

President Masoud Pezeshkian Emphasized in a Phone Conversation With Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif That Iran Welcomes Any Action and Efforts Aimed at Establishing Lasting Peace Between Pakistan and India and Can Play a Mediating Role to Achieve This Goal

IRAN NEWS

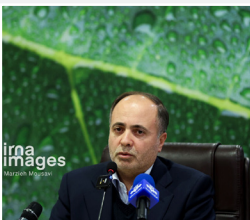
Tehran Governor Announced the Presence of 800,000 Undocumented Foreign Nationals in the Province and Stated Those Migrants Whose Deadlines Have Expired Will Be Detained and Deported Immediately Back to Their Countries

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U.S. Should Change Its Approach If It Wants an Agreement With Iran



TEHRAN – Majlis Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf emphasized that the fact that the U.S. proposal does not even mention the lifting of sanctions clearly demonstrates that the United States’ behavior in indirect nuclear negotiations is inconsistent and lacks sincerity. He stated: “The delusional American president should understand that if they genuinely seek an agreement, they must change their approach, abandon their strategy of dividing work with the Zionist regime, and stop pursuing Netanyahu’s failed ideas.”

Qalibaf delivered a speech on Sunday, June 8, 2024, during a parliamentary session, commemorating the martyrs of the terrorist attack on the Islamic Consultative Assembly. He said: “We take pride in being a country that, through the sacrifice of martyr Soleimani and the defenders of the shrine, was able to end the rule of ISIS and foil the designs of the United States, which, according to the U.S. president, created ISIS, thus ensuring the safety of our dear and honorable people.”

He also reported on his recent trip to Latin America, stating: “Last week, on behalf of the great Iranian nation, I traveled to Latin America to participate in the BRICS parliamentary leaders’ summit. I held bilateral meetings with senior officials from Venezuela, Cuba, and Brazil to develop economic, political, and commercial relations. This trip helped us better understand the region’s vast potential to enhance Iran’s trade balance, and during negotiations, we followed up on agreements made with these countries. We also reached new cooperation proposals, which, if implemented, could significantly impact Iran’s economy.”

IAEA Report Attests to Peaceful Nature of Its Nuclear Program



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran says a recent report by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) suggesting the absence of any credible evidence of military dimensions reaffirms the peaceful nature of its nuclear program.

In an explanatory note published on Saturday, the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) addressed IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi’s latest report, titled “NPT Safeguards Agreement with the Islamic Republic of Iran”, to the agency’s Board of Governors on May 31, 2025.

The confidential IAEA report only claimed that Iran had failed to report its nuclear activities at three undeclared locations and raised concerns about the country’s stockpile of uranium enriched up to 60% purity.

“Regarding the director general’s report, the absence of any evidence of diversion towards military objectives once again confirms the peaceful nature of Iran’s nuclear program. There is no credible evidence to prove that the remaining issues posed a proliferation risk,” the AEOI said.

As stated in the report, the note explained, “Iran continues to cooperate with the agency on matters related to the routine implementation of safeguards, and the agency conducts extensive verification efforts in Iran commensurate with Iran’s nuclear fuel cycle and activities.”

The Atomic Energy Organization of Iran emphasized that the IAEA should employ credible sources for its evaluations to maintain the agency’s objectivity.

“It is a well-established expectation that agency assessments are based solely on verified, credible, and undisputed sources. Reliance on unverified information derived from open sources or information provided by third parties known to the Secretariat, contradicts the principles of objectivity, impartiality, and professionalism that underpin the agency’s mission.”

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK



TEHRAN - President Masoud Pezeshkian says Tehran has conducted its nuclear program in a “completely transparent” manner and is ready for any inspection of its facilities. Pezeshkian made the remark during a meeting with Kazakhstan’s Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Murat Abugaliuly Nurtileu, in Tehran.

“The excuses regarding Iran’s peaceful nuclear program are raised, while we have repeatedly declared explicitly—and demonstrated in practice—that we have never sought, nor will we ever seek, to produce nuclear weapons or weapons of mass destruction,” he said. The president reiterated that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has repeatedly verified the peaceful nature of Iran’s nuclear program.

While Iran remains open to inspections, it will never accept being deprived of knowledge, technology, and scientific achievements, Pezeshkian emphasized.

He added that Iran would not allow others to make decisions about the future and destiny of the Iranian nation.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran is always ready to engage in reasonable discourse but will never accept bullying,” Pezeshkian pointed out.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the president pointed to Iran’s fraternal relations with Muslim countries and said Tehran is ready to work with all Muslim states, including Kazakhstan, to achieve progress, prosperity, and sustainable development.

He noted that Iran is ready to expand ties with Kazakhstan in all fields, given the two countries’ cultural and historic commonalities and common views.

“The future of mutual relations hinges on the shared determination and will to build a bright future based on peace, security, and prosperity for the region and the world,” the president emphasized.

Nurtileu, for his part, expressed his country’s firm determination to boost relations with Iran in the political and economic sectors as well as regional cooperation.

He submitted a written message from Kazakhstan’s president to Pezeshkian and expressed

hope that the message would open a new chapter in ties between the two countries.

Kazakhstan’s foreign minister said his country respects Iran’s principled and wise stance on peaceful nuclear activities and its legitimate right to use peaceful nuclear technology.

Earlier the foreign ministers of Iran and Kazakhstan called for continued consultations on regional and global developments.

During a meeting in Tehran on Saturday, Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi and his Kazakh counterpart, Nurtileu, emphasized the importance of supporting each other’s initiatives and rights in international bodies.

Araqchi said that Iran is committed to pursuing a policy of good neighborliness with all countries in the region, including Kazakhstan.

He added that Tehran and Astana should leverage their vast potential to enhance cooperation in the economic, trade, transportation, and cultural sectors.

The Iranian foreign minister noted that a joint economic committee meeting between the two countries is set to take place in Astana soon. He expressed hope that both sides would seize the opportunity to explore ways to strengthen collaboration across various fields.

Araqchi further highlighted that Iran and Kazakhstan are members of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), and the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), and share common positions on issues related to the Caspian Sea.

Therefore, the two countries need to increase coordination and cooperation in regional circles, he said.

Nurtileu, who is also Kazakhstan’s deputy prime minister, said his country is determined to improve all-out relations with Iran, given enormous bilateral capacities.

At the end of the meeting, Araqchi and Nurtileu signed a memorandum of understanding for cooperation in the field of diplomatic archives.

Iran’s Trade Balance Turns Negative, Reaching \$7b Deficit

TEHRAN - Iran’s foreign trade balance has recorded a significant deficit, amounting to \$7 billion in the first half of 2023, according to a recent report by the Research Center of the Islamic Parliament.

The report, titled “Overview of Iran’s Foreign Trade in the First Half of 2023,” indicates that the country’s customs-based imports reached approximately \$33 billion, while exports stood at around \$26 billion during this period. This resulted in a negative trade (customs) balance of \$7 billion — the largest six-month trade deficit in recent years.

The research highlights that this negative trend has intensified since 2020, continuing into 2023. Contributing factors include a decline in the unit price of exported goods and an increase in the unit price of imports, leading to a decreasing value of Iran’s exports relative to imports. Notably, the value of Iran’s exported commodities decreased by about 17% compared to the previous year.

Long-term analysis reveals two key trends: first, a concentration among Iran’s main trading partners, with the top three partners accounting for 62% of total trade in 2023, double their share in 2004. Second, the trade balance has fluctuated; it improved between 2011 and 2018 but has turned negative again since 2019, reaching a deficit of approximately \$17 billion in 2023.

Major export items include natural gas, petrochemical products, and steel, with agricultural products, stones, and other commodities representing smaller shares. On the import side, the top items in the first half of 2023 were gold, corn, and mobile phones.

The report states that Iran’s total imports in the first half of 2023 amounted to about \$33.09 billion, while exports were approximately \$25.92 billion — resulting in a trade deficit of roughly \$7.16 billion. This deficit has grown compared to \$6.33 billion in the same period last year and \$2.61 billion in 2021.

Furthermore, the report notes that from 2011 to 2018, Iran experienced a rising trend in its trade



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

balance, achieving positive figures in 2015 and 2017. However, since 2019, the trend has reversed, with deficits increasing annually, culminating in a \$17 billion shortfall in 2023. Both illegal imports and exports have also seen an upward trend since 2018.

Another key finding shows increased concentration in Iran’s trading partners. In 2003, only about 31% of Iran’s foreign trade was with its top three partners; by 2023, this figure has doubled to 62%. Conversely, trade with countries ranked 11th and beyond has significantly decreased, now accounting for just 15.7% of total trade.

Approximately 84% of Iran’s foreign trade occurs with only 10 countries, with 70% limited to the top four trading partners.

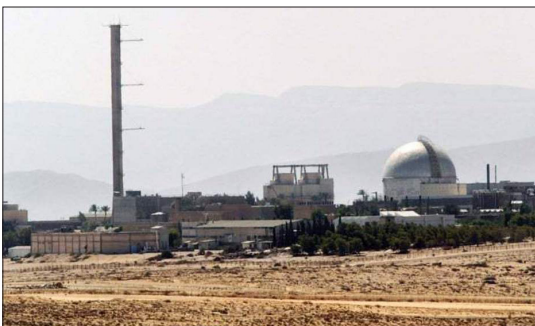
Regarding export composition, mineral materials and chemical products dominate, especially fuels, oils, and mineral waxes under HS code 27, which constitute a major share of exports. Agricultural products, notably nuts (particularly pistachios), dairy, and tomatoes, also hold significant shares.

The first half of 2023 saw higher export levels compared to previous years, although exports in the same period of 2022 declined relative to 2021. On the import side, the first half of 2023 saw increased imports, especially after a dip during 2019-2020 due to COVID-19 and sanctions.

Gold imports alone exceeded \$3 billion in the first six months of 2023, a sharp increase from \$466 million during the same period in 2022.

The report concludes that the average import tariffs have decreased between 2016 and 2023, primarily due to factors such as a reduction of tariffs on essential goods to 1% and changes in import composition caused by bans and currency allocations. It recommends that tariff policies be aligned with Iran’s developmental and production goals, and that trade policies be oriented accordingly.

Iran’s Intelligence Obtains Large Trove of Sensitive Documents From Israeli Regime



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran’s intelligence community has obtained a vast trove of strategic and sensitive documents from the Israeli regime, including thousands of records related to its nuclear plans and facilities.

Sources familiar with the matter told the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) that the intelligence breach was one of the biggest blows to the occupying regime.

The sources said that although the operation to obtain the documents was carried out some time ago, the sheer volume of materials and the need to transport them safely into Iran necessitated a news blackout to ensure they reached the designated protected locations.

They also noted that the abundance of documents is so vast that reviewing them, along with viewing images and videos, has consumed a significant amount of time.

The revelation comes more than two weeks after Israeli authorities announced the arrest of two men on suspicion of committing security crimes on behalf of Iran.

According to a joint statement issued on May 20 by Israel Police and the Shin Bet spy service, Roy Mizrahi and Almog Atlas, both 24, were detained in late April for allegedly conducting intelligence-gathering missions for Iran.

Officials claim the two men are accused of shadowing the Israeli minister of military affairs, Israel Katz, in the community of Kfar Ahim in the southern occupied territories.

Sources told IRIB that their arrest, if it was connected to the case, occurred after the documents had been transported out of the occupied territories.

New U.S. Sanctions Testify to Depth of Washington’s Hostility Towards Iranians



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iran has sharply criticized the United States over its latest round of illegal and unilateral sanctions, calling the coercive measures yet another sign of Washington’s longstanding and profound hostility toward the Iranian people.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei issued a statement on Saturday, denouncing the measures, which had been announced by the US Department of the Treasury and targeted dozens of individuals and companies that Washington alleges are linked to the Islamic Republic’s commercial and banking sectors.

The official condemned the move as politically motivated and baseless, describing the sanctions as “unlawful” and a violation of the international legal norms.

He said the bans were part of a broader, failed campaign of economic coercion aimed at exerting the US’s so-called “maximum pressure” campaign against Iran.

“These sanctions are not only illegal and contrary to the international law, but they also serve as yet another indication of the deep and persistent hostility of the ruling regime in the United States towards the Iranian nation,” the spokesman said.

He added that the measures had been designed to increase pressure on ordinary Iranian citizens by depriving them of their basic human rights and economic opportunities.



Iran Faces U.S. Visa Restrictions Ahead of World Cup

TEHRAN (ILNA) - Minister of Cultural Heritage and Tourism has acknowledged challenges stemming from U.S. visa restrictions in connection with the upcoming FIFA World Cup, stressing that Iranian-Americans could play a vital role in representing the country during the international event.

Seyyed Reza Salehi Amiri stated, “We are certainly facing limitations with U.S. visas in relation to the World Cup, and we need to consider appropriate mechanisms to address this.” He added, “Iranian-Americans themselves can be our greatest opportunity—they are patriotic and deeply connected to Iran, and we must organize and fully utilize this capacity.”

Iran and Uzbekistan Expand Transit and Port Cooperation



TEHRAN - In a significant move to enhance bilateral trade and economic relations, Iranian and Uzbek officials held a joint meeting at Iran's Shahid Rajaei Port to discuss expanding cooperation in transit, logistics, and port infrastructure development.

According to a report from the Ports and Maritime Organization of Iran (PMO), the meeting was attended by Ilhom Mahkamov, Uzbekistan's Minister of Transport and Communications, and Saeed Rasouli, Iran's Deputy Minister of Roads and Urban Development and Managing Director of PMO, along with officials and private sector representatives from both countries.

At the outset, Rasouli expressed condolences on the anniversary of the death of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, founder of the Islamic Republic, before highlighting the progress of bilateral agreements. He announced that a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to enhance transport and transit cooperation between Tehran and Tashkent was signed the previous day in the presence of Iran's Minister of Roads and Urban Development, Farzaneh Sadegh, and Minister Mahkamov.

The Uzbek delegation also toured Shahid Rajaei Port facilities, including the maritime traffic control tower, Container Terminal 2, mechanized warehouses, and the port's expansive 2,400-hectare logistical support zone.

Rasouli emphasized Iran's readiness to turn the MoU into a binding agreement and welcomed Uzbek investment in Shahid Rajaei Port. He stated, “Iran's policy is to enhance economic and trade ties, especially with neighboring countries, and we look forward to Uzbek companies being introduced by their government for joint ventures. Establishing a joint company would be a great step forward.”

Iran Expresses Readiness to Help Kenya Build One Million Affordable Homes



TEHRAN - Iran has announced its willingness to support Kenya in achieving its goal of delivering one million social housing units, offering the expertise and capabilities of its domestic construction companies.

In a meeting held on the sidelines of the UN-Habitat Assembly in Nairobi, Iran's Deputy Minister of Roads and Urban Development and CEO of the Iran Urban Regeneration Company, Abdolreza Golpayegani, met with Kenya's Cabinet Secretary for Lands, Public Works, Housing, and Urban Development, Alice Wahome.

Golpayegani emphasized the strong bilateral relations between Iran and Kenya, calling them a valuable foundation for expanding cooperative efforts in urban development and housing.

Secretary Wahome welcomed Iran's participation in the Assembly and described the meeting as a reflection of the solid ties between the two nations. She highlighted Kenya's national housing agenda, which aims to construct one million affordable housing units over a five-year period — 200,000 units annually — utilizing both public and private sector capacities as well as international partnerships.

Wahome invited Iran to contribute to this effort and noted that Kenya is also seeking to import essential construction materials such as cement, steel, and sanitary products. She emphasized the potential for mutual benefit through the exchange of local Kenyan goods and services in return.

Golpayegani, in turn, praised Kenya's hosting of the UN-Habitat Assembly and recognized the significance of international cooperation in eradicating poverty through accessible housing. He reiterated Iran's readiness to participate in Kenya's housing mission via capable Iranian firms.

He also mentioned Kenya's experience in upgrading informal settlements, specifically referring to a visit to the Kibera neighborhood as part of his itinerary in Nairobi. He extended an invitation to Secretary Wahome to visit Iran to further explore cooperation opportunities.

Minister Highlights High Dependence on Food Imports



TEHRAN - Minister of Agriculture, Gholamreza Nouri Ghezjelreh, has raised concerns about the country's heavy dependence on imported food commodities, revealing that approximately 90% of the nation's edible oil and nearly 30% of its sugar needs are met through imports. Speaking at the inaugural National Conference of Women Managers of the Ministry of Agriculture, the minister emphasized the need to address this issue through better management and consumer behavior reforms—particularly with the help of women in leadership roles.

Nouri Ghezjelreh explained that a large portion of Iran's foreign currency income from oil exports is used to import essential food items. “These imports require hard currency, which is increasingly difficult to secure,” he said. Despite these challenges, consumption levels of essential commodities like oil and sugar in Iran are about 1.5 to 2 times higher than the global average and even exceed national recommended standards.

The minister pointed to the significant levels of food waste in the country, particularly at the end of the production chain. “The largest volume of waste occurs where food reaches its most valuable, consumable form. This isn't just wasteful—it directly harms both national and household economies,” he stated.

Calling food waste an economic and ethical issue, Nouri Ghezjelreh emphasized that women, especially those in managerial roles, can play a transformative role in educating society and shaping more sustainable consumption patterns. “Correct consumption isn't just about preventing waste—it's about improving public health and reducing healthcare costs,” he added.

He cited medical experts who link overconsumption of oil and sugar to chronic diseases such as heart conditions, diabetes, and strokes. “These goods, which are difficult and costly to procure, are consumed excessively and eventually contribute to rising medical expenses,” he noted.

Nouri Ghezjelreh called on female managers to take an active role in fostering a

culture of responsible consumption. “Promoting smarter consumption of oil, sugar, and other staples is not only a national duty but a religious one as well,” he said.

The minister also spoke passionately about food security, calling it the ministry's top mission. “Food is vital to human life, and today, we see its weaponization in war zones like Gaza, where the enemy uses hunger as a tool of oppression. This is why ensuring food security is more critical than ever,” he warned.

He urged women in leadership positions to adopt strategic thinking, foster innovation, and embrace organizational transformation. “Success as a manager begins with small, creative actions—like saving a single sheet of paper or reducing energy use. These are the seeds of meaningful change,” he explained.

Nouri Ghezjelreh emphasized the importance of engaging with professional associations and organizations, saying they serve as both operational and intellectual support systems for government managers.

Addressing gender representation, the minister stressed that women's participation in agricultural leadership roles is based on merit, not gender quotas. “Women have always played a vital and impactful role in agriculture, especially in rural and nomadic communities. Their presence in leadership positions at the Ministry of Agriculture is due to their capabilities and competence, not simply their gender,” he said.

He noted that, unlike in some other sectors where women's entry is recent, women's contributions to agriculture and food production are long-standing. “Go back a few decades, when the line between urban and rural life was more blurred, and you'll see women playing active roles across society,” he added.

Currently, four to five women serve in senior roles at the ministry, a reflection of a broader trend toward gender-inclusive leadership. “These appointments are not just about representation—they're about recognizing talent, leadership ability, and organizational loyalty,” he emphasized.

Iran Set to Enter Aging Phase by 2041, Officials Warn

TEHRAN - Iran is expected to enter a demographic aging phase around the year 2041 (1420 in the Iranian calendar), according to a senior official from the National Population Headquarters. This shift signals significant changes in the country's age structure, prompting calls for urgent planning and policy reforms.

Speaking at the first National Conference of Female Managers at the Ministry of Agriculture Jihad on Saturday, Mehdi Malmir, Deputy for Strategy, Coordination, and Provincial Affairs at the Secretariat of the National Population Headquarters, highlighted the rapid pace of population aging in Iran. He emphasized the growing need to address elderly well-being, poverty alleviation, and inequality—especially in rural and nomadic areas.

Malmir noted that individuals born in the 1970s and early 1980s, currently aged 35 to 50, will enter old age over the next 15 to 25 years, necessitating comprehensive planning to meet the demands of an aging society.

“Currently, around 7.5 million Iranians are over 65, and with rising life expectancy, most are expected to live another 15 to 20 years,” he said.

The northern province of Gilan is already the oldest region in the country, with 12% of its population aged 65 and older. Malmir stated that Gilan is expected to fully transition into the aging phase by 2026 (1405), while provinces such as Sistan and Baluchestan, Hormozgan, and Khuzestan still maintain relatively younger populations.

He warned that social isolation among the elderly is a major challenge. “About 31% of elderly households consist of individuals living alone,” Malmir said, adding that isolation—



especially when combined with poverty, illness, or disability—can lead to serious problems.

Malmir also shed light on the stark gender disparities in elderly poverty. “An alarming 62% of elderly women are suffering from severe food insecurity, compared to 39% of elderly men,” he reported. This gap underscores the need for targeted policies to support aging women, particularly in rural communities.

Although urban areas account for 75% of the national population, the share of elderly is disproportionately higher in rural areas due to youth migration. This shift underscores the urgency of enhancing social support networks and fostering local engagement to combat loneliness among rural seniors.

Citing a historical comparison, Malmir said it took France 150 years to double its elderly population from 7% to 14%, but Iran is projected to do so within just 25 years. He forecast that by 2051 (1430), one-third of Iran's population will be over 60.

Malmir also highlighted the role of the Ministry of Agriculture Jihad in implementing the Family and Youth Support Law, stressing the importance of combating rural poverty and reducing inequalities as part of the ministry's core mission.

He called for full implementation of legal provisions for social services and insurance for rural and nomadic women, urging the government to allocate adequate funding.

While aging is a global phenomenon, Malmir concluded, the pace in Iran is uniquely fast and demands specialized strategies. He emphasized that female managers at the Ministry of Agriculture Jihad can serve as ambassadors for population policies and play a key role in supporting social well-being and elderly care in rural and tribal regions.

Joint Cooperation Aimed at Boosting Iran-Japan Economic Relations



TEHRAN - In a recent meeting between the Executive Vice President of the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) and the head of JETRO's Tehran office with the President of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (TCCIMA), both parties discussed the capacities and future prospects for enhancing bilateral economic cooperation between Iran and Japan.

According to a statement from TCCIMA's public relations office, the meeting focused on fostering constructive dialogue and exploring potential areas for collaboration. Mahmoud Najafi-Arab, President of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, highlighted the history of positive economic and investment ties between the two countries. However, he acknowledged that due to international sanctions, Japanese companies have exercised increased caution in their dealings with Iran, resulting in a decline in economic engagement in recent years.

Najafi-Arab stressed that the current conditions are not permanent and urged Japanese companies to establish their presence in Iran's market early on. He proposed that continuous engagement between TCCIMA and JETRO's Tehran office could help identify mutual economic opportunities. He also expressed TCCIMA's readiness to sign a formal cooperation agreement with JETRO, pointing to promising fields for collaboration such as pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, automotive industries, education, and startups. He further suggested initiating formal communication between TCCIMA and the Tokyo Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Fereydoun Verdinnejad, Secretary-General of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, also voiced the Chamber's commitment to strengthening ties with JETRO. He emphasized the need for mechanisms to facilitate information exchange between Iranian and Japanese companies and economic actors. Verdinnejad added that TCCIMA could serve as a platform for transferring Japanese technical and managerial knowledge to the Iranian business community.

Iran and Tajikistan Map Out Path to Boost Tourism Cooperation



TEHRAN - In a continued effort to strengthen inbound tourism from key target markets, Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts held a specialized meeting focusing on Tajikistan's tourism market.

According to the Ministry's Public Relations Office, the meeting—organized by the Office for Foreign Tourism Marketing and Development—brought together representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Iranian airlines, tourism associations, private sector stakeholders, and regional experts.

Musallam Shojaei, Director-General of Foreign Tourism Marketing and Development, highlighted the cultural, linguistic, and historical commonalities between Iran and Tajikistan, calling them strategic advantages for deepening tourism ties. He noted that the session focused on analyzing current trends in tourist exchanges, evaluating previous initiatives, and identifying barriers to further cooperation. Strategies to increase Iran's market share in Tajikistan's outbound tourism were also discussed.

Key participants included representatives from Varash and Saman Airlines, who play a pivotal role in expanding direct air connections between the two nations. Travel agencies and tourism organizations active in Central Asia also shared valuable insights and practical field experiences with policymakers and tourism planners.

Shojaei emphasized the growing number of Tajik tourists visiting Iran, particularly after the removal of bilateral visa requirements and the addition of more direct flights.

Participants agreed on the importance of targeted media campaigns, event-based tourism initiatives, reducing travel package costs between the two countries, and enhancing the quality of services in health and pilgrimage tourism—areas with strong potential to attract Tajik visitors.

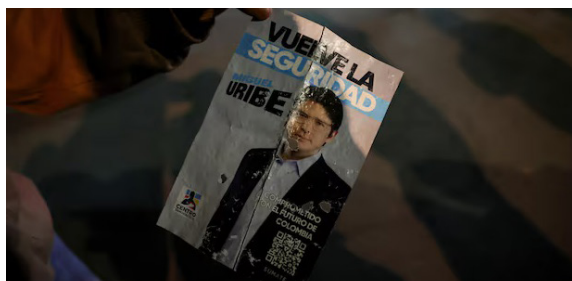
UK, India Discuss Counter-Terrorism Cooperation

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - Britain and India on Saturday discussed expanding their “counter-terrorism” collaboration following recent fighting between India and Pakistan, Britain’s foreign minister told Reuters after meeting Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. British foreign minister David Lammy is the highest-profile Western official to have visited both New Delhi and Islamabad since the South Asian neighbours agreed to a ceasefire last month after their worst fighting in nearly three decades.

The latest tensions began in April after the killing of 26 men in Indian Kashmir that New Delhi blamed on “terrorists” backed by Pakistan, a charge Islamabad denied. India then attacked what it called “terrorist infrastructure” in Pakistan, leading to escalation from both sides until a May 10 ceasefire.



Colombian Presidential Candidate Miguel Uribe Shot, Suspect Arrested



BOGOTA (Dispatches) - Colombian Senator Miguel Uribe was shot in Bogota on Saturday, according to the government and his party, and local media reported that he was in a local hospital in serious condition.

The 39-year-old senator, who is running for the presidency in 2026, is a member of the opposition conservative Democratic Center party founded by former Colombian President Alvaro Uribe. The two men are not related.

According to a party statement condemning the attack, the senator was hosting a campaign event in a public park in the Fontibon neighborhood in the capital on Saturday when “armed subjects shot him in the back.”

The party described the attack as serious, but did not disclose further details on Uribe’s condition.

Colombia’s Defense Minister Pedro Sanchez said a suspect had been arrested in the shooting and that authorities were investigating whether others were involved. Sanchez said he had visited the hospital where Uribe was being treated.

Colombia’s presidency issued a statement saying the government “categorically and forcefully” rejected the violent attack, and called for a thorough investigation into the events that took place.

Uribe is from a prominent family in Colombia, with links to the country’s Liberal Party. His father was a businessman and union leader. His mother, journalist Diana Turbay, was kidnapped in 1990 by an armed group under the command of the late cartel leader Pablo Escobar. She was killed during a rescue operation.

Colombia has for decades been embroiled in a conflict between leftist rebels, criminal groups descended from right-wing paramilitaries, and the government. Leftist President Gustavo Petro sympathized with the senator’s family in a message on X, saying, “I don’t know how to ease your pain. It is the pain of a mother lost, and of a homeland.”

Tensions Rise as Thailand Shuts Tourist Crossings With Cambodia



BANGKOK (Dispatches) - Thailand temporarily closed two of its border crossings with Cambodia to tourists on Saturday after a Cambodian soldier was killed in a recent military clash between the two uneasy neighbors.

There has been sporadic violence between the two South-east Asian neighbors since fighting first broke out in 2008, resulting in at least 28 deaths.

A Cambodian soldier was killed in the most recent outbreak on May 28 in an area known as the Emerald Triangle, where the borders of Cambodia, Thailand and Laos meet.

The Thai and Cambodian militaries agreed to ease tensions the following day but Cambodia then said it would keep its troops in the area, despite Thailand urging it to withdraw.

The Royal Thai Army took control of the “opening and closing” of all border crossings it shares with Cambodia on Saturday, citing a “threat to Thailand’s sovereignty and security”.

Authorities in Thailand’s eastern province of Chanthaburi said in a statement on Saturday they had “temporarily suspended” crossings by Thai and Cambodian tourists at two permanent border checkpoints.

It said trade remained unaffected and Cambodian workers were still permitted to enter Thailand.

Thailand’s Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Phumtham Wechayachai said in a statement on Saturday it was “deeply regrettable” that Cambodia had “rejected” the proposal to withdraw its armed forces.



Trump Deploys National Guard as Los Angeles Protests Continue

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - President Donald Trump’s administration said it would deploy 2,000 National Guard troops on Saturday as federal agents in Los Angeles faced off against demonstrators for a second day following immigration raids.

The security agents confronted around 100 protesters in the Paramount area in southeast Los Angeles, where some demonstrators displayed Mexican flags and others covered their mouths with respiratory masks.

Trump’s border czar, Tom Homan, told Fox News that the National Guard would be deployed in Los Angeles on Saturday evening.

California Governor Gavin Newsom called the decision “purposefully inflammatory.”

“If Governor Gavin Newsom, of California, and Mayor Karen Bass, of Los Angeles, can’t do their jobs, which everyone knows they can’t, then the Federal Government will step in and solve the problem. RIOTS & LOOTERS, the way it should be solved!!!” Trump posted on his Truth Social platform.

The protests pit Democratic-run Los Angeles, where census data suggests a significant portion of the population is Hispanic and foreign-born, against Trump’s Republican White House, which has made cracking down on immigration a hallmark of his second term.

In the late afternoon, authorities began detaining some protesters, according to Reuters witnesses. There was no immediate official information of any arrests.

Video footage showed dozens of green-uniformed security personnel with gas masks lined up on a road strewn with overturned shopping carts as small canisters exploded into gas clouds.

“Now they know that they cannot go to anywhere in this country where our people are, and try to kidnap our workers, our people - they cannot do that without an organized and fierce resistance,” said protester Ron Gochez, 44.

A first round of protests kicked off on Friday night after Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents conducted enforcement operations in the city and arrested at least 44 people on alleged immigration violations.

Stephen Miller, an immigration hardliner and the White House deputy chief of staff, wrote on X that Friday’s demonstrations were “an insurrection against the laws and sovereignty of the United States.” On Saturday, he described the day’s protests as a

“violent insurrection.”

The Department of Homeland Security said in a statement about Friday’s protests that “1,000 rioters surrounded a federal law enforcement building and assaulted ICE law enforcement officers, slashed tires, defaced buildings, and taxpayer funded property.”

Reuters could not verify DHS’s accounts. Angelica Salas, executive director of immigrants’ rights organization Chirla, said lawyers had not had access to those detained on Friday, which she called “very worrying.”

Trump has pledged to deport record numbers of people in the country illegally and lock down the U.S.-Mexico border, with the White House setting a goal for ICE to arrest at least 3,000 migrants per day.

But the sweeping immigration crackdown has also caught up people legally residing in the country, including some with permanent residence, and has led to legal challenges.

In a statement on Saturday about the protests in Paramount, the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Office said: “It appeared that federal law enforcement officers were in the area, and that members of the public were gathering to protest.”

Salas of Chirla said protesters gathered after an ICE contingent appeared to be using parking lots near a Paramount Home Depot store as a base.

ICE, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Los Angeles Police Department did not respond to requests for comment on the protests or potential immigration sweeps on Saturday.

Television news footage on Friday showed unmarked vehicles resembling military transport and vans loaded with uniformed federal agents streaming through Los Angeles streets as part of the immigration enforcement operation.

Raids occurred around Home Depot stores, where street vendors and day laborers were picked up, as well as at a garment factory and a warehouse, Salas of Chirla said.

Bass, the Democratic mayor of Los Angeles, condemned the immigration raids.

“I am deeply angered by what has taken place,” Bass said in a statement. “These tactics sow terror in our communities and disrupt basic principles of safety in our city. We will not stand for this.”

Russia Pummels Ukraine’s Kharkiv in Most Powerful Attack Since Start of War

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia unleashed a barrage of missiles, drones and bombs across Ukraine early Saturday, killing at least five people as it continues to step up its bombardment following a brazen Ukrainian attack on air bases last week.

The Kremlin has accelerated its attacks on Ukraine in recent weeks, as direct negotiations have failed to broker an end to the three-year war or even a temporary truce.

Ukraine’s Foreign Minister Andriy Sybilla called for Kyiv’s western allies to punish Russia for refusing to halt its invasion.

“To put an end to Russia’s killing and destruction, more pressure on Moscow is required, as are more steps to strengthen Ukraine,” he said on social media.

Tens of thousands have been killed since Moscow invaded in February 2022, triggering Europe’s largest conflict since World War II, destroying cities and villages across eastern Ukraine and forcing millions to flee their homes.

The attacks come ahead of an expected prisoner swap, set to take place this weekend – the only concrete agreement to come out of peace talks between the two sides.

The Ukrainian air force said Russia had fired 206 drones and nine missiles in the overnight barrage.

Ukraine’s second largest city of Kharkiv came under “the most powerful attack since the beginning of the full-scale war”, Mayor Igor Terekhov said.

The northeastern city was home to 1.4 million people before the war and lies around 30 kilometres (18 miles) from the border with Russia.

The Russian strikes pummelled homes and apartment blocks there, killing at least three people and wounding 17 more, the mayor said.

Kharkiv region Governor Oleg Syneubov said the wounded included two children.

In the southern city of Kherson, Russian shelling killed a couple and damaged



two high-rise buildings, regional Governor Oleksandr Prokudin said.

Attacks were also recorded on the Dnipropetrovsk, Odesa and Temopil regions.

Rescuers in the western city of Lutsk, near the Polish border, meanwhile discovered a second fatality from strikes a day earlier, describing the victim as a woman in her 20s.

The aerial bombardments come days after Ukraine launched a brazen attack well beyond the frontlines, damaging nuclear-capable military planes at Russian air bases and prompting vows of revenge from Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Russia’s defence ministry meanwhile said Saturday that its forces had downed 36 Ukrainian drones fired at its territory.

Ukraine has been pushing for an unconditional and immediate 30-day truce, issuing its latest proposal during peace talks in Istanbul on Monday.

But Russia, which now controls around one-fifth of Ukraine’s territory, has repeatedly rejected calls to end its three-year war.

The Kremlin said Friday the Ukraine war was “existential” for Russia.

The comments are Moscow’s latest to dampen hopes for a breakthrough amid a flurry of meetings between Russian and Ukrainian delegations, as well as telephone calls between Putin and US President Donald Trump, aimed at stopping the fighting.

“For us it is an existential issue, an issue on our national interest, safety, on our future and the future of our children, of our country,” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters, responding to remarks by Trump on Thursday comparing Moscow and Kyiv to brawling children.

Putin told Trump on a phone call he would retaliate for an audacious Ukrainian drone attack that damaged nuclear-capable military planes at Russian air bases last Sunday, including thousands of kilometres behind the front lines in Siberia.

The Kremlin chief has issued a host of sweeping demands on Ukraine if it wants to halt the fighting.

They include completely pulling troops out of four regions claimed by Russia, but which its army does not fully control, an end to Western military support and a ban on Ukraine joining NATO.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has dismissed the demands as old ultimatums, questioned the purpose of more such talks and called for a summit to be attended by him, Putin and Trump.

The two countries are set this weekend to conduct a large prisoner exchange after agreeing at talks in Istanbul on Monday to free all wounded soldiers and those aged under 25.

U.S.-Backed Gaza Group Suspends Aid; Hamas Vows to Protect UN Aid

CAIRO (Dispatches) - A controversial humanitarian organization backed by the United States and Israel did not distribute any food aid on Saturday, accusing Hamas of making threats that “made it impossible” to operate in the enclave, which the Palestinian militants denied.

The Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, which uses private U.S. security and logistics firms to operate, said it was adapting operations to overcome the unspecified threats. It later said in a Facebook post that two sites would reopen on Sunday.

A Hamas official told Reuters he had no knowledge of such “alleged threats.”

The Hamas-run Gaza government media office said later on Saturday that GHF operation has “utterly failed on all levels” and that Hamas was ready to help secure aid deliveries by a separate long-running U.N.-led humanitarian operation. Hamas also called on all Palestinians to protect humanitarian convoys.

Israel and the United States have accused Hamas of stealing aid from the U.N.-led operations, which the militants deny.

A Hamas source said the group’s armed wing would deploy some snipers from



Sunday near routes used by the U.N.-led aid operation to prevent armed gangs looting food shipments. The U.N. did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Israel allowed limited U.N.-led operations to resume on May 19 after an 11-week blockade in the enclave of 2.3 million people, where experts have warned a famine looms. The U.N. has described the aid allowed into Gaza as “drop in the ocean.”

Israel and the U.S. are urging the U.N. to work through the GHF, but the U.N. has refused, questioning its neutrality and accusing the distribution model of militarizing aid and forcing displacement. The GHF began operations in Gaza on May 26 and said on Friday so far it has distributed nearly 9 million meals.

While the GHF has said there have been no incidents at its so-called secure distribution sites, Palestinians seeking aid have described disorder and access routes to the sites have been beset by chaos and deadly violence.

Dozens of Palestinians were killed near GHF sites between Sunday and Tuesday, Gaza health authorities said. Israel has said it is investigating the Monday and Tuesday incidents, but said it was not to blame for Sunday’s violence.



PARIS (Dispatches) - Coco Gauff battled back from a set down to beat world number one Aryna Sabalenka in a Grand Slam final for the second time with a dramatic victory in the French Open showpiece.

The second-ranked American dug deep to claim a 6-7 (5/7), 6-2, 6-4 victory and her second major title after also defeating Sabalenka at the 2023 US Open.

The 21-year-old more than made amends for her emotional 2022 final loss to Iga Swiatek at Roland Garros, outlasting Sabalenka over two hours and 38 minutes on Court Philippe Chatrier.

"I was going through a lot of things when I lost in this final three years ago. A lot of dark thoughts, so it just means a lot to be here," said Gauff.

"I didn't think honestly that I could do it."

"I also felt like this is one I really wanted, because I do think this was one of the tournaments that, when I was younger, that I felt I had the best shot of winning," added Gauff.

"I just felt like if I went through my career and didn't get at least one of these, I would feel regrets and stuff."

It was a second straight Grand Slam final loss for Sabalenka after her defeat by Madison Keys at the Australian Open in January.

Gauff was rock solid after falling a set down, while Sabalenka made 70 unforced errors in windy conditions in a match which followed a very similar pattern to Gauff's victory at Flushing Meadows two years ago.

"Honestly guys, it hurts so much, especially after such a tough two weeks when I played such great tennis in these terrible conditions," said Sabalenka, whose unforced error tally in the final was the highest by any player in a women's match this tournament.

"To show such terrible tennis in the final, it does really hurt."

Belarusian Sabalenka was aiming to become the only current women's player to win three of the four Grand Slam events after her US Open triumph last year and back-to-back Australian Open titles in 2023 and 2024.

But Gauff instead moved 6-5 ahead in their head-to-head record, proving the more consistent player in the first women's Slam final between the world's top two since Caroline Wozniacki beat Simona Halep in Melbourne in 2018.

Only Gauff, Swiatek, Naomi Osaka and Maria Sharapova have won multiple Slam titles before turning 22 in the last 20 years.

The 27-year-old Sabalenka quickly asserted herself, racing ahead by taking four of the first five games.

The top seed led 4-1 with a double-break in her semi-final win over Swiatek before being forced into a tie-break.

She gifted Gauff a glimmer of hope too, throwing away the sixth game from 40-0 up with two double-faults and a tame backhand into the bottom of the net.

Gauff made it 12 points in a row and levelled the set on her fifth break point of the eighth game when Sabalenka fired another groundstroke long.

She could not build on that momentum and immediately gave the break straight back.

But Sabalenka failed to serve out the set in a tense game, missing two set points—the first with another double-fault—as Gauff eventually extended the opener by taking her fifth break point.

Both players continued to struggle on serve in the breeze, Sabalenka breaking for fourth time in the set but again unable to close it out.

The first tie-break in the opening set of a women's French Open final since 1998 saw Sabalenka finally clinch the set after 77 minutes with a run of four straight points.

It was the longest set in a women's Grand Slam final since the Williams sisters faced off at Wimbledon in 2002 and longer than last year's final between Swiatek and Jasmine Paolini.

Gauff started the second set on the front foot, though, moving into a 4-1 lead with a double-break.

Unlike Sabalenka in the first set, Gauff saw it out with few problems, sending the match into a decider on her first set point with a confident smash at the net.

The US star also struck first blood in the third, breaking in game three as Sabalenka sent down her fifth double-fault.

Sabalenka managed to drag it back to 3-3, but immediately was broken to love as Gauff edged towards the title.

Gauff was denied on her first match point by a booming Sabalenka return onto the baseline and then had to save a break point.

But she got over the line at the second time of asking, falling to the clay in celebration.

Kane Spares Turgid England's Blushes Against Andorra

LONDON (Dispatches) - Lackluster England labored to a 1-0 away win over Andorra to maintain their 100% start to their World Cup qualifying campaign with captain Harry Kane's second-half goal sparing their blushes on Saturday.

On a sultry afternoon in Barcelona, Kane's scrambled effort shortly after the interval was all that separated Thomas Tuchel's team of Premier League household names with the side sitting 173rd in the world rankings.

As expected, England dominated possession but were short of the quality expected with only Chelsea winger Noni Madueke managing to impress in a forgettable match.

England secured the win, however, and sit comfortably top of Group K with three wins from three.

"It wasn't a great performance and I don't think many people will remember this one," Kane, whose goal was the 450th of his career for club and country, told ITV Sport.

"It was a dry pitch, similar to next year at the World Cup so we will



go away and analyse it. We weren't good enough on the ball but we take the three points and move on."

England are expected to be one of the favourites for next year's World Cup and while it is difficult to read too much into a turgid display against defence-minded Andorra, head coach Tuchel will know big improvements must be made.

In six previous games against Andorra, England had scored 25 goals without reply, but even after they went ahead there was no sense the floodgates would open.

Andorra created a couple of chances to heap real embarrassment on their visitors with substitute Guillaume Lopez denied a late equaliser by Ezri Konsa's block.

From the opening whistle, England's build-up play was pedestrian and only Madueke garnished his reputation, especially before halftime with some penetrating runs.

He tested Andorra keeper Iker Alvarez with a curling shot and set up a couple of other chances, one for Jude Bellingham who like most of England's team, looked flat and well off the pace after a long season.

Kane wasted England's best chance in the first half, shooting wide from close range after another dangerous ball by Madueke had been turned back by Curtis Jones.

Pochettino's U.S. Team Lose 2-1 to Turkey in Friendly



WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The United States suffered their third straight loss under coach Mauricio Pochettino as they fell to a 2-1 friendly defeat to Turkey in Hartford, Connecticut.

Pochettino, whose team lost to Panama and Canada in the CONCACAF Nations League finals in March, was without several starters, including captain and AC Milan winger Christian Pulisic.

Almost a year out from the start of the World Cup, which the USA is co-hosting with Canada and Mexico, Pochettino used the match to take a look at some of those on the fringes of his squad.

One of those, Houston Dynamo midfielder Jack McGlynn, put the home side ahead in the second minute in spectacular fashion.

The 21-year-old picked the ball up on the right flank, cut inside and then curled a beautiful shot from 20-yards out into the far corner.

It was an intense start from a hungry looking USA, but Turkey soon found their footing and began to apply pressure on the USA back line.

Arda Guler missed a great chance, unmarked in the box he leaned back and fired over the bar and then Orkun Kokcu forced debutant keeper Matt Freese into a fine save with a fierce drive.

The visitors' pressure paid off in the 24th minute but it was gifted to them by USA midfielder Johnny Cardoso who, attempting to play out from the back, clipped a pass against Guler which ricocheted past Freese and into the net.

Less than three minutes later, Turkey had the lead after the USA defence was unable to clear and the ball fell to Kerem Akturkoglu who drove home.

Depay, Dumfries Earn Netherlands 2-0 Win in Finland



HELSINKI (Dispatches) - The Netherlands kicked off their World Cup qualification campaign with a comfortable victory as goals from Memphis Depay and Denzel Dumfries secured a 2-0 away win over Finland on Saturday.

Depay profited from a defensive error to give the Dutch the lead inside six minutes, and Dumfries added a second with a neat finish at the back post midway through the first half.

The Netherlands moved third in Group G with three points, behind leaders Poland, who have won both their games, and Finland who have four points from three matches.

It was a professional performance from the Dutch, who were settled by their early goals and could then coast through the second half to secure a first victory in their World Cup qualification opener since 2012.

"The first one is always difficult," Netherlands captain Virgil van Dijk told reporters. "Despite the fact that we dominated a large part of the game and perhaps should have made it 3-0."

"We were very good for an hour, the last 30 minutes could have been better."

Depay latched on to a mis-controlled chested back pass by Kaan Kairinen and his neat finish into the bottom right corner meant no clean sheet for home goalkeeper Lukas Hradecky on his 100th international appearance.

It was a 48th international goal for Depay, leaving him two short of Robin van Persie's all-time record for the Netherlands.

The Dutch went 2-0 up after 23 minutes when Cody Gakpo's cross to the back post was volleyed into the roof of the net by Dumfries.

Depay could not beat Hradecky from an excellent chance early in the second half and Gakpo fired into the side netting from a tight angle but Finland rarely threatened to get back into the match.

Ronaldo Rules Out Playing in Club World Cup Amid Transfer Speculation

MUNICH (Dispatches) - Cristiano Ronaldo confirmed he would not play in the upcoming Club World Cup on Saturday, dismissing rumours he was set to transfer to one of the participating clubs.

Speaking ahead of the Nations League final against Spain in Munich, the Portugal captain said suggestions he was set to take part in the newly expanded competition were wide of the mark.

"I will not be at the Club World Cup," the Portugal veteran said, but added he had "been contacted" by several participating teams.

Ronaldo came into Nations League in Germany amid swirling doubts about his future at club level, with the veteran's contract at Saudi side Al-Nassr set to expire at the end of June.



In May, the Portuguese posted on social media "the chapter is over" as reports emerged he could switch to another club, potentially Saudi side Al Hilal, one of the teams who will be at the tournament in the United States in June.

Ronaldo said he was not interested in making a short-term decision which would allow him to play in the competition.

"Some teams reached out to me. Some made sense and others did not, but you can't try and do everything, you can't catch every ball."

The forward said the decision on his future was "almost final".