

Iranian Lawmakers Are Advancing a Bill in Parliament to Increase Military Spending Aimed at Strengthening the Armed Forces for an All-Out Confrontation With the Israeli Regime

IRAN NEWS

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi Left Tehran for China on Monday to Participate in a Summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Where He Is to Hold Bilateral Talks With His Chinese Counterpart

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Nuclear Talks Guided by Principles, Not Trust



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN – Deputy Foreign Minister, Kazem Gharibabadi, asserted in a televised interview on Sunday that Iran’s approach to nuclear negotiations has never been driven by naivety or trust in its counterparts but by firm principles focused on safeguarding national interests and lifting sanctions.

Speaking on IRIB’s Special News Talk program, Gharibabadi dismissed what he called “excessive demands” from Western powers, emphasizing Iran’s insistence on preserving its nuclear rights. “We never sat at the negotiating table out of wishful thinking,” he said. “Our diplomacy is always backed by readiness on the defense front.”

Gharibabadi argued that the recent regional conflict demonstrated Iran’s strength and shifted regional perceptions. “The United States and the Zionist regime tried to impose their will through force but failed,” he said. “We came out of the conflict victorious, which is reflected in the unity and cohesion we now see inside Iran.”

According to the deputy foreign minister, it was the U.S. that requested a ceasefire during the 12-day war, signaling a recognition of Iran’s position. “Even those who once saw Iran as the threat now acknowledge the Zionist regime as the real danger,” he added, pointing to statements by Arab and Islamic nations condemning Israel.

Gharibabadi defended Iran’s robust response to Israeli attacks, describing it as necessary to protect national sovereignty and independence. He argued that this stance also served broader regional interests by highlighting the true source of instability in the Middle East. “The real threat in the region is the Zionist regime, and this has become clearer than ever,” he stated.

Iran, UAE Security Chiefs Urge Collective Efforts for Regional Security



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Senior security officials from Iran and the United Arab Emirates call for collective cooperation among regional countries to ensure security in the region.

In a telephone conversation on Sunday, Secretary of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Ali Akbar Ahmadian and the UAE National Security Advisor Tahnoun bin Zayed Al Nahyan discussed leading developments in the region, particularly the recent acts of aggression by Israel and the United States against the Islamic Republic.

Ahmadian praised the UAE’s stance in condemning the strikes, saying, “The security of the Persian Gulf and the interconnected security of all its members require the participation of regional countries.”

He warned that any foreign threat to one nation’s security would jeopardize the stability of the entire region.

The SNSC secretary reiterated Iran’s principled stance on the expansion of relations with its neighboring countries.

The top Emirati security official, for his part, said security in the region should be maintained by regional countries.

He warned that any disruption to the security of one country would have adverse consequences for other regional states. Al Nahyan reiterated the UAE’s longstanding support for resolving challenges through dialogue.

On the morning of June 13, the Israeli regime launched a premeditated, large-scale military attack on Iranian soil with the green light from the United States.

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Iran Rejects Snapback Sanctions as Politically Motivated, Pledges Response

TEHRAN - Iran’s Foreign Ministry has condemned efforts by the United States and European countries to trigger the so-called “snapback” mechanism, describing it as a politically driven attempt to pressure Iran that will face an appropriate response.

At the ministry’s weekly press briefing, spokesperson Esmail Baghaei addressed a wide range of issues, including the humanitarian toll of recent attacks, Iran’s nuclear stance, and international legal developments. The briefing was also attended by Pir Hossein Kolivand, head of the Iranian Red Crescent Society, who shared grim details about the impact of the latest violence on civilians and medical teams.

Kolivand reported that recent hostilities had led to significant civilian casualties, including 126 women and 41 children, none of whom were involved in military activities. He revealed that five Red Crescent relief workers were killed in direct attacks and an ambulance was deliberately set on fire. “All of this is a clear violation of the Geneva Conventions,” he said, adding that even a Red Crescent helicopter was targeted.

Kolivand stressed that the Red Crescent’s mission is humanitarian, yet they faced deliberate obstruction and attacks while trying to deliver aid. “In just 12 days, we witnessed a range of atrocities,” he said, highlighting attacks on hospitals, rehabilitation centers, and food production sites. The organization has submitted comprehensive reports documenting these violations to the International Committee of the Red Cross, the UN Human Rights Council, and the International Criminal Court.

Baghaei praised the dedication and bravery of Iranian relief workers and pledged that Iran would thoroughly document what it considers crimes committed by Israel. “We are determined to compile and present this evidence internationally,” he said, underscoring Iran’s commitment to holding the perpetrators accountable.

Turning to renewed talk of the snapback mechanism—a process that could reimpose UN sanctions lifted under the 2015 nuclear deal—Baghaei firmly rejected the move as lacking legal

and political legitimacy. “This is merely an abuse of a provision included in Resolution 2231 and has no justification, especially in light of current developments,” he explained.

He reiterated that Iran still considers itself part of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) despite scaling back its commitments in response to what it describes as repeated violations by the US and European signatories. “The snapback is purely a political act aimed at confrontation and will be met with a suitable response from Iran,” Baghaei warned.

Baghaei also accused Germany of violating its obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty by hosting US nuclear weapons, while simultaneously criticizing Iran’s peaceful nuclear activities. “Germany’s position effectively supports serious breaches of international law,” he argued.

Addressing the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, Baghaei attributed the ongoing violence and what he called “genocide” to a lack of accountability for Israel. He said that US obstructionism has paralyzed both the International Court of Justice and the UN Security Council, enabling the continuation of atrocities. “The responsibility lies not only with the Israeli regime but also with its supporters, particularly the United States,” Baghaei stated.

Baghaei highlighted that many of the children killed in the recent attacks were students, and that documenting these crimes remains a priority for Iranian authorities. “Preserving the evidence and sharing these truths with the world is essential,” he emphasized.

Responding to questions about possible diplomatic initiatives, Baghaei said Iran remains in close contact with Russia and China, who have expressed willingness to help resolve nuclear-related issues. However, he noted, “No specific proposal has been presented so far.” He added that Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi’s current trip to China is an opportunity to continue discussions.

Finally, Baghaei confirmed that no date or location has yet been determined for restarting formal nuclear negotiations, although diplomatic communications with various parties remain ongoing.

Iranian Foreign Ministry Issues Detailed Report Accusing Israel of Violating Int’l Law

TEHRAN - Iran’s Foreign Ministry has released a comprehensive report accusing Israel of committing large-scale, unprovoked military aggression that led to significant civilian casualties, widespread destruction, and serious violations of international law and humanitarian principles.

Titled “Brazen Attack on International Law by the Israeli Regime,” the report outlines events that began on June 13 and spanned twelve days, resulting in hundreds of civilian deaths, thousands of injuries, and heavy damage to critical infrastructure. According to Iranian officials, the offensive was carried out under the leadership of Israel’s prime minister, who currently faces an arrest warrant from the International Criminal Court (ICC), and received backing from the United States.

The document asserts that the assault was launched “without provocation,” in direct breach of the United Nations Charter—specifically Article 2(4), which prohibits the use of force against the territorial integrity of any state—as well as other key resolutions such as UNGA Resolution 2625 (XXV) and UNGA Resolution 3314 (XXIX).

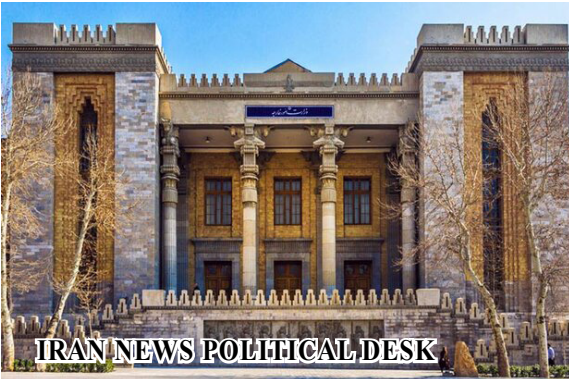
Detailing the human and material cost, the report highlights several high-profile strikes on civilian targets. Among them was the attack on the Shahid Chamran residential complex in northern Tehran, where 60 civilians, including 20 children, lost their lives. Airports in Tehran (Mehrabad), Mashhad (Hasheminejad), and Karaj (Payam) were also reportedly targeted, disrupting critical transportation and logistics.

Medical facilities suffered significant damage as well. Hospitals including Tehran’s Hakim Children’s Hospital and Kermanshah’s Farabi Hospital were struck, destroying intensive care units and ambulances, the report states. In addition, media workers were killed during an airstrike on Iran’s state broadcaster, IRIB, while it was airing live programming.

Cultural sites and vital utilities were not spared either. Strikes on the Shahid Tondgooyan Monument and critical infrastructure such as oil refineries, gas depots, and water pipelines reportedly led to widespread blackouts, flooding, and severe environmental harm.

The toll on civilians was immense: over 3,000 people injured, with more than 500 requiring surgery. Victims included children, pregnant women, Red Crescent workers, and a two-month-old infant, Rayan Ghasseini, who died after suffering severe burns.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry’s report also accuses Israel of carrying out targeted assassinations of high-ranking military leaders and scientists. Among those reportedly killed were Major General Mohammad Bagheri, chief of staff of Iran’s armed forces; Major General Hossein Salami,



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commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC); Major General Gholam Ali Rashid, commander of the Khatam al-Anbiya headquarters; and Major General Amir Ali Hajizadeh, head of the IRGC aerospace division.

The report lists nuclear scientists such as Fereydoun Abbasi, Abdolhamid Minouchehr, Dr. Ahmad Reza Zolfaghari, and others among those assassinated. Family members, including children and elderly relatives, were also killed in these strikes. Rear Admiral Ali Shamkhani, a senior advisor to Iran’s Supreme Leader, reportedly survived but sustained critical injuries.

The report highlights deliberate attacks on Iran’s nuclear facilities in Natanz, Arak, Qom, and Isfahan, all under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards and meant for civilian use. Iran Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the IAEA Statute, UN Security Council Resolution 487, and the Geneva Conventions.

Iran also accused Israel of launching cyberattacks on major banks such as Sepah and Pasargad, as well as online exchanges like Nobitex, resulting in financial losses exceeding \$60 million. Additional “terror operations” included five car bombs that exploded in Tehran on June 15, allegedly aimed at spreading fear among civilians.

Beyond Israel, the report holds the United States and European allies responsible for complicity. It cites U.S. weapons shipments, including 300 Hellfire missiles, and military deployments such as the USS Nimitz. Public support from figures like former U.S. President Donald Trump, UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer, France’s Emmanuel Macron, and German politicians is also highlighted as evidence of political endorsement.

Iran contends these actions breach the jus cogens prohibition against aggression and violate obligations under the Articles on State Responsibility (ARSIWA).

Finally, Iran’s report urges the United Nations and the global community to condemn Israel’s actions, hold it accountable, and prevent future aggression. It calls on UN member states to refuse any support to the Israeli regime, deny legitimacy to its operations, and work collectively to uphold humanitarian law.

“The international community is being put to the test,” the report warns. “Failure to act will not only embolden further acts of aggression but also erode the very foundation of global order and the rule of law.”

Women Have Stronger Motivation and a More Suitable Foundation for Social Participation



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - President Masoud Pezeshkian stressed the importance of national unity and inclusiveness, stating that society should not be divided into “insiders” and “outsiders.” He highlighted that women form a significant part of society, possessing both a more suitable foundation and stronger motivation for active social engagement.

On Sunday, in an unannounced visit to the Presidential Vice Presidency for Women and Family Affairs and the National Population Headquarters, Pezeshkian emphasized the need to focus on tangible outcomes in governance. “If, despite spending considerable resources across various sectors—including culture—we are not achieving the desired results, then we must seriously reconsider our methods and how we allocate resources,” he said.

The president underscored the necessity of making decisions based on accurate, up-to-date data, especially concerning women, family issues, and demographic challenges. “Instead of first trying to restructure or create new bodies, our efforts should aim toward real, meaningful achievements rather than merely showing activity. We must make improvements based on experience and collected data to increase effectiveness and improve outcomes,” he added.

Pezeshkian noted that expectations should align with the country’s available resources and prevailing conditions, warning against demands that exceed what is realistically possible.

Reflecting on his own administrative experience, the president stressed the importance of harnessing public participation and strengthening inter-sectoral collaboration. “Without the people, we can achieve nothing,” he declared.

He pointed to the critical role of the public in past national crises: “Whether during the eight-year imposed war or the more recent twelve-day conflict, it was the people’s steadfastness and sacrifice that led to victory and national pride. If we embrace the idea that people must be active in all arenas, we can overcome any challenge. But if we simply wait for governments to do everything, we will not succeed.”

Netanyahu Openly Dictating U.S. in Talks With Iran



TEHRAN (PressTV) - The Iranian foreign minister has stated that Israel’s prime minister has failed to achieve any of his objectives through the regime’s latest war of aggression against Iran.

Abbas Araqchi commented that Benjamin Netanyahu is “openly dictating” what the U.S. should or should not say or do in discussions with Iran, despite his failures during the recent aggression against the Islamic Republic.

He made these remarks in a social media post in response to Netanyahu’s assertion that Iran must limit the range of its missiles to 480 kilometers.

Araqchi described it as absurd to expect Iran to accept advice from “a war criminal.”

He emphasized that Netanyahu’s aspirations to undermine more than 40 years of peaceful nuclear advancements were unrealistic.

He noted that every one of the dozen Iranian scientists killed by mercenaries trained over 100 capable successors, who will demonstrate their capabilities to Netanyahu.

“But his arrogance doesn’t end there. Having miserably failed to achieve any of his war objectives in Iran and compelled to turn to ‘Daddy’ when our powerful missiles targeted secret Israeli sites—which Netanyahu is still censoring—he is now openly dictating what the US should or shouldn’t say or do in talks with Iran,” he stated.

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



Fuel Supply Held Steady in War

TEHRAN (Shana) - Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad welcomed and thanked the president for his unannounced visit to the Oil Ministry on Sunday, calling it a morale booster for petroleum industry employees. He stated that during the 12-day war, the oil industry remained resilient and ensured uninterrupted fuel supply across the country. Paknejad noted that senior managers at the meeting with President Masoud pezeshkian represented employees working around the clock. He said the president's presence would undoubtedly uplift colleagues in the oil sector. Reflecting on the recent 12-day war, he added, "We learned many lessons during this period. From the first moments of the invasion, all oil industry employees reported to work full-time and took charge of operations."

Official Sale Price of Iranian Crude Oil for July Announced



TEHRAN - The National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) has announced the official selling price of Iranian crude oil for July 2025 (covering parts of Tir and Mordad 1404 in the Iranian calendar). According to the announcement, Iranian Light crude will be offered to Asian customers at nearly \$1.50 above the base price, which is benchmarked against the average price of Oman/Dubai crude.

As reported by the Oil Ministry, the official selling prices for various grades of Iranian crude for July 2025 have been set. For markets in Northwest Europe and South Africa, the price of Iranian Light crude oil has risen significantly compared to the previous month, and will be set at \$2.20 above the price of North Sea Brent crude.

Meanwhile, Iranian Heavy crude and Foroozan blend will be offered in these markets at premiums of 40 cents and 50 cents above Brent, respectively. This marks a change from previous months, when Iranian crude grades were priced slightly below Brent in these regions.

In the Mediterranean market, Iranian Light crude will be sold at around \$2 above Brent. Foroozan will be priced on par with Brent, while Iranian Heavy crude will be priced 15 cents below the benchmark.

In the Asian market—where prices are set based on the average price of Oman/Dubai crude—Iranian Light will be sold at \$1.55 above the base price, showing a slight decrease compared to last month. Foroozan will be priced 5 cents higher than the base, while Iranian Heavy crude will be offered at 20 cents below the benchmark.

It is worth noting that the NIOC's International Affairs Department publishes the official selling prices for all grades of Iranian crude oil on a monthly basis.

Tehran Faces Driest Year in Six Decades



TEHRAN - The current water year has been the driest in the past 60 years for Tehran Province, according to the managing director of Tehran Province Water and Wastewater Company, who announced new plans to help residents reduce water consumption through installment-based purchases of water-saving devices.

Mohsen Ardakani highlighted that climate change has become a global issue, and Iran — particularly its capital — has not been spared from its consequences. He cited reduced rainfall, rising temperatures, and shifts in the timing and distribution of precipitation as clear outcomes of these changes.

"For the first time in our long-term statistical record, Tehran is experiencing its fifth consecutive drought year," Ardakani said, adding that annual rainfall has dropped below the long-term average of 280 millimeters.

He noted that in the current water year — about 10 months into it — rainfall in Tehran Province has only reached 149 millimeters, marking a 45% decline compared to typical annual figures. Even when compared to last year's already low rainfall, this represents a further 35% drop.

Due to the low precipitation, water storage in Tehran's reservoirs has fallen to less than 20% of capacity, Ardakani explained. In such conditions, the most effective strategy to cope with drought is to reduce water consumption by at least 20%.

He pointed out that while the recommended daily water use per person in Tehran is 130 liters, current average consumption stands at 250 liters per person per day. He stressed that a 20% reduction would significantly help during this period of severe water scarcity.

Focusing on efforts to ensure water supply, Ardakani said the company has prioritized distribution management and consumption control. Projects under way include the major "Ghamar Bani Hashem" ring project, of which nearly 140 kilometers out of a planned 170 kilometers have been completed, as well as the expansion of SCADA systems, telemetry, storage tanks, and local pressure monitoring equipment.

War Benefits No One and Has No Winners



TEHRAN - President Masoud Pezeshkian on Sunday paid an unannounced visit to the Ministry of Petroleum, where he thanked the minister and senior managers for their efforts to ensure uninterrupted energy supply during wartime challenges and prevent shortages and disruptions.

"You were the ones who, alongside other segments of society, with accurate understanding and timely prudence, thwarted the enemy's plans to destabilize the country," the president said. "Without the people's unity and presence in the field, alongside the capabilities and missiles of the armed forces that shattered the image of the Zionist regime, our success and victory would not have been possible."

Highlighting the Ministry of Petroleum's critical responsibility in organizing energy production and consumption, Pezeshkian stressed that having accurate, up-to-date, and comprehensive data is key to the success of any plan in this field. He called for strengthening cross-sector coordination to better manage the energy sector.

The president also underscored the importance of increasing investment in the oil industry. "Many individuals and companies have expressed interest in investing in energy production and consumption management, and we should take a more active approach in attracting and utilizing this potential," he noted.

As part of broader efforts, Pezeshkian identified the expansion of clean energy infrastructure—especially accelerating the construction of solar power plants—as a complementary measure. He explained that developing solar energy would reduce the

need to supply subsidized gas and diesel for power generation, thereby giving the Oil Ministry more room to invest and increasing the sector's attractiveness for private investors.

Pezeshkian instructed officials at the Ministry to draw on existing experiences and expert opinions to devise comprehensive strategies for better managing energy production and consumption. "Consider all opportunities, threats, and possibilities, and make the necessary forecasts," he urged, adding: "I hope that this winter, we will no longer face energy shortages."

The president also welcomed the ministry's successful initiatives to curb fuel smuggling, improve consumption management, and enhance efficiency. He pointed to two key steps that could further boost performance: allowing operational teams to share in savings from reduced smuggling and waste, and designing pay systems based on employee performance.

In another part of his remarks, Pezeshkian emphasized the government's commitment to diplomacy to prevent further conflict. "War benefits no one and never has a winner," he said. "In line with the government's slogan of national unity, we strive to advance peace, calm, and stability through internal cohesion and friendship with neighbors and other countries worldwide. We have never bullied anyone and never will, but we will also never submit to force and bullying."

Around 5m Afghan Workers Live in Iran

TEHRAN - Seyed Malek Hosseini, Deputy Minister for Entrepreneurship Development and Employment at Iran's Ministry of Cooperatives, Labor and Social Welfare, has highlighted the urgent need to shrink the informal labor market and better connect small businesses to the broader Iranian economy. Despite ongoing reforms, about 57% of Iran's labor market still consists of informal jobs.

Speaking at a press conference, Hosseini paid tribute to the journalists covering the recent 12-day conflict, noting the crucial role of local media in countering misinformation. He praised the resilience and dedication of Iranian journalists, saying that in times of crisis, "the people of Iran show unwavering support for their land and identity."

Hosseini outlined four key strategic areas for his office, as presented by the labor minister to parliament. Central among these is the reduction of informal employment and integrating small enterprises into the national economy. While acknowledging the complexity of these challenges, he promised a full report on progress made in recent months.

He also emphasized the need for more precise labor market analysis to support employers and new market entrants. "In the past, employment policy often felt rushed and reactive," he said. "We need to step back and offer a clear, data-driven picture of the labor market."

Turning to the issue of foreign labor, Hosseini noted that Iran has experienced four major waves of Afghan migration over the past half-century. Official estimates once suggested Afghan migrants comprised up to 10% of Iran's population—an exceptional figure by global standards. While recent adjustments have brought this number down, their presence in the workforce remains significant.

Over 40 years of international sanctions and environmental crises have not changed Iran's overall approach, Hosseini explained. "Despite all these challenges, Iran has always treated Afghan migrants with humanity and respect," he said, adding that cultural and linguistic ties make this relationship unique.

He criticized certain public misconceptions about Afghan migrants, clarifying that Iran legally accepts foreign workers from up to 80 countries under specific regulations. "They must enter legally, hold valid work documents, and be identifiable," he said, noting that even the Taliban refuses undocumented migrants from Iran.

According to data released up to late June 2025, Iran currently hosts about 433,000 documented foreign workers, representing just 2% of its 24 million-strong workforce. The vast majority—over 430,000—are Afghan nationals, while fewer than 10,000 are classified as foreign specialists. Around 4,250 are low-skilled foreign workers.

The sectors most dependent on foreign labor include construction (53%), industry (about 19%), and agriculture (11.1%), with mining accounting for a smaller share.

Hosseini acknowledged that estimates of undocumented Afghan



workers in Iran's labor market suggest a much larger presence—roughly 5 million individuals, including family-run and group enterprises. Around 3 million are thought to be directly involved in work, mostly in informal or family-based roles.

Iran launched a return program for undocumented Afghan migrants starting in early 2025, under which approximately 800,000 have returned to Afghanistan so far. "The real challenge," Hosseini explained, "lies in the speed of acceptance on the Afghan side," noting that Iran has tried to ensure health care, shelter, and nutrition for returning migrants.

Views on the impact of Afghan workers in Iran are mixed. Some argue that their departure could threaten the survival of many businesses, while others say their lower wages and exemption from taxes and insurance obligations create unfair competition for Iranian workers.

Hosseini pointed out that, in specialized and physically demanding sectors like construction and agriculture, Afghan workers often fill roles that Iranians are unwilling to take. Iranian workers generally take on management and supervisory roles in these sectors.

He stressed that foreign labor policy must focus on "transparency and clear regulation." Of the estimated 6 million Afghan migrants currently in Iran (including undocumented residents), only about 700,000 have returned under official repatriation programs. "The priority must be proper registration, identity verification, and protection of rights for both employers and workers," he said.

Despite progress, 57% of Iran's workforce still operates outside formal structures. This limits access to insurance and social protections. Hosseini pointed to last year's approval of insurance coverage for drivers working on ride-sharing and delivery platforms as a significant achievement in bringing more workers into the formal system.

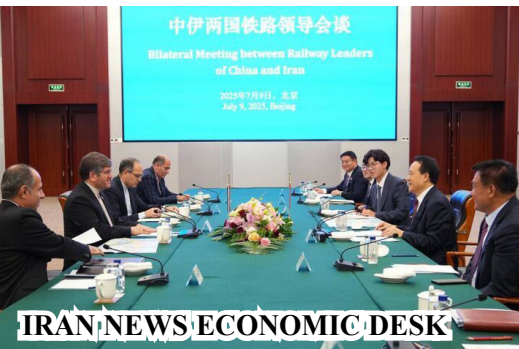
He also noted modestly positive labor market trends over the past year. Unemployment rates and underemployment have declined slightly, although overall labor force participation has not changed significantly.

Hosseini reaffirmed that Iran's policy on Afghan migrants balances national interests with a human-centered approach. He rejected claims that the government promotes anti-migrant sentiment, describing such accusations as "unfair."

"Foreign workers of any nationality are valued," Hosseini said. "But if they remain undocumented and outside the legal system, it becomes impossible for policymakers to protect them or ensure fairness in the labor market."

In closing, Hosseini said that Iran's approach to Afghan migrants is rooted in shared culture and history rather than simple economic necessity. "Those who criticize our current policies often misunderstand the balance we must strike—upholding the law while preserving human dignity and managing our labor market effectively," he said.

Container Train Services Between Iran and China to Increase



TEHRAN - In a recent meeting between the CEO of Iran Railways and the President of China Railways, the two sides emphasized boosting the number of container trains running between their countries.

Jabbarali Zakeri, Deputy Minister of Roads and Urban Development and CEO of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways, met with Gou Zhongwen, President of China Railways, during his trip to China to attend the General Assembly of the International Union of Railways (UIC) and the 12th World Congress on High-Speed Rail.

During the meeting, the Chinese official described the resumption of container trains between China and Iran in 2024 as a positive development and expressed hope that cooperation between the two railways would continue to expand.

Highlighting Iran as an important partner within the framework of the "Belt and Road Initiative," he stressed the need for coordinated efforts to stabilize prices and simplify customs processes along the southern corridor.

Zakeri also outlined Iran's plans to develop its rail network and increase freight transit, citing the countries' longstanding historical ties.

He noted ongoing electrification projects and efforts to double-track the East-West corridor in Iran, stretching from Sarakhs on the eastern border to Razi on the western border. Zakeri revealed that a contract has been signed with a Chinese company to electrify about 1,000 kilometers of this corridor. The aim is to increase rail freight capacity from five million tons to fifteen million tons.

Explaining that the East-West corridor consists of three branches—northern, central, and southern—Zakeri said Afghanistan Railways has proposed building a standard-gauge railway from Kashgar, China, through Afghanistan, connecting into this corridor. He described this as a valuable opportunity for Iran and China to establish an integrated, standard-gauge rail link between the two countries.

Zakeri also pointed to foreign investment in Iran's dry port of Apadana (Aprin rail dry port) and invited China Railways to consider investing in this strategic logistics hub.

53m Tons of Goods Handled at Iran's Ports in Spring 2025



TEHRAN - Iran's ports managed by the Ports and Maritime Organization handled a total of 53 million tons of goods during the first quarter of the year 1404 in the Iranian calendar (spring 2025). The volume of container operations during this period reached 750,000 TEU.

According to a Sunday report by the Ports and Maritime Organization, the combined loading and unloading of oil and non-oil products amounted to 53 million tons. Of this, non-oil goods accounted for 34 million tons, while oil products made up the remaining 19 million tons.

During this period, total unloading of oil and non-oil goods stood at 16.7 million tons. Specifically, 13.3 million tons were non-oil goods, and 3.4 million tons were oil products.

Total loading of oil and non-oil goods reached 36 million tons, comprising 20.8 million tons of non-oil goods and 15.2 million tons of oil products.

The report also noted that container handling operations in the first quarter of 1404 totaled 750,000 TEU (twenty-foot equivalent units).

Russia, China discuss Ukraine War and Ties With U.S.

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia and China's foreign ministers on Sunday discussed their relations with the United States and the prospects for ending the war in Ukraine, China and Russia's foreign ministries said in a statement.

President Vladimir Putin's foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, met Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, in Beijing on Sunday. Lavrov is due to attend a meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's (SCO) foreign ministers in China.

"The parties also discussed relations with the United States and prospects for resolving the Ukrainian crisis," Russia's foreign ministry said.

"The importance of strengthening close coordination between the two countries in the international arena, including in the United Nations and its Security Council, the SCO, BRICS, the G20 and APEC, was emphasized," the ministry said.



Macron Calls for Major Hike in Defense Spending



PARIS (Dispatches) - French President Emmanuel Macron on Sunday announced 6.5 billion euros in extra military spending in the next two years because of new and unprecedented threats, from Russia to terrorists to online attacks.

The French leader laid out the spending plans in a sweeping speech calling for intensified efforts to protect Europe. He said France will aim to spend 64 billion euros in annual defense spending in 2027, the last year of his second term; that would be double the 32 billion in annual spending when he became president in 2017.

"Since 1945, freedom has never been so threatened, and never so seriously," Macron said in the French president's traditional speech to the military on the eve of the Bastille Day national holiday.

"To be free in this world we must be feared. To be feared we must be powerful," he said.

He insisted that France can find the money to spend more on the military even as it tries to bring down massive debts. Conservative and far-right parties have supported greater defense spending, while left-wing parties accuse the government of sacrificing hard-won social welfare benefits for military spending.

"The nation needs you," he said. "Every French man and woman must be cognitive of the threat around us."

"We all need to make sacrifices. Freedom has a price tag."

Europe is in danger because of Russia's war in Ukraine and wars in the Middle East, and because "the United States have added a form of uncertainty," Macron said. He also cited online disinformation campaigns by unnamed foreign governments and propaganda operations targeting children, in "the screen era."

Germany Urges Tough EU Response If Fair Deal Cannot Be Reached on U.S. Tariffs



BERLIN (Dispatches) - The European Union will need to take "decisive" action to counter U.S. tariffs if no "fair" deal is reached with Washington to avert threatened levies, Germany's finance minister said on Sunday.

Lars Klingbeil told the Sueddeutsche Zeitung newspaper that "serious and solution-oriented negotiations" with the U.S. were still necessary, but added that if they fail, the EU would need "decisive counter-measures to protect jobs and businesses in Europe".

On Saturday US President Donald Trump announced that the EU and Mexico would be targeted with steep 30 percent tariffs as of August 1. In the case of the EU, he cited the U.S.'s trade imbalance with the bloc as justification for the new levies.

Europe's biggest economy stands to be particularly affected by the tariffs, just as it was hoping to emerge from two years of recession.

Klingbeil said the tariffs would have "only losers" and "threaten the American economy at least as much as businesses in Europe".

He said that "Europe remains determined and united: we want a fair deal."

"Our hand remains outstretched but we won't accept just anything," Klingbeil said, and added that contingency measures in the case of no deal "must continue to be prepared".

Later on Sunday Chancellor Friedrich Merz told the ARD broadcaster that if the threatened tariffs came into effect they would "overtake a lot of the efforts we have been making" towards reviving the economy and would "hit our exporters to the core".

Merz said he agreed with French President Emmanuel Macron, who said on Saturday the EU had to "step up the preparation of credible countermeasures" in the event of no deal before August 1.



Gaza Civil Defense Says 40 Dead in Israeli Strikes

GAZA CITY (Dispatches) - Gaza's civil defense agency said Israeli air strikes on Sunday killed more than 40 Palestinians, including at a market and a water distribution point, as talks for a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas stalled.

Delegations from Israel and the Palestinian militant group have now spent a week trying to agree on a temporary truce to halt 21 months of bitter fighting in the Gaza Strip.

But on Saturday, each side accused the other of blocking attempts to secure an agreement at the indirect talks in the Qatari capital, Doha.

There has meanwhile been no let-up in Israeli strikes on Gaza, where most of the population of more than two million have been displaced at least once during the war.

Seven UN agencies on Saturday warned that a fuel shortage had reached "critical levels", threatening aid operations, hospital care and already chronic food insecurity.

Civil defense agency spokesman Mahmud Bassal said at least 43 people were killed in the latest Israeli strikes, including 11 when a market in Gaza City was hit.

Eight children were among 10 victims of a drone strike at a water point in the Nuseirat refugee camp, in central Gaza, Bassal said.

"We woke up to the sound of two large explosions," Khaled Rayyan told AFP after a house was flattened also in Nuseirat. "Our neighbour and his children were under the rubble."

Another resident, Mahmud al-Shami, called on the negotiators to secure an end to the war.

"What happened to us has never happened in the entire history of humanity," he said. "Enough."

In southern Gaza, three people were killed when Israeli jets hit a tent sheltering displaced Palestinians in the coastal Al-Mawasi area, the civil defense spokesman said.

There was no comment from the Israeli military, which has recently intensified its operations across Gaza.

But it said in a statement Sunday that in the past 24 hours fighter jets "struck more than 150 terror targets throughout the Gaza Strip".

The targets included militants, weapons storage sites, and anti-tank and sniper positions, the military statement said.

Media restrictions in Gaza and difficulties accessing many areas mean AFP is unable to independently verify tolls and details provided by the civil defence agency and other parties.

The war was sparked by Hamas's October 7, 2023 attack on Israel that led to 1,219 deaths, most of them civilians, according to an AFP tally based on official figures.

Out of 251 people taken hostage that day, 49 are still held in Gaza, including 27 that the Israeli military says are dead.

Hamas-run Gaza's health ministry says that at least 58,026 Palestinians, most of them civilians, have been killed in Israel's military reprisals. The UN considers the figures reliable.

Talks to agree a 60-day ceasefire in the fighting and hostage release were in the balance on Saturday after Israel and Hamas accused each other of trying to block a deal.

Hamas wants the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza, but a Palestinian source with knowledge of the talks said Israel had presented plans to maintain troops in more than 40 percent of the territory.

The source said Israel wanted to force hundreds of thousands of Palestinians into the south of Gaza "in preparation for forcibly displacing them to Egypt or other countries".

A senior Israeli official said Israel had demonstrated "a willingness to flexibility in the negotiations, while Hamas remains intransigent, clinging to positions that prevent the mediators from advancing an agreement".

U.S. Will Send Patriot Air Defense Missiles to Ukraine

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - President Donald Trump on Sunday said Washington would send Patriot air defense systems to Kyiv and hinted at new sanctions on Russia, once again voicing displeasure with Russian leader Vladimir Putin over Moscow's war in Ukraine.

The U.S. president's announcement of the much-needed weapons for Ukraine came after he earlier said he would make a "major statement... on Russia" on Monday.

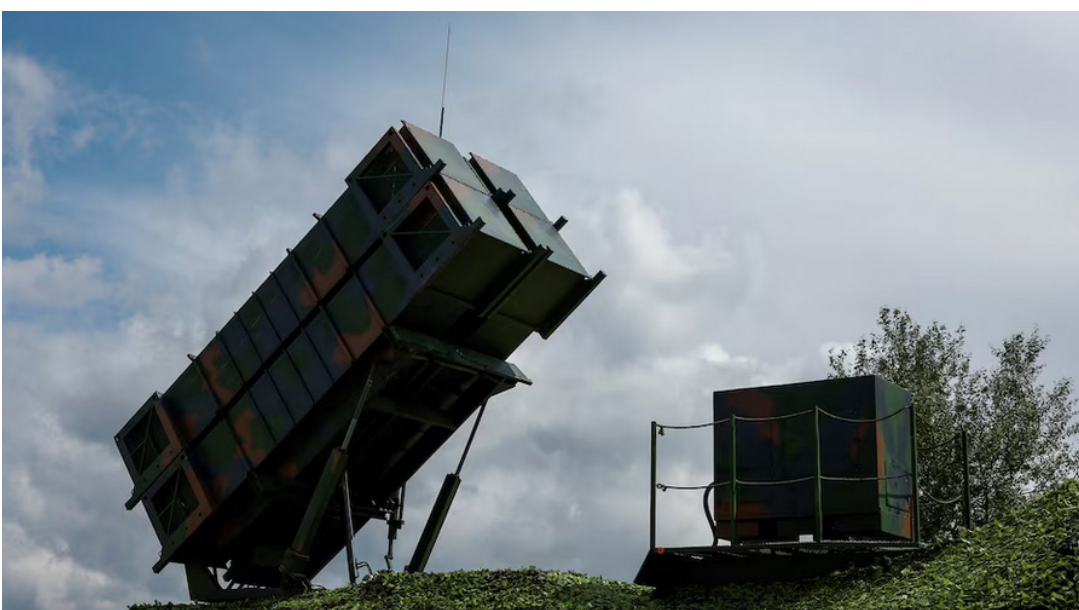
The announcement could come amid a diplomatic flurry set for Monday, with the U.S. special envoy starting his latest trip to Ukraine and Trump set to meet with NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte in Washington.

Moscow's offensive on Ukraine has lasted for more than three years, with attacks intensifying this summer and U.S.-led negotiations so far yielding no results to end the fighting.

"We will send them Patriots, which they desperately need," Trump said Sunday, without specifying how many weapons he would send to Ukraine.

"I haven't agreed on the number yet, but they're going to have some because they do need protection," he told reporters at Joint Base Andrews, as he returned from watching the FIFA Club World Cup final in New Jersey.

The White House has U-turned from an announcement earlier this month that it would pause some arms deliveries to Kyiv, instead announcing a new deal which would involve NATO paying the United States for some of the weapons it sends to Ukraine.



"We basically are going to send them various pieces of very sophisticated military and they're going to pay us 100 percent for them," Trump said. "It'll be business for us," he added.

Earlier this week, President Volodymyr Zelensky said Ukraine was "close to reaching a multi-level agreement on new Patriot systems and missiles for them."

Trump also repeated that he was "disappointed" in the Russian leader, as he grows increasingly exasperated with Putin.

"Putin really surprised a lot of people. He talks nice and then he bombs everybody in the evening," said the disgruntled Trump.

When he first returned to the White House in January, Trump insisted he could work with the Russian leader to end the war, holding off on hiking sanctions unlike European allies.

But Russia has for months refused a ceasefire proposed by the United States and Kyiv.

Trump has repeatedly voiced displeasure with Putin in recent days, and on Sunday hinted he might finally be ready to toughen sanctions as momentum grows for a deterrent package in Congress.

When asked about whether he would announce any sanctions against Russia, Trump responded: "We're going to see what we will see tomorrow, OK?" and repeated plans to meet with Rutte.

Earlier on Sunday, U.S. senators touted a bipartisan bill that would arm Trump with "sledgehammer" sanctions to use against Russia.

The sanctions bill would allow Trump "to go after Putin's economy, and all those countries who prop up the Putin war machine," Republican Senator Lindsey Graham told broadcaster CBS

news.

It "would give President Trump the ability to impose 500 percent tariffs on any country that helps Russia," said Graham, adding that those could include economies that purchase Russian goods like China, India or Brazil. "This is truly a sledgehammer available to President Trump to end this war," said Graham.

"Without a doubt, this is exactly the kind of leverage that can bring peace closer and make sure diplomacy is not empty," Zelensky said about the proposed bill in an X post.

Nigeria's Former President Buhari Dies in London at 82

LONDON (Dispatches) - Muhammadu Buhari, who left office in 2023 after serving two terms, made Nigerian political history as the first opposition candidate to defeat a sitting president at the ballot box.

Buhari died at a clinic in London at the age of 82, his former spokesman, Garba Shehu, said in a post on social media.

Buhari's tenure was dogged by health rumours.

He governed Nigeria with a strong hand as a military ruler in the 1980s before reinventing himself as a "converted democrat" to be elected as president decades later.

The rake-thin 82-year-old Muslim from the far north of Africa's most populous nation made political history as the first opposition candidate to defeat a sitting leader at the ballot box in 2015.

He unseated then-incumbent Goodluck Jonathan on a vow to crack down on Nigeria's rampant corruption and end an insurgency by Boko Haram jihadists, going on to claim re-election in 2019.



Buhari's initial win—after three failed attempts in a country where re-election for the incumbent had been taken for granted—was seen as a rare opportunity for Nigeria to change course.

But his time at the helm failed to halt graft and insecurity, and was further dogged by economic woes, ill-health and the heavy-handed treatment of protesters.

Critics accused him of nepotism, appointing his northern kinsmen to sensitive government posts which heightened suspicion and rancour in a country where regional rivalry between the north and the south is high.

Buhari's first taste of power came in 1983 when he spearheaded a coup that overthrew the democratically elected president Shehu Shagari.

His government then launched a "War Against Indiscipline" as it cracked down hard on dissent and jailed what it said were corrupt politicians and businessmen.



Sinner Ends Alcaraz Reign to Win First Wimbledon Crown

LONDON (Dispatches) - Jannik Sinner has warned Carlos Alcaraz that he will get even stronger after beating his arch-rival to win his first Wimbledon title.

Sinner avenged an agonising French Open final loss against Alcaraz as he battered the Spaniard into submission with a dynamic display of power hitting on Centre Court.

The Italian's 4-6, 6-4, 6-4, 6-4 victory ended Alcaraz's two-year reign as Wimbledon champion and gave Sinner his fourth Grand Slam crown.

Sinner has reached the last four Grand Slam finals, winning three of them, and the world number one has no intention of resting on his laurels.

"I don't think I'm at my best because at 23 I don't think you can be in your best shape ever. So hopefully I can keep improving," he said.

"I keep looking up to Carlos because even today I felt like he was doing couple of things better than I did.

"That's something we will work on and prepare ourselves because he's going to come for us again. "We have a big target on us, so we have to be prepared."

It was a cathartic triumph for Sinner after he squandered a two-set lead and blew three championship points against Alcaraz at Roland Garros in June.

Alcaraz had won five successive encounters against the 23-year-old, including finals in Paris, Rome and Beijing, prior to their showdown at the All England Club.

Sinner admitted it was vital to finally beat the world number two for the first time since 2023.

"It is important, for sure, because you know, when you lose several times against someone, it's not easy. But in the same time in the past I felt that I was very close," he said.

"I never pushed myself down. I felt like I did something great because it has been not easy. Coming here and winning Wimbledon, it has been amazing."

While Sinner had spent the last five weeks publicly insisting he would not let his French Open collapse affect him, he revealed he had to work hard to move on from the loss before launching his Wimbledon challenge.

"This is the part where I'm the proudest because it really has not been easy. I always tried to be honest with myself and had the self-talk. You know, what if, what if? I tried to accept it, in a way," said Sinner, who returned from a three-month doping ban in May.

"Even if I don't cry, it feels emotional because only me and the people who are close to me know exactly what we have been through on and off the court, and it has been everything except easy.

"We've tried to push, you know, every practice session, even I was struggling at times mentally.

"That's why I also said after Roland Garros that it's not the time to put me down, no, because another Grand Slam is coming up, and I did great here."

Sinner and Alcaraz have won the past seven majors between them, establishing themselves in a class of their own.

Sinner's coach Darren Cahill expects the pair to battle for supremacy for years to come, but he stopped short of comparing it to the dynastic era of Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic.

"It's difficult to compare this rivalry to what we've just had. It's been a golden age in tennis with Novak and Roger and Rafa. They dominated for 20 years," Cahill said.

"To win a Grand Slam back in those days, you had to beat one of them in the quarters, the other one in the semis, and another one in the final.

"These guys still have a ways to go, but they've started incredibly well. Carlos is a big focus, and both of those guys are pushing each other.

"The rivalry is real. Hopefully it's going to be there for the next 10 or 12 years."

England Roar Back to Set Up Thrilling Finale at Lord's



LONDON (Dispatches) - Fired-up England reduced India to 58-4 chasing 193 for victory in a highly-charged final session on day four on Sunday as a gripping third test at Lord's headed for a tense finale.

England fast bowler Jofra Archer dismissed Yashasvi Jaiswal for naught, Brydon Carse removed Karun Nair and Shubman Gill, and captain Ben Stokes bowled nightwatchman Akash Deep in the final over to set up a thrilling last day.

Indian opener KL Rahul remained unbeaten on 33 and the touring side need another 135 runs to go 2-1 up in the series after they had dominated the morning session at the home of cricket to move into a strong position.

"The last hour's viewing, our guys running in really well, there was an edge out there and it shows how important test cricket is and creates a great spectacle for everyone to be involved in," England batting coach Marcus Trescothick said.

With the pitch offering more assistance to the bowlers and variable bounce, England tried to bat positively but Ben Duckett, Zak Crawley, Ollie Pope and Harry Brook all fell cheaply.

Duckett played an audacious ramp shot to the boundary but two balls later he attempted to pull Mohammed Siraj through the leg side and was easily caught by Jasprit Bumrah at mid-on to depart for 12.

Siraj roared at Duckett as he walked back to the pavilion as the tension between the teams that flared up late on Saturday continued to simmer.

Pope never looked comfortable and was trapped lbw by Siraj for four after India successfully reviewed the umpire's initial decision of not out.

Crawley, on 22, played a loose drive at Nitish Kumar Reddy and the ball flew straight to gully where Jaiswal took a simple catch to put England in trouble at 50-3.

Brook ramped Deep for consecutive fours before driving him over long-off for six, but the fast bowler quickly exacted revenge when he bowled the right-hander for 23 as he attempted a rash sweep to a straight full-pitched delivery.

Chelsea Stun PSG 3-0 to win Club World Cup

NEW JERSEY (Dispatches) - Cole Palmer scored two goals and made another as Chelsea stunned Paris Saint-Germain in the final of the Club World Cup yesterday, beating the European champions 3-0 before lifting the trophy alongside U.S. President Donald Trump.

PSG were the favorites after coming to the United States fresh from winning the Champions League and having destroyed Real Madrid 4-0 in the semi-finals.

But having been three goals ahead early on in the semis, this time the roles were reversed as PSG found themselves 3-0 down by the break.

Palmer opened the scoring midway through the first half and struck again to make it two on the half-hour mark, before taking advantage of passive defending to set up Joao Pedro for the third on 43 minutes.

A bad day for PSG was summed up when Joao Neves was shown red following a VAR review four minutes from the end for pulling Marc Cucurella by the hair off the ball.

"Being Club World Cup champion is something for us to be proud of. We are very happy, especially against a team in PSG who I consider the best in the world with one of the best managers in the world," said Chelsea coach Enzo Maresca, before hailing match-winner Palmer.

"These are the games where we expect Cole to appear because it is a big game, a big moment, and once again he showed how good he is."

Before Chelsea got to lift the trophy, tensions spilled over at



full-time with players facing off on the pitch and Paris coach Luis Enrique raising his arm to the neck of Joao Pedro.

"There was a lot of pushing and shoving. It was a situation that obviously should have been avoided, but my intention was clearly just to try to separate the players," said Luis Enrique.

The scoreline was one few could have predicted as Chelsea capped what has been a long but memorable season—they are the first ever winners of the 32-team Club World Cup having also won the UEFA Conference League and finished fourth in the Premier League.

They will also take away around \$125 million in prize money,

meaning the prospect of a drastically curtailed summer break before returning for next season will surely feel worth it.

For PSG, meanwhile, the financial rewards are similar but there will be genuine disappointment at falling short of adding this title to their Champions League triumph and French league and cup double.

Nevertheless, conquering Europe was always the main aim this season for Luis Enrique's team, who now have exactly a month to digest this and take a holiday before returning to action in the UEFA Super Cup against Tottenham Hotspur.

There was a real sense of occasion at the MetLife Stadium, with the backdrop of the Manhattan skyline and with Trump in attendance along with First Lady Melania Trump in a crowd of 81,118.

For the second time in six weeks PSG found themselves involved in a final that quickly turned into a one-sided affair.

The club claimed a historic 5-0 win over Inter Milan in the Champions League final, but here they were ripped apart by Chelsea.

The opening goal came in the 22nd minute as Malo Gusto got the better of Nuno Mendes down the right before seeing his shot blocked by Lucas Beraldo. The ball came back to Gusto and he teed up Palmer to finish into the bottom-left corner.

Cash and Glasspool Win Wimbledon Men's Doubles Title



LONDON (Dispatches) - Fifth seeds Julian Cash and Lloyd Glasspool capped their dream summer with the Wimbledon crown and first Grand Slam title as a pair when the British team downed Rinky Hijikata and David Pel 6-2 7-6(3) in the men's doubles final.

Queen's Club and Eastbourne champions Cash and Glasspool became the first all-British pairing to win the All England Club trophy since 1936, when Pat Hughes and Raymond Tuckey defeated their compatriots Charles Hare and Frank Wilde in the final.

"When you say it, it sounds incredible," said Glasspool. "We've had a Brit win it last year (Henry Patten), the year before that (Neal Skupski) so I didn't think too much of it, but now we needed to give you two so we did our best."

The local favourites shot out of the blocks after an early break thanks to a poor service game from Pel and raced through the opening set with minimum fuss, leaving fans buzzing on a sun-drenched Centre Court.

The Australian-Dutch duo of Hijikata and Pel saved a break point at the start of the second set and applied pressure in the fourth game but their opponents were equal to the task and took a step towards the title when they went 4-2 up.

Hijikata and Pel, who entered the tournament as alternates and survived match points in their first two rounds, drew level after eight games before Cash and Glasspool moved up a gear in the tiebreak to prevail and spark huge celebrations.

Merlier Sprints to Tour de France Stage 9 Win

PARIS (Dispatches) - Tim Merlier won stage nine of the Tour de France at Chateauroux on Sunday after a heroic long-range escape from Mathieu van der Poel was caught in the final kilometer.

There was no change atop the overall standings with Tadej Pogacar now holding a 54sec advantage over Remco Evenepoel in second with French starlet Kevin Vauquelin third.

This was a second win for Soudal Quick-Step sprinter Merlier who was first across the line on stage three at Dunkirk as he racked up a 12th stage win this year.

On a sun drenched slog from the Chinon vineyards, Van der Poel and a teammate broke early and built up a lead of 5min 30sec on the flat roads to Chateauroux.

Jonas Ricksaert won the combativity award for



accompanying Van der Poel to within 10km of the line before slumping over his handlebars.

With his gung-ho all-in style Van der Poel grew his Tour de France legend here despite being caught with 700m to go, the plaudits will be both his and Merlier's.

As Van der Poel was reeled in, it looked as though Jonathan Milan would win a second consecutive stage but Merlier got ahead with 50m remaining as Milan finished second with Arnaud De Lie completing the podium.

Pogacar's Tour de France defence took a hit Sunday as his key teammate Joao Almeida threw in the towel two days after his nasty fall at the Mur de Bretagne, where he fractured a rib.

The stage 10 should shake up the race with eight classified climbs in the Massif Central on the July 14 French national holiday.