

Iran Has Executed Two Members of the Terrorist Cult Mujahedin-e-Khalq Organization (MKO) Convicted of Armed Insurrection and Waging War Against the Country

IRAN NEWS

Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar Says That President Masoud Pezeshkian Will Soon Make an Official Visit to Islamabad

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Zangezur Corridor Plan a Threat to Iran's National Unity and Territorial Integrity



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TEHRAN - In a strong statement warning of geopolitical threats masked as economic initiatives, Ali Akbar Velayati, senior advisor to Iran's Supreme Leader on international affairs, described the proposed "Zangezur Corridor" as a serious danger to Iran's national unity and territorial integrity.

Velayati issued the statement in a message honoring the legacy of Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili, a spiritual figure and the founder of the Safavid dynasty, during a commemorative ceremony held in Ardabil Province. Addressing the ceremony, he praised the cultural and historical role of Azerbaijani regions within Iran and underscored their deep-rooted connection to Iranian-Islamic identity.

Velayati emphasized that Iran's strength has long stemmed from its internal cohesion and unity among various ethnic and religious groups. "The culture of Iran is distinguished by two essential features: internal solidarity among its diverse ethnicities and its deep historical continuity. This unity has always served as a source of inspiration for Muslim nations around the world," he said.

He highlighted that Iranian identity is built on monotheism, tracing a continuous line from ancient Zoroastrianism to the widespread embrace of Islam. "Even in ancient times, Iranian kings considered themselves spiritual descendants of Prophet Abraham. After the advent of Islam, Iranians welcomed it with open arms," he stated, noting that the birthplace of Zoroaster is widely believed to be in the region of Azerbaijan.

Velayati drew a direct line from Iran's religious and cultural heritage to its contemporary political resilience. He praised the Islamic Republic's current leadership, calling it the most stable political structure in Iran since the advent of Islam. "Under the wise leadership of Ayatollah Khamenei, the Islamic Republic has preserved its sovereignty and unity despite increasing regional and international pressures," he said.

Nation's Vigilance Will Prevent Terrorists From Achieving Sinister Goals



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iranian First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref condemns the "tragic" armed attack in the country's southeast, saying the nation's vigilance prevented terrorists from obtaining their sinister goals.

Armed terrorists stormed a courthouse in Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchestan Province, on Saturday, killing six people, including a woman and a one-year-old child, and injuring 23 others.

Iranian security forces killed three assailants during the ensuing clashes. The so-called Jaish al-Adl terrorist group claimed responsibility for the attack.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran has always been a victim of terrorism, and unfortunately, those who claim to advocate for human rights remain silent in the face of the terrorist operations by various groups and do not speak out," Aref said in a message on Saturday.

He added that the criminal terrorists, backed by the enemies, once again carried out provocative acts with the aim of disrupting order, security, and creating tension in the country.

The vice president called on Iranian security and police authorities to thoroughly investigate the issue to prevent similar incidents.

Meanwhile, in a phone conversation with Mansour Bijar, the governor general of Sistan and Baluchestan, Iranian Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni issued an order to investigate various aspects of the blind terrorist attack.

He also called for taking immediate measures to treat the injured.

Zionist Enemy Seeks Revenge on Iranian Nation Through Economic War, Psychological Operations

TEHRAN - Majlis Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf warned that the Zionist regime, reeling from a recent show of Iranian unity, is now attempting to take revenge on the Iranian nation through economic warfare and psychological operations.

Speaking at the open session of Majlis, Qalibaf commemorated the 40th day since the martyrdom of Iranian citizens, commanders, and scientists during the Israeli regime's recent 12-day offensive. He condemned the attack as a terrorist act, emphasizing that the Zionist regime once again proved its "inherent tendency toward terrorism" and disregard for civilian lives—whether military, elderly, women, or children.

"The illegitimate and cancerous entity of the West," he said, referring to Israel, "is currently committing one of the worst atrocities in history in Gaza. It must be stopped before dragging the entire region and world into further chaos."

Qalibaf hailed the unprecedented unity of the Iranian people over the past 40 days, which he described as delivering the "hardest slap to the face of the Zionist enemy." He warned, however, that the enemy has now shifted its strategy to economic and psychological warfare to punish the resilient and oppressed people of Iran.

He stated that the responsibility now lies with the country's economic commanders and government officials. "It is time for the economic managers of government bodies to take the lead," Qalibaf said.

Qalibaf emphasized that maintaining national unity and continuing the "sacred national defense" requires a cohesive economic strategy, which has been laid out in the Seventh Development Plan. He also referenced a message from Iran's Supreme Leader, who outlined seven strategic obligations for the country, stressing the need for executive bodies to act with "seriousness and persistence to see national projects through to completion."

He added that one of the government's immediate responsibilities is to resolve imbalances in energy—specifically in electricity, gas, and water. "In the coming days and weeks, the government must act with urgency and resolve these issues," Qalibaf said. He underscored that the people must be assured that the government is pursuing a rational, cohesive strategy free from "shock therapy," and that any economic benefits, such as savings and improved efficiency, must first be passed on to the public to secure broader societal cooperation.

Citing the late General Qassem Soleimani, Qalibaf noted that "every threat carries within it a great opportunity." He argued that energy imbalances, if addressed wisely and with public



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engagement, could become a powerful driver of Iran's economic revitalization. Resolving energy issues, he said, could increase productivity, enhance energy security, prevent industrial blackouts, boost exports, and increase foreign exchange earnings—benefits that would directly and indirectly raise Iranians' purchasing power and brighten the country's future.

Qalibaf called for the continued and timely distribution of digital coupons (electronic subsidy cards), noting that existing issues such as database errors and household income classifications must be corrected. He said such short-term support mechanisms are essential for alleviating the burden on low-income households.

He also praised Iran's major industries as key engines of progress, saying they proved their loyalty by maintaining production chains even during times of national crisis. Qalibaf urged the government and Central Bank to use all available tools to support these industries to the fullest extent.

He highlighted the importance of the Production and Infrastructure Financing Law, passed in the previous (11th) Parliament, which provides a legal foundation for supporting production lines and development projects. "There must be no financial obstacles in the way of funding these industries," he stated. "Solving the country's problems hinges on production, and our industry stands at the forefront of that effort."

Qalibaf expressed the Parliament's full commitment to addressing economic challenges, vowing to work alongside the government with maximum unity and cooperation. He noted the recent passage of a key law targeting speculative financial activity and unproductive trading—part of a broader structural reform to Iran's economy.

The new anti-speculation law, which had been stalled in previous parliamentary sessions, was finally ratified in the 12th Parliament. Qalibaf said the legislation will help redirect capital into productive sectors and bolster investment in manufacturing—an area consistently emphasized by the Supreme Leader. It also aims to stabilize markets, create a fairer tax system, and improve the overall business environment.

Addressing a terrorist attack that occurred the previous day in southeastern Iran, Qalibaf said that "foreign-backed terrorists" targeted innocent civilians, including women and children. He described the attack as an act of vengeance against the Iranian people, who have stood firm in the face of Zionist and American aggression.

He emphasized that Iran's armed forces and security institutions will continue to confront the perpetrators of such crimes with full force, as they did in Zahedan.

Iran, Iraq Hold Talks to Resume MD Aircraft Flights During Arbaeen Pilgrimage



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TEHRAN - Iran's Civil Aviation Organization has entered into negotiations with its Iraqi counterpart to resolve the ban on McDonnell Douglas (MD) aircraft flights during the Arbaeen pilgrimage season.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a ceremony honoring Hajj service providers, Seyed Hamidreza Sanai, Deputy Head of Iran's Civil Aviation Organization for International and Aviation Affairs, announced that promising developments are expected soon regarding MD aircraft operations for Arbaeen pilgrims.

"In recent talks with the Iraqi side, including a meeting with Iraq's Civil Aviation Authority, we discussed technical matters concerning the ban. Both parties emphasized the importance of facilitating travel for Iranian pilgrims to ensure maximum participation during Arbaeen," Sanai stated.

According to Sanai, one of the main issues discussed was the set of restrictions imposed on parts of the Iranian fleet, particularly concerning safety concerns raised by the Iraqi side. He noted that Iran provided assurances and proposed solutions to address these concerns, expressing optimism that a breakthrough will occur in the coming days.

"The discussions mainly revolved around Iraq's need for confidence in the safety standards of certain aircraft types used in Iran. To that end, we agreed to exchange documentation, and if necessary, allow Iraqi officials to inspect Iran's aircraft maintenance, repair centers, and regulatory processes," he added.

Sanai revealed that negotiations have taken place over seven different aircraft types, and so far, permits have been granted for two of them. He expressed hope that, once the Iraqi side is satisfied with the safety standards, MD flights will also be authorized in time for Arbaeen.

102 Women and 47 Children Killed in 12-Day War



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TEHRAN - During the recent 12-day conflict, 102 women and 47 children lost their lives, while 16 emergency medical personnel were wounded, according to the head of Iran's National Emergency Organization.

In a press conference held Sunday morning at the Emergency Organization headquarters, Jafar Miadfar reported that despite the damage sustained by emergency forces, stations, and ambulances during Israeli attacks, none of the medical teams ceased their critical work. He noted that 26 provinces faced direct conflict, with 37 medical universities and 100 cities targeted during the war.

Miadfar stated that nearly 6,000 civilians were injured and transported to medical facilities. Throughout the conflict, emergency services performed 1,044 surgeries on the wounded. The health system and all medical groups maintained a strong presence over the 12 days. Retired health workers also stood ready to be called upon if needed, but fortunately, no such recalls were necessary.

The National Emergency Organization completed 10,500 wartime missions alongside 126,000 routine urban and road-related emergency operations, ensuring that regular healthcare services were not compromised. Miadfar praised the public's cooperation during the crisis, emphasizing it as a sign of social and cultural maturity.

Regarding casualties, Miadfar emphasized that final numbers would be confirmed by the forensic medicine authority. However, current emergency statistics indicate that 302 women were injured and 102 women were killed. Additionally, 215 children and adolescents were injured, with 47 fatalities among them.

Resumption of Iran-U.S. Talks Hinges on Guarantees Against Further Strikes

TEHRAN (PresSTV) - Iran has called for firm guarantees that no further military strikes will be carried out against its territory before reentering negotiations with the United States, a senior Iranian diplomat said.

Deputy Foreign Minister Majid Takht-Ravanchi made the remarks in an interview with Turkey's nationwide Habertürk TV channel on Saturday, following the second round of diplomatic talks between Iran and the European troika, France, Britain, and Germany, held the previous day in Istanbul.

The closed-door meeting, which lasted more than three hours, was attended by deputy foreign ministers Takht-Ravanchi and Kazem Gharibabadi, along with senior representatives from the E3 countries. It followed a similar session held on May 16 in the same city.

Takht-Ravanchi noted that Iran and the United States have been exchanging messages through intermediary nations facilitating communication between the two sides.

He pointed out that Tehran and Washington were in indirect negotiations, mediated by Oman, when the Israeli regime carried out acts of aggression against the Islamic Republic, which the US later joined.

"This was a betrayal of diplomacy, this was an attack on diplomacy," he emphasized.

"Therefore, before starting a new round of negotiations with the United States, we must receive guarantees that we will not face similar attacks again. It is essential for us that they will not betray diplomacy again," he pointed out.

He said the Israeli regime and the US have surprised Iran by conducting their war of aggression, adding, "We do not want the same show to be repeated. The United States must convince us that it will not do such a thing this time."

He insisted that the negotiations should be based on the principle of a win-win policy and



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reiterated that Iran would never accept "any kind of imposition" from the US.

Iran and the United States held five rounds of indirect talks on Tehran's peaceful nuclear program before June 13, when the Israeli regime launched an unprovoked act of aggression on the Islamic Republic, assassinating many high-ranking military commanders and nuclear scientists in addition to ordinary civilians.

Mediated by Oman, the 6th round of talks was planned to be held in the Omani capital of Muscat on June 15, but was called off due to the Israeli attacks.

On June 22, the United States officially joined the war against Iran by launching attacks on three nuclear facilities in the country in violation of the United Nations Charter and the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Elsewhere in his comments, Takht-Ravanchi said that during the Friday talks, Iran and the E3 discussed the technical aspects of Tehran's nuclear program and the lifting of sanctions, with Iran emphasizing once again that uranium enrichment must be an integral part of any agreement.

He reiterated the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program and added that, based on a religious decree issued by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the Islamic Republic does not seek nuclear weapons.

"Enrichment will be continued (in Iran) for peaceful purposes within the framework of the NPT (the Non-Proliferation Treaty) and will not be stopped," the top diplomat pointed out.

Speaking at the end of the talks in Istanbul, Takht-Ravanchi said Tehran insists on its "absolute" right to enrichment inside the country as a member of the NPT.

"Enrichment, which is among our absolute rights, should be continued inside the country," he added.



823 Companies Register for 19th IranPlast Exhibition

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The 19th International IranPlast Exhibition has seen an exceptional response from petrochemical industry players and related sectors, with 823 domestic and international companies completing their pre-registration for the event so far. According to Iran's National Petrochemical Company, as of July 22, a total of 823 companies across various product categories have pre-registered for the exhibition. These include 254 companies in raw materials, 147 in machinery and equipment, 391 in finished and semi-finished products, and 31 in technical, financial, and engineering services. Collectively, applicants have requested approximately 66,000 square meters of exhibition space, underscoring IranPlast's status as the largest specialized event for the petrochemical value chain in the region.

Iran-Switzerland Trade Grows by 12%, Reaches \$241m in 2024



TEHRAN - According to a new report from the International Affairs Department of Iran's Chamber of Commerce, trade between Iran and Switzerland grew by nearly 12% in 2024, reaching a total of \$241 million. Despite the growth, the trade balance remains heavily in favor of Switzerland.

The report outlines that while bilateral trade had once reached \$2.5 billion in the 1970s and \$3.2 billion in 2010, the imposition of international sanctions has significantly impacted economic ties, reducing trade volume to its current level. In 2024, Swiss exports to Iran accounted for approximately \$221 million, while Iran's exports to Switzerland were only around \$20 million.

This trade imbalance highlights Iran's reliance on imported goods from Switzerland, particularly pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, machinery, and chemicals. In contrast, Iran primarily exports agricultural products and handicrafts such as pistachios, saffron, and carpets. The disparity reflects a mismatch in the trade structures of the two countries, as well as the constraints imposed by sanctions on Iran's ability to export to European markets.

The report emphasizes Switzerland's strength in pharmaceuticals, machinery, financial services, and luxury goods, identifying it as a valuable potential partner for Iran. However, sanctions, competition from China, and international pressure continue to hinder the development of stronger trade ties.

Looking ahead, the report notes that lifting sanctions, enhancing financial channels such as the Swiss Humanitarian Trade Arrangement (SHTA), and expanding cooperation could help restore trade to historical levels. It also identifies opportunities for partnership in key sectors such as healthcare, industry, and energy. Nevertheless, in the short term—through the end of 2025—growth is expected to remain modest, with humanitarian trade likely to remain the primary focus under existing restrictions.

Iran Launches New International Passenger Trains to Dushanbe, Herat, and Ankara



TEHRAN - Iran is expanding its international rail connectivity with the launch of new passenger train routes to three foreign destinations: Dushanbe (Tajikistan), Herat (Afghanistan), and Ankara (Turkey). The initiative is part of a broader strategy by the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development to strengthen regional ties and promote cross-border travel through more affordable and accessible transportation options.

Jabarali Zakeri, Deputy Minister of Roads and Urban Development and CEO of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways, announced the reactivation of the Tehran-Van train route after a five-year suspension. He noted that even during the recent 12-day conflict, an additional train service was introduced due to public demand. "The occupancy rate of this train was 100% during this period," he stated.

Zakeri emphasized Iran's commitment to enhancing rail links with neighboring countries, describing rail transport as a strategic means of deepening people-to-people connections while reducing travel costs.

Following the success of the Tehran-Van route, plans are underway to extend the service from Van to Ankara, allowing passengers to travel by train directly from Tehran to the Turkish capital. Talks with Turkish authorities are ongoing, and while financial agreements with Turkish Railways have yet to be finalized, Zakeri expects ticket pricing to be announced within the next two months.

In addition, Zakeri confirmed the imminent launch of two new international rail routes: Tehran-Herat and Mashhad-Herat. Negotiations with Afghan officials have concluded, and passport control protocols are being finalized. The first trains on these routes are expected to depart in the coming weeks. Until the full rail connection from the Iranian town of Rozanak to Herat is completed by Iran, passengers will travel by train to Rozanak, where a new passenger terminal has already been built.

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Iran Aims to Facilitate Travel for Expatriates, Boost Cultural Tourism Through Technology and Cooperation

TEHRAN - Millions of Iranians living abroad have expressed strong interest in visiting their homeland, and the Iranian government is taking steps to ease their travel experience, according to Seyed Zia Hashemi, Deputy for Cultural Affairs to the First Vice President.

Speaking at the seasonal summit of deputy ministers and provincial directors of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Hashemi emphasized that Iranian identity and cultural resilience are critical national assets. "Our resistance is not only through military power but also through national heritage and cultural pride," he said, commemorating the victims of recent Israeli attacks.

Hashemi stressed the importance of Iranian-Islamic architecture and announced that the administration is committed to advancing it. He also called attention to the potential of the National Pilgrimage Council to promote senior-friendly tourism, given the country's aging population.

Maryam Jalali Dehkordi, Deputy for Handicrafts at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, stated that traditional crafts are more than an economic driver—they are a means of preserving cultural identity. "Craft artists do not merely produce goods; they narrate the story of our civilization," she said. Highlighting the social nature of the industry, she noted its strong foundation in family, community, and women-led entrepreneurship.

Over 70% of Iran's handicraft workforce are women, Jalali reported, identifying the sector as a strategic tool for female empowerment. She also called for stronger collaboration across ministries to support handicrafts, including integrating them into art therapy and mental health programs—a practice already in use for autistic children.

Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni underlined the strategic partnership between his ministry and the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, describing culture and identity as national strengths. He announced that Iran aims to attract at least 15 million foreign tourists annually under its 7th Development Plan, though he emphasized this is only the beginning.

Iran's World Heritage registrations have grown from 3 to 29 sites since the 1979 Revolution, reflecting decades of dedication to preserving its unique heritage, Momeni noted. He described Iran's ethnic diversity not as a divisive force, but as a source of cultural richness and national unity, demonstrated most vividly during widespread Nowruz travels.

"We are committed to creating affordable, safe, and high-quality travel opportunities across the country," he added, urging better promotion of provincial

tourism sites to ensure balanced development and protect heritage.

Seyed Sattar Hashemi, Deputy Minister of Communications and Information Technology, emphasized the transformative role of technology in tourism. He advocated for artificial intelligence, augmented reality (AR), and virtual reality (VR) to decode ancient inscriptions and offer immersive cultural experiences to tourists.

Referring to recent cyberattacks during the Israeli conflict, Hashemi highlighted the importance of cybersecurity alongside digital growth. He also announced a pending proposal to the Cabinet for a "Digital Transformation Plan," including a focus on tourism. "IranAccess," a project aimed at boosting international exposure to Iran's tourism potential, was also discussed.

He praised the successful launch of the Nahid-2 satellite, a milestone in Iran's tech development, reinforcing national pride and scientific self-reliance.

Ahmad Meydari, Minister of Cooperatives, Labour, and Social Welfare, praised the Ministry of Cultural Heritage for its role in job creation, calling it one of the most cost-effective and high-return institutions for employment generation. He announced a strategic initiative to allocate 7 trillion tomans (around \$140 million) to support home-based and local crafts businesses.

Meydari also revealed that the renowned Homa Hotel will soon be offered under a management contract, with cooperation expected from the tourism ministry in identifying qualified investors. On workforce development, he confirmed the ministry's readiness to support the professional accreditation of craft artists through vocational training partnerships.

Regarding social security, Meydari proposed the use of rural and tribal insurance funds to cover workers in the crafts, tourism, and cultural sectors, describing it as an accessible and beneficial option.

The ministry is also considering offering consumer credit lines of up to 50 million tomans to handicraft buyers, a model previously piloted in the apparel industry.

All participating officials echoed the need for institutional cooperation to amplify the impact of tourism and cultural policies. They emphasized that aligning governmental and non-governmental actors—alongside integrating digital tools—can enhance national identity, economic resilience, and cultural diplomacy.

By empowering traditional crafts, promoting heritage tourism, and leveraging technology, Iran seeks not only to attract more foreign and domestic tourists but also to turn cultural development into a cornerstone of economic strategy—particularly for its growing diaspora eager to reconnect with their roots.

Iran, Iraq Strengthen Agricultural Ties With Focus on Technical and Engineering Services

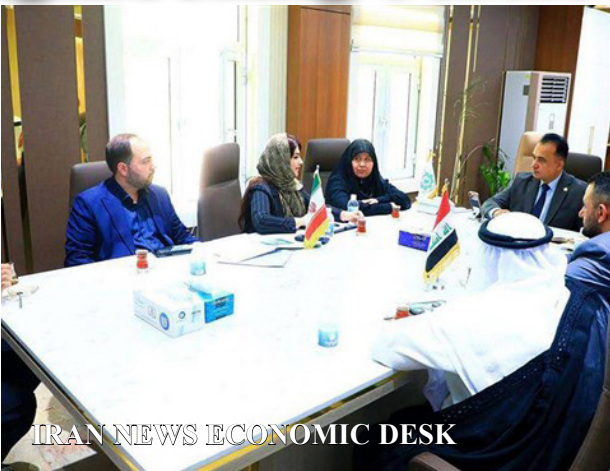
TEHRAN - Iran and Iraq are entering a new phase of agricultural cooperation, with a strong emphasis on the export of Iranian technical and engineering services. This initiative was discussed during a recent high-level meeting between Iranian and Iraqi agricultural officials, aiming to enhance bilateral economic ties and support Iraq's agricultural development.

Shahla Amouri, President of the Ahvaz Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture, announced the results of a technical meeting with Taleb Jasb Al-Kaabi, CEO of Iraq's state-owned Agricultural Equipment Company. The two sides explored ways to boost Iran's role in developing Iraq's agricultural infrastructure by transferring technical know-how and providing advanced services.

Amouri, who is also a board member of the Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce, highlighted Khuzestan province's vast agricultural and industrial capacity. She stated that Iran is well-positioned to export high-demand agricultural products and services to Iraq, particularly those not widely produced there. "Iran has the capability to be a key player in meeting Iraq's agricultural needs," she said.

To achieve this, Amouri called for greater support from the Iranian government, including export incentives, streamlined customs procedures, and the removal of trade barriers. These steps, she noted, are vital to empowering Iranian producers and traders to expand their presence in Iraq without facing logistical or bureaucratic hurdles.

Amouri emphasized that Iraq could serve as a gateway for Iranian products to reach broader regional markets, especially in the Persian Gulf. By strengthening economic diplomacy and supporting the export of knowledge-based and engineering services, Iran could reinforce its role as a strategic trade partner in the region.



With regional competitors like Turkey and Saudi Arabia vying for influence in Iraq, Amouri stressed the importance of preserving and expanding Iran's share of the Iraqi market. She urged the Iranian government to provide targeted support to the private sector, such as low-interest financial aid and export subsidies.

Highlighting Iran's technological advantages, Amouri pointed to the country's achievements in manufacturing advanced agricultural equipment, including non-military drones and modern irrigation systems. She said such capabilities could make Iran a reliable partner in Iraq's agricultural modernization.

She also proposed the creation of joint Iranian-Iraqi ventures in manufacturing and logistics — such as co-producing smart irrigation equipment and establishing logistics centers near border areas — to reduce costs and create long-term benefits for both sides.

Looking ahead, Amouri expressed optimism about the future of Iran-Iraq agricultural collaboration. She noted that such efforts could enhance food security in Iraq while facilitating the export of Iranian agricultural goods to other regional markets through integrated value chains.

She concluded by expressing hope that these discussions would lead to concrete commercial agreements, including the export of equipment and engineering services, and eventually the establishment of joint agricultural technology parks to drive innovation and productivity.

Taleb Jasb Al-Kaabi, representing Iraq's state agricultural firm, welcomed Iran's technical expertise. He emphasized the need for international partnerships to revitalize Iraq's agriculture, citing directives from Iraqi Agriculture Minister Abbas Jabr Al-Maliki to pursue collaboration with experienced nations like Iran.

Alarm Bells Ring Over Agricultural Production Decline in Iran



TEHRAN - Agricultural producers in Iran are sounding the alarm over a steep decline in domestic production, warning of a looming crisis that could severely impact the country's food security. According to industry representatives, bureaucratic hurdles, poor government planning, and inadequate financial support are driving the sector toward collapse.

In an interview with ILNA, Sayed Farhadi, Chairman of the Iranian Association of Agricultural Fertilizer Producers, painted a grim picture of the current state of agriculture in Iran. He criticized both state-owned suppliers and government agencies for failing to provide essential resources in time, leading to reduced crop yields and increased dependency on imports.

Farhadi revealed that Iran will only be able to procure around 6 to 7 million tons of wheat from domestic sources this year, well below national demand. The country will likely be forced to import an additional 5 million tons. This shortfall, he said, stems from last year's drought and the government's failure to supply necessary agricultural inputs in a timely manner.

He noted that while it would have cost only \$500 million to provide sufficient inputs last year, Iran is now spending nearly \$5 billion to import basic agricultural commodities—a stark indicator of ineffective policymaking.

Administrative inefficiencies are also hampering progress. Farhadi pointed to the long and unclear currency allocation processes, saying producers are bogged down by red tape rather than focusing on productivity. "Manufacturers spend months chasing approvals with no results. Even when foreign exchange is approved, it's often insufficient and delayed," he added.

The government has allocated just €22 million over the past two years for fertilizer production—less than 10% of the estimated €120 million needed annually. This shortfall has placed Iranian producers at a disadvantage compared to importers, who reportedly acquire raw materials at up to 30% lower cost.

Farhadi also criticized government attitudes toward energy consumption in production. In some cases, diesel used for manufacturing is labeled as "smuggled" by authorities unaware of industrial realities. He urged state officials to leave their offices and engage directly with producers to understand field conditions.

Gov't Prioritizes Facilitating International Trade in 14th Administration



TEHRAN - The Minister of Industry, Mine, and Trade has emphasized the 14th administration's strong commitment to international trade, stating that although previous governments had made efforts in this area, international trade agreements were not effectively implemented until now.

Speaking at a meeting with economic stakeholders in West Azerbaijan province, Minister Seyed Mohammad Atabak highlighted the government's new approach. "The 14th administration has prioritized operationalizing international trade agreements," he said, underscoring the need to capitalize on the province's geographical advantages.

Atabak called for the resolution of customs-related issues and improvements in the process of issuing business licenses, arguing that the border advantages of West Azerbaijan have not been fully utilized.

He also pointed to the province's limited contribution to industrial employment, revealing that there are over 2,400 incomplete industrial projects in West Azerbaijan. "These dormant projects are lowering the province's value-added output," he warned.

Referring to West Azerbaijan's unique geopolitical position, bordering three countries, Atabak emphasized the need to boost the province's trade share and ensure smoother commerce operations. He also noted that border service systems have recently been reactivated to support this effort. He further stressed the importance of upgrading the region's road infrastructure.

Thousands Rally in Malaysia to Call for PM Anwar's Resignation

KUALA LUMPUR (Dispatches) - Thousands of people rallied in the Malaysian capital on Saturday to demand the resignation of Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, as public discontent grows over rising living costs and allegations of failing to deliver promised reforms.

Protesters - mostly wearing black t-shirts and bandannas carrying the slogan "Turun Anwar", or "Step Down Anwar" - marched through the heart of Kuala Lumpur, before converging in the city's Independence Square to hear speeches by top opposition leaders. Police estimated at least 18,000 were in attendance.



Taiwan Move to Recall Opposition Lawmakers Fails



TAIPEI (Dispatches) - Taiwan opposition lawmakers survived a major recall election on Saturday, thwarting a bid to oust one-fifth of the island's parliamentarians - a move supporters had hoped would send a message to China but that opponents called an assault on democracy.

All recall votes against 24 lawmakers from the largest opposition party, the Kuomintang, were rejected, according to live vote counts by Taiwanese media. The voting followed a campaign begun by civic groups.

The election result is a blow to President Lai Ching-te's Democratic Progressive Party, which has missed an opportunity to reshape the Taiwan legislature and regain its majority.

The government said the island's largest-ever recall vote had faced "unprecedented" election interference by China, which claims the democratically governed island as its own - a claim Taiwan rejects.

While Lai won last year's presidential election, the DPP lost its legislative majority. The opposition has flexed its muscles since then to pass laws the government has opposed and impose budget cuts, complicating efforts to boost defence spending in particular.

KMT Chairman Eric Chu thanked Taiwan's voters and called for Lai to apologise and reflect on his own governance.

"One should not lose the elections and then call for malicious recalls. One should not seek one-party dominance and destroy democracy," he told a press briefing in Taipei. "Most importantly, the people of Taiwan chose stability and chose a government that gets things done, rather than political infighting."

The political drama comes as China ramps up a military and diplomatic pressure campaign against Taiwan to assert its territorial claims. Lai has offered talks with Beijing many times but been rebuffed. It calls him a "separatist".

North Korea's Kim Vows to Win Anti-U.S. Battle Marking Korean War Anniversary



SEOUL (Dispatches) - North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said the country would achieve victory in "anti-imperialist, anti-U.S." battles, as the country marked the anniversary of the Korean War armistice, state media reported on Sunday.

Kim "affirmed that our state and its people would surely achieve the great cause of building a rich country with a strong army and become honorable victors in the anti-imperialist, anti-U.S. showdown," KCNA state news agency said, referring to his visit to a war museum on a previous day.

North Korea signed an armistice agreement with the United States and China on July 27, 1953, ending the fighting in the three-year war. U.S. generals signed the agreement representing the United Nations forces that backed South Korea.

North Korea calls July 27 "Victory Day" even though the armistice drew a border dividing the Korean peninsula roughly equally in area and restoring balance after the two sides had made major advances back and forth during the war.

South Korea does not mark the day with any major events.

North Korea is now fighting alongside Russia in the war in Ukraine. Thousands of North Korean troops were deployed to Russia's Kursk region, while Pyongyang has also supplied Russia with munitions. It may deploy more troops in July or August, South Korea has said.

Kim also visited memorials honouring the veterans of the 1950-53 war including the Tower of Friendship remembering the Chinese People's Liberation Army soldiers who fought with the North Koreans, and met soldiers in an artillery regiment to celebrate the day, state media KCNA said.



Israeli Military Says Airdrops Will Resume in Gaza as Hunger Grows

GAZA CITY (Dispatches) - Israel's military says airdrops of aid began Saturday night in Gaza, and humanitarian corridors would be established for United Nations convoys.

The statement issued late Saturday came after increasing accounts of starvation-related deaths in Gaza following months of experts' warnings of famine. International criticism, including by close allies, has grown as several hundred Palestinians have been killed in recent weeks while trying to reach aid.

The military's statement did not say when the humanitarian corridors for U.N. convoys would open, or where. It also said the military is prepared to implement humanitarian pauses in densely populated areas.

"Tonight, the (Israeli military) will resume the aerial airdrops of humanitarian aid, as part of ongoing efforts to allow and facilitate the entry of aid to Gaza," it said, adding that the first drops would consist of seven pallets containing flour, sugar and canned food provided by international organisations.

The statement added that the military "emphasizes that combat operations have not ceased" in Gaza against Hamas. And it asserts there is "no starvation" in the territory.

At least 53 people were killed by Israeli airstrikes and gunshots overnight, according to health officials and the ambulance service on Saturday, as ceasefire talks appear to have stalled and Palestinians in Gaza face famine.

The majority of victims were killed by gunfire as they waited for aid trucks close to the Zikim crossing with Israel, said staff at Shifa hospital, where the bodies were brought.

Israel's army didn't respond to request for comments about the latest shootings.

Those killed in strikes include four people in an apartment building in Gaza City among others, hospital staff and the ambulance service said.

The strikes come as ceasefire talks between Israel and Hamas have hit a standstill after the U.S and Israel recalled their negotiating teams on Thursday, throwing the future of the talks into further uncertainty.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Friday his government was considering "alternative options" to ceasefire talks with Hamas. His comments came as a Hamas official said negotiations were expected to resume next week and portrayed

the recall of the Israeli and American delegations as a pressure tactic.

Egypt and Qatar, which are mediating the talks alongside the United States, said the pause was only temporary and that talks would resume, though they did not say when.

For desperate Palestinians a ceasefire can't come soon enough.

The United Nations and experts say that Palestinians in Gaza are at risk of famine, with reports of increasing numbers of people dying from causes related to malnutrition. While Israel's army says it's allowing aid into the enclave with no limit on the number of trucks that can enter, the U.N. says it is hampered by Israeli military restrictions on its movements and incidents of criminal looting.

The Zikim crossing shootings come days after at least 80 Palestinians were killed trying to reach aid entering through the same crossing. Israel's military said at the time its soldiers shot at a gathering of thousands of Palestinians who posed a threat, and that it was aware of some casualties.

Israel is facing increased international pressure to alleviate the catastrophic humanitarian crisis in Gaza. More than two dozen Western-aligned countries and more than 100 charity and human rights groups have called for an end to the war, harshly criticizing Israel's blockade and a new aid delivery model it has rolled out.

The charities and rights groups said even their own staff were struggling to get enough food.

For the first time in months Israel said it is allowing airdrops, requested by Jordan. A Jordanian official said the airdrops will mainly be food and milk formula. British Prime Minister Keir Starmer wrote in a newspaper article on Saturday that the U.K. was "working urgently" with Jordan to get British aid into Gaza.

Aid group the World Central Kitchen said on Friday that it was resuming limited cooking operations in Deir al-Balah after being forced to halt due to a lack of food supplies.

It said it's trying to serve 60,000 meals daily through its field kitchen and partner community kitchens, less than half of what it's cooked over the previous month.

Thai-Cambodia Border Shelling Continues Despite Trump's Ceasefire Call

SISAKET (Dispatches) - Cambodia and Thailand each said the other had launched artillery attacks across contested border areas early on Sunday, hours after U.S. President Donald Trump said the leaders of both countries had agreed to work on a ceasefire.

Four days after the worst fighting in more than a decade broke out between the Southeast Asian neighbours, the death toll stood above 30, mainly civilians. More than 130,000 people have been evacuated from border areas in the two countries.

Cambodia's Defense Ministry said Thailand had shelled and launched ground assaults on Sunday morning at a number of points, including in Phnom Kmoach, which borders Thailand's coastal Trat province. The ministry's spokesperson said heavy artillery was fired at temple complexes.

The Thai army said Cambodia had fired shots into several areas, including near civilian homes, early on Sunday. The governor of Surin told Reuters artillery shells had been fired into the province, damaging a house and killing some livestock.

In the Thai province of Sisaket, Reuters reporters heard shelling early on Sunday and said it was unclear which side of the border it was on.

"If there is a ceasefire, things will be better," Sisaket resident Thavorn Toosawan told Reuters. "It's great that America is insisting on the ceasefire because it would bring peace."

Trump said on Saturday that he had spoken with the prime ministers of Thailand and Cambodia and they had agreed to meet immediately to quickly work out a ceasefire to end fighting that began on Thursday. Bangkok and



Phnom Penh each say the other side started the hostilities.

"Both Parties are looking for an immediate Ceasefire and Peace," Trump wrote on social media. Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet endorsed the call for the fighting to stop.

"I made it clear to Honourable President Donald Trump that Cambodia agreed with the proposal for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire between the two armed forces," Hun Manet posted on Facebook, noting he had also agreed to Malaysia's earlier ceasefire proposal.

Thailand's response was more qualified, as it had been with the proposal from Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, saying Cambodia needed to do more before talks could begin.

"I thanked President Trump for his concern and expressed that Thailand agrees in principle to have a ceasefire in place. However, Thailand would like to see sincere intention from the Cambodian side," acting Prime Minister Phumtham Wechayachai said on Facebook.

The countries have faced off since the killing of a Cambodian soldier late in May during a brief skirmish. Troops on both sides of the border were reinforced amid a full-blown diplomatic crisis that brought Thailand's fragile coalition government to the brink of collapse.

Thailand and Cambodia have bickered for decades over undemarcated points along their 817-km (508-mile) land border, with ownership of the ancient Hindu temples Ta Moan Thom and the 11th century Preah Vihear central to the disputes.

Preah Vihear was awarded to Cambodia by the International Court of Justice in 1962, but tension escalated in 2008 after Cambodia attempted to list it as a UNESCO World Heritage site, and skirmishes over several years brought at least a dozen deaths.

Cambodia said in June it had asked the court to resolve its disputes with Thailand, which says it has never recognised the court's jurisdiction and prefers a bilateral approach.

Hundreds Rally in Scotland to Protest Against Trump's Golf Visit

GLASGOW (Dispatches) - U.S. President Donald Trump played golf under tight security on the first full day of a visit to Scotland Saturday, as hundreds of protesters took to the streets in major cities.

Trump played at his Turnberry resort with son Eric and US ambassador to the UK Warren Stephens, waving to photographers following his arrival in his mother's birth country on Friday evening.

His presence has turned the picturesque and normally quiet area of southwest Scotland into a virtual fortress, with roads closed and police checkpoints in place.

Police officers -- some on quad bikes and others on foot with sniffer dogs -- patrolled the famous course and the sandy beaches and grass dunes that flank it.

Secret Service snipers were positioned at vantage points while some other golfers on the course were patted down by security personnel.

The 79-year-old Trump touched down Friday at nearby Prestwick Airport as hundreds of onlookers came out to see Air Force One and catch a glimpse of its famous passenger.



The president has professed a love of Scotland, but his controversial politics and business investments in the country have made for an uneasy relationship. Speaking to reporters on the tarmac, Trump immediately waded into the debate surrounding high levels of irregular migration, and lashed out at renewable energy efforts.

"You better get your act together or you're not going to have Europe anymore," he said, adding that migration was "killing" the continent.

"Stop the windmills. You're ruining your countries," he added.

Trump's five-day visit, which is set to mix leisure with business and diplomacy, has divided the local community.

Several hundred protesters demonstrated outside the US consulate in the capital Edinburgh and in the city of Aberdeen, near where Trump owns another golf resort.



Bublik, Darderi Win Titles

LONDON (Dispatches) - Top-seeded Alexander Bublik of Kazakhstan delivered 26 winners while posting a 6-4, 6-3 victory over Arthur Cazaux on Saturday to win the Generali Open title at Kitzbuehel, Austria.

Bublik, 28, has won eight straight matches and also prevailed in last week's EFG Swiss Open Gstaad.

On Saturday, Bublik saved 4 of 5 break points while notching his seventh career title. Cazaux was playing in his first ATP final. The 22-year-old Frenchman had seven aces and didn't commit a double fault.

Second-seeded Luciano Darderi registered seven aces and won his second straight title, beating Carlos Taberner of Spain 6-3, 6-3 in the championship match.

Darderi, a 23-year-old from Italy, won 87 percent (20 of 23) of his first-serve points while cruising to the victory. He won last week's Nordea Open and has prevailed in nine consecutive matches.

Darderi is 4-0 all-time in finals. Taberner, 27, played in his first career title match.

Meanwhile Anna Kalinskaya outclassed Britain's Emma Raducanu 6-4 6-3 at the Washington Open to advance to the final, where she will face Leylah Fernandez.

After a strong start from both players, Kalinskaya secured the first break to lead 5-4 and served out the opening set, handing Raducanu her first dropped set of the tournament.

The two exchanged early breaks in the second set before the Russian pulled ahead once more, taking a lead that proved decisive and breaking again to seal the win.

Having denied fans a rematch of the 2021 U.S. Open final between Raducanu and Fernandez,

Kalinskaya will now aim to capture her first WTA 500 title in the final.

"It was an interesting match. It's nice to play against Emma," world number 48 Kalinskaya said. "I'm proud of myself. I stayed aggressive and stuck to my plan."

Earlier, Fernandez came from a set down to defeat third seed Elena Rybakina 6-7(2) 7-6(3) 7-6(3) in a marathon battle marked by dominant serving from both players.

Rybakina edged a tight first set, gaining the upper hand in the tiebreak with two clutch return winners.

Fernandez dropped her serve in the opening game of the second set, but Rybakina was unable to serve out the match at 5-4, allowing the Canadian to rally and level the contest by taking the second tiebreak.

As in the opener, neither player dropped serve in the third set, but Fernandez grew in confidence and secured victory in three hours and 12 minutes to reach her first final of the season.

On the men's side, seventh seed Alex de Minaur blew hot and cold in his semi-final meeting with Corentin Moutet but was able to grind out a 6-4 6-3 win over the lucky loser.

"It wasn't pretty tennis, but I knew it was going to be a tricky match without a lot of rhythm... I had the mentality of doing whatever it took to get into the title match tomorrow," said De Minaur, who also reached the final in D.C. in 2018.

De Minaur will also return to the top 10 after reaching the final, where he will face Alejandro Davidovich Fokina, a 6-2 7-5 winner over Ben Shelton.

Liverpool Beaten 4-2 by AC Milan in Hong Kong Pre-Season Friendly



HONG KONG (Dispatches) - AC Milan beat Liverpool 4-2 in a pre-season friendly in Hong Kong as the Premier League club's record signing Florian Wirtz made his first start for them.

Former Liverpool manager Kenny Dalglish laid a wreath before the game and the players had "Diogo J 20" on their shirts in honour of their former teammate Diogo Jota, who died along with his brother Andre Silva in a car accident in Spain this month.

The English champions fell behind in the 10th minute when Rafael Leao scored from a Christian Pulisic pass. Dominik Szoboszlai levelled 20 minutes later with a curling shot from the edge of the box following an assist by Rio Ngunzwa who latched onto a long ball from Ryan Gravenberch.

Leao orchestrated a devastating counter-attack as Milan reclaimed the lead early in the second half. The Portuguese winger powered past Conor Bradley on the left flank and squared for Ruben Loftus-Cheek who fired home from inside the box.

Mohamed Salah spurned an opportunity from a Wirtz assist and Liverpool looked increasingly vulnerable as time passed by. Noah Okafor added Milan's third in the 60th minute.

"The most beautiful and important thing I'm happy about in these first 20 days of work because the team has a proactive attitude and significantly raised its level of endurance," Milan coach Massimiliano Allegri said.

Australia Beat Windies by Three Wickets in Fourth T20I Match



LONDON (Dispatches) - West Indies were 205 for nine after being sent to bat first after the visitors won the toss, but took five wickets after the midpoint to keep the pressure on Australia chasing 206 to win.

The Aussies seized a 4-0 lead in the five-match series and can complete a sweep by winning Monday's finale at Warner Park.

Green struck his half-century off 35 balls with three sixes and three fours while Inglis had one six and 10 fours in 30 balls and Glenn Maxwell had 47 runs off 18 balls, hitting six sixes and a four.

But a night after Tim David bashed Australia's fastest T20I century off only 37 balls, he was rested from the Aussie lineup and the chase had some tense moments.

Australia's Mitchell Marsh was out lbw for a second-ball duck from West Indies left-arm fast-medium pace bowler Jediah Blades.

Inglis entered to partner with Maxwell but flew out to deep backward square, caught by Sherfane Rutherford off a ball from Romario Shepherd to start the seventh over, leaving the Aussies on 66 for two.

The visitors reached 129 for two at the drinks break but on the next ball to start the 11th over, Maxwell was caught by Jason Holder at long on from a Akeal Hosein delivery.

Blades bowled Mitchell Owen for two thanks to Rutherford's deep cover grab and two balls later Blades got his third wicket, sending off Cooper Connolly for a duck on Holder's mid-off catch, the Aussies stuck on 134 for five.

Holder took Aaron Hardie for 23 on a long off catch by Shimron Hetmyer to open the 17th over with the Aussies still 21 runs from victory.

A drive by Green deflected off Shepherd's fingers and into the stumps of Xavier Bartlett out of his ground, his seventh wicket gone for nine and the Aussies two runs from victory.

Green, however, scored runs off the next two deliveries and Sean Abbott pushed Australia across the line, scoring the final run with four balls to spare.

Norris Holds Off Piastri to Take Belgian GP Pole

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - Lando Norris resisted mounting pressure from his McLaren team-mate and series leader Oscar Piastri to take pole position for the Belgian Grand Prix.

The 25-year-old Briton, whose mother is Belgian, shrugged aside concerns over his struggles on Friday to clock a best lap in one minute and 40.562 seconds, beating Australian Piastri by 0.085 seconds as McLaren reeled off a convincing front row lock-out.

It was his fourth pole this year and the 13th of his career.

Charles Leclerc qualified third with a late improved lap enabling him to overhaul defending world champion Max Verstappen's best effort for Red Bull.

Alex Albon was fifth for Williams ahead of Mercedes' George Russell, Yuki Tsunoda in the second Red Bull, Racing Bulls' rookies Isack Hadjar and Liam Lawson and Sauber's Gabriel Bortoleto.

Seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton failed to make it out of the Q1 session for Ferrari and will start Sunday's 44-lap race from 16th on the grid in the company of Mercedes' mercurial rookie Kimi Antonelli, who was 18th with two-time champion Fernando Alonso 19th for Aston Martin.

After victories in Austria and Britain, Norris will be seeking a third consecutive win to overhaul Piastri's nine-point lead in the title race.

"It was a decent lap and I'm happy," said Norris. "Everyone was a bit worried after yesterday, but I wasn't that far off."

"There were just a few little issues we had. I was confident that I could get back to the top."

Piastri, who had been faster than Norris in Friday's action, said: "It's a bit disappointing. The second lap was coming together well



and then I made a mistake into turn 14 and I lost a lot of time. The car was very good again, but it's about fine margins."

Leclerc said he was surprised by his time.

"I didn't expect it. We thought we were a lot more behind. We thought we had something more in the car with the upgrade, but it was a good lap. It takes time to maximise those upgrades."

After a masterclass from Verstappen in the sprint race earlier, Red Bull chose to change his 'skinny' rear wing to a bigger high-downforce version in anticipation of Sunday bringing heavy rain to the sweeping Ardennes circuit.

Norris found his pace to clock 1:41.010, six-tenths better than the

Ferrari, followed by Piastri two-tenths down in second, the pair showing McLaren's intent under grey skies before a frantic finale during which Hamilton found a late survival lap which was promptly deleted for exceeding track limits.

That left Gabriel Bortoleto 15th for Sauber and eliminated the Ferrari driver along with Alpine's Franco Colapinto, Mercedes' rookie Antonelli, who replaced Hamilton, and the two Aston Martins of Alonso and Lance Stroll.

Q2 began with everyone on softs and Verstappen fastest, trimming Norris's time, before Piastri and Norris took over for the opening runs.

The Dutchman chose not to run again, leaving the usual suspects a clear run to the top-10 shootout while the Haas pair Esteban Ocon and Oliver Bearman exited along with Alpine's Pierre Gasly, Hulkenberg and Sainz.

Russell, who was stripped of victory last year because of an underweight car, was first out for Q3, but it was Verstappen again on top before the McLarens flexed their muscle, Norris beating Piastri by 0.189 on their first runs.

Verstappen's final run on fresh softs was not enough to resist an improved lap from Leclerc as Piastri also failed to improve, leaving Norris to claim pole position.

"Oh my god, that was really, really bad," said Verstappen, as a rise in track temperature subdued his performance.

"Ideally, of course I would like to at least be P3, but fighting the McLarens will be very hard."

"The wet around here, it's always very tricky," he added. "We have to wait and see how much rain is going to fall."

Groves Wins Tour de France Stage 20, Pogacar Retains Lead

PARIS (Dispatches) - Australia's Kaden Groves completed his set of grand tour stage wins when he prevailed on the Tour de France's penultimate ride, avoiding a crash on slippery roads before powering to a solo triumph on the 184.2km journey from Nantua.

Groves's bike-handling skills were on display when he managed to stay up as Spain's Ivan Romeo and France's Romain Gregoire skidded out of control in front of him on a wet descent 21 kilometres from the finish.

The Alpecin-Deceuninck rider then attacked from a reduced breakaway bunch and never looked back in the remaining 17 kilometres, bursting into tears in a mix of disbelief and exhaustion after the line.



Groves, who gave his team their third victory in this year's Tour after Jasper Philipsen and Mathieu van der Poel also won, has seven Vuelta and two Giro d'Italia stage wins to his name.

The 26-year-old, who is used to winning from bunch sprints, was beaming with pride after a memorable ride.

"There's so much pressure at the Tour, and having won in the Giro, having won in the Vuelta, all I ever get asked is am I good enough to win in the Tour? And now I show them," Groves said. "It's my first time winning, so it's pretty incredible."

Dutchman Frank van den Broek took second place, 54 seconds behind, with his compatriot Pascal Eenkhoorn third, five seconds further back.