

Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi Has Strongly Reacted to the Language of Threats Used by the U.S. and Israeli Officials, Saying That Iran Will Respond in a More Decisive Manner If the Aggression Is Repeated

IRAN NEWS

President Masoud Pezeshkian Says Tehran Urgently Needs to Improve Relations With Its Neighbors, Stressing That Stronger Regional Ties Could Help Neutralize Western Sanctions

VOL. XXIX, No. 8326 TEHRAN Price 50,000 Rials

www.irannewsdaily.com

WEDNESDAY JULY 30, 2025 MORDAD 08, 1404

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Iran Ready for Interaction, But Won't Give Up Nuclear Rights



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - President Masoud Pezeshkian says Tehran is ready for negotiations over its peaceful nuclear program but will never give up the nation's rights.

Pezeshkian made the remarks in a Monday meeting with the new French Ambassador to Tehran, Pierre Cochard, who submitted his credentials to the Iranian president.

"We demand our rights within the framework of international regulations and adhere to the requirements of this framework," he said.

The president said Iran's nuclear activities had been subject to the strictest supervision in the past and that Tehran is ready for interactions in this regard.

"However, this does not mean that we are relinquishing the rights of the Iranian people. We are ready for dialogue and do not seek war, but our response to any potential repetition of aggression will be strong," the Iranian president stated.

Pezeshkian said Iran seeks interaction with the world, but Western countries are disrupting this process by spreading lies and accusing Tehran of making efforts to manufacture nuclear weapons.

Iran and the European troika—France, Britain, and Germany—held a second round of talks in Istanbul, Turkey, on July 25 and agreed to continue discussions on sanctions relief and the nuclear issue.

Iran and the United States had 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, which included attacks on Iranian nuclear sites.

Iran Eyes \$12b Export Potential to EAEU



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iran sees a promising \$12 billion export potential to the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), according to the Iranian Trade Promotion Organization (TPO). The assessment comes following the enforcement of a major free trade agreement (FTA) between Iran and the EAEU, which came into effect on May 14.

The EAEU, which includes Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia, and Kyrgyzstan, recorded imports worth \$311 billion in 2024. An analysis by the Secretariat of the Iran-EAEU FTA suggests that Iran has the capacity to claim at least \$12 billion of that market share, signaling a significant opportunity for Iranian producers.

Under the new agreement, 87% of goods traded between Iran and EAEU member states are now exempt from customs tariffs. Officials expect this to significantly enhance the competitiveness of Iranian products compared to similar foreign goods in the EAEU markets. The agreement is considered one of Iran's most influential trade pacts to date.

While Iran's trade with the EAEU has grown in recent years, officials acknowledge that there is still a long road ahead to reach an optimal market share. They stress the need for increased production, improved logistics infrastructure, targeted marketing, and alignment of product quality with consumer preferences in EAEU countries.

The TPO also emphasized the critical role of the private sector, including chambers of commerce and manufacturing industries, in leveraging the benefits provided by the agreement.

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK



Further Mischief by Israel Will Be Met With a Stronger Slap

TEHRAN - First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref issued a stern warning to Israel during a speech marking National Skills Week, stating that any further provocative actions by the Israeli regime would be met with a "stronger slap." He emphasized that Iran is currently observing a ceasefire but warned that this would not restrain the country if provoked again.

"The outcome of this war was that the occupying regime, through its patron the United States, proposed a ceasefire. We are now in a state of ceasefire and hope, for once, they remain committed to it despite their usual conduct. However, if they repeat their mischief, they will be hit even harder," Aref declared.

Aref made these remarks during a ceremony honoring technical and vocational professionals, using the occasion to highlight the importance of skills-based education and national self-sufficiency in technological advancement.

He criticized Iran's historical overreliance on assembly-based industries and emphasized the need to overhaul technical and vocational education to better align with national development goals. Aref noted that although efforts had been made to upgrade vocational education and integrate it with higher academic institutions, results had fallen short.

"The minimal facilities needed to absorb skilled graduates into industry and services were not provided. A group was formed to address this gap, and mechanisms were created to ensure vocational degrees are academically equivalent to theoretical education," he explained.

The Vice President called for stronger collaboration between public and private sectors in equipping training centers and highlighted the vital role of private initiative in national achievements, citing the recent 12-day conflict as an example.

Turning to global technological trends, Aref warned that technology is outpacing scientific development, raising concerns among scholars and philosophers about its potential future threats to humanity.

"We must not lag behind in emerging and advanced technologies. With our motivated youth, it is the technologists—not just scientists—who must lead the way," he said.

Aref emphasized the critical need for synergy between science and technology, noting that Iran's share in global technological progress exceeds its population share and must be further strengthened by fortifying the chain of skilled human resources.

He stressed that technical and vocational education must be a national priority supported by all sectors and reaffirmed the long-standing significance of skill development as highlighted in Iran's national plans and leadership directives.

"Every development plan and the 20-Year Vision Document has given special attention to technical and vocational training. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei has prioritized production in recent years, and production hinges on technical skills," Aref noted.

He concluded by calling for a renewed focus on productivity, stating that despite its importance in the Seventh Development Plan, achieving real economic growth requires prioritizing efficiency, with technical education playing a key role.

Aref also expressed condolences for the Iranian soldiers, scientists, and civilians killed in the recent 12-day war, describing it as brutal and unjust. He reiterated that Iran is currently in a ceasefire but prepared for any renewed aggression from Israel.

Intelligence Ministry Details Counterintelligence Masterstroke During Israeli-U.S. War



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's Intelligence Ministry has detailed its complex multi-pronged intelligence operations aimed at neutralizing enemies' attempts at infiltration and subversion during the Israeli regime's and the U.S.'s unprovoked war last month.

In a statement on Monday, the ministry cataloged its counterintelligence operations in the face of the warfare that saw the Israeli regime beginning to attack nuclear, military, and civilian targets across the country on June 13 and later soliciting American assistance.

The war lasted no more than 12 days, ending after the Islamic Republic's defensive and retaliatory strikes compelled Tel Aviv to request a ceasefire.

The ministry described the war as a "full-scale, hybrid aggression" by the regime and the United States, backed by various adversarial groups, including terrorist outfits, as well as some European countries.

According to the ministry, the Zionist regime was aided in the war by "the Western intelligence-security NATO."

The goal, it stated, went beyond delivering a military blow to the Islamic Republic, extending into efforts by the aggressors to overthrow the country's Islamic establishment, disintegrate the country, and sow domestic destabilization.

However, the statement hailed that "not a single operation against the country's security was realized," attributing this to divine grace, the instructions issued by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, and the nation's insight.

Iran Rejects U.S. Claim of Interference in Gaza Ceasefire Talks



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei has strongly rejected U.S. allegations of interference in Gaza ceasefire negotiations, dismissing the claims as "utterly baseless."

Baghaei made the remarks in response to IRNA asking about U.S. President Donald Trump's recent claims regarding the involvement of Iran in the Gaza ceasefire talks.

Speaking alongside British Prime Minister Keir Starmer following their meeting on Monday, Trump claimed that Iran "interjected themselves" into the latest round of ceasefire talks in Qatar.

"I think they got involved in this negotiation, telling Hamas and giving Hamas signals and orders. And that's not good," he further claimed.

In response, Baghaei noted, "Iran, in unison with the majority of nations, strongly condemns the genocide in Gaza and supports any process that can halt the atrocities and alleviate the sufferings of the oppressed people of Gaza."

He underlined that Hamas negotiators are "fully capable of discerning and pursuing the best interests of the oppressed people of Gaza, rendering any third-party interference unnecessary."

He categorically dismissed allegations of Iran's interference in the negotiations as "utterly baseless," asserting that such claims are a deliberate attempt to "deflect responsibility and obscure the US's complicity in Israel's crimes against the Palestinian people."

Baghaei highlighted several Israeli atrocities, including "the killing of 60,000 innocent people, including women and children, the intensification of the siege of the Gaza Strip in recent months, the prevention of humanitarian aid from entering the Strip, and the killing of hungry and thirsty civilians in death traps in so-called aid distribution centers established by an American company."

Iran Opposes Any Attempt Meant to Disintegrate Syria

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's ambassador to the United Nations says Tehran strongly opposes any attempt aimed at undermining Syria's sovereignty and disintegrating the conflict-ridden country.

Amir Sa'ed Iravani made the remarks during a UN Security Council meeting on Syria as the southern Sweida province has witnessed deadly clashes between the Druze community, Bedouins, and the ruling HTS forces, while Israel has used the violence as a pretext to attack various sites across the Arab country.

Iravani warned against the Tel Aviv regime's "dangerous and destabilizing" schemes aimed at detaching Syria's southern governorates from the authority of the central government, noting that such illegal actions constitute a flagrant violation of international law, the UN Charter and Security Council resolutions.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic."

"We strongly oppose any attempt—whether direct or indirect—to undermine Syria's national sovereignty or to fragment its territory," he said.

The Iranian envoy also expressed worries about the recent outbreak of violence in Sweida and said Tehran supports the interim government's efforts to restore stability.

He further condemned the mass killing of Syria's Alawites in the coastal cities of Latakia and Tartous, saying justice must be pursued through credible mechanisms, free from foreign interference and political manipulation.

"We urge full respect for the rights of all minorities and the resolution of internal differences through inclusive dialogue. Sectarian violence undermines public trust in the political transition, which must remain inclusive and nationally owned. A unified and diverse Syria is essential for lasting peace and stability," he said.

Meanwhile, Iravani denounced the recent Israeli airstrikes and acts of aggression targeting Damascus and southern Syria, as well as the regime's illegal occupation of the Golan Heights. "There is no military solution to the crisis in Syria," he said. "The only viable path forward



is through a Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political process, facilitated by the United Nations and based on core principles outlined in Resolution 2254."

He also expressed Iran's commitment to working constructively with the UN and regional partners to support peace, justice, and the full recovery of Syria, free from occupation, terrorism, and foreign interference.

Meanwhile Iravani formally urged the United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and the Security Council to condemn a recent terrorist attack in the country's southeast in the strongest possible terms.

Iran's ambassador to the UN, Iravani, conveyed this message on Monday in a letter addressed to Guterres and the president of the Security Council.

He emphasized the need for the international body to take a firm and principled stance against terrorism, regardless of the identity of the perpetrators.

Iravani reaffirmed Iran's unwavering commitment to defending its citizens and national security against any terrorist acts.

He stated that Iran will relentlessly combat terrorist groups and their sponsors with determination and full force until such threats are completely eradicated from the nation.

The ambassador stressed that acts of terrorism and sabotage will not deter Iran from protecting its people or upholding justice.

The terrorist attack, which occurred on Saturday in the southeastern Sistan and Baluchestan Province, resulted in the tragic deaths of six individuals, including an infant and her mother.

On Sunday, a commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Basij force was killed in a separate terrorist attack in Zahedan.

The IRGC Ground Force's regional Quds Base said in a statement on Monday that Javad Karim Koshteh, the commander of the Basij resistance base, was killed while on duty at Imam Hadi mosque in Zahedan's Shirabad district on Sunday.



Emphasis on Expanding Iranian Goods’ Market Share in Export Destinations

TEHRAN (TPO) - In a strategic coordination meeting with Iran’s commercial attachés stationed in key export markets, the Head of the Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) of Iran underscored the importance of monitoring foreign markets and enhancing the presence of Iranian products abroad.

The meeting was held with the participation of Mohammad Ali Dehghan Dehnavi, Head of the TPO, Morteza Salehi, Deputy to the Head, and senior organization officials at the TPO headquarters. The session focused on reviewing the organization’s primary missions concerning the development of target export markets.

July Inflation Rate Announced; Annual Inflation Hits 35.3%



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - According to the Statistical Center of Iran, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for Iranian households reached 360.2 in July 2025 (Tir 1404 in the Persian calendar), marking a 41.2% increase compared to the same month last year.

Based on the report released by the Iranian Statistics Center, the CPI in July 2025 shows a monthly increase of 3.5%, a year-on-year (point-to-point) increase of 41.2%, and a 35.3% rise over the past 12 months compared to the corresponding period the previous year.

Point-to-point inflation refers to the percentage change in the CPI compared to the same month in the previous year. In July 2025, the point-to-point inflation for households across the country was 41.2%, meaning households spent on average 41.2% more than they did in July 2024 for the same basket of goods and services. This marks an increase of 1.8 percentage points compared to the previous month.

Monthly inflation reflects the percentage change in the CPI from the previous month. For July 2025, monthly inflation for Iranian households was 3.5%. Within major groups, the inflation rate for food, beverages, and tobacco was 5.1%, while for non-food goods and services, it was 2.6%.

Annual inflation is the percentage change in the average CPI over the past 12 months compared to the same period a year earlier. In July 2025, the annual inflation rate for Iranian households reached 35.3%, up 0.8 percentage points from the previous month.

The report also examined inflation by income deciles. The annual inflation rate ranged from 35.0% for the tenth (highest) decile to 35.6% for the eighth and ninth deciles, resulting in a 0.6 percentage point gap between income groups. This gap narrowed by 0.2 percentage points compared to the previous month, when it stood at 0.8%.

Iran–Turkey Trade Surpasses \$2.2b in Q1



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iran and Turkey’s bilateral trade has exceeded \$2.2 billion in the first quarter of the Iranian year 1404 (March–June 2025), according to Iran’s Commercial Attaché in Turkey.

Based on the latest statistical analysis from Iran’s Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), Turkey remains Iran’s fourth largest trading partner, with the total trade value between the two countries reaching \$2.229 billion during the spring season.

This volume has positioned Turkey as Iran’s third-largest trade partner overall, accounting for 11.9% of Iran’s total foreign trade during this period.

Turkey ranks as Iran’s fourth-largest export destination, following China, Iraq, and the UAE. Iran exported 1.523 million tons of goods to Turkey, valued at \$1.607 billion, representing 8% of Iran’s total export value.

On the import side, Turkey is Iran’s third-largest import source, following the UAE and China and ahead of India and Germany. Iran imported 1.607 million tons of goods from Turkey, valued at \$1.985 billion, constituting 15.2% of Iran’s total import value.

According to official data: The export-to-import ratio (SaVa Index) stood at 472.

The average export value per ton from Iran to Turkey was \$615, compared to an average import value per ton of \$1,236.

The terms of trade (export unit price to import unit price ratio) with Turkey were calculated at 0.498, higher than the national average of 0.234.

The diversity of trade was also notable, with 710 different export items and 1,901 different import items recorded between the two countries.

In the first three months of 1404, Iran’s key export commodities to Turkey included: Natural gas – 19%; Aluminum and aluminum products – 17%; Urea fertilizer – 11%; Copper and its products – 7%; Zinc and its products – 7%; Rail and maritime industries – 5%; Plastic products – 4%; Polymer raw materials – 3%; and Other goods – 27%.

Iran Aims to Eliminate Hepatitis C by 2026



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran has officially reaffirmed its strong national commitment to eliminating Hepatitis C by the year 1405 (2026), according to the Deputy Minister of Health. Dr. Alireza Raisi stated that the country is following a well-defined roadmap involving targeted strategies, inclusive participation, and continued implementation of diagnostic, treatment, and prevention programs aimed at achieving international recognition in the form of bronze, silver, and ultimately gold certification levels for disease elimination.

Speaking at a World Hepatitis Day event held on Monday — attended by representatives from the World Health Organization (WHO) and other international agencies — Dr. Raisi emphasized Iran’s notable progress in managing infectious diseases despite sharing borders with high-burden countries such as Afghanistan and Pakistan. He cited Iran’s success in controlling tuberculosis and malaria as examples of its achievements in public health.

“These public health successes are the result of two decades of uninterrupted effort,” he noted. “They may be less visible but form the hidden pillars of community health — much like national security, which is only appreciated when it’s lost.”

Dr. Raisi reviewed the WHO’s benchmarks for certifying Hepatitis C elimination: Bronze level: At least 60% of infected individuals must be identified, and 40% treated; Silver level: 70% diagnosed, 60% treated; and Gold level: 80% diagnosed, 70% treated.

“Iran is performing exceptionally well in areas such as vaccination coverage, injection safety, blood screening, and preventing mother-to-child transmission,” he added.

Dr. Raisi explained that, if the country can align its case detection and treatment rates with global targets by 2026, it can first secure the bronze certification and potentially advance to gold. “This goal is not just a slogan—it’s a national commitment,” he asserted.

Outlining the pillars of Iran’s national plan, Dr. Raisi said it is built on three main strategies: Active case finding in high-risk populations, including people who inject drugs, prisoners, individuals with special conditions, and refugees; Free access to diagnostic, care, and treatment services; and Full insurance coverage for the general population.

The plan spans from 1403 to 1406 (2024–2027), focusing on gradually expanding screening and treatment capacity. Currently, around 13,000 to 21,000 new cases are identified annually—numbers that could help Iran meet the bronze-level target by 2026.

Dr. Raisi also acknowledged the challenges posed by economic sanctions and called for continued international support. He expressed gratitude to WHO, UNICEF, and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for their assistance in providing medical equipment, knowledge transfer, and harm reduction services for vulnerable groups.

He urged these agencies to continue their support, particularly in areas such as prevalence estimation studies, standardizing protocols, strengthening infrastructure, and integrating HIV care services.

Reiterating that Iran’s Hepatitis C elimination initiative is a strategic national commitment, not just a presentation, Dr. Raisi emphasized collaboration across multiple government bodies including the Ministry of Interior, Welfare Organization, Prisons Organization, Drug Control Headquarters, medical universities, and academic experts.

“Eliminating Hepatitis C in Iran is not a dream—it’s an achievable reality,” he concluded.

World Hepatitis Day is observed annually on July 28 (6 Mordad in the Iranian calendar), marking the birthday of Dr. Baruch Blumberg (1925–2011), who discovered the Hepatitis B virus in 1967 and developed the first Hepatitis B vaccine two years later.

Strengthening Ties with Neighboring and Regional Countries Has Become a Strategic Priority

TEHRAN - First Vice President, Mohammad Reza Aref, has emphasized the importance of enhancing relations with China, stating that for the Islamic Republic of Iran, developing ties with neighboring and regional countries has evolved from a mere tactic into a strategic policy.



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

Aref made these remarks during a meeting with members of the Iran-China Chamber of Commerce and Industry. He noted that Iran had lacked an active private sector in previous decades, but that a competitive, rather than exclusionary, private sector is now emerging. He added that with the government’s recent policies focusing on the private sector, this segment can take a leading role in managing the country’s economy.

Aref stated that through the implementation of various development programs, the government concluded that private sector involvement is essential. “We cannot rely solely on government resources and control for national progress and development,” he said, adding that global experience has shown that the private sector, operating within legal frameworks, must play a leading role in the economy.

He further noted that since the implementation of general policies under Article 44 of the Constitution, there are no barriers to private sector participation in any field. “In the 14th government, we have reached the consensus that the private sector must be utilized in all areas. It pursues profit and efficiency, and as such, tends to make fewer mistakes,” he said.

Highlighting global technological advances driven by the private sector, Aref stressed that Iran must follow the same path. He reiterated the importance of developing ties with China, saying that the primary focus of the 14th government’s foreign policy is to strengthen relations with neighboring countries and those sharing common civilizational values.

Aref added that Iran and China have had longstanding commercial, cultural, and social ties over the centuries. Through tourism and

people-to-people exchanges in recent decades, the two nations are not unfamiliar with each other. Based on these historical connections, he believes a future strategic relationship can be further developed.


He also emphasized expanding scientific and technological cooperation between the two countries and thanked Iran’s private sector for its efforts in enhancing economic relations with China over recent decades. He noted that the 14th government believes in public participation and the role of the private sector. “The Iran-China Chamber of Commerce should step forward on behalf of the private sector to deepen economic ties with China. There are no obstacles to expanding relations with this country. Administrative barriers faced by entrepreneurs and economic actors must be removed through collaboration between the two governments,” he added.

Aref concluded by stating that Iran and China are both eager to strengthen their relations and that the private sector must find its footing in investment and economic cooperation with neighboring and regional countries. He called for the formation of a dedicated task force to identify and resolve challenges to bilateral cooperation and project implementation.

Also during the session, Majidreza Hariri, President of the Iran-China Chamber of Commerce, stressed that the chamber’s capacities and resources are at the service of the 14th government’s goals. He said the Iran-China Chamber and the private sector can play a vital role in developing innovation, technology, industry, and transportation cooperation, aiding the government in strengthening economic relations with China as one of Iran’s key strategic partners.

In closing, participants in the meeting shared their suggestions and solutions for maximizing the potential of Iran-China cooperation and addressing current challenges to deepening bilateral ties.

Imam Khomeini Airport to Be Transferred to the Private Sector



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The CEO of Imam Khomeini Airport City Company announced that the government aims to reduce its direct involvement in airport operations and instead rely on private sector capacity. So far, contracts worth nearly 400 trillion rials (approximately \$8 billion USD) have been signed with private investors.

Speaking at a press conference, Saeed Chalandari told IRNA that one of the mandates of the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development under Iran’s Seventh Development Plan is the transfer of airport operations to the private sector.

“Although Imam Khomeini Airport City is a major project with extensive ongoing activities, and full privatization may not be feasible, we are committed to incorporating as much private sector involvement as possible,” he said.


Chalandari emphasized that the government does not wish to act as the main operator. “Even in Phase 2 of the airport’s expansion, the Minister of Roads and Urban Development has stressed minimizing reliance on public funds and instead leveraging private sector resources,” he added.

Chalandari stated that there is no need for foreign investment in the country’s airports, as numerous capable domestic investors are ready to engage. “It is up to us in the public sector to create the right conditions and incentives to keep the private sector motivated to invest,” he noted.

Answering another question, the CEO said that the runways for Phase 2 of Imam Khomeini Airport are expected to become operational within the first half of the Iranian year 1405 (March–September 2026), requiring an estimated \$300 million in funding. This amount is to be sourced through a special permit granted by the Supreme Leader.

He also acknowledged some previous issues in the allocation of funds for Phase 2, but noted that a new agreement, facilitated by the Minister and the Planning Department of the Ministry, has paved the way for the gradual release of resources to accelerate progress.

Gas Output from South Pars Increases with Infill Drilling Project



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The gas production from Iran’s South Pars gas field continues to rise as part of the ongoing implementation of the infill drilling project, according to the project manager overseeing infill well drilling operations.

Speaking on Monday, Shabir Nabavi, the official in charge of the South Pars infill drilling project, said the third well under the infill plan has been brought online at platform SPD19A, located in Phase 19 of the South Pars field. This new well has added 1.6 million cubic meters per day to the gas production of the joint field.

Nabavi explained that the third well (SPD19A-04) was successfully completed and brought into production after drilling to a final depth of 4,073 meters at an angle of approximately 50 degrees. The process included the installation of production tubing, extensive acid stimulation, flow testing, and connection to existing platform facilities.

He further noted that this well was drilled under the fourth work package of the infill project, as part of an EPD (Engineering, Procurement, and Drilling) contract carried out by Pasargad Energy Development Company. With this well now operational, the drilling rig is being moved to a new location.

So far, three wells in total have been brought into full operation under this project, collectively adding 5 million cubic meters per day to South Pars’ gas output, Nabavi stated. He added that more wells currently under drilling are expected to enter the production stream in the coming months.

According to the report, the South Pars infill drilling project involves the drilling of 35 new wells across 17 existing gas platforms. Once fully completed, the project is expected to boost South Pars’ daily gas production by 36 million cubic meters.

Flooding Kills 30 in Beijing as Heavy Rains Sweep Across China

BEIJING (Dispatches) - Heavy rain in the Chinese capital Beijing has killed 30 people and prompted authorities to evacuate 80,000, state media said Tuesday.

Intense rainstorms have pummelled swathes of northern China this week, including the capital and the provinces of Hebei, Jilin and Shandong.

As of midnight Monday, "the latest round of heavy rainstorms has left 30 people dead in Beijing", state news agency Xinhua said, citing the city's municipal flood control headquarters.

Over 80,000 people have been evacuated in the Chinese capital alone, local state-run outlet Beijing Daily said on social media.



Trump Issues New Ultimatum Calling on Putin to End Ukraine War in 10 or 12 Days



GLASGOW (Dispatches) - U.S. President Donald Trump on Monday cut down his 50-day deadline for Russia to end the war in Ukraine to "about 10 or 12 days", adding that he was not very interested in talking to his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin following repeated failures to bring about a ceasefire.

issued on Monday a dramatic new ultimatum to Russia to end the war in Ukraine or face tough new sanctions, as he met UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer in Scotland.

Trump told reporters that he was not very interested in talking to Russian President Vladimir Putin anymore, underscoring his mounting frustration with his counterpart in Moscow.

Trump, sitting alongside Starmer at the US leader's luxury golf resort in Turnberry, south of Glasgow, said he was "very disappointed" with Putin over continued strikes against Ukrainian civilian targets.

He announced that he was reducing an earlier 50-day deadline for Putin to bring the Ukraine conflict to an end to "about 10 or 12 days", starting immediately.

"There is no reason in waiting," Trump said, adding he thought Putin would want to end things quick.

"I really felt it was going to end. But every time I think it's going to end he kills people.

People welcome Trump with a giant US flag as US president Donald Trump delegations drive past them near Prestwick airport.

"I'm not so interested in talking (to him) anymore," he added.

Trump said sanctions and tariffs would be used as penalties for Moscow if it did not meet his demands.

"There's no reason to wait. If you know what the answer is going to be, why wait? And it would be sanctions and maybe tariffs, secondary tariffs," Trump said.

"I don't want to do that to Russia. I love the Russian people."

U.S., China Hold New Talks on Tariff Truce



STOCKHOLM (Dispatches) - Top U.S. and Chinese economic officials met in Stockholm on Monday for more than five hours of talks aimed at resolving longstanding economic disputes at the centre of a trade war between the world's top two economies, seeking to extend a truce by three months.

U.S. Treasury Chief Scott Bessent was part of a U.S. negotiating team that arrived at Rosenbad, the Swedish prime minister's office in central Stockholm, in the early afternoon. China's Vice Premier He Lifeng was also seen at the venue on video footage.

China is facing an August 12 deadline to reach a durable tariff agreement with President Donald Trump's administration, after Beijing and Washington reached preliminary deals in May and June to end weeks of escalating tit-for-tat tariffs and a cut-off of rare earth minerals.

Negotiators from the two sides were seen exiting the office around 8 p.m. (1800 GMT) and did not stop to speak with reporters. The discussions are expected to resume on Tuesday.

Trump touched on the talks during a wide-ranging press conference with British Prime Minister Keir Starmer in Scotland. "I'd love to see China open up their country," Trump said.

Without an agreement, global supply chains could face renewed turmoil from U.S. duties snapping back to triple-digit levels that would amount to a bilateral trade embargo.

U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer said he did not expect "some kind of enormous breakthrough today" at the talks in Stockholm that he was attending.



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - There is no alternative to a two-state solution between Israelis and the Palestinians, France told a UN conference co-chaired with Saudi Arabia Monday that was boycotted by Israel and branded a stunt by Washington.

"Only a political, two-state solution will help respond to the legitimate aspirations of Israelis and Palestinians to live in peace and security. There is no alternative," French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said at the start of the three-day meeting.

Days before the conference, French President Emmanuel Macron announced he would formally recognise Palestinian statehood in September, provoking strong opposition from Israel and the United States.

Luxembourg hinted Monday that it could follow France and recognise a Palestinian state in September, with the possibility that other countries could announce similar plans when the conference resumes Tuesday.

"All states have a responsibility to act now," said Palestinian prime minister Mohammad Mustafa at the start of the meeting, calling for an international force to help underwrite Palestinian statehood.

He called for the world to recognise Palestinian statehood, while later demanding that Hamas surrender control of the Gaza Strip and its arms as part of a deal to end fighting in the territory.

France is hoping Britain will follow its lead. More than 200 British members of parliament on Friday voiced support for the idea, but Prime Minister Keir Starmer said that recognition of a Palestinian state "must be part of a wider plan".

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said at the meeting "the two-state solution is farther than ever before".

According to an AFP database, at least 142 of the 193 UN member states now recognise the Palestinian state proclaimed by the Palestinian leadership in exile in 1988.

In 1947, in a resolution approved by the General Assembly, the United Nations decided to partition Palestine, then under a British mandate, into Jewish and Arab states. Israel was proclaimed in 1948.

For decades, most UN members have supported a two-state solution with Israel and a Palestinian state existing side-by-side.

But after more than 21 months of war in Gaza, the ongoing expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, and Israeli officials declaring designs to annex occupied territory, it is feared a Palestinian state could become geographically impossible.

The current war in Gaza started following a deadly attack by Hamas on Israel, which responded with a large-scale military response that has claimed tens of thousands of Palestinian lives and destroyed most infrastructure in the enclave. Barrot said it would be an "illusion to think that you can get to a lasting ceasefire without having an outline of what's going to happen in Gaza after the end of the war and having a political horizon".

Beyond facilitating conditions for recognising Palestine, the meeting will focus on three other issues: reform of the Palestinian Authority, disarmament of Hamas and its exclusion from Palestinian public life, and normalisation of relations with Israel by Arab states.

However, no new normalisation deals are expected to be announced at the meeting, according to a French diplomatic source.

Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud said US President Donald Trump could be a "catalyst" to ending the war in Gaza and jump-starting the two-state solution, stressing Riyadh had no plans to normalize relations with Israel.

Following his plea to Trump, the US State Department labeled the three-day event "unproductive and ill-timed", as well as a "publicity stunt" that would make finding peace harder.

Jordan's Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi said action was needed to counter Israeli "settlements, land confiscation (and) encroachments on the holy sites".

Israel and the United States were not taking part in the meeting, amid growing international pressure on Israel to end nearly two years of war in Gaza.

Despite "tactical pauses" announced by Israel, the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza will dominate speeches.

Israeli Ambassador to the UN Danny Danon said "this conference does not promote a solution."

UN Chief Wants Hunger Not to Be Used as a Weapon of War

ADDIS ABABA (Dispatches) - UN chief Antonio Guterres on Monday said food must not be used as a weapon of war as world leaders gathered for a food summit in Africa, where 280 million people face chronic hunger.

The African Union urged donors to provide greater support for the world's poorest continent, which is struggling with poverty, unrest and the effects of climate change.

A new report co-authored by several United Nations agencies found global hunger fell slightly in 2024 thanks to progress in Asia and South America.

But 8.2 per cent of the world — an estimated 638 to 720 million people — still faced hunger last year, and the situation was worsening particularly in Africa, where the figure is 20.2 per cent.

"Hunger fuels instability and undermines peace. We must never accept hunger as a weapon of war," Antonio Guterres told the UN Food Systems Summit in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa via video link.

"Climate change is disrupting harvests, supply chains and humanitarian aid," he said.

He highlighted the worsening crises in Sudan and Gaza.

The World Health Organisation has warned that malnutrition in the occupied Palestinian territory has reached "alarming levels" since Israel imposed a total blockade on Gaza on March 2.

In late May, Israel began allowing a trickle of aid to enter, but more than 100 NGOs have warned that "mass starvation" is spreading.

The summit takes place against the backdrop of aid cuts by the United States and other Western nations that are badly affecting much of the developing world.

Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, head of the African Union's executive commission,



told the summit that food insecurity was on the rise across Africa, blaming "climate shocks, conflicts and economic disruptions".

"At this crucial moment, how many children and mothers on the continent are sleeping hungry? Millions, certainly," he said.

Youssouf said more than 280 million Africans were malnourished, with "nearly 3.4 million... on the brink of famine" and some 10 million displaced by drought, floods and cyclones.

He urged AU member states to devote 10 per cent of their gross domestic

product to agriculture to help foster "nutritional resilience".

"But we cannot do this alone. We call on our partners to honour their commitments to finance and support African solutions," he said.

The UN report made clear how far there was to go to meet its goal of ending world hunger by 2030.

Current projections suggest some 512 million people will still be undernourished by the end of the decade, 60 per cent of them in Africa.

"Global hunger figures have slightly improved compared to 2022 and 2023," Alvaro Lario, president of the International Fund for Agricultural Development, told AFP.

The UN report highlights "persistent inequalities", with women and rural communities most affected, and the gap widening further over the previous year.

"Despite adequate global food production, millions of people go hungry or are malnourished because safe and nutritious food is not available, not accessible or, more often, not affordable," it said.

It found the response to price spikes between 2021 and 2023 was "more coordinated, informed and restrained" than the previous inflationary shock during the 2007-08 financial crisis.

Some 2.3 billion people had to occasionally skip a meal in 2024 and are considered moderately or severely food insecure — 335 million more than in 2019.

Thai Army Accuses Cambodia of Violating Truce Hours After Deal

SURIN (Dispatches) - Thailand's army accused Cambodia Tuesday of violating an hours-old truce, saying clashes continued despite a deal meant to end the bloody fighting that engulfed their jungle-clad frontier.

Following peace talks in Malaysia on Monday, both sides agreed an unconditional ceasefire would start at midnight to end fighting over a smattering of ancient temples in disputed zones along their 800-kilometre border.

"At the time the agreement took effect, the Thai side detected that Cambodian forces had launched armed attacks into several areas within Thai territory," said Thai army spokesman Winthai Suwaree.

"This constitutes a deliberate violation of the agreement and a clear attempt to undermine mutual trust, he added in a statement. "Thailand is compelled to respond appropriately, exercising its legitimate right to self-defense."

Cambodia's defense ministry spokeswoman Maly Socheata insisted there had been "no armed clashes against each other in any regions".



However, both sides said morning meetings scheduled between opposing regional commanders along the border as part of the truce pact had either begun or were still scheduled to start.

In Cambodia's Samraong city — 20 kilometres from the border — an AFP journalist said the sound of blasts stopped in the 30 minutes leading up to midnight, with the lull continuing until dawn.

"The frontline has eased since the ceasefire at 12 midnight," Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet said in a Tuesday morning message on Facebook.

Jets, rockets and artillery have killed at least 38 people since last Thursday and displaced nearly 300,000 more — prompting intervention from US President Donald Trump over the weekend.

The flare-up was the deadliest since violence raged sporadically from 2008-2011 over the territory, claimed by both because of a vague demarcation made by Cambodia's French colonial administrators in 1907.



Monfils Bows Out in Toronto

TORONTO (Dispatches) - Gael Monfils said he has played for the last time in Toronto after crashing out of the Masters in the opening round of the ATP Masters to a Chilean qualifier.

The 38-year-old French tennis icon missed out on four match points to exit 6-4, 4-6, 7-6 (7/3) to number 142 Tomas Barrios Vera, who won the first Masters match of his career and ended a seven-match loss streak at the ATP level.

Monfils symbolically touched the baseline as he walked off a loser after nearly three hours in torrid summer temperatures approaching 35 Celsius.

"There's no explanation, it's the last one," he said. "It will be two years to play (again) in Toronto, so pretty much I won't be able to play it. Obviously I think the next one is too old for me, so I think it was the last time I'll play here."

He added: "I actually thought at the end, and I was like, 'Well, I think it's, unfortunately, but the last time I think I would play here.'"

Monfils had little good to say about his effort.

"Without taking credit from my opponent, (it was a) bad match from my side, not the quality that I want, not the level that I want to perform," he said.

"(I need to) try to work hard, feel this winning (habit come) back a little bit and try to still believe.

"Keep my head up, even though it's not easy, but I will try my best."

Meanwhile Genie Bouchard extended her tennis career for at least one more match Monday, beating

Emiliana Arango 6-4, 2-6, 6-2 in the first round of the National Bank Open.

Bouchard, who reached the Wimbledon final and two other Grand Slam semifinals in 2014, announced this month that she would retire after a final appearance in her hometown tournament.

She then opened it with her first WTA Tour victory since 2023 — and the 300th of her career — and advanced to face No. 17 seed Belinda Bencic.

Bouchard reached No. 5 in the rankings in 2014 but the 31-year-old has largely switched to pickleball, playing just one match this season before being given a wild card into the Montreal tournament.

After splitting the first two sets, Bouchard broke the 82nd-ranked Arango twice — first with a forehand, then from the Colombian's missed volley — to build a 5-1 lead in the decisive third.

Arango broke back with Bouchard serving for the match to make it 5-2, but the Canadian went up 40-love in the ensuing game. Arango then sent her backhand wide on Bouchard's second match point.

Bouchard waved and blew kisses to the crowd after the win.

"I told my family that if I won, I would come out of retirement," she said from center court. "I felt like the old Genie out there."

Emma Raducanu, playing just two days after losing in the semifinals in Washington, beat Elena-Gabriela Ruse 6-2, 6-4. Naomi Osaka, in her first tournament since announcing she would no longer work with coach Patrick Mouratoglou, eliminated Ariana Arseneault 6-4, 6-2.

Late Odegaard Penalty Seals Arsenal's 3-2 Win Over Newcastle

SINGAPORE (Dispatches) - Martin Odegaard scored the winner from the spot in the 84th minute as Arsenal beat Newcastle 3-2 in a pre-season friendly in Singapore.

Viktor Gyokeres, the Swedish international striker signed on Saturday from Sporting Lisbon, was introduced to the crowd of more than 38,700 before kickoff.

He watched from the bench as his new club won an entertaining encounter in the Singapore heat.

The 27-year-old could make his debut when Arsenal take on Tottenham in Hong Kong next Thursday in another friendly.

"We are increasing the quality of the squad all the time, so we're super happy to have Viktor with us," said manager Mikel Arteta.

"It has been a long journey to get him here."

Newcastle, who were missing striker Alexander Isak as he considers his future, scored with their first attack in the sixth minute.

New signing Anthony Elanga blasted the ball into the bottom corner after meeting a cross from Sandro Tonali.

But Arsenal overcame a shaky start, regaining their rhythm and control of the game.

Mikel Merino levelled in the 33rd minute from Kai Havertz's flick.

Arsenal were ahead two minutes later when defender Alex Murphy fumbled the ball into his own net.

The Magpies almost conceded a third after the restart but had keeper Nick Pope to thank after he stopped a bicycle kick by Bukayo



Saka.

Against the run of play, substitute Jacob Murphy levelled for Newcastle a minute later after his shot from outside the box sneaked past David Raya.

With the match seemingly headed for a draw, it was 15-year-old Max Dowman's deep run into the box, where he was clipped by

Joelinton, that proved to be the game-changer.

Odegaard made no mistake from the spot to give Arsenal their second win in Singapore following a 1-0 victory over AC Milan.

"Playing against Newcastle today wasn't just a friendly. It was a real test," said Arteta.

"It gave us the chance to raise our competitiveness and physical level. There are still things we need to work on, like how we compete, understand our positions and show the willingness to win."

Meanwhile Marcus Rashford made his first appearance for Barcelona in a 3-1 pre-season win over J. League side Vissel Kobe in Japan, coming on as a substitute.

The English forward joined the Spanish champions on loan from boyhood club Manchester United this week and was thrust into action against Kobe in the second half.

Barcelona had initially cancelled the match on Wednesday, citing unspecified "serious contractual breaches on behalf of the promoter".

But the friendly went ahead and Eric Garcia opened the scoring in the first half for the visitors before Taisei Miyashiro equalised for the J. League team that retired Barca star

Andres Iniesta once played for.

Barcelona coach Hansi Flick changed his line-up at half-time and new signing Roony Bardghji restored their lead in the 77th minute.

Pedro Fernandez added a third in the 87th minute.

Piastri and Norris Racing Like Champions in F1 Title Battle



SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS (Dispatches) - McLaren boss Andrea Stella says teammates Oscar Piastri and Lando Norris are racing like champions and the Formula One title will probably be decided by fine margins and individual brilliance.

The pair are 16 points apart in a two-horse race, with Australian Piastri leading McLaren's sixth one-two of the season in Belgium on Sunday and taking his sixth win of the campaign.

Red Bull's Max Verstappen is third but 81 points behind with his hopes of a fifth successive title fast receding.

There are 11 races left and the intra-team rivalry will be the major focus with McLaren set to retain the constructors' crown with ease as they now a massive 268 points clear of second-placed Ferrari.

Norris won in Britain after Piastri was penalised for braking erratically behind the safety car but the Australian triumphed at Spa by slipstreaming past from second on the grid.

"There is very, very little between our two drivers and this is because the two drivers are racing at a very, very high level," Stella told reporters.

"I think the difference will be made by the accuracy, the precision, the quality of the execution," added the Italian, who worked with champions at Ferrari and said Piastri and Norris were both operating at that level.

At Spa, the regular grid lineup was replaced by a rolling start in wet conditions after four laps behind the safety car, with Norris finding pole position was no real advantage once the race got going.

Piastri had discovered the same during the Saturday sprint, when Verstappen won from second on the grid after seizing the lead on the opening lap.

Why Liverpool Could Not refuse Bayern's £70m Luis Diaz Offer



LONDON (Dispatches) - Liverpool have been the Premier League's big spenders this summer, but their latest transfer activity cements their reputation among the best salesmen in the business.

The most prominent purchases will always grab the biggest headlines, but the money Liverpool have recouped in the Fenway Sports Group era will have passed the £1bn mark by the end of the current transfer window.

Even 'Del Boy' would look at some of the trades the club have pulled off over the past 10 years and doff his flat cap.

Luis Diaz's move to Bayern Munich for a fee of £70m was not top of the agenda heading into this summer, but was finally accepted once the German champions lodged an offer that could not be refused.

The popular and hard-working Diaz leaves Anfield having proven the perfect FSG purchase – signed at the peak of his powers for just £37m and sold in his late 20s for nearly double the price.

Bayern have committed to pay handsomely for a winger who will be in his early 30s once his contract ends – and not just in terms of the fee, Diaz's wages will be significantly higher in Bavaria than at Anfield. Had Liverpool been prepared to match the salary with the new contract Diaz and his representatives have been agitating for since 2023, this move would never have happened. The player first asked to leave in 2024, having been frustrated that the pay rise he wanted was not forthcoming, with two contract offers from the club rejected.

FSG football CEO Michael Edwards and his executive team are uncompromising when it comes to establishing a player's value. When crunching the data, they simply believed better options were available for the conservatively estimated £10m-plus-a-year contract the Colombian wanted. Once Bayern's bids kept creeping up, privately Edwards and sporting director Richard Hughes knew the valuation they had in mind would be met.

Destructive Dwarshuis Gives Australia 5-0 Sweep of West Indies T20s

LONDON (Dispatches) - Chasing a modest 171 to win the fifth T20 international, Australia recovered from 25-3 and 60-4 to score 173-7 with three overs to spare.

Cameron Green anchored the middle-order recovery with 32, big-hitting Tim David raced to 30 off 12 balls with four sixes and a four, and Mitchell Owen scored 37.

When Green departed, Australia were 141-6, still needing 30, and the West Indies sniffed a consolation win.

But Aaron Hardie kept his composure to see Australia home by three wickets with an unbeaten 28.

"I didn't expect 5-0 at the start of the series. But we played some great cricket," said Australia captain Mitchell Marsh.



West Indies captain Shai Hope pinpointed the reason for his team's failure to win a match.

"We never put together a proper batting display. We either started well or finished poorly or the other way round," said Hope.

"Against a quality team you can't get away with that." The West Indies were in trouble early, having been asked to bat when Marsh won the toss.

Dwarshuis removed Brandon King for 11 and Hope for nine to reduce the hosts to 22-2 in the fourth over.

That became 64-4 until Hetmyer led a fightback, hitting three fours and three sixes on his way to a half-century.