocki has said Poland must continue to support Kyiv's war effort, but in a break with the policy of previous governments in Warsaw, he opposes NATO membership for Ukraine.



BEIRUT (Dispatches) - Israel warned today that it will keep striking Lebanon until militant group Hezbollah has been disarmed, hours after it hit south Beirut in what Lebanese leaders called a major violation of a November ceasefire.

An Israeli military evacuation call issued ahead of Thursday's strikes sent huge numbers of residents of the southern suburbs of the Lebanese capital, long a bastion of Iran-backed Hezbollah, fleeing for their lives.

The attack on what the Israeli military said was Hezbollah's underground drone factories came on the eve of Eid al-Adha, one of the main religious festivals of the Muslim calendar.

The strikes came around an hour after Israel's military spokesman issued an evacuation call, and sent plumes of smoke billowing over Beirut.

The attack came six months after a ceasefire agreement was sealed in a bid to end hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel. "There will be no calm in Beirut, and no order or stability in Lebanon, without security for the State of Israel," Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz said in a statement.

"Agreements must be honored and if you do not do what is required, we will continue to act, and with great force." Under the ceasefire brokered by the United States and France, Lebanon committed to disarming Hezbollah, which was once reputed to be more heavily armed than the state itself.

Hezbollah sparked months of deadly hostilities by launching cross-border attacks on northern Israel in what it described as an act of solidarity with its Palestinian ally Hamas following its October 7, 2023 attack.

The war left Hezbollah massively weakened, with a string of top commanders including its longtime leader Hassan Nasrallah killed and weapons caches dotted around Lebanon incinerated.

Israel has carried out repeated strikes on south Lebanon since the truce, but strikes targeting Beirut's southern suburbs have been rare.

"Following Hezbollah's extensive use of UAVs as a central component of its terrorist attacks on the State of Israel, the terrorist organization is operating to increase production of UAVs for the next war," the military said, calling the activities "a blatant violation of the understandings between Israel and Lebanon".

Under the truce, Hezbollah fighters were to withdraw north of the Litani river, about 30 kilometers (20 miles) from the Israeli border, and dismantle any remaining military infrastructure to its south.

Israel was to withdraw all its troops from Lebanon but it has kept some in five areas it deems "strategic".

The Lebanese army has been deploying in the south and removing Hezbollah infrastructure, with Prime Minister Nawaf Salam saying Thursday that it had dismantled "more than 500 military positions and arms depots" in the area.

Following the strike on Thursday, Lebanon's leaders accused Israel of a "flagrant" ceasefire violation by launching strikes ahead of the Eid al-Adha holiday.

President Joseph Aoun voiced "firm condemnation of the Israeli aggression" and "flagrant violation of an international accord... on the eve of a sacred religious festival".

The prime minister too issued a statement condemning the strikes as a violation of Lebanese sovereignty.

One resident of southern Beirut described grabbing her children and fleeing her home after receiving an ominous warning before the strikes.

"I got a phone call from a stranger who said he was from the Israeli army," said the woman, Violette, who declined to give her last name.

Israel also issued an evacuation warning for the Lebanese village of Ain Qana, around 20 kilometers (12 miles) from the border.

Four Dead in Russian Drone Attack on Kyiv

KYIV (Dispatches) - Russia carried out a barrage of drone strikes across Ukraine overnight, killing at least four people and wounding 20 in the capital Kyiv, Ukrainian officials said Friday.

"Kyiv came under another attack involving UAVs and ballistic missiles. Rescuers are responding to the aftermath at several locations across the city," the State Emergency Service of Ukraine wrote on Telegram.

Kyiv's Mayor Vitaly Klitschko said four people have been confirmed dead in the capital, and 20 wounded - 16 of whom were hospitalised.

Ukraine's general staff said it had launched what it described as a preemptive strike on Russian airfields in Saratov and Ryazan regions, in addition to fuel reservoirs, during an overnight attack on Friday.

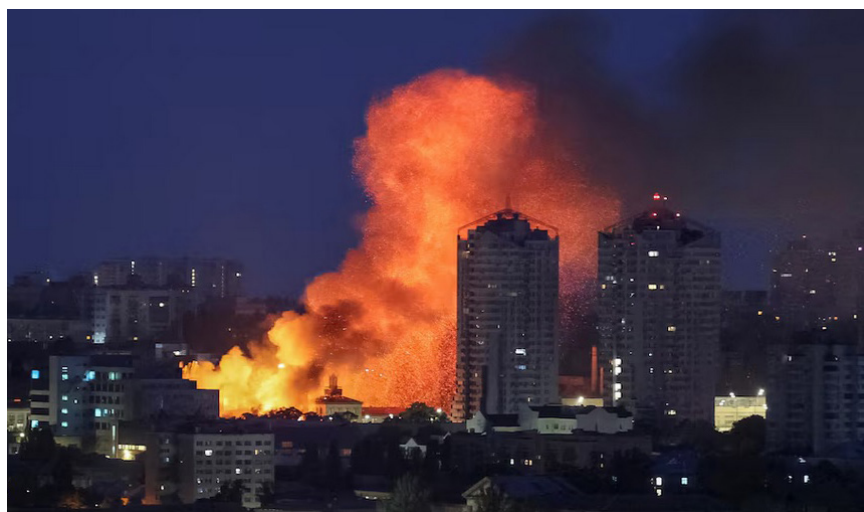
"The Ukrainian Defence Forces launched a pre-emptive strike. On the eve of the massive enemy attack, enemy airfields and other important military facilities were hit," the Ukrainian military said in a statement on the Telegram messaging app.

The attack on Kyiv followed a warning from Russian President Vladimir Putin, conveyed in a phone conversation with U.S. leader Donald Trump, that the Kremlin would hit back after Ukrainian drones destroyed several strategic bomber aircraft in attacks deep inside Russia.

Several fires broke out in various districts as a result of the shelling, including at a residential building, a civil infrastructure facility and a metal hangar.

The shelling damaged train tracks in the Kyiv region, with Ukraine's national railway operator warning of 90-minute delays.

Several strikes also hit western Ukraine's city of Lutsk and Ternopil



region.

Ukraine's air defense units downed 406 out of 452 Russian drones and missiles during an overnight attack on Friday on the capital Kyiv and other regions, the air force said.

"Today, the enemy carried out the most massive air attack on our region to date. There are multiple strikes," Ternopil's regional military administration chief Vyacheslav Negoda said.

"We have begun extinguishing fires and assessing the damage and other consequences."

The shelling in Lutsk wounded five people.

"We also have numerous broken windows in private homes, several

educational institutions, and one damaged government facility," the city's mayor Igor Polishchuk said on Telegram.

Buildings and cars were also damaged in the western city of Khmelnytsky, the region's governor said.

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Russian leader Vladimir Putin has vowed to take revenge following a recent drone attack by Kyiv on Russian soil, which destroyed billions of dollars' worth of nuclear-capable bombers.

Ukrainian spies last weekend destroyed some of Russia's strategic bomber aircraft on the ground using quadcopter drones hidden in wooden sheds.

The Kremlin was planning an unspecified response to the Ukrainian attack on Russian air bases, Trump said after a telephone conversation with Putin on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, Ukrainian strikes overnight on Russia wounded three people in the western Tula region.

Russian air defence forces shot down a drone heading for Moscow, the capital's mayor said.

"In total, an attempted attack by ten enemy drones targeting Moscow has been successfully repelled," Mayor Sergei Sobianin said.

Putin appeared to rule out a ceasefire or any direct talks with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

The Ukrainian leader said on Wednesday that Moscow had handed Kyiv an "ultimatum", demanding Ukraine fully pull out of four regions Russia claims to have annexed but does not fully control.

Trump Reinstates U.S. Travel Ban, Bars Citizens of 12 Countries

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - U.S. President Donald Trump signed a proclamation banning the citizens of 12 countries from entering the United States, saying the move was needed to protect against "foreign terrorists" and other security threats.

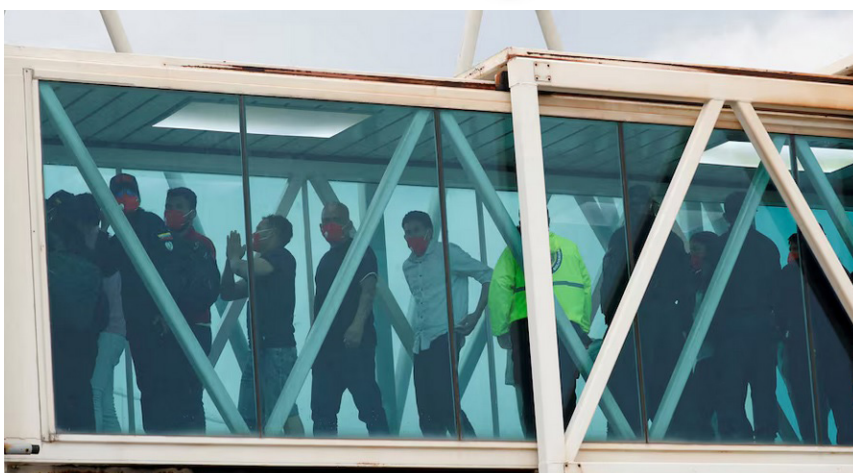
The directive is part of an immigration crackdown Trump launched this year at the start of his second term, which has included the deportation to El Salvador of hundreds of Venezuelans suspected of being gang members, as well as efforts to deny enrollments of some foreign students and deport others.

The countries affected by the latest travel ban are Afghanistan, Myanmar, Chad, Congo Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Haiti, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen.

The entry of people from seven other countries - Burundi, Cuba, Laos, Sierra Leone, Togo, Turkmenistan and Venezuela - will be partially restricted.

"We will not allow people to enter our country who wish to do us harm," Trump said in a video posted on X. He said the list could be revised and new countries could be added.

The proclamation is effective on June 9, 2025 at 12:01 a.m. EDT (0401 GMT). Visas issued before that date will not be revoked, the order said.



The African Union's Commission expressed concern on Thursday about the potential negative impact of the new travel ban on educational exchanges, commercial engagement and broader diplomatic relations.

In retaliation, Chad's President Idriss Deby instructed his government to stop issuing visas to U.S. citizens. Congo Republic's government spokesperson Thierry Mougalla said his country's inclusion was a "misunderstanding."

"Congo is neither a terrorist state, nor does it harbor any terrorists, or known for having any terrorist tendencies," Mougalla told journalists.

During his first, 2017-21 term in office, Trump announced a ban on travelers from seven Muslim-majority nations, a policy that went through several iterations before it was upheld by the Supreme Court in 2018.

Former President Joe Biden, a Democrat who succeeded Trump, repealed that ban on nationals from Iran, Libya, Somalia, Syria and Yemen in 2021, calling it "a stain on our national conscience".

Trump said the countries subject to the most severe restrictions were determined to harbor a "large-scale presence of terrorists," fail to cooperate on visa security, have an inability to verify travelers' identities, inadequate record-keeping of criminal histories and high rates of visa overstay in the United States.



Haliburton, Pacers Stun Thunder in Last Second of Game 1

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - There was never a doubt in Tyrese Haliburton's mind. The Indiana Pacers star has done it too often -- especially in the 2025 playoffs -- to not have confidence in the closing seconds.

Haliburton hit a 21-foot pull-up jumper in the final second on Thursday as the Pacers completed a stunning comeback for a 111-110 win over the Oklahoma City Thunder in Game 1 of the NBA Finals. It was Haliburton's fourth big-time shot in the closing seconds during this year's playoffs.

The Pacers hadn't led in the Thursday game until Haliburton drained his latest clutch hoop with 0.3 seconds remaining.

"Ultimate confidence in himself," Indiana's Myles Turner said of Haliburton. "Some players will say they have it, but there are other players that show it. ... He wants to be the one to hit that shot. He doesn't shy away from that moment."

In Game 5 of the first round of the playoffs, Haliburton cut through the lane to hit a driving layup with 1.3 seconds left in overtime, giving the Pacers a win and ending the series against the Milwaukee Bucks. In Game 2 of the second round, he hit a step-back 3-pointer with 1.1 seconds remaining to put Indiana up one and put the Cleveland Cavaliers into a 2-0 hole.

Then in Game 1 of the Eastern Conference finals, Haliburton hit another step-back shot that appeared to be the game-winner initially but was changed to a two that forced overtime against the New York Knicks. Indiana eventually won.

The Thursday shot merely continued the pattern.

Indiana trailed by as many as 15 points in the fourth quarter, and though the Pacers cut the deficit to one in the closing seconds, the Thunder had the ball in the Most Valuable Player's hands with a chance to put the Pacers away.

However, Andrew Nembhard guarded MVP Shai Gilgeous-Alexander tenaciously, helping force a

missed fadeaway that opened the door for Haliburton's heroics.

With 11 seconds left, Pacers coach Rick Carlisle trusted his team and didn't take a timeout. Haliburton worked his way down the court against Oklahoma City's Cason Wallace, driving just inside the 3-point arc before pulling up for a shot that briefly rattled around the rim before dropping through. "I had a pretty good idea," Haliburton said when asked whether he knew the shot was good. Indiana won despite turning the ball over 25 times -- 20 times in the first half alone.

"It's not the recipe to win," Haliburton said. "We can't turn the ball over that much ... (but) come May and June, it doesn't matter how you get 'em, just get 'em."

The best-of-seven series resumes with Game 2 on Sunday in Oklahoma City.

"The series isn't first to one, it's first to four," Gilgeous-Alexander said. "So we have four more games to get. They have three, and that's just where we are."

Game 1 was a gut punch for the Thunder, who led from the start and got 38 points from Gilgeous-Alexander.

Oklahoma City managed just 11 points off the Pacers' giveaways, including just nine off Indiana's 20 first-half turnovers.

The Pacers trailed by 15 early in the fourth quarter before chipping away at the deficit. Nembhard and Myles Turner each scored eight points in the period.

Indiana cut the deficit to one with 48.6 seconds remaining on Pascal Siakam's putback following a missed 3-point attempt by Nembhard.

Siakam led the Pacers with 19 points and added 10 rebounds. Obi Toppin had 17 points off the bench, Turner scored 15 and Nembhard had 14. Haliburton finished with 14 points, 10 rebounds and six assists.

For Oklahoma City, Jalen Williams contributed 17 points on 6-of-19 shooting while Chet Holmgren was just 2 of 9 for six points.

Spain Hold Off Furious France Comeback to Reach Nations League Final

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Spain starlets Lamine Yamal and Nico Williams dazzled as La Roja beat France 5-4 in a thriller in Stuttgart on Thursday, to set up a Nations League final with Portugal.

Yamal bagged a brace while Williams scored and provided an assist as the two wingers cut France's makeshift defence to ribbons.

Mikel Merino and Pedri were also on the scoresheet for the Euro 2024 champions.

Kylian Mbappé netted a second-half penalty, but Spain were 5-1 up and cruising, before Les Bleus suddenly woke up as their opponents took their foot off the pedal.

France's three late goals -- a Rayan Cherki screamer, a Spain own goal and a stoppage time strike from Randal Kolo Muani -- were not enough.

Yamal, still just 17, said Spain "deserved to win."

"It was a great game -- at the end it was a little too close, but we played very well," he added.

Spain held on to book an all-Iberian Nations League final against Cristiano Ronaldo and Portugal on Sunday in Munich, while France will face hosts Germany in Stuttgart for the bronze medal, earlier in the day.

A smiling goalscorer Merino told DAZN: "It was a crazy game.



Not the best game for the coaches -- nobody wants to concede so many goals -- but an amazing game for the fans.

"We're going to remember this one for a long time."

Returning to Germany where they won the European Championship in dominant fashion a year ago, Spain seem an even more complete team, despite their late fadeout.

France coach Didier Deschamps said "it's a mixed bag."

"Not everything can be thrown in the rubbish bin ... but I'm not leaving with a smile," he added.

France were more dangerous in the opening stages, with Deschamps electing to channel his attack through Ousmane Dembele rather than Mbappé.

Dembele, fresh from Paris Saint-Germain's Champions League triumph, created an early chance for Mbappé, but the Real Madrid superstar wasted it, electing to pass rather than shoot when one-on-one with the 'keeper.

Minutes later, Spain escaped again as Theo Hernandez's long-range effort shaved the top of the crossbar.

Spain made France pay soon after, when Williams and Oyarzabal, La Roja's two goalscorers in the Euro 2024 final, linked up with 22 minutes played.

After a tear down the right, Yamal threaded it to Oyarzabal, who held off three defenders with his back to goal before finding Williams, who rifled his shot into the top of the net.

Spain grabbed full hold of the match just three minutes later when Oyarzabal dinked the French defense, allowing Merino to collect and hammer past an off-balance Maignan.

France had the better chances later in the half, with Dembele finding space in the box three times only to blast straight at a grateful Unai Simon.

Uzbekistan, Jordan Qualify for First World Cup



DUBAI (Dispatches) - Uzbekistan and Jordan made history by qualifying for their first World Cup, while the pair will be joined in next year's tournament by perennial participants South Korea.

Uzbekistan, one of the fastest-rising national teams in Asia, drew 0-0 with the UAE in Abu Dhabi to take the second automatic spot in Group A, although top place is still in play after already qualified Iran lost 1-0 to Qatar in Doha.

Heading into the third round's final set of fixtures on Tuesday, Iran sit at the summit, two points ahead of Uzbekistan.

The top two teams in each of the three Asian groups go straight to the World Cup, while those finishing third and fourth--the UAE and Qatar hold those slots in Group A--enter a fourth round of qualifiers.

In Group B, South Korea confirmed their place in an 11th straight World Cup by defeating Iraq 2-0 in Basra.

The victory, sealed by second-half goals from Kim Jin-gyu and Oh Hyeon-gyu, means South Korea reclaim top spot from Jordan, whose 3-0 victory against Oman earlier on Thursday ultimately proved enough to secure their participation at the expanded 48-team showpiece in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

Jordan's King Abdullah II congratulated the team on social media.

"This historic qualification is well-deserved by our team, which includes stars and cadres of whom we are proud," he wrote on X.

"Special thanks go to our loyal fans who have been our support and encouragement."

Lackluster Carlo Ancelotti Debut as Brazil Held to Goalless Draw at Ecuador



GUAYAQUIL (Dispatches) - Carlo Ancelotti got off to a disappointing start as Brazil coach in Thursday's South American World Cup qualifiers, drawing 0-0 against runners-up Ecuador, putting the Italian manager under considerable pressure.

Brazil were unable to break down Ecuador's organised defence and had few chances in the first half, the clearest coming from a Vinicius Jr attempt assisted by Gerson that was saved by goalkeeper Gonzalo Valle.

Ecuador threatened in the second half when John Yeboah attempted a through ball, but striker Nilson Angulo was caught offside.

Ancelotti's side created more chances, but failed to capitalise, with Richarlison squandering a well-placed pass from Vinicius Jr in the box and Casemiro's powerful long-range shot being saved by Valle.

"Of course we always have to improve, but little by little we're getting better. It's only been two or three days with a new coach. The dynamic is good, the atmosphere is good. I'm very happy to be back. The atmosphere is excellent," Casemiro said after the match.

"Ancelotti hasn't had time to show us his game plan yet. It's only been two or three days of training," Vinicius added.

Brazil remain in fourth place with 22 points. Ancelotti was appointed as the new coach only last month, tasked with pulling the team back from a difficult period -- a challenging mission as they seek to become six-time world champions.

Their next opponents are third-placed Paraguay, who won 2-0 against Uruguay earlier.

Meanwhile, Ecuador are closer to qualifying, remaining in second place with 24 points. The top six teams qualify directly for next year's World Cup in the United States, Mexico and Canada. They play ninth-placed Peru on Tuesday.

Djokovic Downs Zverev to Reach French Open

PARIS (Dispatches) - Three-time champion Novak Djokovic kept up his quest for a record-breaking 25th Grand Slam title, battling past third seed Alexander Zverev 4-6 6-3 6-2 6-4, to set up a French Open semi-final against top seed Jannik Sinner.

The 38-year-old Serbian notched his 101st victory at Roland Garros, site of his Olympic gold medal victory last year at the Paris Games, after three hours and 17 minutes.

Former world number one Djokovic is just two matches away from becoming the first player, male or female, to win 25 Grand Slam singles trophies.

Earlier on Wednesday Sinner booked his spot in the last four with a straight-sets win over Kazakh Alexander Bublik.

"Obviously there was a lot of tension, pressure but it is normal when you play against Zverev, one of the best in the world, in the last five-six years," Djokovic said in a post-match interview.

"My game is based on a lot of running. I am 38 years old, it is not



easy to keep running like that but, okay, it works."

"A match like the one this evening is the biggest reason why I continue playing and competing at this level," he said.

Zverev, last year's finalist who is still searching for a maiden Grand Slam title, started out strongly and broke Djokovic in the very first game.

Attempting to join the Serb, Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer as the only men in the Open Era to reach French Open semi-finals in five consecutive years, the German held on to that advantage to earn the first set.

Knowing he could not match his 28-year-old opponent for fitness, Djokovic tried to keep the rallies as short as possible, playing more and more drop shots -- 35 in total -- to force the tall Zverev to the net.

Djokovic broke his opponent at 2-1 in the second set and was quickly 4-1 up before Zverev had any time to react. He secured the second set with yet another drop shot.