

Foreign Ministers of Iran and Pakistan Discussed and Exchanged Views on Ways to Develop Bilateral Relations and the Agenda of the Visit of Islamic Republic of Iran President Masoud Pezeshkian to Islamabad

IRAN NEWS

Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi, in a Phone Call With the UAE's Deputy PM and Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Said the Israeli Regime Aims to Disrupt Security in the Region, and Called on Regional Countries to Remain Vigilant in the Face of Such Plots

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Iran-Pakistan Trade to Reach \$10b

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK



TEHRAN - President Masoud Pezeshkian announced plans to raise trade between Iran and Pakistan to \$10 billion annually, calling current economic ties between Tehran and Islamabad "strong and positive."

Speaking to reporters on Saturday, before departing for Pakistan, President Pezeshkian said he was traveling at the official invitation of Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, accompanied by a high-ranking delegation.

"There have always been deep, cordial, and longstanding relations between Iran and Pakistan, spanning economic, scientific, cultural, and border cooperation," Pezeshkian stated. "There is a strong connection between the people of Iran and our dear brothers and sisters in Pakistan."

The president praised Pakistan's stance during recent escalations involving Israeli and American aggression against Iran, describing Islamabad as one of the countries that "strongly condemned the unlawful and inhumane attacks" and expressed full support for Iran's territorial integrity, government, and people. "This is truly appreciated," he said.

Pezeshkian noted that enhancing border trade—via land, air, and sea—is a priority of this trip. He emphasized the importance of linking to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and extending that route through Iran to Europe, aligning with regional development goals.

He reiterated Iran's intention to boost trade volume with Pakistan to \$10 billion annually and underlined the importance of border and security issues for both nations. "We will hold discussions on these matters and aim to establish regional security through bilateral cooperation," he said.

Economic Growth Slows Sharply in June



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - According to a newly released report by the Iranian Parliament's Research Center, Iran's non-oil economic growth turned negative in June 2025, marking a concerning trend, particularly in the agriculture and industrial sectors.

The report estimates that Iran's overall economic growth in June was just 0.1%, but when oil is excluded from the calculations, the economy contracted by 0.2%.

This monthly report, part of an ongoing effort to compensate for delays in official data releases, provides real-time monitoring of Iran's GDP trends. It is the twelfth report in the series and warns that economic policymaking in the absence of up-to-date data on the real economy could face serious challenges.

The data reveals that most economic sectors experienced contraction in June.

Agriculture recorded one of the sharpest declines, with a 5.3% contraction compared to June 2024. The Ministry of Agriculture attributes this mainly to severe drought and reduced rainfall, which led to a sharp fall in crop production. The sector had already posted negative growth in April and May.

Additional contributing factors include rising temperatures, water shortages, and delays in the supply of agricultural inputs. Overall, the agricultural sector's value-added growth in spring 2025 is estimated to be -4.7%.

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

Nahid-2 Launch Marks New Era for Domestic Space Technology



TEHRAN - Iran has entered the final testing phase of its domestically developed telecommunications satellite Nahid-2, in what officials are calling a landmark achievement for the country's homegrown space program. According to Iranian Space Agency (ISA) President Dr. Hassan Salarieh, Iran now possesses full technical capability to design, build, and operate Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellites entirely with domestic resources.

As reported by ISNA, Nahid-2 is more than just a communications platform—it represents Iran's growing mastery of complex aerospace engineering and a shift toward operational self-sufficiency in satellite technology.

Designed to operate in the high-bandwidth "Ku" frequency band, Nahid-2 enables applications such as data transfer, satellite telephony, and broadcasting. The satellite was designed, assembled, and tested by the Iranian Space Research Center with support from several domestic tech firms.

"Most of the satellite's subsystems were developed in-house," Dr. Salarieh noted, adding that collaboration with the private sector supplied additional components. Among its features are experimental systems for three-axis attitude control, telemetry and telecommand operations in multiple frequency bands (S, U, V), as well as power distribution, thermal control, and onboard navigation simulations.

Building on this momentum, Salarieh confirmed that work is already underway on Nahid-3, the next iteration in the satellite series. A second Nahid-2 unit is also undergoing final preparations and is expected to launch soon.

Iran's space communications roadmap includes not only more LEO satellites but a push toward satellites in geostationary orbit (GEO) and even small-scale satellite constellations for broader coverage.

Despite having its own launch vehicles—like Simorgh and Qaem-100—capable of deploying 300 kg payloads to orbit, Iran opted to use a Russian Soyuz rocket for Nahid-2. The reason, Salarieh explained, was the specific orbital path required, which was more easily accessible from a Russian launch site.

"This is standard international practice," he said. "Even spacefaring nations often rely on foreign launch platforms to meet mission-specific needs."

The next Nahid-2 launch, however, is planned to use the domestically developed Simorgh



launcher.

Iran is currently developing a new launch facility in Chabahar, which will enable more flexible access to a variety of orbital inclinations. Salarieh said the site will play a key role in supporting both domestic and international launches in the near future.

He also pointed to growing collaboration with Russia in space launch and technology, a partnership that has helped accelerate Iran's technological advancement.

Dr. Salarieh stressed that Nahid-2 is overwhelmingly a product of Iranian expertise, with nearly all design, fabrication, testing, and systems integration carried out inside the country.

"While some components may be sourced internationally for economic reasons, the design and engineering backbone is entirely local," he said.

"That's a powerful statement about how far our industry has come."

Iran's launch capabilities have advanced in parallel, with domestic vehicles successfully placing satellites into orbit.

Iran's long-term goal is to fully control both satellite production and launch operations. The Simorgh rocket is now considered operational, and heavier-lift vehicles such as Sarir and Soroush are in development to handle larger missions. The Qaem-100 launcher is already capable of placing satellites weighing up to 100 kg into orbit.

With parallel investments in launch vehicles and spacecraft infrastructure, Salarieh said, Iran is steadily moving toward complete independence in deploying its satellites.

A second Nahid-2 satellite has already been completed and is waiting on the results of the first mission to inform final adjustments. The plan is to launch this follow-up unit using Iran's Simorgh launcher from domestic soil.

While domestic development is a central pillar of Iran's space strategy, Salarieh emphasized that international partnerships remain a priority.

"We welcome collaboration with countries that are interested in working with us," he said. "Each successful launch enhances our technical expertise—and accelerates our growth."

The ISA aims to strengthen its role on the global stage as both a technological innovator and a capable partner in the rapidly evolving space sector.

Gold Reserves Bolster Economic Resilience Amid Gov't Support Package



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The Vice President of Iran's Chamber of Commerce has praised the Central Bank's recent gold reserve policies as a strategic and stabilizing measure for Iran's national economy. In an exclusive interview with IRNA, Payam Bagheri underscored the significance of increasing strategic gold holdings in enhancing economic resilience, particularly in times of crisis.

Bagheri emphasized that gold reserves serve not only as a financial buffer but also as a psychological stabilizer for the market. "In many countries, including Iran, boosting strategic gold reserves is recognized as a vital tool for maintaining economic stability," he noted. "These reserves reinforce the credibility of the country's monetary structure and provide confidence to the markets."

He called for a committed and structured approach to gold accumulation, saying it should not be viewed solely through an economic lens. "Gold reserves can support monetary and fiscal policies, especially when the nation faces external shocks or internal fiscal stress," Bagheri added.

The business leader also proposed practical solutions to maximize the utility of gold reserves, including implementing gold-based trade mechanisms. According to Bagheri, using gold in barter arrangements could help facilitate foreign trade and simultaneously increase national gold holdings.

"This mechanism has a dual advantage: it enables exporters to repatriate their foreign currency earnings more easily, and it reinforces the country's strategic reserves," he explained. "In the long run, this is a form of economic investment that pays dividends in terms of national financial security."

Bagheri stressed that if such policies are implemented systematically, they could expand trade exchanges while mitigating the impact of currency restrictions. "Structured execution is key," he said, "as it can strengthen the resilience of the economy and contribute to a more predictable financial environment."

Bagheri also lauded the Central Bank's effective market management during a recent 12-day conflict, describing its actions as "professional and appropriate under exceptional circumstances." During this tense period, the government introduced a comprehensive economic support package that successfully stabilized the currency market.

"This support package was not only effective but also received backing from the private sector," Bagheri said. "It aimed to balance the realities of foreign exchange constraints with the pressing needs of the domestic economy."

The package focused on guiding market expectations in a rational direction and adjusting foreign exchange policies to align with the country's current economic climate. "It's a realistic approach, rooted in an understanding of the complexities we're facing," he added.

Despite his support for the recent initiatives, Bagheri cautioned that the success of economic policies depends on swift and thorough implementation. "We must ensure that these decisions don't remain on paper. Execution, paired with vigilant oversight, is essential for real impact," he urged.

Bagheri also highlighted the need for disciplined allocation of foreign exchange resources, with a focus on smart prioritization. He believes the Chamber of Commerce and other private sector entities can play a crucial role in this effort. "The Chamber has access to a rich network of expertise and data. This should be utilized to guide resource allocation in a way that's both efficient and productive," he said.

One of the core elements of the government's support package, according to Bagheri, is targeted assistance for small and medium-sized enterprises—a segment he described as "the backbone of the national economy."

"Allocating foreign exchange in a way that empowers these businesses is essential," he stated. "Their growth directly contributes to greater economic resilience and job creation, which in turn stabilizes the broader economy."

In summary, Iran's strategy of boosting its gold reserves, combined with a coordinated government support package, is yielding tangible results in market stabilization and economic resilience. As policymakers continue to navigate complex domestic and global pressures, the integration of private sector expertise and disciplined execution will remain critical to long-term economic stability.

July Inflation Surpasses 40%

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian



Iran's ailing economy is the direct result of contradictory decisions rooted in conflicting economic doctrines imposed over different periods. Over time, these ideologically driven policies—often misaligned with the country's realities—have culminated in a fragile and dysfunctional system.

Global economic experiences and field-tested models now provide relatively comprehensive solutions that any country, once it has properly understood its unique context, can selectively implement to establish a sustainable economic framework. However, when we speak of a "sick economy," we are essentially summarizing the negative outcomes of misguided policies in just a few words.

Over the past century, Iran has been repeatedly subjected to waves of decisions made either under domestic political pressures or in response to severe shortfalls and constraints. In some cases, the absence of any decision at all has proven even more detrimental—indeed, inaction is often the worst kind of economic illness.

Broadly speaking, Iran's economy has never been truly "popular" or people-centric. It might more accurately be described as state-dominated. This has caused chronic confusion and instability for ordinary citizens, who have rarely experienced periods of economic stability. Consequently, the groundwork for a truly people-oriented economy has never taken root.

A people-centered economy is one where ordinary citizens—not governments or large corporations—form the backbone of economic activity. In such a model, the government's role is limited to statistical oversight, with no direct intervention. Prices are set purely by the dynamics of supply and demand—a system that has endured for millennia.

In this model, every unit of supply is matched against demand, creating inherent stability. Unfortunately, half of Iran's modern economic history—particularly since the revolution—has been marked by excessive state intervention. Economic storms brought about by poor policy and mismanagement have driven capital flight, fueled unstable decision-making, anchored the economy to foreign exchange fluctuations, and most disastrously, entrenched a form of state capitalism that has widened inequality, given rise to nouveau riche elites, and deepened mass poverty.

Inflation, largely stemming from chronic budget deficits, has compounded over time. Government decisions to authorize private banks have only driven up interest rates, placing monetary control in the hands of newly rich elites. This is a compounding injury—a wound upon a wound—where monetary governance is now dominated by entities lacking both religious and national legitimacy.

Parliamentary laws, meanwhile, have either gone unimplemented or failed to have meaningful impact on major economic sectors. Today, Iran's economy—trapped under the weight of international sanctions—faces a narrow, treacherous path forward.

Policy instability discourages investment by preventing entrepreneurs from predicting future conditions. This stifles new business development and hampers industrial growth, leading to stagnation in production. With production stagnant, supply tightens. Inflation escalates, adding yet more instability.

As prices rise, the real value of people's income erodes. When wages remain static while the prices of basic goods—bread, meat, chicken, milk, and more—climb monthly, the public can no longer afford essentials. This breeds economic recession alongside inflation.

Worse still, market pricing is increasingly based on FIFO principles ("Next In, First Out"), which means current prices reflect future replacement costs rather than actual current costs. In this setup, if we consider foreign currency as a strategic commodity, the free-market exchange rate effectively becomes the benchmark for future prices—further fueling inflation. As mismatches in policy feed off each other, the condition of our economic patient worsens, moving ever closer to a terminal stage.

Today, the administration of President Pezeshkian sees exchange rate increases as the path to budgetary balance. The Central Bank is working to reduce allocations of subsidized foreign currency for essential goods and shift gradually toward the "NIMA" exchange rate system—raising the rate from 28,500 toman per dollar to 70,000 toman.

Though this policy shift is being rolled out gradually, it has already stirred market anxiety and diminished national resilience—especially critical in times of external threats. As a result, July and the months to come are likely to face inflation rates exceeding 40%.

The government must be urged to pause. These decisions should be postponed until after the looming crisis with the U.S. and NATO is resolved. Otherwise, the administration may find itself accused of undermining the nation's resilience from within.

IRAN NEWS



Minister Denies Reports of 40m Barrels of Stranded Iranian Oil

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iranian Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad has dismissed recent claims by some foreign media outlets that over 40 million barrels of Iranian oil are currently stranded at sea.

“I reject this claim,” Paknejad said, responding to the allegation.

He explained that in the process of selling oil, there are times when shipments are temporarily held or moved due to market-related factors and evolving conditions. “These actions are part of our adaptive strategies based on the circumstances we face,” he said, adding, “Fundamentally, we don’t have oil that we are unable to sell.”

Iran Successfully Launches Nahid-2 Satellite



TEHRAN - Iran has successfully launched the Nahid-2 communications satellite, a move hailed by the country’s Minister of Communications as a milestone in expanding Iran’s role in space telecommunications and fostering collaboration with the private sector.

In a statement reported by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, Minister Seyed Sattar Hashemi praised the launch as a turning point for the nation’s space industry. He emphasized the need for tangible space-based services that directly address public needs and improve quality of life.

During a supervisory session at the Iranian Space Agency, Hashemi applauded the technical achievements and the strategic importance of Nahid-2, calling it a symbol of prudent policymaking and hope—particularly following recent regional tensions.

“In a time when the country needed a hopeful message, the successful launch of Nahid-2 was warmly welcomed by both the public and members of parliament,” he said.

Minister Hashemi stressed the importance of communicating the benefits of space advancements to the public. “People want to know: what do these space programs actually do for them? We need to clearly explain how these technologies solve real problems and serve national institutions,” he added.

Referring to Iran’s Khayyam satellite, which plays a key role in land management, the minister pointed out that such applications should set the standard for a service-driven space industry. “We must move beyond the notion that space is only about high-tech. It must be practical, accessible, and solution-oriented,” he said.

The Minister highlighted the critical role of the Iranian Space Agency in developing space telecommunications and called for a well-structured roadmap to increase Iran’s share in the global space sector. He also welcomed private sector involvement, describing it as a valuable step that brings innovation, investment, and agility.

Ilam: A Treasure of Iran’s Civilization and Nature



TEHRAN - Farhad Azizi Zelani, Director General of National and World Heritage Sites at Iran’s Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, has emphasized Ilam’s exceptional status as both a historical and natural treasure, calling it a unique center of Iranian civilization and a promising destination for tourism.

In a televised interview with Ilam’s provincial network, Azizi Zelani described Ilam as a region rich in both heritage and untouched landscapes. “Ilam is not only one of Iran’s ancient civilizational centers, but also home to rare natural and historical attractions,” he said. “What sets it apart is the combination of pristine nature and deep-rooted cultural history—something scarcely found elsewhere in the country.”

Highlighting Ilam’s cultural and ecological significance, he called the province “a crossroads of culture, history, and nature in western Iran,” and stressed that it should not be viewed merely as a border province.

Azizi Zelani pointed out the need for strategic promotion, stating, “One of our consistent concerns has been the effective and dignified introduction of these capacities. If Ilam’s attractions are presented properly, they have the potential to become a top-tier tourism destination.”

He underlined the importance of producing high-quality, culturally grounded narratives as the first step toward developing Ilam as a tourism destination. “The Ministry stands ready to fully support provincial initiatives that align with this goal,” he added.

Concluding his remarks, Azizi Zelani said that destination development requires cultural, infrastructural, and media-oriented backing. “I hope that with continued efforts in Ilam and national synergy, we can turn its hidden potential into a tourism asset and elevate Ilam’s status on Iran’s tourism map.”

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK



TEHRAN - Iran currently enjoys a favorable trade balance with Pakistan, exporting goods at a rate 3.5 times greater than its imports from the neighboring country, according to Iranian trade officials. The deepening of economic ties is expected to be a major topic during President Masoud Pezeshkian’s official visit to Islamabad, his first bilateral foreign trip since Israel’s recent 12-day military campaign against Iran.

President Pezeshkian departs for Pakistan at the invitation of his Pakistani counterpart. The visit is being closely watched by analysts for its potential geopolitical implications in the wake of heightened regional tensions following the recent conflict.

Speaking to IRNA ahead of the visit, Hamid Reza Karbalaei Esmaeili, Deputy for the Indian Subcontinent at Iran’s Trade Promotion Organization, emphasized the growing trend in bilateral trade and outlined key figures and challenges.

Esmaeili noted that trade between Iran and Pakistan has seen steady growth, increasing by 13.6% in the Iranian calendar year 1403 (March 2024–March 2025) compared to the previous year. The total trade volume reached \$3.129 billion, with Iran exporting \$2.423 billion worth of goods to Pakistan and importing \$706 million, reflecting a positive trade balance for Iran.

Iran’s primary exports to Pakistan include petroleum-based products, powdered milk, and varieties of dates, while its main imports consist of rice, oilseeds, and meat products from Pakistan.

Despite annual growth, recent quarterly figures suggest a slowdown. In the first three months of the current Iranian year (starting March 2025), Iran’s exports to Pakistan stood at \$420 million, marking a 20% decline from the same period last year. Imports also dropped slightly to \$174 million, a 4% decrease. Esmaeili attributed this drop to ongoing regional instability and logistical challenges.

To sustain and expand trade relations, Esmaeili stressed the urgent need to

strengthen trade infrastructure, particularly maritime transport, where current exchange is nearly nonexistent. “Our sea transport capabilities are very limited. Boosting this area could open up vast new potential for trade,” he said.

He also highlighted the vital role of border markets in facilitating commerce between the two nations. Establishing and activating these border posts, Esmaeili argued, would significantly boost local economies and reduce logistical friction.

Iran and Pakistan began implementing a limited free trade arrangement in 2016, but a comprehensive agreement has remained elusive. Esmaeili expressed hope that negotiations in the coming weeks could finally yield a broader free trade agreement—one that has been in the making for nearly a decade.

“The 14th Iranian administration is pursuing active economic diplomacy,” Esmaeili said, “with a focus on enhancing trade relations with neighboring countries. We’re optimistic that ongoing talks will make it easier for Iranian and Pakistani traders to conduct business.”

According to Esmaeili, recent shifts in Pakistan’s trade policies and tariff structures have made it easier to do business with Iran compared to previous years. This, he said, could result in increased cooperation and more streamlined trade channels moving forward.

President Pezeshkian’s visit to Islamabad, occurring against a backdrop of post-conflict regional recalibration, is widely seen as part of Tehran’s strategy to bolster regional alliances, assert economic resilience, and advance political cooperation in South Asia.

As both countries seek to deepen ties amid complex geopolitical dynamics, today’s diplomatic and economic talks may lay the groundwork for a more integrated regional trade network, benefiting not just Iran and Pakistan, but the broader region as well.

Traditional Craftsmanship Can Shine Globally if Aligned With Int’l Standards

TEHRAN - Maryam Jalali, Deputy Minister for Handicrafts and Traditional Arts at Iran’s Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, emphasized that Iran’s traditional skills—when integrated with global standards—can preserve national identity and flourish in the international market.

Speaking during National Skills Week, Jalali noted that handicrafts are more than marketable products; they are a platform for social resilience, cultural diplomacy, and development-driven investment.

“Globalization today is not about imposing uniform models,” Jalali said, “but about empowering regions to tell their unique stories. With its unparalleled reserves of handicrafts and intangible heritage, Iran has the potential to raise a distinct and powerful voice on the global stage.”

She stressed that storytelling lies at the heart of cultural globalization. “Every Iranian region is a complex and rich system of indigenous skills. We live in a consumer-centric era, where skills must respond to market demands. Handicrafts can no longer be seen purely through a subsistence or ritual lens. Contemporary skill must rise from tradition while operating within a framework of global competitiveness and standardization.”

Jalali referred to the National Skills Week slogan—“Unity for Investment and a Skilled Iran”—stating that unity should not be viewed as a mere administrative slogan, but as an ecosystem of creative policymaking, flexible planning, and intelligent grassroots action. “If these three pillars focus on traditional and local skills, Iran will become truly skilled—not only in technique, but also in its culture of production, development mindset, and civilizational depth.”

She noted that when skills serve everyday life and production, they lead to greater cohesion. This convergence can bring together institutions, industries, tradespeople, and families. “A skilled Iran is a narrating Iran, a creative Iran, and a resilient Iran—one that speaks with deep-rooted authenticity while engaging in global dialogue.”

On the role of handicrafts in the resilience of less-developed



communities, Jalali said: “Contemporary development discourse has only recently begun to embrace concepts like resilience and balanced growth—concepts that have long been woven into the fabric of Iranian handicrafts. These crafts represent ecological consciousness, cultural self-sufficiency, and locally grounded resilient economies.”

She added that handicrafts embody development that emerges from culture and geography. “The raw materials used in authentic craft production are derived from the

native environment. Thus, development in this sector is endogenous and wisdom-driven. This art-industry has always responded to real human and social needs.”

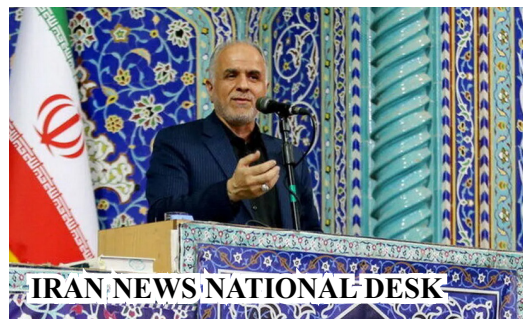
Criticizing a reductionist, Western-centric view of development, Jalali said: “Some believe development began with the Industrial Revolution and that we must attach ourselves to the West. In reality, handicrafts carry our historical knowledge, civilizational insight, and ecological wisdom. Our traditional arts—from textiles and architecture to pottery and metalwork—represent a sustainable and balanced model of development rooted in our land and people.”

She concluded by emphasizing the role of handicrafts in strengthening rural value chains, supporting economic stability, and preserving cultural identity.

Highlighting the connection between economy, culture, and dignity, Jalali stated: “Investing in handicrafts is not just a financial venture—it’s a cultural, identity-based, and civilizational investment. Those seeking meaningful development should turn to this sector. It offers economic profitability, social engagement, and cultural influence.”

In closing, she underlined the importance of handicrafts in cultural diplomacy: “Every handmade object carries a story. Our mission at the Handicrafts Division is to professionally and globally present this capacity. Globalizing Iranian handicrafts means introducing Iran through the lens of wisdom, art, and civilization.”

Int’l Legal Pursuit of Israeli Regime’s Crimes on the Agenda



TEHRAN - Minister of Justice announced that international legal action against the crimes of the Israeli regime and the United States is actively being pursued through both domestic and international legal channels.

Speaking during Friday prayers in the city of Fuman, Minister of Justice Amin Hossein Rahimi commemorated the martyrs, especially those of the recent 12-day conflict. He emphasized the unity that emerged among the Iranian people and officials during the war, and noted that Fuman holds a special place in the country’s revolutionary and wartime history, closely associated with the late religious figure Ayatollah Bahjat.

Rahimi expressed gratitude to the provincial officials of Gilan and members of the parliamentary Legal and Judicial Committee who attended the ceremony. He stated that a session will be held tomorrow with the province’s parliamentary delegation to review Gilan’s judicial issues.

He further explained that his visit to the region was at the invitation of the parliamentary representative for Fuman and Shaft—who is also a member of the Legal and Judicial Committee—in order to personally follow up on regional issues and concerns.

Referring to recent Israeli and American attacks on Iran, Rahimi asserted that these actions violated all international norms and conventions and constituted war crimes, as they targeted civilians and scientists rather than combatants.

Highlighting the recent remarks by the Supreme Leader, Rahimi stressed that in addition to a strong retaliatory response, there must also be legal accountability for these crimes. He affirmed the Ministry of Justice’s commitment to pursuing such cases in international forums.

Drawing a parallel with the imposed war of the past, Rahimi said that despite efforts by the enemy to destabilize the country, the result has been increased unity among the people. He noted that this has placed greater responsibility on the government, which in its 14th administration has undertaken serious measures to solve national problems and maintain cohesion.

Apocalyptic Scenario for Tehran’s Water Supply Not Ruled Out



TEHRAN - The head of the Water Institute at the University of Tehran has warned that an apocalyptic scenario regarding Tehran’s water supply is not out of the question if residents do not cooperate with water conservation efforts.

In an interview with ILNA, Banafsheh Zahraei stated, “If citizens cooperate, we can avoid an apocalyptic scenario. But I must emphasize that if people fail to do their part, autumn brings no rain, and drought conditions persist, we will face serious challenges.”

She noted that while the government is actively working to prevent a water crisis similar to the severe shortages in Hamedan three years ago, the risk remains real. Measures such as drilling wells, building new water transfer lines, and managing water pressure are already underway to reduce the likelihood of a worst-case scenario.

However, Zahraei warned that without public participation and sufficient rainfall in the fall — especially if rains are delayed — some areas of Tehran may face water shortages and restrictions.

“If the consumption reductions expected from temporary closures (like public holidays) don’t occur, we could face serious problems by autumn. We’re not trying to cause panic, but people really do need to conserve water,” she stressed.

Zahraei also pointed to structural challenges in Tehran’s water distribution system. “Tehran does not have an integrated water distribution network. The west is independently supplied by the Karaj and Taleghani dams, while the east depends on Lar, Larian, and Mamloo dams. If reserves in any of these dams are depleted, they can’t support each other,” she explained.

UN Report Finds United Nations Reports Are Not Widely Read

UNITED NATIONS (Dispatches) - A United Nations report seeking ways to improve efficiency and cut costs has revealed: U.N. reports are not widely read.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres briefed countries on Friday on the report, produced by his UN80 reform that focused on how U.N. staff implement thousands of mandates given to them by bodies like the General Assembly or Security Council.

He said last year that the U.N. system supported 27,000 meetings involving 240 bodies, and the U.N. secretariat produced 1,100 reports, a 20% increase since 1990.

“The sheer number of meetings and reports is pushing the system – and all of us – to the breaking point,” Guterres said.



U.S. Sanctions Force Vessels With Russian Oil to Divert From India



NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - At least two vessels loaded with Russian oil bound for refiners in India have diverted to other destinations following new U.S. sanctions, trade sources said, and LSEG trade flows showed.

The U.S. Treasury Department this week imposed sanctions on more than 115 Iran-linked individuals, entities, and ships, some of which are involved in transporting Russian oil.

U.S. President Donald Trump has urged countries to halt purchases of oil from Moscow, threatening 100% tariffs unless Russia agrees to a significant peace deal with Ukraine.

Three ships - the Aframaxes Tagor and Guanyin and the Suezmax Tassos - were scheduled to deliver Russian oil to Indian ports this month, trade sources said. All three vessels are under U.S. sanctions.

Tagor was bound for Chennai on India's east coast, while Guanyin and Tassos were headed to ports in western India, according to trade sources and Russian ports data.

Tighter Western sanctions aimed at cutting Russia's oil revenue, seen as funding its war against Ukraine, have been increasingly hitting Russian oil supplies for India, which buys more than a third of its oil needs from Russia.

Tagor is now heading to Dalian in China, while Tassos is diverting to Port Said in Egypt, the data shows.

Guanyin remains on course to Sikka, a port used by Reliance Industries and Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd.

Indian Oil Corp, which was to receive the Tagor shipment, and BPCL did not respond to Reuters' emailed requests for comment.

South Africa Plans Measures to Support Exporters Hit by Trump Tariffs



JOHANNESBURG (Dispatches) - South Africa said on Friday it would draft measures to support exporters hit by U.S. President Donald Trump's new 30% tariff, which is expected to trigger widespread job losses in the nation's automotive and agriculture industries.

Pretoria's trade ministry has launched an “Export Support Desk” to assist affected companies and advise on alternative markets during a period Trade Minister Parks Tau described as “a trying moment for South Africa”.

Trump on Thursday issued an executive order imposing higher import duties on dozens of countries which are set to take effect in seven days, as part of his push to reshape global trade in favour of the United States.

“All channels of communication remain open to engage with the U.S., and our negotiators are ready pending invitation from the U.S.,” President Cyril Ramaphosa said in a statement on Friday.

He added that the government was finalising a support package for vulnerable exporters, with details to be announced soon.

South Africa has tried for months to negotiate a deal with Washington and offered to buy U.S. liquefied natural gas and invest in U.S. industries in exchange for a lower tariff.

But Trump's team was unresponsive to the proposal, which came amid tensions between Washington and Pretoria over South Africa's foreign policy and domestic affirmative action laws, which Trump disapproves of.

The U.S. is South Africa's second-largest bilateral trading partner after China, importing goods such as cars, iron and steel products, wine and citrus fruit. Mercedes-Benz South Africa is one of the country's big auto exporters to the U.S.

Trump Deploys Nuclear Submarines in Row With Russia After Medvedev's Comments



WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – U.S. President Donald Trump ordered the deployment of two nuclear submarines Friday in an extraordinary escalation of what had been an online war of words with a Russian official over Ukraine and tariffs.

Trump and Dmitry Medvedev, the deputy chairman of Russia's security council, have been sparring on social media for days.

Trump's post on his Truth Social platform abruptly took that spat into the very real—and rarely publicized—sphere of nuclear forces.

“Based on the highly provocative statements,” Trump said he had “ordered two Nuclear Submarines to be positioned in the appropriate regions, just in case these foolish and inflammatory statements are more than just that.”

“Words are very important, and can often lead to unintended consequences, I hope this will not be one of those instances,” the 79-year-old Republican posted.

Trump did not say in his post whether he meant nuclear-powered or nuclear-armed submarines. He also did not elaborate on the exact deployment locations, which are kept secret by the US military.

But in an interview with Newsmax that aired Friday night, Trump said the submarines were “closer to Russia.”

“I always want to be ready. And so I have sent to the region two nuclear submarines,” he said.

“I just want to make sure that his words are only words and nothing more than that.”

Trump's remarks came hours after Russian President Vladimir Putin said Moscow had started mass producing its hypersonic nuclear-capable Oreshnik missile, and could deploy them to Belarus, a close Russian ally neighbouring Ukraine, by year-end.

The nuclear sabre-rattling came against the backdrop of a deadline set by Trump for the end of next week for Russia to take steps to ending the Ukraine war or face unspecified new sanctions.

Despite the pressure from Washington, Russia's onslaught against its pro-Western neighbor continues to unfold at full bore.

An AFP analysis yesterday showed that Russian forces had launched a record number of drones at Ukraine in July. The United States and Russia control the vast majority of the world's nuclear weaponry, and Washington keeps nuclear-armed submarines on permanent patrol as part of its so-called nuclear triad of land, sea and air-launched weapons.

Trump told Newsmax that Medvedev's “nuclear” reference prompted him to reposition US nuclear submarines.

“When you mention the word ‘nuclear’ ... my eyes light up. And I say, we better be careful, because it's the ultimate threat,” Trump said in the interview.

Medvedev had criticised Trump on his Telegram account Thursday and alluded to the “fabled ‘Dead Hand’”—a reference to a highly secret automated system put in place during the Cold War to control the country's nuclear weapons.

This came after Trump had lashed out at what he called the “dead economies” of Russia and India.

Medvedev had also harshly criticized Trump's threat of new sanctions against Russia over its war in Ukraine.

Accusing Trump of “playing the ultimatum game,” he posted Monday on X that Trump “should remember” that Russia is a formidable force.

Trump responded by calling Medvedev “the failed former President of Russia, who thinks he's still President.”

Medvedev should “watch his words,” Trump posted at midnight in Washington on Wednesday. “He's entering very dangerous territory!”

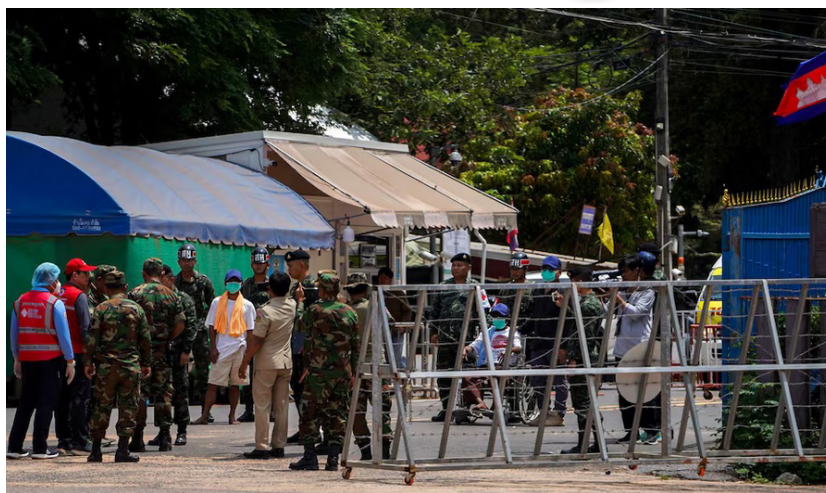
Medvedev is a vocal proponent of Russia's war—and generally antagonistic to relations with the West.

He served as president between 2008-2012, effectively acting as a placeholder for Putin, who was able to circumvent constitutional term limits and remain in de facto power.

The one-time reformer has rebranded over the years as an avid online troll, touting often extreme versions of official Kremlin nationalist messaging.

But his influence within the Russian political system remains limited.

Thailand Returns Some Cambodian Soldiers Ahead of Key Border Talks



BANGKOK (Dispatches) - Thailand's army sent home two Cambodian soldiers from a group of 20 on Friday, ahead of a key meeting in Malaysia next week where defense ministers and military commanders will hold talks aimed at maintaining a ceasefire along their disputed border.

Long-simmering tensions on the Thai-Cambodian border exploded into clashes last week, including exchanges of artillery fire and jet fighter sorties, the worst fighting between the Southeast Asian neighbors in over a decade.

The clashes claimed at least 43 lives and left over 300,000 people displaced.

A truce was achieved on Monday, following a push by Malaysia and phone calls from U.S. President Trump who threatened to hold off tariff negotiations with both countries until fighting stopped.

Thailand and Cambodia previously faced tariffs of 36% for sending goods to the U.S., their largest export markets. Following further negotiations, they will now pay a 19% tariff, the White House announced on Friday.

In Bangkok, Thai government spokesperson Jirayu Houngsub told reporters on Friday that two Cambodian soldiers had been sent back, and the remaining 18 were being processed for violating immigration law.

“The Cambodian soldiers intruded on Thai territory and the army took

them into custody, treating them based on humanitarian principles,” he said.

In a statement, the Cambodian defense ministry asked Thailand to return all the detained soldiers.

“Cambodia is actively engaging in negotiations to secure their release,

and reiterates its firm call for their immediate and unconditional release in accordance with the international humanitarian law,” a ministry spokesperson said.

Defense ministers and military leaders from both sides, who were previously scheduled to meet in the Cambodian capital next week, will now hold talks in Malaysia, after Thailand sought a neutral venue for the meeting.

The General Border Committee, which coordinates on border security, ceasefires, and troop deployments, will meet between August 4-7, Thai Acting Defense Minister Nattaphon Narkphanit told reporters.

“Defense attachés from other ASEAN countries will be invited as well as the defense attachés from the U.S. and China,” a Malaysian government spokesperson told reporters, referring to the Southeast Asian regional bloc that the country currently chairs.

Thailand and Cambodia have for decades claimed jurisdiction over undemarcated points along their 817-km (508-mile) land border, with ownership of several ancient temples at the center of disputes.

In May, a Cambodian soldier was killed in a skirmish, leading to a troop build-up and a diplomatic crisis, which eventually snowballed into five-days of intense fighting in late July.

Ukrainians Mourn 31 Killed in Russian Strike on Kyiv

KYIV (Dispatches) - Ukrainian rescuers recovered more than a dozen more bodies from the rubble of a collapsed apartment block in Kyiv overnight, bringing the death toll from Russia's worst air strike of the year on Ukraine's capital to 31.

A two-year-old was among the five children found dead after Thursday's sweeping Russian drone and missile attack, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Friday, announcing the end of a more than 24-hour-long rescue operation.

A total of 159 people were wounded in the multi-wave strike, in which Russia launched more than 300 drones and eight missiles early on Thursday, the latest in a campaign of fierce strikes on Ukrainian towns and cities.

Video on the presidential website showed Zelenskyy chatting with residents of areas where high-rise apartment buildings suffered heavy damage.

“The state will definitely provide help and support to everyone affected,” Zelenskyy wrote on the website.

In Kharkiv, Ukraine's second largest city in the northeast of the country, a drone attack on Friday injured 10 people, including three children, one of them a five-



month-old infant. Five people remained in hospital.

The worst damage in Kyiv was to an apartment building that partially collapsed in the Sviatoshyn district in western Kyiv. Damage was also reported in at least three other districts of the capital.

U.S. President Donald Trump on Thursday sharply criticised Russia's “disgusting” behaviour against Ukraine, while saying he was not sure whether sanctions would deter Russia. He has given President Vladimir Putin until August 8 to make a deal or else he will respond with economic pressure.

Natalia Matviyenko, 65, sitting near the damaged apartment building, said she did not place much faith in Trump's tough rhetoric.

“Trump just says, ‘I'm upset with President Putin's behaviour.’ And what? No results,” she said.

Trump on Friday said he had ordered two nuclear submarines to be moved to the “appropriate regions” in response to threats from former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev.



Rublev, Tiafoe Earn Third-Round Wins in Toronto

TORONTO (Dispatches) - Sixth-seeded Andrey Rublev of Russia shrugged off a first-set loss to defeat No. 28 Lorenzo Sonego of Italy 5-7, 6-4, 6-3 in third-round action on Friday at the National Bank Open in Toronto.

Rublev had six aces among 29 winners in the victory.
“The main thing today, I was able to be mentally really good,” Rublev told the Tennis Channel.
“After the first set, I didn’t (go) down. I was, like, OK, let’s keep fighting, keep being positive ... then I was able to create more things, like to go to the net.”

Spain’s Alejandro Davidovich Fokina pulled off an upset as the No. 20 seed knocked out 12th-seeded Jakub Mensik of Czechia 6-2, 6-4. The Spaniard converted all four of his break points as he won 49.1 percent of his returns (28 of 57) compared to Mensik’s 29.2 percent (14 of 48). His reward is a fourth-round match versus Rublev.

Czechia’s Jiri Lehecka earned the day’s other upset as the No. 19 seed rallied to take down No. 15 Arthur Fils of France by a 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 count. Lehecka stacked up 12 aces to Fils’ three on the hard court.

No. 7 Frances Tiafoe beat Australia’s Aleksandar Vukic 6-3, 4-6, 6-3 to advance to a fourth-round match with another Aussie, ninth-seeded Alex de Minaur, on Sunday. No. 13 Flavio Cobolli of Italy maxed out his serve at 135 mph during his 6-2, 4-6, 6-3 victory over Hungary’s Fabian Marozsan.

Meanwhile Anastasija Sevastova stunned two-time defending champion Jessica Pegula 3-6, 6-4, 6-1 to book a fourth-round clash with Naomi Osaka at the WTA Canadian Open.

Sevastova, a former world No. 11 now ranked 386th, snapped fourth-ranked Pegula’s 11-match WTA Canada win streak, the longest since Serena Williams reeled off 14 consecutive wins in 2011, 2013 and 2014.

She will try to extend her Montreal run in a round of 16 meeting with Osaka, a four-time Grand Slam champion from Japan who ousted another Latvian, 22nd seed Jelena Ostapenko, 6-2, 6-4.

“Somehow, I was down 2-0 in the second set and started to play better and better,” Sevastova said. “Third set I played really good.

“Just trying to stay on the court as long as possible,” added Sevastova, who has dealt with injury since returning from maternity leave in February 2024.

In the night session, second-seeded Iga Swiatek -- playing her first tournament since winning Wimbledon -- raced into the fourth round with a 6-2, 6-2 victory over Germany’s Eva Lys. Swiatek next faces Denmark’s Clara Tauson, who beat Yuliia Starodubtseva 6-3, 6-0.

Pegula, last year’s US Open runner-up in her best Slam showing, was the first woman to win back to back Canadian Open titles since Martina Hingis in 1999-2000.

But she has struggled in recent months, dropping her openers at Wimbledon and at Washington last week.

The American broke to open the match and again at love to claim the first set.

But she couldn’t maintain an early break in the second, with Sevastova breaking for a 5-4 lead and denying Pegula on three break chances before holding in the final game to force a third set in which she seized a 4-1 lead on the way to victory.

“It was a weird match for me,” Pegula said. “I felt like I had total control and then I just played a couple of terrible games for, like, three games.

Osaka, twice a winner at both the US and Australian Opens, is one match away from her first quarter-final run at either a Grand Slam or WTA 1000 event since she returned from maternity leave at the start of 2024.

Djokovic Becomes a Part-Owner of Ligue 2 Club Le Mans



PARIS (Dispatches) - Tennis great Novak Djokovic has become a part-owner of French Ligue 2 club Le Mans FC with former Formula 1 drivers Felipe Massa and Kevin Magnussen also acquiring stakes, the newly promoted club announced on Friday.

The investment is led by Brazilian group OutField, an international consortium co-founded by Pedro Olivera, and includes Georgios Frangulis, CEO of global health-food brand OakBerry.

“Djokovic, the most successful player in history, whose mental strength and unique approach will bring considerable added value,” the club said in a statement.

“Massa (15 seasons in Formula 1) and Magnussen (10 seasons), who will help create a bridge between football and motorsport – a distinctive strength of the Le Mans brand.”

Le Mans begin their Ligue 2 campaign on August 9, away at Guingamp.

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.

Son Says He Is Leaving the Club



LONDON (Dispatches) - Tottenham Hotspur captain Son Heung-min will bring his 10-year spell with the Premier League club to an end this summer, the 33-year-old South Korean said on Saturday.

Son, who is under contract until 2026, led Spurs to their first trophy in 17 years with their win over Manchester United in the Europa League final in May, having joined the North London club from Bayer Leverkusen in 2015.

While Son did not disclose his next destination, British media have linked him with a move to Major League Soccer club Los Angeles FC.

“I have decided to leave the team this summer,” Son said at a press conference ahead of Spurs’ pre-season friendly against Newcastle United in Seoul on Sunday.

“I think it was one of the most difficult decisions I’ve ever made in my football career. Playing football and being with one team for 10 years is something I am very proud of, but I think I gave my all to the team every single day.

“I did my best on the field and off the field, and by winning the Europa League, I thought I’d done everything I could and achieved. That was probably the biggest reason (why I decided to leave the team).”

Son has made 454 appearances for Spurs and scored 173 goals. He won the Premier League Golden Boot in the 2021-22 season.

“I was so grateful that the team helped me a lot with this decision and respected my choice,” he added.

“It was my favourite place for 10 years, and it was the place where I grew a lot as a football player and a person, so I have a very grateful heart.”

Meanwhile Brighton & Hove Albion’s James Milner will don the number 20 shirt this season as a tribute to former Liverpool teammate Diogo Jota, who died in a car crash in Spain last month.

Jota and his brother Andre Silva were killed in early July when their Lamborghini veered off the road and burst into flames in northwestern Spain.

India Hit Back Against Bazballing England on Another Remarkable Day

LONDON (Dispatches) - India roared back into contention on an exhilarating day two of the final test as their seamers restricted England to a 23-run lead after the hosts had threatened to run away with a match that the tourists need to win to square the series.

After mopping up India’s brittle tail in less than 30 minutes in the morning, openers Zac Crawley and Ben Duckett raced to 92-0 in 12 overs in a blistering return of Bazball.

However, continuing the back and forth theme of the entire series, India responded as their bowlers ran in relentlessly to peg England back to 247. Opener Yashasvi Jaiswal then scored quickly in a potentially awkward last 90 minutes, ending unbeaten on 51 with India closing on 75-2, 52 runs ahead to leave the pivotal match fascinatingly poised.

Another fabulously undulating day began with India resuming at 204-6 but soon skittled for 224 as pace bowler Gus Atkinson took five wickets in his first test since May.

It was an all-too-familiar collapse by the tourists this summer as Karun Nair fell lbw for 57 and Washington Sundar was caught for 26. Atkinson then bowled Mohammed Siraj and had Prasidh Krishna caught behind, both for ducks, to finish with 5-33.

England set about their reply in their usual, swashbuckling fashion, exemplified by Duckett’s extraordinary reverse hook for six off Akash Deep.



They reached 50 in seven overs - the fastest 50 opening partnership England have ever managed in a test - but fell just short of the 100 as Duckett was caught behind reversing for 43.

They were 109-1 at lunch and England looked poised to take command but India, as they have all summer, refused to buckle as Crawley (64) and Ollie Pope (22) quickly departed.

Joe Root brought his usual calm to proceedings until Siraj nipped one back at him for an lbw on 29, with Jacob Bethell going the same way soon after.

Krishna finished off the session in style by having Jamie Smith brilliantly caught in the slips for eight by KL Rahul then getting

Jamie Overton lbw for nought and followed up with the wicket of Atkinson to finish with 4-62.

Harry Brook had a late flurry either side of a rain delay before becoming Siraj’s fourth victim when bowled for 53 as England, with injured Chris Woakes absent, were all out for 247.

India’s openers quickly erased that and pushed on well beyond, with Jaiswal looking particularly enterprising en route to a quickfire 51 - though he was badly dropped in the deep on 40. Rahul departed tamely for seven off Josh Tongue, and Sai Sudharsan followed, lbw to Atkinson for 11, leaving Deep not out four.

With good weather forecast for Saturday, another Oval full house will turn up in expectation of more fireworks in what has been one of the most entertaining series for years.

England’s batting coach Marcus Trescothick said the match was finely balanced.

“There was lots of positive cricket. We put them under pressure but they fought back pretty well and it sets it up nicely for tomorrow,” he said.

Of England’s scintillating opening stand he added: “We’re that sort of side when pitches are like this – we want to put pressure back on the bowlers, using your feet, not playing conventional cricket. Success comes from being inventive, brave. It worked well but then we lost a couple of wickets.”

Red Bull Reprimanded After Verstappen Throws Out the Towel

BUDAPEST (Dispatches) - Formula One stewards reprimanded Red Bull on Friday for a bizarre incident involving Max Verstappen throwing a face towel out of his car and onto the track during Hungarian Grand Prix practice.

The four-times world champion was summoned after the second session at the Hungaroring as stewards reviewed the video evidence.

“Shortly after Car 1 was released from its garage, the driver of Car 1 (Verstappen) was observed to have thrown a towel out of the cockpit,” they said in a statement.

“The driver explained that while in the garage, the face towel had slipped from his lap to the side of the seat and the team was unaware that it remained in the cockpit.

“When the driver realised it was there, he moved to the



far right of the track and attempted to throw it as far away from the car and the track as possible.”

The towel landed on the asphalt, however, and remained there to the end of the session.

The stewards accepted that the towel was more dangerous in than out, with the potential to become lodged in the footwell and interfere with Verstappen’s ability to control the car fully.

They also ruled that Red Bull had therefore released the car in an unsafe condition, although less serious than leaving a hard object in the cockpit.

Meanwhile McLaren’s rate of progress may be faster than Ferrari during their golden era with German Formula One great Michael Schumacher, team boss Andrea Stella said on Friday.