

Defense Minister Brigadier General Aziz Nasirzadeh Says the Country's Armed Forces Are Fully Prepared to Give a Harsh Response to Any Possible Adventurism by the Criminal Israeli Regime and Its Western Supporters

IRAN NEWS

Amid a Major Counterterrorism Operation in Iran's Southeastern Province of Sistan and Baluchestan, the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Has Struck Sharp Blows to Israel-Linked Terrorists

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2 DOMESTIC



Iran Prepares to File International Lawsuit Over Heritage Damage

> SEE PAGE 2

3 INTERNATIONAL

Russia, U.S. Hold Frank Ukraine Talks as Washington Slams Moscow's Lack of Flexibility



> SEE PAGE 3

IAEA Must Drop Double Standards for Iran to Resume Cooperation



TEHRAN (PressTV) - President Masoud Pezeshkian says Tehran will resume its cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) if double-standard policies regarding its nuclear program are dropped.

In a phone call, Pezeshkian and European Council President António Costa discussed the latest international developments, particularly the Israeli regime's 12-day imposed war, and the future of relations between Iran and the European Union.

"The resumption of cooperation [with the IAEA] hinges on the correction of the double standards regarding Iran's nuclear case," Pezeshkian said.

He reaffirmed Iran's principled stance on proceeding with the path of constructive interaction and effective dialogue with the world, adding that Tehran is committed to regional and global peace and security.

Pezeshkian emphasized that a parliamentary law on suspension of Iran's cooperation with the UN nuclear agency was a "reaction to the biased and unprofessional" performance of the agency's director general.

The Iranian president warned that the agency's lack of impartiality in its reports, its overlooking of attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities, and its silence in the face of violations of international law have undermined the IAEA's credibility.

Late in June, Iran's Constitutional Council approved a parliamentary bill on suspending cooperation with the IAEA after its report against Iran's nuclear program became a lightning rod for the Israeli aggression on the Islamic Republic.

Gaza Genocide Result of World's Failure to Learn From Srebrenica Massacre



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi says that if the world had "truly internalized the lessons" of the Srebrenica massacre, we wouldn't be seeing another genocide against Muslims happening now in Gaza.

Araqchi made the remarks on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Srebrenica massacre, the deadliest mass killing in Europe since the Second World War.

"Last year, the UN voted to designate July 11 as the International Day of Remembrance for the Srebrenica Genocide," Araqchi wrote on his X account on Thursday. Araqchi called it "a day of shame for those who were either complicit or stayed silent as thousands of innocent Muslims were massacred."

In July 1995, around 8,000 Muslims were massacred after Dutch forces handed them over to the Bosnian Serb troops, which the international war crimes tribunal labeled as genocide.

"On the 30th anniversary of this grave atrocity, Iran pays tribute to the innocent martyrs and expresses solidarity with the survivors and their families."

"Had the world truly internalized the lessons of Srebrenica, we would not be witnessing another genocide against Muslims, this time in Gaza," he noted.

The top diplomat also said that Iran will always stand with the oppressed, "be it in Bosnia and Herzegovina or in Palestine."

Speaker Says U.S. Must Compensate for Aggression Against Iran



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Majlis Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf asserts that the cessation of Israel's recent military aggression was due to the regime's failures rather than any restraint on its part.

In a live interview addressing the 12-day war by the US-Israeli alliance against Iran, Qalibaf said that the actual Israeli casualties were significantly higher than official reports suggested.

He referenced scientific models indicating that the reported 3,500 injuries should equate to at least 500 deaths, stating, "3,500 injured should imply at least 500 dead."

He said that Iran contended not just with Israel, but with NATO and Western powers under US command.

He emphasized that Iran's dominance in land and air contributed to the failure of the Zionist regime, declaring, "We have disabled Israel's military and defense centers."

He noted that Iranian missile strikes during the final days of the confrontation were over 90% accurate, effectively incapacitating key Israeli military and air defense systems.

Qalibaf claimed that Iran had unrestricted access to targets across the occupied territories, which compelled Israel to seek a truce.

He pointed out that the song "Boom Boom Tel Aviv" has become a symbol of Iranian

public diplomacy, asserting that having one billion views signifies a victory in the war of narratives.

He also mentioned the support Iran received from both Shia authorities and Sunni scholars, likening it to a renewed tobacco embargo.

Touching on indirect negotiations with the US, Qalibaf criticized Washington for launching attacks on Iran while talks were ongoing.

He emphasized that if the US is sincere in its diplomatic offers, it must address its aggression and broken promises.

"First, America must explain why it attacked us during negotiations," he questioned. "Two key issues must be clarified in these negotiations: establishing stable security in the region and ensuring Iran's economic interests."

Qalibaf described the US as a "garbage dump" that undertakes the dirty work of Western powers.

"If America is honest, it must compensate for the damage caused by its recent attacks," he concluded.

Iran Denounces UK Intelligence Report Meant to Malign National Interests



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iran has categorically rejected a report by the United Kingdom's parliament's intelligence watchdog as "unfounded and politically-motivated," warning that such a "hostile" move reveals a broader attempt of distortion aimed at maligning the Islamic Republic's legitimate regional and national interests.

On Thursday, Britain's Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament (ISC) alleged that Iran has "significantly increased" its threats within the UK, claiming that Iranian spies have been behind at least 15 attempts to kill or kidnap British-based individuals since 2022.

The accusations drew a swift response from the Iranian Embassy in London, which issued a "categorical rejection of the unfounded, politically motivated and hostile allegations" leveled by the ISC against Tehran.

"The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran firmly denies all allegations made in these sections and considers them to be baseless, irresponsible, and reflective of a broader pattern of distortion intended to malign Iran's legitimate regional and national interests. These claims not only lack substantive evidence but also contradict the Islamic Republic of Iran's principled commitment to international law, sovereign equality, and peaceful coexistence," the statement stressed.

The embassy also emphasized that not only is the report not grounded in reality and unhelpful in resolving misunderstandings, but it also presents false information to the public and policy-makers, thereby distorting the understanding of the issue and leading to miscalculations.

Israeli-U.S. Aggression on Iran Violation of Int'l Law



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's ambassador and permanent representative to the United Nations has reiterated the Islamic Republic's vehement denunciation of Israel's US-backed aggression on the country, stressing that the 12-day war constituted a flagrant breach of international law and the UN Charter.

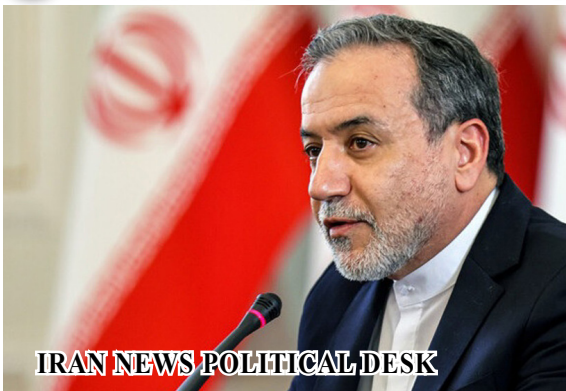
Amir Sa'ed Iravani made the statement on Thursday in a letter addressed to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and UN Security Council President Asim Ibrahim Ahmad, while attaching a detailed report of the Iranian Foreign Ministry about the occupying regime's aggression on Iranian soil last month.

"In the early hours of June 13, 2025 while Iranian families were at rest, the Israeli regime—backed by extensive military, intelligence, and political support from the United States and certain Western countries—launched coordinated air, missile, and drone attacks targeting residential areas, civilian infrastructure, and peaceful nuclear facilities. These indiscriminate and illegal attacks martyred 1,100 innocent civilians, including 132 women and 45 children, and injured over 5,700 others," Iravani said.

"These heinous crimes constitute grave violations of the UN Charter, international law, international humanitarian law, including the Geneva Conventions, and international human rights instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the ICCPR. The subsequent US military aggression on 22 June 2025 further compounded these violations," he added.

The Iranian diplomat underlined that the deliberate targeting of residential areas, hospitals, medical centers, ambulances, civilians, energy infrastructure, scientists, and peaceful nuclear facilities under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards is a blatant violation of international law and constitutes as war crime, crime of aggression, and crime against humanity.

Iran Sets Condition for Resuming Negotiations With U.S.



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Foreign Minister Seyyed Abbas Araqchi has stated that Tehran is open to resuming negotiations with the United States based on dignity and mutual respect.

In a detailed interview with Le Monde published on Thursday, Araqchi emphasized that the US must first change its behavior and guarantee it will not conduct further military strikes against Iran during negotiations.

He reiterated that Iran has always approached negotiations with a commitment to dignity, logic, and mutual respect, saying, "Diplomatic contacts and exchanges have always been ongoing. Currently, a diplomatic hotline is being established through friendly countries or intermediaries."

"Diplomacy is a two-way street. It was the US that broke off negotiations and resorted to military action. Therefore, it is crucial for the US to accept responsibility for its mistakes and to demonstrate a clear change in behavior. We need assurances that the United States will refrain from military attacks during any future discussions," Araqchi stated.

He highlighted that US attacks have caused damage to Iran's nuclear facilities, emphasizing that the country reserves the right to seek compensation once the extent of the damage is assessed.

"It is our right to request compensation for the consequences of these actions. The assertion that a program has been destroyed, forcing a nation to abandon peaceful nuclear programs aimed at fulfilling energy, medical, pharmaceutical, agricultural, and developmental needs, is a significant miscalculation," he explained.

Araqchi further asserted that a program under the constant supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and conducted in accordance with international law encompasses far more than just physical structures.

"The indomitable will of a nation that has achieved the pinnacle of scientific knowledge is not easily undermined. The IAEA's reports have consistently confirmed that no diversion toward weapons activities has been detected in Iran's peaceful nuclear program," he said.

He noted that the true damage lies in the impact on the non-proliferation regime, stating, "The attack on nuclear facilities monitored by the IAEA, coupled with the failure of Western

countries to condemn it, represents an assault on the foundations of international law, particularly the non-proliferation regime."

Araqchi emphasized that for renewed talks, the United States must accept responsibility for its actions toward Iran. He warned that further sanctions or military threats would undermine diplomatic efforts.

He also addressed suggestions from the three European countries regarding the activation of the sanctions mechanism outlined in the 2015 nuclear deal, stating that such a move would be tantamount to a military attack and would essentially negate Europe's role in discussions concerning Iran's peaceful nuclear program.

On June 13, Israel launched a blatant and unprovoked act of aggression against Iran, assassinating many high-ranking military commanders and nuclear scientists.

On June 22, the United States officially joined Israel's war of aggression against Iran by launching attacks on three nuclear facilities in the country in violation of the United Nations Charter and the NPT.

On June 24, the Israeli regime, isolated and abandoned, declared a unilateral halt to its aggression, announced on its behalf by US President Donald Trump.

Araqchi reaffirmed that Iran has no intention of withdrawing from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and remains committed to it, but insisted that the treaty must not be applied in a one-sided manner.

"We enrich uranium based on our rights under the NPT and have consistently affirmed our lack of military intentions. Even amidst attacks and violations, we have not deviated from our stated policy on nuclear weapons, which is firmly grounded in a fatwa prohibiting the production, stockpiling, or use of weapons of mass destruction," he said.

He concluded by stating that "The level of enrichment is determined by Iran's needs. We have previously established a single-digit benchmark, particularly for the Tehran Research Reactor, which is utilized for medicinal and therapeutic purposes involving radiopharmaceuticals."

IRAN NEWS



Preliminary License Issued for Iran's Trade Center in Shanghai

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iran has received official approval to establish its first trade center in Shanghai, China, under the supervision of the Iran Trade Promotion Organization (TPO). According to a statement by the TPO, the preliminary license for setting up the Trade Center of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Shanghai has been issued. The license is valid for one year, from May 31, 2025, to May 31, 2026. The implementing company is required to carry out its activities strictly in accordance with the regulations and conditions set by the organization. The statement also noted that failure to meet these requirements could result in suspension or revocation of the license by the Trade Centers Task Force.

Food Security Seen as a Weapon of War and Top National Priority



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - In a recent address, Minister of Agriculture, Gholamreza Nouri Ghezleji, underscored the strategic importance of food security and called for greater self-sufficiency in this critical sector.

According to ILNA, citing the Government Information Center, the minister made these remarks during the inauguration and tour of "Sina Fanavaran Mandegar," the country's first specialized center for producing embryos from top cattle breeds. He paid tribute to the martyrs and expressed gratitude to the Iranian people and armed forces for their firm response to aggressors, highlighting food security as both a strategic necessity and a national priority.

Celebrating recent military victories, Nouri Ghezleji said: "Today, our missile capabilities are respected and admired by neighboring countries and the Islamic world. We must honor this achievement, especially since we first heard the congratulations for this victory from the Supreme Leader himself."

The minister also praised Hojjatoleslam Khamoushi, head of the Endowments and Charity Affairs Organization, for his efforts to advance agricultural goals. He noted that the organization has played a significant role in strengthening food security by linking the tradition of religious endowments (waqf) to modern, technology-driven agricultural initiatives.

Highlighting the valuable partnership with the Academic Jihad organization, Nouri Ghezleji described it as an important scientific and research collaborator for the Agriculture Ministry, emphasizing its active role in promoting food security.

Referring to the recent 12-day conflict, he warned that food security remains a key tool exploited by adversaries to disrupt markets, spread psychological and economic insecurity, and intensify crises. "Even during these days, the enemy counted on destabilizing the market," he remarked.

Iran's Trade Borders with Iraq, Turkey, Oman Remained Open During 12-Day War



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The Director General of the West Asia Office at Iran's Trade Promotion Organization announced that despite the recent 12-day imposed war, Iran's trade borders with Iraq, Turkey, and Oman remained open.

According to ILNA, quoting the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, Abdolamir Rabihavi reported that Iran's non-oil exports in the first three months of this year reached approximately \$11.655 billion. Over \$5 billion of Iran's total foreign trade was conducted with West Asian countries, accounting for about 45 percent of the Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign trade. During this period, Iran's trade with Iraq amounted to \$1.905 billion, with the UAE \$1.592 billion, with Turkey \$937 million, and with Oman \$437 million.

Rabihavi stated that China, the UAE, Iraq, Turkey, Afghanistan, Oman, and Pakistan are Iran's top seven export partners.

Referring to Iran's imports in the first quarter of 1404 (Iranian calendar year), Rabihavi noted that the value of imported goods reached \$13.029 billion. The UAE and Turkey remain Iran's main suppliers, with imports valued at \$3.886 billion from the UAE and \$1.986 billion from Turkey. Other key suppliers include China, India, Germany, Russia, and the Netherlands.

Emphasizing that the 12-day imposed war did not disrupt Iran's trade with neighboring countries, Rabihavi explained: "Twelve official border crossings with Iraq remained continuously active; there was no disruption or halt in the export of Iranian goods to Iraq. Likewise, trade continued smoothly through the three border points between Iran and Turkey. Ports in the UAE and Iran also remained operational, ensuring uninterrupted exports and imports with the UAE and Oman, and southern Iranian ports continued their activities without interruption."

Iran Prepares to File International Lawsuit Over Heritage Damage



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - In a significant move during the recent 12-day conflict, UNESCO has delivered letters from Iranian officials and cultural institutions to the Israeli government, calling for the protection of Iran's historical sites. This was revealed by Seyyed Reza Salehi Amiri, Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, during his first press conference held after the ceasefire between Iran and Israel.

As soon as the conflict began, Iran's Deputy for Cultural Heritage issued urgent directives to transfer museum artifacts to secure storage facilities. Prominent institutions such as the National Museum of Iran and the UNESCO-listed Golestan Palace successfully relocated significant collections within a matter of days. The National Museum of Iran even installed water shields on its rooftops to meet international protocols aimed at alerting authorities about potential threats to cultural assets.

Despite public criticism triggered by images showing chandeliers at Golestan Palace wrapped in plastic for protection, experts argue that, given the absence of comprehensive wartime crisis management plans and limited prior experience, these swift protective measures were commendable. As Salehi Amiri emphasized, the next step should be to establish clear wartime protocols and conduct crisis drills during this period of ceasefire to better safeguard cultural heritage during future conflicts.

Responding to questions about whether Iran could leverage international pressure, particularly after the United States and Israel withdrew from UNESCO in 2011, Salehi Amiri confirmed that the government has already tasked relevant agencies with assessing all physical, financial, and cultural damages, both direct and indirect. These assessments aim to form the basis for an international lawsuit against Israel for damages inflicted on Iranian cultural heritage during the recent hostilities.

Salehi Amiri stressed that Iran, with its extensive network of historical and archaeological sites, has a duty to protect these assets, not just as national treasures

but as part of the shared cultural legacy of humanity. He also highlighted the ministry's early decision to issue a "red alert," drawing international attention to the threat of attacks on cultural sites.

Ali Darabi, Deputy Minister of Cultural Heritage, underscored the unique challenge posed by confronting two countries — the U.S. and Israel — that no longer recognize UNESCO obligations and are thus not bound by its cultural heritage conventions. Darabi insisted these countries must be pressured to respect international norms.

He elaborated on ongoing international cooperation, mentioning that influential cultural organizations like ICOM and ICOMOS have already issued statements condemning potential harm to heritage sites. Moreover, the World Assembly of Ancient Civilizations — comprising ten member states including Iran, Armenia, and Greece — plays a pivotal role in fostering cooperation on heritage protection and artifact restitution among its members.

Darabi also noted that Iran, as the head of the Tehran-based Regional Research Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage, has contacted its 24 associated countries, some of which issued formal statements supporting the safeguarding of historical sites during the conflict. A planned meeting of the governing council of this center had to be postponed due to airspace restrictions caused by the war.

In response to a journalist's suggestion, Darabi welcomed the idea of launching a broader diplomatic effort to push for stricter international laws and penalties against countries that target cultural heritage during armed conflict. He confirmed that the Ministry of Cultural Heritage would actively pursue this initiative, aiming to prevent attacks on historical and cultural sites worldwide.

"The protection of cultural heritage isn't just a national issue," Darabi concluded. "It is a responsibility shared by all civilized nations, and we must act decisively to uphold it."

Digital Businesses Need a Crisis Management Plan

TEHRAN - Restrictions on internet access during the 12-day imposed war by the Zionist regime against the Iranian nation were inevitable, but they created significant challenges for online and digital businesses. According to the head of Iran's National Union of Virtual Businesses, these experiences highlight the urgent need to draft a clear crisis protocol for the information technology sector.

Following the outbreak of war, the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology temporarily limited user access to the internet to prevent the aggressor's misuse of the network for military purposes, which could endanger the lives and property of Iranian citizens. These restrictions were lifted on June 24, with Minister Seyed Sattar Hashemi announcing that communication services had returned to normal.

Any disruption to internet connectivity, regardless of cause, inevitably affects virtual businesses. Reza Olfatnasab, head of the National Union of Virtual Businesses, told IRNA that during the recent war, many online businesses in Iran faced serious difficulties. "Any disruption or restriction on internet access has a direct and severe impact on these businesses," he said.

Olfatnasab emphasized that improving internet quality and ease of access is vital to expanding the digital economy. "During the recent conflict, there were days when international internet access suffered severe disruptions. Even though the domestic internet was available, users still experienced problems," he added.

He noted that many digital businesses rely on specific software provided by foreign companies and used globally. "Any development work or bug fixes in digital businesses require access to the international internet," he explained.

Olfatnasab called for proper planning to protect the digital

economy in times of crisis, helping businesses remain resilient and minimize losses. "If the digital economy truly matters to the country, authorities need to address these issues; otherwise, we risk losing an already fragile digital ecosystem," he warned.

He also highlighted broader structural issues, such as overlapping responsibilities among different institutions in the digital space, which delay effective solutions. "Disruptions or restrictions reduce sales and revenue for digital businesses, sometimes to zero. Like any other sector, the digital economy needs profitability to attract investors—without it, there will be no new investment," he said.

Olfatnasab also mentioned that during the 12-day war, Iran's digital and communication infrastructure faced heavy cyberattacks. "Online businesses came under severe attack, but thanks to God and the efforts made, they managed to stay operational," he said.

He stressed the importance of leveraging all available resources to strengthen online businesses and support the national economy. For example, he suggested that satellite internet could be explored as a potential solution during crises, provided it is carefully studied by experts.

Despite all challenges, Olfatnasab praised online businesses for supporting citizens and cooperating with the government during the recent conflict. "Our most important demand remains access to the international internet," he concluded. "We have formally requested the Digital Economy Task Force to improve this access because if another internet shutdown occurs, the resulting damage could be irreversible."

Iran Leads Global Oil Production Growth with 13% Increase



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - According to the latest OPEC data, Iran has recorded the highest growth in crude oil production worldwide in 2024, boosting its daily output by 374,000 barrels. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia has faced a significant decline in production for the second consecutive year.

As reported by IRNA citing the Oil Ministry, the 60th edition of OPEC's Annual Statistical Bulletin shows that Iran's crude oil production rose by 13% in 2024. The country's daily output increased from 2.884 million barrels in 2023 to 3.257 million barrels this year.

The United States ranked second with an increase of 274,000 barrels per day—a 2% rise—followed by Nigeria (158,000 barrels), Venezuela (138,000 barrels), and Argentina (65,000 barrels).

In contrast, Saudi Arabia saw a drop of 651,000 barrels per day, equivalent to a 7% decrease, marking its second year of reduced production by a similar amount. Russia and Iraq also recorded notable declines, with daily production falling by 404,000 barrels and 256,000 barrels, respectively.

Overall, global oil production in 2024 decreased by 767,000 barrels per day compared to the previous year, with OPEC members accounting for 572,000 barrels of this reduction.

Iran and Russia Expand Agricultural Cooperation



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - In a phone conversation today, Iran's Minister of Agriculture Jihad, Gholamreza Nouri, emphasized the expansion of agricultural cooperation and the implementation of bilateral agreements with the Russian Federation.

According to ILNA, quoting Iran's Ministry of Agriculture Jihad, Nouri thanked Russia's Minister of Agriculture, Oksana Lut, for her message of condolence following recent incidents in Iran and reiterated Tehran's commitment to strengthening agricultural ties with Moscow.

During the call, Nouri highlighted the progress made in implementing previous agreements within the framework of the comprehensive strategic partnership between the two countries. He also extended an official invitation to his Russian counterpart to visit Tehran.

Additionally, the Iranian minister discussed the general outline of several joint projects in areas including agricultural research, hybrid seed production, and livestock and poultry, leveraging the capacities offered by BRICS. These projects had been previously discussed in an earlier meeting between the two ministers, and both sides agreed to continue efforts toward their implementation.

For her part, Russian Minister Oksana Lut expressed her condolences over the deaths of Iranian citizens in recent events and thanked Minister Nouri for his efforts in drafting joint projects and addressing obstacles to economic cooperation between Iran and Russia.

She also referred to a letter she had sent aimed at deepening collaboration and confirmed her readiness to visit Iran at the earliest opportunity to explore the country's agricultural potential firsthand.

This conversation reflects the strong determination of both nations to expand bilateral relations in the agricultural sector and to utilize existing capacities to boost joint cooperation.

Russia Intercepts 155 Ukrainian Drones, Two Killed in Overnight Attack

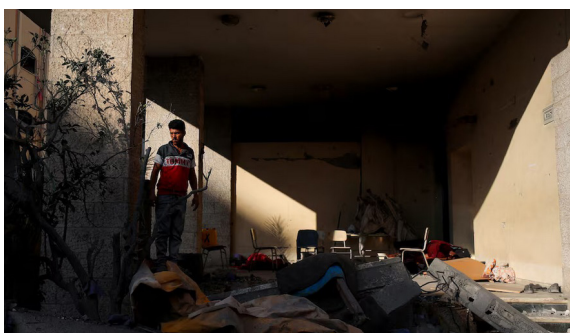
MOSCOW (Dispatches)- Russian air defense systems intercepted 155 Ukrainian drones in an overnight barrage, the defence ministry said Friday, with local officials saying at least two people were killed by drones.

From 11pm (2000 GMT) Thursday to 7am Friday, "air defence systems on duty intercepted and destroyed 155 Ukrainian unmanned aerial vehicles of the fixed-wing type", the ministry said on Telegram, adding that 53 of the drones were shot down over the Kursk region bordering Ukraine.

Earlier the governor of the western Lipetsk region said that one person died after a drone crashed into a farming area.



Israeli Strike Kills Children Near Gaza Clinic



CAIRO (Dispatches) - An Israeli airstrike hit Palestinians near a medical centre in Gaza on Thursday, killing 10 children and six adults, local health authorities said, as ceasefire talks dragged on with no immediate deal expected.

Verified video footage from the strike in Deir al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip showed the bodies of women and children lying in pools of blood amid dust and screaming. One clip showed several motionless children lying on a donkey cart.

"She didn't do anything, she was innocent, I swear. Her dream was for the war to end and that they announce it today, to go back to school," said Samah al-Nouri, sitting by the body of her daughter who was killed in the blast.

"She was only getting treatment in a medical facility. Why did they kill them?" she said, with other bodies laid out around her at a nearby hospital.

Israel's military said it had struck a militant who took part in the Hamas-led October 7, 2023, attack that triggered the war. It said it was aware of reports regarding a number of injured bystanders and that the incident was under review. U.S.-based Project HOPE said the strike had hit right outside its Altayara health clinic. "Horrorified and heartbroken cannot properly communicate how we feel anymore," the aid group said in a statement.

The Deir al-Balah missile strike came as Israeli and Hamas negotiators hold talks with mediators in Qatar over a proposed 60-day ceasefire and hostage release deal aimed at building agreement on a lasting truce.

A senior Israeli official said on Wednesday that an agreement was not likely to be secured for another one or two weeks, however, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said on Thursday he was hopeful of a deal.

"I think we're closer, and I think perhaps we're closer than we've been in quite a while," Rubio told reporters at the ASEAN summit in Malaysia.

France, UK Sign Historic Deal to Coordinate Nuclear Deterrence for First Time



PARIS (Dispatches) - French President Emmanuel Macron and UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer on Thursday announced a new defense relationship that will, for the first time, co-ordinate their countries' nuclear deterrence systems. The "historic" deal aims to jointly protect Europe from threats amid growing uncertainty over US commitment to European security.

France and Britain on Thursday agreed to reinforce co-operation over their respective nuclear arsenals as the two European powerhouses seek to respond to growing threats to the continent and uncertainty over their U.S. ally.

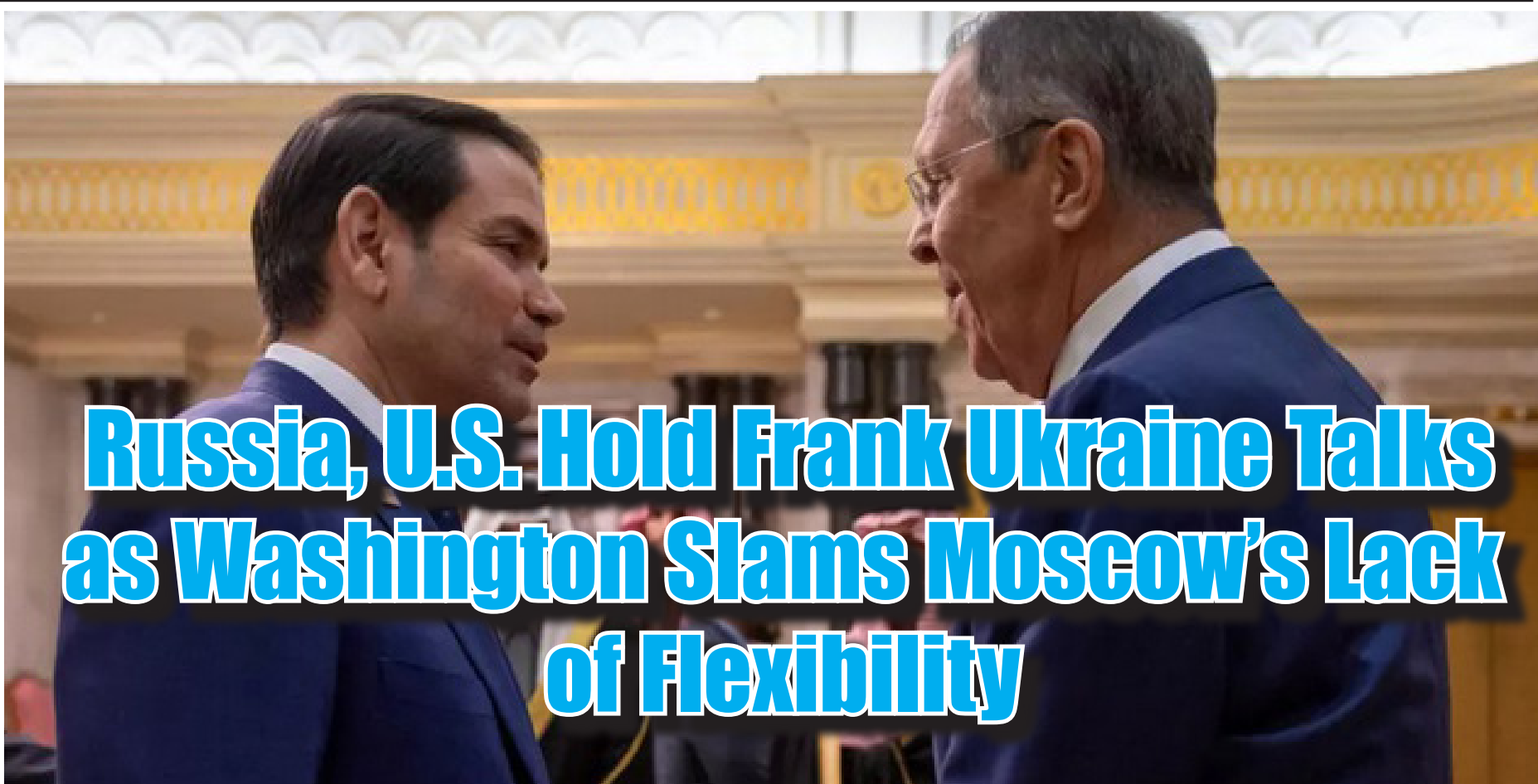
The announcement came after French President Emmanuel Macron concluded a three-day state visit to Britain, where the two allies sought to turn the page of years' of turbulence following Britain's decision to withdraw from the European Union.

"This morning, we signed the Northward declaration, confirming for the first time that we are coordinating our independent nuclear deterrence," British Prime Minister Keir Starmer told a news conference alongside Macron.

"From today, our adversaries will know that any extreme threat to this continent would prompt a response from our two nations. There is no greater demonstration of the importance of this relationship."

US President Donald Trump's questioning of burden-sharing in NATO and his overtures to Russia have led to existential questions in Europe about the trans-Atlantic relationship and Washington's commitment to helping defend its European allies.

Russia, U.S. Hold Frank Ukraine Talks as Washington Slams Moscow's Lack of Flexibility



MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and U.S. top diplomat Marco Rubio held "frank" talks on the Ukraine war during a meeting Thursday, both sides said, as Washington hit out at Moscow's lack of "flexibility".

The U.S. secretary of state said Lavrov shared new ideas on resolving the conflict which he promised to present to US President Donald Trump, but played down the prospect of a breakthrough.

The pair met hours after Moscow pummeled Kyiv for a second straight night and as the United Nations said the number of victims from Russian attacks was at its highest level in three years.

Trump, who forced the warring countries to open negotiations for the first time in three years, this week accused Russian President Vladimir Putin of talking "bullshit" on Ukraine.

The U.S. leader's efforts to secure a ceasefire have failed to extract any concessions from the Kremlin, despite multiple calls with Putin.

Rubio told reporters Lavrov had floated something "new" on the conflict, but did not give details.

"It's not a new approach. It's a new idea or a new concept that I'll take back to the president to discuss," he said.

He added that it was not something that "automatically leads to peace, but it could potentially open the door to a path".

The U.S. diplomat said he had also conveyed Trump's anger that the more than three-year war, triggered by Russia's 2022 invasion, was still ongoing, criticising Moscow's lack of "flexibility".

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said that the United States would deliver more weapons to Kyiv and that he had "specific dates" on when they would arrive, in response to an AFP question.

Zelensky said in an X post that Ukraine was "ready" for different approaches to "scale up protection", including by "purchasing a large defense package from the United States, jointly with Europe".

Trump seemed to back up such an agreement. In an interview with American broadcaster NBC late on Thursday, he said NATO was "paying" the United States for weapons to send to Ukraine.

"We're sending weapons to NATO, and NATO is paying for those weapons, 100% ... And then NATO is going to be giving

those weapons (to Ukraine)," Trump said.

Trump also said he would make a "major statement ... on Russia" on Monday.

NATO secretary general Mark Rutte said he had spoken with Trump and was "working closely with allies to get Ukraine the help they need".

The leaders of Britain and France meanwhile announced they had prepared plans for a peacekeeping force to be deployed to Ukraine in the event of a ceasefire.

Ukraine said that two people – a 22-year-old policewoman on duty at a metro station and a 68-year-old woman – were killed in the latest assault on the capital.

Police described Maria Dzumaga as a "kind, cheerful, sincere, responsible, and dedicated police officer" who had joined in 2023.

AFP journalists heard loud detonations reverberating over Kyiv throughout the night and saw flashes from air defense systems illuminating the sky.

Resident Karyna Wolf told AFP she could hear the growing buzz of a drone until a large explosion rocked the flats just two floors above in her building.

"I immediately jumped away from the wall, away from the windows and ran into the hallway, and in those seconds there was an explosion. There was a lot of glass shards flying at me," the 25-year-old said.

As Rubio and Lavrov met in Kuala Lumpur, Zelensky was at a conference in Rome, where he called for more international political and military support.

Zelensky said Putin wanted "our people to suffer, to flee Ukraine and for homes, schools, for life itself to be destroyed", urging Western leaders to boost defence investments.

The Kremlin denied peace talks were stalled and said it was still open to contacts.

Moscow has for months refused a ceasefire and two rounds of talks with Ukraine have produced no breakthrough.

PKK Fighters to Lay Down Weapons at Key Ceremony in Iraqi Kurdistan



ANKARA (Dispatches)- PKK fighters were to begin laying down their weapons at a ceremony in Iraqi Kurdistan Friday, two months after the Kurdish rebels ended their decades-long armed struggle against the Turkish state.

The disarmament ceremony marks a turning point in the transition of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) from armed insurgency to democratic politics, as part of a broader effort to draw a line under one of the region's longest-running conflicts.

Founded in the late 1970s by Abdullah Ocalan, the PKK took up arms in 1984, beginning a string of bloody attacks on Turkish soil that sparked a conflict that cost more than 40,000 lives.

But more than four decades on, the PKK in May announced its dissolution, saying it would pursue a democratic struggle to defend the rights of the Kurdish minority in line with a historic call by Ocalan, who has been serving a life sentence in Turkey since 1999.

Friday's ceremony was to take place during the morning at an undisclosed location in the mountains of Iraqi Kurdistan – where most of the PKK's fighters have been holed up for the past decade – near the northeastern city of Sulaimaniyah.

Although there were limited details about the ceremony, a PKK source told AFP around 30 fighters would destroy their weapons and then return to the mountains.

"As a gesture of goodwill, a number of PKK fighters, who took part in fighting Turkish forces in recent years, will destroy or burn their weapons in a ceremony," a PKK commander told AFP on July 1, speaking on condition of anonymity.

But tensions rose ahead of the ceremony as two drones were shot down overnight near Iraqi Kurdish peshmerga bases, one in Sulaimaniyah, and the other in Kirkuk to the west, according to officials who did not say was behind the attacks. No casualties were reported.

The start of the PKK's disarmament is a key step in the months-long indirect negotiations between Ocalan and Ankara that began in October

with the blessing of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and have been facilitated by Turkey's pro-Kurdish DEM party.

Among those expected to attend the ceremony were several DEM lawmakers, who arrived in Sulaimaniyah on Thursday, and a handful of journalists.

It was not clear whether the ceremony would be broadcast live.

"I believe in the power of politics and social peace, not weapons. And I urge you to put this principle into practice," Ocalan said in a video message released on Wednesday, pledging that the disarmament process would be "implemented swiftly".

Erdogan said peace efforts with the Kurds would gain momentum after the PKK began laying down its weapons.

"The process will gain a little more speed when the terrorist organisation starts to implement its decision to lay down arms," he said at the weekend.

"We hope this auspicious process will end successfully as soon as possible, without mishaps or sabotage attempts," he added on Wednesday.

In recent months, the PKK has taken several historic steps, starting with a ceasefire and culminating in its formal dissolution announced on May 12.

The shift followed an appeal on February 27 by Ocalan, who has spent the past 26 years in solitary confinement on Imrali prison island near Istanbul.

Trump Puts 35% Tariff on Canada, Eyes 15%-20% Tariffs for Others

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – U.S. President Donald Trump ramped up his tariff assault on Canada on Thursday, saying the U.S. would impose a 35% tariff on imports next month and planned to impose blanket tariffs of 15% or 20% on most other trading partners.

In a letter released on his social media platform, Trump told Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney the new rate would go into effect on August 1 and would go up if Canada retaliated.

In a post on X late on Thursday, Carney said his government will continue to defend Canadian workers and businesses in their negotiations with the U.S. as they work towards that deadline.

The 35% tariff is an increase from the current 25% rate that Trump had assigned to Canada and is a blow to Carney, who was seeking to agree a trade pact with Washington.

An exclusion for goods covered by the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) on trade was expected to stay in place, and 10% tariffs on energy and fertilizer were also not set to change, though Trump had not made a final decision on



those issues, an administration official said.

Trump complained in his letter about what he referred to as the flow of fentanyl from Canada as well as the country's tariff- and non-tariff trade barriers that hurt U.S. dairy farmers and others. He said the trade deficit was a threat to the U.S. economy and national security.

"If Canada works with me to stop the flow of Fentanyl, we will, perhaps, consider an adjustment to this letter," Trump wrote.

Canadian officials say a minuscule amount of fentanyl originates from Canada but they have taken measures to strengthen the border.

"Canada has made vital progress to stop the scourge of fentanyl in North America. We are committed to continuing to work with the United States to save lives and protect communities in both our countries," Carney added in his X post late Tuesday.

The prime minister said last month that he and Trump had agreed to wrap up a new economic and security deal within 30 days.

Sabalenka out, Swiatek in



LONDON (Dispatches) - Iga Swiatek breezed into her first Wimbledon final yesterday but hopes of a dream match-up with Aryna Sabalenka were dashed when the top seed was stunned by Amanda Anisimova.

Five-time Grand Slam champion Swiatek, not previously known for her prowess on grass, demolished former Olympic champion Belinda Bencic 6-2, 6-0 in just 71 minutes on Centre Court. “Honestly, I never even dreamed that it’s going to be possible for me to play in the final,” said the 24-year-old eighth seed.

“So I’m just super-excited and proud of myself and, I don’t know, tennis keeps surprising me.

“I thought I had experienced everything on the court but I didn’t experience playing well on grass, so that’s the first time. I’m super excited and just enjoying it.”

In baking conditions, Swiatek caught her Swiss opponent cold, racing into a 3-0 lead, and never relinquished her grip against her 35th-ranked opponent.

Bencic, who won gold at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021, at least got on the board in the first set, but in the second set the rampant Swiatek went up another gear and her opponent had no answers.

“Today was just a different level from Iga. She played amazing and I didn’t feel like she let me in the match for one second,” Bencic said.

“There’s nothing I really regret. In the end, she was just too good, and I was a step too short.”

Swiatek has largely gone under the radar at this year’s Wimbledon, dropping just one set while every seed above her has been eliminated.

Four of her five major wins have come on the clay of the French Open, with her previous best performance at Wimbledon a run to the quarter-finals in 2023.

She made her first grass-court final at Bad Homburg just two weeks ago and is now into her second final on the surface.

Swiatek has won all five of her Grand Slam finals, but standing in the way of a sixth major title is Anisimova in their first professional meeting.

Anisimova, the American 13th seed, shattered Sabalenka’s Wimbledon title bid with a tense 6-4,

4-6, 6-4 victory.

World number one Sabalenka had reached the previous three Grand Slam finals but came up short against Anisimova, who matched her blow for blow in a bruising encounter lasting just over two hour and a half hours.

“This doesn’t feel real right now, honestly,” said Anisimova. “Aryna is such a tough competitor and I was absolutely dying out there. I don’t know how I pulled it out.

“We’ve had so many tough battles and to come out on top and be in the final of Wimbledon is incredible.”

The 23-year-old, who now has an impressive 6-3 winning record against Sabalenka, won the first set but the Belarusian hit back to level.

Anisimova was hailed as a teenage sensation after reaching the 2019 French Open semi-finals aged just 17.

But in 2023, she took an eight-month break from the court for mental health reasons, tumbling out the top 400.

This time last year, she was on the comeback trail but was ranked too low to get into the Wimbledon main draw and fell in qualifying.

She became only the second player in the Open era to reach a women’s final at a Grand Slam after losing in qualifying at the previous year’s event.

“If you told me I would be in the final of Wimbledon, I would not believe you. It’s indescribable to be honest,” she said.

She is guaranteed to make her top-10 debut on Monday.

Defeat was a bitter blow for Sabalenka, who has still never been beyond the semi-finals at Wimbledon.

The 27-year-old won last year’s US Open to collect her third major, but suffered agonising defeats in the finals of this year’s Australian and French Opens.

Ancelotti Sentenced to One-Year Jail for Tax Fraud



MADRID (Dispatches) - A Spanish court yesterday sentenced former Real Madrid manager Carlo Ancelotti to a year in jail for tax fraud committed in 2014, a punishment that will not oblige the Brazil coach to serve prison time.

Prosecutors alleged the Italian created a system of shell companies to hide extra earnings during his first spell as Real Madrid manager in 2014 and 2015, notably through image rights.

They said the 66-year-old, one of the most successful managers in football history, failed to pay more than one million euros due to undeclared earnings in those years, seeking four years and nine months’ jail against him.

Ancelotti denied having intentionally committed fraud at his highly publicised trial in April, saying he never realised a scheme allowing him to collect some of his salary in image rights would see him pay less tax.

A Madrid court announced it had convicted Ancelotti for “an offence against the treasury... to the punishment of one year in prison” and a fine of 386,361 euros (US\$452,821).

Ancelotti showed a “conscious desire to evade the payment of taxes on the income obtained from the exploitation of his image rights, through artificial mechanisms”, the court wrote in a ruling.

“The actions are blatantly fraudulent and the structures used do not conform to a real economic logic. The deliberate concealment of income through opaque structures and entities in tax havens proves a fraudulent intent,” it added.

But the former Chelsea, Bayern Munich and Paris Saint-Germain boss, who no longer lives in Spain, will not serve jail time because the sentence is less than two years and he has no criminal record.

Cooper Flagg Scores 10 in Summer League Debut



LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Dallas Mavericks rookie and No. 1 NBA Draft pick Cooper Flagg contributed 10 points, six rebounds and four assists in 32 minutes in his Las Vegas Summer League debut Thursday as the Mavericks edged the Los Angeles Lakers 87-85.

Flagg added three steals and a block. He went scoreless during the second half and finished 5-for-21 from the floor.

“Not up to my standard, but I’m going to regroup; I’m going to be all right,” Flagg told ESPN postgame. “This is a new feeling, new environment, new teammates, but the guys settled down.”

Lakers second-year guard Bronny James missed a potential go-ahead trey in the closing seconds. Los Angeles’ Cole Swider led all scorers with 22 points to go with 10 rebounds.

Ryan Nembhard paced Dallas with 21 points and Miles Kelly followed with 17. The main attraction, though, was undeniable.

Fans at the Thomas & Mack Center buzzed when Flagg got touches as well as during his early, sporadic defensive matchups against James, who scored his team’s first five points and finished with eight.

Speaking during halftime of ESPN’s broadcast, Mavericks coach Jason Kidd lauded Flagg’s moxie during his unofficial professional debut.

“I think when you have someone like Cooper who can handle, who can shoot, who can pass, you want the ball in his hands,” Kidd said. “He’s a great decision-maker. He did that at Duke and also in high school. So, you get to see it tonight. He’s going to have some mistakes. We all did; we all threw it in the stands once in a while, but I think just his poise as an 18-year-old is incredible.”

Dalton Knecht (15 points) and DJ Steward (14) also scored in double figures for the Lakers. Darius Bazley grabbed a game-high 11 rebounds.

PSG Thrash Real Madrid 4-0 to Set Up Club World Cup Final With Chelsea

NEW JERSEY (Dispatches) - Fabian Ruiz scored twice as European champions Paris Saint-Germain turned on the style in their reunion with Kylian Mbappe, thrashing Real Madrid 4-0 in the semi-finals of the Club World Cup to set up a final showdown with Chelsea.

Ruiz and Ousmane Dembele scored inside nine minutes to stun Real and silence the majority of the 77,542 crowd who were wearing white at the MetLife Stadium outside New York.

The Spanish midfielder added another before half-time and Goncalo Ramos got a late fourth as Luis Enrique’s side moved one game away from glory at FIFA’s new tournament.

Victory against Chelsea on Sunday would complete a campaign of unparalleled success for the Parisians, who won the French title and then the first UEFA Champions League in their history in May.

“We are in a special season, a special moment, and we deserved to win,” Luis Enrique told broadcaster DAZN before looking ahead to the final.

“We are going to try, one more step against a good team like Chelsea. They did great, they performed the whole competition and now it is time for us to prepare for that... we want to make history in our club, and then take some holidays.”

After blowing away Inter Milan 5-0, the biggest victory in



European Cup final history, PSG began their Club World Cup bid by putting four past Atletico Madrid and the ease with which they disposed of Real was striking.

PSG’s fluidity contrasted starkly with Madrid, who are a work in progress under new coach Xabi Alonso.

“We were not good enough today,” said Alonso. “We are not the first ones to lose to them but we have a lot of different things to improve.”

Mbappe struggled to make any impact on his first start at the tournament and in his first game against PSG since leaving the French club last year.

The defeat is a real blow to Real as they hoped to win the first 32-team Club World Cup to add to their record tally of 15 European Cups.

PSG were without imposing centre-back William Pacheco due to suspension following his sending-off against Bayern Munich in the quarter-finals, but that did not matter.

Lucas Beraldo slotted into the defence with ease, and the rest of PSG’s first-choice line-up was there.

Real were missing central defender Dean Huijsen through suspension, while the absence of Trent Alexander-Arnold was an added blow.

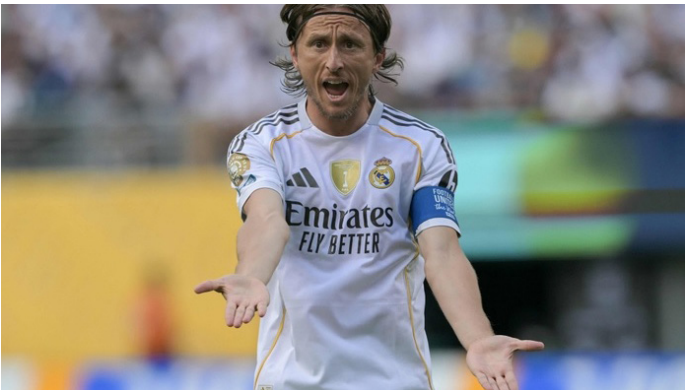
Modric Leaves Real Madrid as Club's Most Decorated Player

BARCELONA (Dispatches) - The curtain finally fell on Real Madrid midfield maestro Luka Modric’s superlative career at the club after a drubbing by Paris Saint-Germain in New Jersey, but in years to come that will be forgotten.

The 39-year-old made his last appearance for the club as a substitute in the 4-0 Club World Cup semi-final defeat on Wednesday, but leaves a host of indelible memories from his time with the Spanish giants.

The Croatian confirmed in May he would leave Madrid after the tournament in the United States, and he is set to join AC Milan next season.

Modric turns 40 in September but still hopes to play for Croatia at the 2026 World Cup, and regular football is what he needs, after his minutes shrank last season under previous



Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti.

The veteran midfielder won a club-record 28 trophies over 13 years in the Spanish capital, in which he conquered fans of all teams across Spain with his consistent brilliance.

“It’s not the desired finish, it’s a bitter end, but he will not be remembered for this game, but instead for other great ones,” said new Real Madrid coach Xabi Alonso after the PSG humbling.

“He is a legend both of world football and Real Madrid, he will be remembered for many more good things than the 25 minutes he played today.”

Modric has been a key part of Madrid’s success since arriving in 2012 from Tottenham, winning six Champions League trophies and four La Liga titles among other silverware.