

Iran Has Managed to Significantly Increase Its Oil Production in a Short Period of Time Under an Emergency Plan Introduced by the Government and Despite the Pressures of the U.S. Sanctions

IRAN NEWS

Iran Has Posted a Trade Deficit of Just Over \$1b in the Four Calendar Months to July 22, as Figures Released by the Customs Office (IRICA) Show Trade With the Rest of the World Fell by 10% in Value Terms Over the Same Period

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2 DOMESTIC



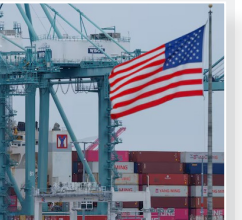
Iran Sets \$2b Agricultural Trade Target With China

> SEE PAGE 2

3 INTERNATIONAL

Trump Hits Dozens of Countries' Goods With Steep Tariffs

> SEE PAGE 3



West's Ridiculous Assassination Claims Cover for Israeli Crimes



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iran has dismissed "baseless and ridiculous" accusations from Western countries claiming that Tehran is collaborating with international criminal groups to carry out assassination plots abroad.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei condemned on Friday the anti-Iran claims made by the United States, Canada and a dozen European states in their joint statement released the previous day.

He said the "blatant blame game" is an attempt to divert public attention from the most pressing issue of the day, which is the Israeli genocide in the occupied Palestine.

"The United States, France, and other signatories to the anti-Iran statement must themselves be held accountable for actions that violate international law, as they support and host terrorist and violent elements and groups," he added.

Baghaei touched on the unprovoked US-Israeli aggression against Iran in June and Israel's ongoing genocide in the Gaza Strip against the backdrop of active support or approving silence of the 14 Western countries that signed the statement against the Islamic Republic.

He further denounced the accusations as "blatant lies and an escape forward, designed as part of a malicious Iranophobia campaign aimed at exerting pressure on the great Iranian nation."

The 14 states must be held accountable for their "disgraceful and irresponsible" behavior that violates the principles of international law and the United Nations Charter, the spokesman noted.

If War Begins Against Iran, We Will Devastate Them



TEHRAN - In a powerful Friday sermon delivered in Tehran, Ayatollah Seyyed Ahmad Khatami warned that if war is ever waged against Iran again, the country will respond with overwhelming force, turning Tel Aviv into a "ghost city" and leaving its enemies "devastated."

Addressing worshippers during the Friday prayers, Khatami praised national unity and resilience in the recent 12-day conflict, declaring that Iran emerged victorious against the "Zionist regime."

"The people stood as one against the enemy and broadcast the voice of unity and cohesion to the world," he said. "You showed the world that if Iran is your target, we stand for Iran with our entire being."

Khatami cited 11 reasons for what he described as Iran's success in the 12-day war, acknowledging the heavy cost, including the loss of top military commanders like Generals Bagheri, Rashid, Salami, Hajizadeh, and renowned scientists such as Tehrani and Abbasi. Despite the sacrifices, he emphasized that Iran remains unshaken.

"The enemy seeks to annihilate, caught between life and death," he said. "But we are still standing tall like a cypress tree. We exist, we will endure—and we will break you."

Khatami claimed that while Israel faced humiliation globally, Iran gained in honor and strength.

"For the first time since World War II, a country dared to strike the U.S. Al Udeid base with courage," he said. "The world now sees Israel as a cancerous tumor that must be removed before it spreads further."

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK



No Power Can Bring a United Iran to Its Knees

TEHRAN - President Masoud Pezeshkian says no power will be able to bring the Iranian people to their knees, and no obstacle can hinder their progress as long as they maintain their unity and coherence.

Speaking in a ceremony in the city of Zanjan on Thursday, Pezeshkian hailed the "honorable" and strong defense of the Iranian people, police, and security forces, as well as missile scientists, during 12 days of Israeli-US acts of aggression against the Islamic Republic in June.

He appreciated the great efforts made by the Iranian Armed Forces, including the Army and the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), during the imposed war.

"Despite all the enemies' threats and pressure, these forces ...defeated both the Zionist regime [which was equipped] with Iron Dome as well as the United States, which enjoyed all its advanced military equipment, and targeted them with their missiles," the president said.

Pezeshkian emphasized that the Iranian nation and Armed Forces defended national sovereignty despite facing harsh sanctions.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said on Tuesday that the recent 12-day war revealed the strength and determination of the Iranian nation, and showed the world the unmatched firmness of the Islamic Republic's foundation.

He said the war served as an occasion for the Islamic Republic to display its willpower and capabilities, stressing that the root cause of enmity toward Iran lies in the nation's "faith, knowledge, and unity."

Meanwhile earlier Pezeshkian praised Venezuela's explicit and courageous stance in condemning the recent Israeli aggression against Iran and expressing solidarity with the Iranian nation.

During a telephone conversation with his Venezuelan counterpart, Nicolas Maduro, Pezeshkian also highlighted the Islamic Republic's commitment to the path of diplomacy and peace.

"Our preference has always been peace and dialogue. Nevertheless, the United States, through its irresponsible behavior and betrayal of the diplomatic path, prepared the ground for the Zionist

regime's aggression," he pointed out.

The Iranian president further noted that the Israeli act of aggression was a blatant violation of all international laws and standards.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran, relying on its legitimate right to self-defense, gave a decisive and crushing response to this aggression. Any adventurism by this criminal regime will also be met with a decisive response," Pezeshkian said.

Pezeshkian also hailed the constructive initiatives of the Venezuelan president concerning the promotion of peace in the West Asian region, and welcomed the proposal to hold a summit for promoting peace, confronting war, and presenting a Middle East plan.

He then expressed Iran's interest in the expansion of relations with Venezuela, stressing that bilateral ties between Tehran and Caracas will grow deeper, broader, and more strategic in all spheres.

For his part, Maduro expressed condolences and sympathy to the Iranian families who have lost their loved ones as a result of the Israeli strikes.

"The honorable, noble, and heroic Iranian nation stood up to the aggression and recorded a golden page in history. With such courage and decisive response, you have given additional spirit and motivation to independent and justice-seeking nations that are walking on the path of development, peace, and confronting hegemony," the Venezuelan president noted.

He praised the steadfastness and resilience of Iranians during the June 13-24 war, stating that the nation has demonstrated the ability to defend its right to life and peace, and defeated the Zionist hegemony throughout the conflict.

"I am confident that by continuing diplomatic efforts and the initiative of the peace summit, we will achieve great agreements and lasting peace; a peace that is the natural right of the Iranian nation and all the nations of the West Asian region," Maduro stressed.

The Venezuelan leader finally called for the expansion of bilateral cooperation in all domains.

Compensation for War Prerequisite for Resumption of Nuclear Talks With U.S.

TEHRAN - Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi says the United States must compensate Tehran for losses incurred during the 12-day US-Israeli aggression on the Islamic Republic before resumption of nuclear talks.

Speaking in an interview with the Financial Times in Tehran published on Thursday, Araqchi said Iran would not agree to "business as usual" in the wake of Israel's acts of aggression last month, which the US later joined despite having been in talks with Iran.

"They should explain why they attacked us in the middle of . . . negotiations, and they have to ensure that they are not going to repeat that [during future talks]," he added.

"And they have to compensate [Iran for] the damage that they have done."

On June 13, Israel launched an unprovoked war against Iran, assassinating many high-ranking military commanders, nuclear scientists, and ordinary civilians. More than a week later, the United States also entered the war by bombing three Iranian nuclear sites in a grave violation of the United Nations Charter, international law, and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

In response, the Iranian Armed Forces targeted strategic sites across the occupied territories as well as the al-Udeid air base in Qatar, the largest American military base in West Asia.

Araqchi further pointed to his exchange of messages with US envoy Steve Witkoff during and since the war, saying that he had stressed the need to find a "win-win solution" to resolve the years-long stand-off over the country's nuclear program.

"The road to negotiation is narrow but it's not impossible. I need to convince my hierarchy that if we go for negotiation, the other side is coming with real determination for a win-win deal," the top Iranian diplomat added.

Araqchi explained that Witkoff has tried to convince him and has proposed resuming talks, but emphasized, "We need real confidence-building measures from their side."

The veteran Iranian diplomat, without giving details, added that any resumption of talks should include financial compensation and assurances that no more attacks would take place against



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

Tehran during negotiations.

The top Iranian diplomat noted that the war had only deepened distrust of US President Donald Trump, who during his first term abandoned a 2015 deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"Anti-negotiation feelings are very high," Araqchi said.

"People are telling me, 'Don't waste your time anymore, don't be cheated by them . . . if they come to negotiations it's only a cover-up for their other intentions.'"

Iran and the United States had held five rounds of indirect talks on Tehran's peaceful nuclear program before the beginning of Israel's acts of aggression.

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 anti-Iran attacks.

Araqchi once again reiterated Iran's resolve to continue its enrichment activities, saying there could be no deal as long as Trump demanded that Iran agree to zero enrichment.

He, however, added that Washington should address its concerns through negotiations. "We can negotiate, they can present their argument and we will present our own argument," the Iranian minister said. "But with zero enrichment, we don't have a thing."

Araqchi also hit out at the European troika – Britain, France and Germany- who have warned they would trigger a so-called snapback mechanism to reinstate UN sanctions at the end of August if Tehran does not resume negotiations with Washington and its cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

He noted that the three European signatories to the JCPOA have failed to fulfill their obligations as per the nuclear deal, emphasizing that Tehran would end talks with the trio if they trigger the snapback mechanism.

"With the Europeans, there is no reason right now to negotiate because they cannot lift sanctions, they cannot do anything," he said. "If they do snapback, that means that this is the end of the road for them."

Iran's Strategic Stance on the Zangezur Corridor Dispute

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

Zangezur, a mountainous region located in southern Armenia and northwestern Iran, shares a border with Turkey. During the era of the Russian Empire and later the Soviet Union, this region was part of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic, although its population was predominantly of Armenian ethnicity. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Zangezur came entirely under Armenian control and became part of Armenia's Syunik Province. However, from a geopolitical standpoint, the Zangezur Corridor is a vital route for connecting Turkey to Azerbaijan through the Azerbaijani exclave of Nakhchivan. Azerbaijan has demanded free access to Nakhchivan via this corridor, while Armenia, concerned about its national sovereignty and border security with Iran, has resisted this demand.

Turkey and Azerbaijan strongly support the establishment of a transit corridor, while Armenia and its allies—particularly Russia and Iran—are wary of the geopolitical consequences. This border conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Zangezur has become one of the most complex and historically rooted disputes in the South Caucasus region. The area's strategic importance has increased, especially after the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War in 2020 and subsequent developments.

Following the 2020 ceasefire, Azerbaijan pushed for the opening of the Zangezur Corridor for logistical and trade purposes. Many in Armenia view granting transit rights to Azerbaijan as a threat to their sovereignty, fearing it could effectively sever their geographic connection with Iran. While Russia is officially acting as a mediator, its policies remain ambiguous—maintaining alliances with Armenia while also fostering close ties with Azerbaijan.

Iran, like Armenia, opposes any redrawing of borders. Tehran fears that the Zangezur Corridor could undermine its influence in the region and strengthen the Ankara-Baku axis. Some analysts suggest a possible Russian- or EU-mediated agreement could allow for controlled transit through Zangezur, balancing the interests of all parties. However, Iran has made it clear it will not accept any scenario that eliminates its strategic neighbor, Armenia—even if it means potential conflict with Turkey and Azerbaijan.

It is evident that if Azerbaijan escalates its pressure—militarily or economically—the risk of renewed military conflict remains high. Any decision regarding Zangezur could shift the balance of power in the Caucasus and significantly impact the relationships among Turkey, Russia, Iran, and the West.

From Iran's perspective, Zangezur is not merely a border issue. It represents a geopolitical arena where regional and global powers compete. A diplomatic resolution to this strategic dispute is only possible if an agreement ensures Armenia's security, Azerbaijan's transit interests, and Iran's continued geographic and strategic connection to Armenia.

Knesset Speaker Disgrace to Humanity for Denying Gaza Starvation



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Majlis Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf has blasted the Israeli Knesset speaker as a "disgrace to humanity" for denying the starvation of Gaza's children.

"Criminal Knesset speaker claims the starvation of Gaza's children is 'fake news'. Shame on you!" Qalibaf wrote on his X account on Thursday.

Qalibaf noted that the world is "witnessing the greatest #Genocide in history" at the hands of the Israeli regime. Citing four UN reports confirming the genocide and famine in Gaza, Qalibaf exposed the Israeli official's lies, saying "Are UN experts, UNICEF and aid organizations lying, while only you tell the truth? You are a disgrace to humanity."

On Tuesday, addressing the Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament in Geneva, Qalibaf called the Israeli regime the "Nazis of the 21st century," displaying images of starving Palestinian children.

IRAN NEWS



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

Aeroflot to Resume Flights Between Moscow and Tehran on August 5

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Russian airline Aeroflot has announced it will resume its flight operations between Moscow and Tehran starting August 5, 2025 (15 Mordad 1404 in the Iranian calendar).

According to a report from TASS news agency, the airline will operate one weekly flight using an Airbus aircraft on the Moscow–Tehran–Moscow route from that date. Beginning September 11, 2025 (21 Shahrivar), Aeroflot plans to increase service to two weekly flights, operating on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Non-Oil Trade Reaches \$34b in First Four Months of the Year



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's non-oil trade reached 61.02 million tons with a total value of \$34.175 billion in the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20 to July 21), according to the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

The report released Wednesday indicates that while trade volume increased by 0.48% compared to the same period last year, the overall value of trade dropped by 10%.

According to IRICA, exports accounted for 48.811 million tons valued at \$16.549 billion, while imports amounted to 12.209 million tons, valued at \$17.627 billion.

During this period, non-oil exports increased by 1.46% in volume, but experienced a 5.51% decrease in value. Imports also dropped—3.23% in volume and a more significant 14.20% in value.

In the petrochemical sector, 17.402 million tons of products worth \$6.894 billion were exported, showing an 8.30% decline in volume and a 10.22% decrease in value compared to the same period last year.

The top five non-oil export items included: Natural gas; Liquefied propane; Methanol; Liquefied butane and Petroleum bitumen.

Meanwhile, the top five imported commodities were: Raw gold, Animal feed corn, Rice, Sunflower seed oil and Soybeans.

Iran's main export destinations during this period were China, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Oman. On the import side, the top trade partners were the UAE, China, Turkey, India, Germany, the Russian Federation, and the Netherlands.

13% Growth in Beverage Exports, Despite Wartime Conditions



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Deputy Minister of Public Industries at the Ministry of Industry, Mine, and Trade announced a 13% growth in the export of coffee and beverages over the past year, highlighting the sector's resilience and continued supply during the 12-day Israeli military aggression against Iran.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the 12th International Exhibition of Beverages, Coffee, Tea, and Related Industries at Tehran's International Permanent Fairground on Wednesday, Ebrahim Sheikh emphasized the significant achievements of Iran's beverage industry both during the wartime period and in the aftermath.

"This exhibition is being held regularly and impressively, with excellent design, effective business dialogues, and enthusiastic visitors," Sheikh said.

He noted that during the war, the domestic beverage industry not only sustained but also increased production, ensuring uninterrupted supply of products to the market. "Essential goods were continuously stocked on shelves, and the bottled water sector, in particular, responded with remarkable effort," he added.

Sheikh extended appreciation to the workers, managers, and factories that maintained round-the-clock operations during the war, ensuring the steady supply of essential beverages to citizens.

Sheikh also thanked associations related to beverages and bottled water for their collaboration in addressing packaging, logistics, and fuel challenges, revealing that public industries overall experienced 13% growth last year.

He highlighted that the beverage sector alone saw a 6% rise in production and a 13% increase in exports in the previous year—a trend that has continued into the first quarter of this year.

"Iran's beverage products offer a diverse and competitive portfolio, both regionally and globally," Sheikh stated.

He emphasized that contingency plans are in place to secure timely access to essential raw materials—such as bottled water, PET containers, and additives—in the event of future crises. "The industry has remained dynamic and expanding, even under wartime conditions," he said.

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK



Iran Sets \$2b Agricultural Trade Target With China

TEHRAN - Minister of Agriculture, Gholamreza Nouri Ghezeljeh, announced a \$2 billion target for expanding agricultural trade between Iran and China, on the sidelines of the 10th Meeting of Agriculture Ministers of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member states.

Nouri—currently visiting the southwestern Chinese city of Kunming to attend the SCO summit—said the meeting is focused on strengthening agricultural cooperation, increasing exchanges among member countries, and identifying ways to deepen relations.

Calling SCO member states key agricultural partners for Iran, Nouri highlighted that nations such as China, Russia, India, Pakistan, and Central Asian countries are crucial trade allies. He said Iran seeks to expand economic and agricultural relations with these countries both bilaterally and through SCO frameworks.

Currently, Iran-China agricultural trade stands at around \$1 billion, with exports and imports fairly balanced. However, Nouri stated that given the strong foundations of bilateral relations, the figure can feasibly double to \$2 billion in the near term.

He also identified fisheries as a particularly promising area for cooperation and expressed optimism that this visit would help pave the way for accelerated and expanded joint ventures.

Underscoring Iran's strategic outlook on China, the minister emphasized that the Islamic Republic is committed to deepening and strengthening its relations with Beijing.

During a separate meeting with Belarusian Minister of Agriculture Yuri Gorlov, the two sides reaffirmed their commitment to expanding bilateral agricultural ties.

Minister Nouri thanked Belarus for its supportive stance during the Israeli

regime's aggression and expressed Iran's readiness to cooperate in areas including agricultural mechanization, livestock farming, dairy industries, and joint fertilizer production projects. He also highlighted Iran's interest in exporting fruits, vegetables, and dried nuts to Belarus.

Minister Gorlov reiterated Belarus's support for Iran's principled positions and commended the active Iranian presence at this year's agricultural expo in Minsk. He welcomed the progress in agricultural cooperation between the two countries.

With President Raisi's upcoming visit to Minsk, both parties agreed to sign three cooperation agreements covering veterinary and livestock quarantine, forestry, and agricultural research.

Meanwhile Minister Nouri also met with his Tajik counterpart, Qurbon Hakimzoda, to discuss strengthening agricultural cooperation.

Referencing Iran's foreign policy focus on deepening ties with neighboring and friendly countries, Nouri said enhanced agricultural collaboration is a key part of these strategic efforts. He stressed the importance of food security and reaffirmed Iran's commitment to joint agricultural projects.

Nouri thanked Tajikistan's government and people for their solidarity during recent Israeli attacks and for standing by Iran.

Minister Hakimzoda praised the resilience of the Iranian people and reiterated Tajikistan's support for Iran. He expressed satisfaction with the successful implementation of the countries' first joint agricultural committee and welcomed the progress on previous agreements.

The two ministers discussed investment opportunities in food processing industries, development of agricultural mechanization, livestock, aquaculture, and other key sectors. They also agreed to convene the second joint agricultural committee meeting in the near future.

Gov't, Private Sector Must View Economy as a Shared Vessel

TEHRAN - The head of the Iranian Oil, Gas and Petrochemical Products Exporters' Union (OPEX) has emphasized that this is not the time for demands from the government, nor the time to prioritize individual profits or corporate gain. Instead, both the government and the private sector must regard the economy as a shared vessel, and contribute to it as much as possible in the current sensitive climate.

Seyed Hamed Hosseini noted that, based on published statistics, Iran's oil production is nearing five million barrels per day. He added that, given domestic consumption, Iran's crude oil exports have certainly surpassed 1.5 million barrels per day.

"The first impact of this production increase is evident in the national budget bill, as it can help reduce the government's budget deficit," Hosseini explained. "The second impact is Iran's growing share in the global oil market, which is crucial for the country's long-term interests."

Stressing the importance of maintaining high production levels, Hosseini said achieving this requires significant investment, particularly given the lack of access to foreign investment. As a result, he suggested the focus should shift to the private sector and quasi-governmental institutions to drive upstream investments and maximize output from oil fields. He noted this strategy aligns with Iran's designated slogan for the year and appears to be a current goal of the Ministry of Petroleum.

Hosseini also pointed to several challenges impeding further production and export growth: High investment risk under current conditions; Lack of excess liquidity in the private sector; High-interest rates on foreign currency loans for investors; Uncertainty around timely return on investment, along with other technical, financial, and commercial obstacles; and Gopolitical Pressures and Global Market Considerations

Commenting on the global oil market, Hosseini noted that rising oil prices are not favorable to major economies like China and the United States, which seek economic growth or aim to curb inflation and lower interest rates. He argued that neither power wants prolonged conflict in the Persian Gulf, as it would destabilize



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

markets.

He added, however, that economic variables are only one factor in political decision-making. "Geopolitical decisions are not always economically driven. A prime example is the Russia-Germany gas pipeline, which remains unused despite its economic benefits."

Due to the fast-moving and complex nature of current global developments, Hosseini stressed that no amount of

advanced computing can reliably predict future scenarios, as most forecasts rely on a limited set of variables. Nonetheless, he emphasized that all stakeholders are actively evaluating potential outcomes and that rational planning requires preparing for all possibilities.

Hosseini said diversifying export markets and delivery methods for petroleum products must become a core component of Iran's international oil marketing strategy. While mechanisms like the "snapback" clause pose difficulties, he asserted that strategic diversification is a necessity, not an option. At the same time, maximizing revenue and reducing government expenses are essential goals, though these must be balanced with maintaining social satisfaction.

"Future decisions cannot be purely economic," Hosseini warned. "Political, military, security, social, and diplomatic factors will all influence outcomes, making the decision-making process even more complex."

Hosseini concluded by stressing that Iran's shrinking share of the global economy is a critical weakness. "We must not only prevent further decline but actively work to expand our share. The greater a country's stake in the global economy, the less vulnerable it is to external pressures and shortages."

He reiterated: "This is not the time to demand a share from the government or focus on personal profit. The government and private sector must treat the economy as a joint vessel and strive collectively for national interests. The government must remove barriers, the private sector must fight to survive, and the quasi-governmental sector must abandon self-serving approaches."

1.4m Job Seekers Annually, But Only 1m Jobs Available



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The Deputy Minister of Cooperatives, Labor and Social Welfare and head of the Technical and Vocational Training Organization of Iran has stated that approximately 1.4 million people enter the job market each year, while only around one million job opportunities are available. Sustainable employment, he emphasized, depends on balancing labor market supply and demand.

Speaking at the Provincial Skills Council meeting on Wednesday, Gholamreza Mohammadi highlighted serious concerns in the field of skills training. "The employment cycle is crucial," he said, "and it's a process in which a job seeker acquires the necessary competencies and skills to secure a job, through assessment and proper training."

He noted that 30% of the targeted 8% economic growth should come from productivity, primarily through workforce efficiency. "A person who undergoes more skills training over the course of a year can expect a long-term productivity increase of around 3%, along with a 10% rise in wages," he said. "In some countries, productivity growth rates have reached 4%, underscoring the critical role of technical and vocational training."

However, Mohammadi acknowledged that Iran's skills training system lags behind international standards. He revealed that while Iran ranks around 61 out of 140 countries in general education—indicating relatively strong academic performance—its ranking drops drastically to 136 in terms of the skills needed for employment.

"This mismatch in the education system has created a major skills gap," he said. "Currently, about one in every two people in the job market suffers from a lack of practical skills."

Due to the misalignment between training programs and market needs, fewer than half of job seekers are able to leverage their acquired skills to find suitable employment, he explained. Moreover, higher education and vocational systems meet only about 28% of market demands—roughly half the global average.

Mohammadi stressed the growing importance of revising educational systems to keep pace with rapid technological changes and evolving labor market needs.

Iran and EAEU Take Next Step With Approval of Free Trade Roadmap



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The head of the Eurasian Economic Commission's Executive Board, Bakytzhan Sagintayev, announced that the free trade agreement between the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and the Islamic Republic of Iran—set to be implemented in May 2025—is now entering a crucial new phase with the preparation of a detailed roadmap for 2025 to 2028.

Speaking on Thursday during a meeting with Iran's Ambassador to Russia, Kazem Jalali, Sagintayev stated that the roadmap is scheduled to be formally adopted at a joint committee meeting in September 2025.

"The approval of this document will ensure coordinated progress in all planned areas of cooperation," he said. Sagintayev emphasized that the implementation of the free trade agreement has elevated economic and trade relations between EAEU member states and Iran to a new level.

According to him, trade turnover between Iran and EAEU countries rose significantly, reaching \$5.9 billion in 2024—a 14.6% increase compared to the previous year.

During the meeting, Ambassador Jalali highlighted Iran's resilience in the face of recent Israeli attacks, which he said were aimed at destabilizing the Islamic Republic. He noted that over 150 women and 200 children lost their lives during the 12-day conflict, but emphasized that the outcome was a stronger sense of national unity within Iran.

Referring to the free trade agreement and Iran's new observer status within the EAEU, Jalali described them as strong signals of mutual intent to deepen cooperation. He thanked the EAEU for its continued support.

Russia's Roscosmos, NASA Agree to Extend ISS Operations

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - The head of Russia's space agency Roscosmos said Thursday that he had agreed with his NASA counterpart during talks in the United States to extend the International Space Station's (ISS) operation until 2028. Space is one of the final areas of US-Russia cooperation amid an almost complete breakdown in relations between Moscow and Washington over the Ukraine conflict.

Roscosmos said earlier this week that its chief, Dmitry Bakanov, arrived in the United States for talks with NASA's acting administrator Sean Duffy, the first such meeting since 2018.

"The dialogue went well. We agreed that we will operate the ISS until 2028... And we will work on the issue of de-orbiting it until 2030," Bakanov was quoted as saying by the TASS news agency.



El Salvador Parliament Approves Reform to Allow Bukele to Run Indefinitely



SAN SALVADOR (Dispatches) - The party of El Salvador President Nayib Bukele approved constitutional changes in the country's National Assembly on Thursday that will allow indefinite presidential reelection and extend presidential terms to six years.

Lawmaker Ana Figueroa from the New Ideas party had proposed the changes to five articles of the constitution. The proposal also included eliminating the second round of the election where the two top vote-getters from the first round face off.

New Ideas and its allies in the National Assembly quickly approved the proposals with the supermajority they hold. The vote passed with 57 in favor and three opposed.

Bukele overwhelmingly won reelection last year despite a constitutional ban, after Supreme Court justices selected by his party ruled in 2021 that it allowed reelection to a second five-year term.

Figueroa argued Thursday that federal lawmakers and mayors can already seek reelection as many times as they want.

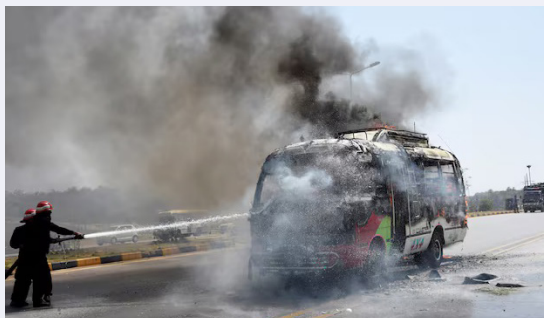
"All of them have had the possibility of reelection through popular vote, the only exception until now has been the presidency," Figueroa said.

She also proposed that Bukele's current term, scheduled to end June 1, 2029, instead finish June 1, 2027, to put presidential and congressional elections on the same schedule. It would also allow Bukele to seek reelection to a longer term two years earlier.

Marcela Villatoro of the Nationalist Republican Alliance (Arena), one of three votes against the proposals, told her fellow lawmakers that "Democracy in El Salvador has died!"

"You don't realize what indefinite reelection brings: It brings an accumulation of power and weakens democracy ... there's corruption and clientelism because nepotism grows and halts democracy and political participation," she said.

Pakistan Jails More Than 100 Members of Ex-PM Imran Khan's Party for 2023 Riots



LAHORE (Dispatches) - A Pakistani anti-terrorism court on Thursday sentenced more than 100 members of jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan's party to prison terms on charges related to riots that targeted military sites in 2023, a court order said.

Fifty-eight of the defendants, who included parliamentarians and senior officials, were sentenced to 10 years in prison and the rest were given sentences ranging from one to three years, the court said.

The accused include Omar Ayub Khan and Shibli Faraz, the leaders of Khan's opposition Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party (PTI) in the lower and upper houses of parliament respectively, the court order seen by Reuters read.

"The prosecution has proved its case against the accused without a shadow of doubt," it said in announcing the sentences.

Khan, who has been in prison since 2023 facing charges of corruption, land fraud and disclosure of official secrets, is being tried separately on similar charges related to the riot.

The government accuses him and other leaders of inciting the May 9, 2023, protests, during which demonstrators attacked military and government buildings, including the army headquarters in Rawalpindi.

He denies wrongdoing and says all the cases are politically motivated as part of a military-backed crackdown to dismantle his party. The military denies it.

Khan's arrest had prompted the countrywide violent protests.

Thursday's ruling does not directly affect the incitement case against him in which prosecution is still presenting witnesses.

The PTI party said it will challenge the verdict.



Trump Hits Dozens of Countries' Goods With Steep Tariffs

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - U.S. President Donald Trump slapped steep tariffs on exports from dozens of trading partners including Canada, Brazil, India and Taiwan, pressing ahead with his plans to reorder the global economy ahead of a Friday trade deal deadline.

Trump set rates including a 35% duty on many goods from Canada, 50% for Brazil, 25% for India, 20% for Taiwan and 39% for Switzerland, according to a presidential executive order.

The order, listed higher import duty rates of 10% to 41% starting in seven days for 69 trading partners as the 12:01 a.m. EDT deadline approached.

Some of them had reached tariff-reducing deals; others had no opportunity to negotiate with his administration. Trump included an exception for some goods shipped within the coming week.

Goods from all other countries not listed would be subject to a 10% U.S. import tax. Trump had previously said that rate might be higher.

The administration also teased that more trade deals were in the pipeline as it seeks to close trade deficits and boost domestic factories.

Facing a Friday deadline of his making, the Republican president has tapped emergency powers, pressured foreign leaders, and pressed ahead with trade policies that sparked a market sell-off when they were first announced in April.

This time, markets had a more muted reaction. Stocks and equity futures fell modestly in Friday morning trading in Asia.

Trump's order said that some trading partners, "despite having engaged in negotiations, have offered terms that, in my judgment, do not sufficiently address imbalances in our trading relationship or have failed to align sufficiently with the United States on economic and national-security matters."

Other details are still to come, including on the "rules of origin" that will determine what products might face even higher tariffs.

Trump also said "we have made a few deals today that are excellent deals for the country," and a U.S. official later told reporters that they were still to be announced.

Trump issued a separate order for Canada that raises the rate on Canadian goods subject to fentanyl-related tariffs to 35%, from 25% previously, saying Canada had "failed to cooperate" in curbing illicit narcotics flows into the U.S.

The higher tariffs on Canadian goods contrasted sharply with Trump's decision to grant Mexico a 90-day reprieve from higher tariffs of 30% on many goods to provide more time to negotiate a broader trade pact.

Trump complained to reporters earlier that Canada had "been very poorly led."

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said he was disappointed by Trump's decision, and vowed to take action to protect Canadian jobs and diversify the country's export markets.

"While we will continue to negotiate with the United States on our trading relationship, the Canadian government is laser

focused on what we can control: building Canada strong," he said in a post on X.

The extension for Mexico avoids a 30% tariff on most Mexican non-automotive and non-metal goods compliant with the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement on trade and came after a Thursday morning call between Trump and Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum.

"We avoided the tariff increase announced for tomorrow," Sheinbaum wrote on X, adding that the Trump call was "very good."

About 85% of U.S. imports from Mexico comply with the rules of origin outlined in the USMCA, shielding them from 25% tariffs related to fentanyl, according to Mexico's economy ministry.

Trump said the U.S. would continue to levy a 50% tariff on Mexican steel, aluminum and copper and a 25% tariff on Mexican autos and on non-USMCA-compliant goods subject to tariffs related to the U.S. fentanyl crisis.

"Additionally, Mexico has agreed to immediately terminate its Non Tariff Trade Barriers, of which there were many," Trump said in a Truth Social post, without providing details.

Goods from India appeared to be headed for a 25% tariff after talks bogged down over access to India's agriculture sector, drawing a higher-rate threat from Trump that also included an unspecified penalty for India's purchases of Russian oil.

Although negotiations with India were continuing, New Delhi vowed to protect the country's labor-intensive farm sector, and the threat of higher rates from Trump triggered outrage from the opposition party and a slump in the rupee.

Trump's rollout of higher import taxes on Friday comes amid more evidence they have begun driving up consumer goods prices.

Commerce Department data released Thursday showed prices for home furnishings and durable household equipment jumped 1.3% in June, the biggest gain since March 2022. Recreational goods and vehicles prices shot up 0.9%, the most since February 2024. Prices for clothing and footwear rose 0.4%.

This range plot displays U.S. President Donald Trump's tariff rates for the economies which reached deals with the U.S., or received Trump's letter on July 7 or later, or have special situations.

Trump hit Brazil's exports on Wednesday with a steep 50% tariff as he escalated his fight with Latin America's largest economy over its prosecution of his friend and former President Jair Bolsonaro, but softened the blow by excluding sectors such as aircraft, energy and orange juice from heavier levies.

The run-up to Trump's tariff deadline was unfolding as federal appeals court judges sharply questioned Trump's use of a sweeping emergency powers law to justify his sweeping tariffs of up to 50% on nearly all trading partners.

Trump invoked the 1977 International Emergency Economic Powers Act to declare an emergency over the growing U.S. trade deficit and impose his "reciprocal" tariffs and a separate fentanyl emergency.

Zelenskiy, Moving to Defuse Crisis, Restores Power of Anti-Graft Agencies

KYIV (Dispatches) - President Volodymyr Zelenskiy restored the independence of Ukraine's two main anti-corruption agencies on Thursday, moving to defuse a political crisis that has shaken faith in his wartime leadership and worried Western partners.

Thousands of protesters rallied in Kyiv and other cities in recent days in a rare show of discontent after lawmakers led by Zelenskiy's ruling party rushed through amendments last week defanging the respected agencies.

Zelenskiy reversed course after the outcry, under pressure from top European officials, who warned that Ukraine was jeopardising its bid for European Union membership by curbing the powers of its anti-graft authorities.

He signed a new bill on Thursday shortly after lawmakers approved it 331 to 0, saying the legislation "guarantees the absence of any kind of outside influence (or) interference".

"Ukraine is a democracy - there are definitely no doubts," Zelenskiy said on the Telegram messaging app.

Thursday's law reverses amendments that had given his hand-picked general prosecutor the power to transfer cases away from the agencies and reassign prosecutors, a step critics alleged had been designed to protect his allies from prosecution.

Eradicating graft and shoring up the rule of law are key requirements for Kyiv to join the EU, which Ukrainians see as critical to their future as they fend off a Russian invasion.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen described Thursday's law as "a welcome step" and urged Ukraine to continue its reform drive.



Popular demonstrations had continued even after Zelenskiy submitted the new bill last week, with hundreds rallying near the presidential offices in Kyiv late on Wednesday chanting "Shame!" and "The people are the power!"

Ukrainians, following a night of deadly Russian air strikes, also rallied near parliament ahead of Thursday's vote to pressure lawmakers to approve the new measure.

After it passed, they burst into cheers and applause.

"Some fight on the front, and some need to put them (authorities) in their place here," said demonstrator Mykola Pomnichuk, 42.

Speaking at the rostrum before voting, opposition member Yaroslav Yurchyshyn thanked Ukrainians for stopping authorities "one step from the abyss" of autocracy.

Some lawmakers appeared in parliament with handmade placards mimicking those carried by protesters.

The National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine (NABU) and the Specialised Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office (SAPO) have stepped up a closely watched campaign against graft since Russia's February 2022 invasion.

They have brought charges against lawmakers and senior government officials, including a then-deputy prime minister who was accused last month of taking a \$345,000 kickback.

Speaking to Reuters last Friday, after Zelenskiy's reversal, NABU chief Semen Kryvonos said he expected continued pressure on his agency from corrupt forces uninterested in cleaning up Ukraine.

He said he and other anti-corruption officials felt a greater sense of responsibility following the protests, but also called on the country's leadership to help their effort.

"This responsibility must be shared with the government, which needs to react and say, 'Okay, there's corruption here - let's destroy it.'"

Germany Warns Israel Over Gaza Famine, Hints at EU Rift and Diplomatic Shift

BERLIN (Dispatches) - German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul said Thursday that the humanitarian situation in Gaza was "beyond imagination", ramping up the pressure on Israel to act quickly as criticism mounts over the devastating war.

"The humanitarian disaster in Gaza is beyond imagination," Wadephul said at a Jerusalem press conference after meeting top Israeli officials.

Israel must "quickly and safely send sufficient humanitarian and medical aid to avoid mass deaths" as a result of starvation, he said, calling it "absolutely intolerable" that "men, women and children were killed every day whilst desperately searching for food".

Israel is under mounting international pressure to agree a ceasefire and allow a surge in food aid into the Gaza Strip, where UN-backed experts have reported



"famine is now unfolding".

Canada on Wednesday became the latest Western government to announce plans to recognise a Palestinian state, after similar moves from France and Britain.

Germany has held off promising to recognise Palestinian statehood and maintained its long-standing position that recognition could come only after negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians.

"We see recognising a Palestinian state at the end of a process of a negotiation, a process that must, however, begin soon," Wadephul said.

He warned that a "gap" may be opening between Israel and the European Union, calling on "both sides" to make sure that this did not happen.



Gauff Fights Back to Advance in Canada, Medvedev Crashes Out

MONTREAL (Dispatches) - Top seed Coco Gauff staged a thrilling comeback to reach the last 16 of the Canadian Open on Thursday, while former U.S. Open champion Daniil Medvedev was knocked out of the men's tournament by Australian Alexei Popyrin.

World number two Gauff clawed her way back from a set down to defeat Russian Veronika Kudermetova 4-6 7-5 6-2 in a match that stretched over two and a half hours.

"It was a tough match today," the French Open champion said.

"I thought I did well mentally, especially on the return. I was playing an opponent who served really well. Obviously, I would have liked to serve better, but I'm just happy to get through."

Ukrainian Dayana Yastremska stunned American eighth seed Emma Navarro 7-5 6-4 while Russian fourth seed Mirra Andreeva also exited the tournament, losing 7-6(5) 6-4 to American McCartney Kessler.

Ninth seed Elena Rybakina from Kazakhstan saw off Romanian Jaqueline Cristian 6-0 7-6(5).

On the men's side, Alex Michelsen toppled third seed Lorenzo Musetti 3-6 7-6(4) 6-4 in a gripping third-round contest.

The American 26th seed shrugged off a sluggish start to unleash a barrage of big hitting and keep the Italian on the ropes.

The shocks kept coming as 10th seed Medvedev was stunned by 18th seed Popyrin 5-7 6-4 6-4, while German top seed Alexander Zverev had to come from a set down to defeat Italian Matteo Arnaldi 6-7(5) 6-3 6-2 to claim his 500th tour-level match win.

Eighth seed Casper Ruud from Norway beat Portugal's Nuno Borges 7-5 6-4, fifth seed Holger Rune cruised past Alexandre Muller 6-2 6-4, and Francisco Cerundolo defeated his Argentine compatriot Tomas Etcheverry 6-3 6-4.

Meanwhile world number nine Holger Rune said his brief collaboration with Andre Agassi had given him a unique insight into how the eight-times Grand Slam champion viewed the game and hopes to use the advice he received to take his game to the next level.

Rune announced himself as one of the sport's most promising young talents three years ago by winning his first Masters title in Paris after beating four top-10 players and defeating Novak Djokovic in the final.

However, the 22-year-old has had limited success since, winning just two more titles and failing to advance beyond the quarter-final stage at the Grand Slams.

With fellow young guns Carlos Alcaraz and Jannik Sinner now dominating the game's biggest events, Rune turned to American great Agassi earlier this month in Washington for a three-day training block.

"It was insane. I've never met a guy who sees tennis that way and I found it interesting," Rune told the Tennis Channel at the Canadian Open in Toronto.

"He makes things simple on the court. Sometimes tennis can be a difficult sport and sometimes it can be a very easy sport. There's always a reason why it's this or that.

Olympic Biathlon Champion Confirmed Dead After Pakistan Mountaineering Accident

KHAPLU (Dispatches) - Germany's two-time Olympic biathlon gold medalist Laura Dahlmeier was confirmed dead aged 31 on Wednesday after being hit by falling rocks on a Pakistani mountain.

The dangerous nature of the site made rescue efforts "impossible", her management company reported in a statement issued on Wednesday, which confirmed her death.

"Rescue efforts to recover her failed and the operation was suspended," the statement continued.

"Laura's energy and passion for life touched so many around the world," the International Biathlon Union reacted in a statement.

It added: "Her legacy, both within biathlon and beyond, will never be forgotten and will continue to inspire countless athletes and adventurers for generations to come."

"This is an enormous shock. Laura will always remain in my heart," Dahlmeier's friend and rival, Czech champion Gabriela Soukalova posted on social media.

The accident happened around midday on Monday at an altitude of 5,700 metres on Laila Peak in the Karakoram range, according to a statement from her team on her official social media pages.

Dahlmeier's climbing partner was able to sound the alarm after reaching safety.

"It was determined that a helicopter rescue is not possible," Areeb



Ahmed Mukhtar, a senior local official in Ghanche district, where the more than 6,000 metre mountain is located, told AFP earlier on Wednesday.

"The conditions at the altitude where she was injured are extremely challenging," he added.

Shipton Trek & Tours Pakistan, which organised the expedition, confirmed the ground rescue by a team of four that includes three

Americans and a German mountaineer.

Dahlmeier was "hit by falling rocks," her team said on Tuesday, adding no one had yet been able to reach her due to the danger of further rockfalls and the site's "remoteness".

Muhammad Ali, a local disaster management official, told AFP that weather conditions have been "extremely harsh" in the region for the past week, with rain, strong winds and thick clouds.

Dahlmeier, an experienced mountaineer, had been in the region since the end of June and had already ascended the Great Trango Tower.

German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier issued a statement on Wednesday calling Dahlmeier "an ambassador for our country around the world (and) a role model for peaceful, joyful, and fair coexistence across borders."

She won seven world championship gold medals, and at the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang she became the first woman biathlete to win both the sprint and the pursuit at the same Games.

Dahlmeier retired from professional competition in 2019 at the age of 25.

She went on to become a commentator on biathlon events for German broadcaster ZDF, and also took up mountaineering.

Man United Cruise Over Bournemouth in Premier League U.S. Friendly



WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Manchester United made it two wins out of two with a 4-1 victory over Bournemouth in the Premier League Summer Series pre-season tournament in Chicago.

Goals from Rasmus Hojlund, Patrick Dorgu, Amad Diallo and teenager Ethan Williams sealed an encouraging result for Ruben Amorim's side at a rainy, windswept Soldier Field.

United, who had opened their tour with a 2-1 victory over West Ham on Saturday, were always in control against the Cherries, taking the lead after just eight minutes through Hojlund.

Dorgu curled in an inviting cross from the left flank and Denmark international team-mate Hojlund timed his run and jump to perfection to glance a header past Bournemouth goalkeeper Djordje Petrovic.

Dorgu then doubled United's lead in the 25th minute, latching on to a clever, lofted quick free-kick from Mason Mount, muscling his way into the area and sliding a cool finish beneath the advancing Petrovic.

Diallo bundled in United's third in the 53rd minute before Amorim made nine changes with 20 minutes to go.

Substitute Williams needed just two minutes to make an impact curling a low finish into the bottom corner to put United 4-0 up.

The only blemish on United's performance came with an 88th-minute own goal from Matthijs de Ligt.

In the other Premier League friendly in Chicago, West Ham came from behind to beat former manager David Moyes's Everton 2-1.

Idrissa Gueye put Everton 1-0 up after 17 minutes before West Ham recovered to equalise through Brazilian international Lucas Paqueta just before half-time. Germany international Niclas Fullkrug's 64th-minute strike sealed the Hammers' win.

Verstappen Quells Speculation by Committing to Red Bull for 2026



BUDAPEST (Dispatches) - Max Verstappen ended weeks of speculation about his future on Thursday when the reigning Formula One world champion said he would be staying with Red Bull in 2026.

Verstappen said it was time to "stop all the rumours".

"I've never really said anything about it because I was just focused on talking to the team about how we can improve our performance," the Dutchman explained at the Hungaroring circuit ahead of this weekend's Hungarian Grand Prix.

"And that's why I had nothing really to add, but I think it's time to basically stop all the rumours.

"For me, it's always been quite clear that I was staying anyway."

Four-time world champion Verstappen's future became a subject of speculation after rival driver George Russell revealed his Mercedes team were talking to the Dutchman's management about his future plans.

It emerged that there was a performance clause in Verstappen's contract that offered him a chance to leave Red Bull if he was not in the top three at the end of July.

But that clause has now elapsed and he will stay with Red Bull next year, the first season following a sweeping change of technical regulations.

Verstappen is contracted to Red Bull until the end of 2028 and a similar scrutiny of his contract is expected next year once it becomes clear which teams have adapted and progressed best under the new regulations.

Verstappen has fallen 81 points behind series leader Oscar Piastri of McLaren into third place in the drivers' championship this year.

Sarr Wonder Goal Stuns Arsenal as Spurs Win Hong Kong Derby

HONG KONG (Dispatches) - Pape Matar Sarr scored from the halfway line as Tottenham punished a shaky performance by Arsenal goalkeeper David Raya to win the first north London derby staged outside the UK 1-0.

Raya, who had already been caught in no-man's land twice as inswinging corners hit the post, was at fault again in the 45th minute when Sarr robbed Myles Lewis-Skelly just inside the Arsenal half.

The Spurs midfielder looked up, saw Raya stranded way outside his penalty area and let fly to score in outrageous fashion from 50 yards out.

"It was fantastic, fantastic. Well taken," said new



Tottenham manager Thomas Frank of the goal.

"And all the credit to Papa. He's impressed me, I must admit he's been really good in the last few weeks."

Nominally a pre-season "friendly", there was no love lost on the pitch between the bitter rivals.

Tackles flew in and tempers frayed in a fiercely contested clash in front of a 49,975 sellout crowd under the roof in the air-conditioned Kai Tak Stadium.

Sarr's screamer gave Frank the north London bragging rights, at least until the pair clash again in the Premier League on November 22 at the Emirates stadium.