

Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi, on His X Account, Criticized Western Governments for Their “Shameful and Deafening” Silence on Israeli Atrocities After Five Journalists Were Killed in a Targeted Attack on Their Tent in Gaza City

# IRAN NEWS

IAEA's Deputy Director General and Head of the Department of Safeguards Massimo Aparo Held Talks in Tehran With Iranian Officials and Left the Iranian Capital on Monday Afternoon

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## Iran Slams Israel's Attacks on Vaccine Production Facilities, Public Health Centers



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - A senior Iranian diplomat has denounced Israel's attacks during the 12-day imposed war on Iran's vaccine and drug production facilities and public health centers as a clear violation of international law and a threat to regional and global biological security.

Heidar Ali Balouji, director of the disarmament and arms control department at the Iranian Foreign Ministry, made the remarks at a meeting of the Working Group on Strengthening of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Biological Weapons (BWC) in Geneva on Monday.

Referring to Israel's aggressive, direct, and deliberate attacks on vaccine, medicine, and health production facilities and other similar centers in Iran, Balouji condemned the actions as a clear violation of international law and the basic principles of the Convention.

On June 13, Israel launched an unprovoked war against Iran, assassinating many high-ranking military commanders, nuclear scientists, and ordinary civilians.

Balouji also warned that these attacks, in addition to harming national capacities in the field of public health, endanger regional and global biosecurity.

He underscored that attacks on peaceful biological facilities violate the fundamental rights of member states to the peaceful use of biological sciences and constitute an attack on the entire global disarmament regime.

## Iran, Iraq Sign Key Border Security Agreement Following High-Level Talks



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran and Iraq have signed a memorandum of understanding to boost security along the shared border.

The MoU was inked on Monday by Iraqi National Security Advisor Qasim al-Araji and Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Larijani, who is in Baghdad on the first official trip abroad since assuming the post last week.

Prime Minister Mohammed Shia' al-Sudani of Iraq also oversaw the signing ceremony.

Heading a delegation, Larijani arrived in Baghdad on Monday on the first leg of a regional tour which will also take him to Lebanon.

During the meeting between Larijani and Sudani, the prime minister said Iraq is committed to enhancing relations with Iran and expanding fruitful partnerships in various fields to serve the interests of both nations.

Sudani reiterated Iraq's principled and firm stance in opposing the Israeli regime's acts of aggression against Iran and any actions that escalate conflicts at the regional and international levels.

He also expressed Iraq's support for the resumption of negotiations between Iran and the United States.

Larijani told Sudani that Iran is keen to foster relations with Iraq in various fields, particularly the railway connecting the two countries for passenger transport and linking it with the Development Road and major corridors emerging in the region.

## Gov't Spokesperson Rules Out Immediate Gasoline Price Hike



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

Tehran, August 12, 2025 — Fateme Mohajerani, spokesperson for the Iranian government, held a detailed press conference today addressing a range of key issues from fuel pricing and international relations to economic reforms and social policies. Most notably, she confirmed that there are no immediate plans to raise gasoline prices in Iran, while also extending heartfelt appreciation to the Iraqi government and people for their hospitality during the recent Arbacen pilgrimage.

Responding to growing speculation about a potential hike in gasoline prices, Mohajerani said the government is still in the consultation phase. “We must discuss this matter thoroughly before reaching any final decisions, but now is not the right time,” she said. Gasoline currently costs 1,500 toman per liter, a price she described as relatively cheap, especially for owners of expensive vehicles. She raised the question of whether the government could better allocate subsidies to benefit lower-income families rather than wealthier car owners.

“This is still just a topic under consideration, and at present, we do not have any plan to increase gasoline prices,” she stressed, adding that the government remains committed to supporting vulnerable segments of society through appropriate mechanisms.

Turning to foreign affairs, the spokesperson recounted President Ebrahim Raisi's recent official visit to Pakistan. During this trip, 12 cooperation agreements were signed, marking an important step toward increasing bilateral trade from \$3 billion to a targeted \$10 billion. Mohajerani highlighted the focus on enhancing strategic partnerships and called the visit “productive and fruitful,” reflecting Iran's growing engagement with its neighbors.

Mohajerani provided updates on several domestic economic issues. Regarding the government's longstanding plan to remove four zeros from the national currency, a measure first initiated in 2007, she said this step aims to reduce the psychological burden of inflation and facilitate structural reforms in the monetary system. The cabinet recently approved moving forward with the plan, which is expected to be implemented gradually in coordination with parliament.

Addressing concerns about rising bread prices, she pointed to sharp increases in flour costs—from 2,500 toman per kilogram in 2020 to over 20,000 toman currently—as well as guaranteed government wheat purchases and increased wages for bakery workers. “Given these factors, it is natural for bread prices to rise,” she said, urging a balanced and gradual approach due to the complexity of the production process.

On migration, Mohajerani emphasized Iran's shared cultural and religious bonds with Afghanistan, but acknowledged the need to manage migration in line with national interests. Referring to the Ministry of Interior, 75% of those who have left Iran recently did so voluntarily. The government is working to ensure humane treatment of migrants while protecting national

security and economic stability.

She also detailed new programs to support journalists, including health insurance and housing initiatives, particularly aimed at reporters in provincial areas.

Regarding changes in the Supreme National Security Council, Mohajerani described the recent appointments as “natural” and part of a strategy to bolster Iran's international negotiation capabilities. President Raisi has placed trusted figures in key roles to enhance the government's diplomatic and security apparatus.

She also spoke about the formation of the Defense Council, chaired by the president, underscoring the importance of experienced leadership to address evolving security challenges.

The government is also reviewing proposals to officially adopt the “toman” as the national currency unit, replacing the rial, which remains the official legal tender. Mohajerani explained that while the rial is the formal currency, the toman is widely used colloquially and has deeper Iranian roots. Any transition would be gradual and coordinated closely with parliament to avoid economic disruption.

Addressing concerns about the Zangazur corridor, Mohajerani rejected exaggerated media claims about border loss, stating that only a minor section near the border is affected. She reiterated the government's firm stance on preserving national sovereignty, regional stability, and preventing foreign military presence. The foreign minister has communicated these demands clearly in regional dialogues.

On energy, Mohajerani acknowledged ongoing challenges with electricity and water supply deficits. The government is prioritizing renewable energy projects, particularly solar power, and encouraging private sector participation. Public cooperation is also essential to address water shortages, given Iran's geographic realities.

Rejecting notions that Iran is isolated internationally, Mohajerani noted that government ministers actively engage in foreign visits and maintain strong ties with neighboring countries. The government's diplomatic efforts focus on regional cooperation and advancing national interests.

She emphasized that negotiations and dialogue are tools for achieving these goals, with the overarching aim of presenting an accurate image of Iran's strength and resilience globally. The diplomatic corps remains active, including recent visits by international figures such as the IAEA deputy director, underscoring Iran's commitment to constructive engagement despite external pressures.

Mohajerani concluded the briefing reaffirming the government's dedication to transparency and responsiveness to public concerns, promising that all reforms and policies would be communicated clearly to the Iranian people as they unfold.

## As Long as This Banking System Exists, The World Belongs to the Yankees

At the outset of this piece, I would like to explain the meaning of the word Yankee so that I can convey my intent more clearly to the reader.

The word Yankee has several meanings depending on the geographical region and historical context in which it is used:

In the northeastern United States (especially New England), it refers to residents of states such as Massachusetts and Connecticut. Historically, this term is often associated with hard work, frugality, and traditionalism.

In many countries (such as in Europe, Asia, and Latin America), it is used to refer to an American citizen—usually informally, and sometimes with humor or sarcasm.

This word can sometimes carry a negative connotation (especially when used by non-Americans in a derogatory tone), but within the U.S. it is usually neutral or even a point of pride (especially in New England).

In my usage here, the intent is to link the goals of the current banking system to serving the interests of the Yankees—that is, Americans.

From the moment private banking was officially introduced in Iran through British arrangements, until today—nearly 35 years later—the harms of this decision have been repeatedly discussed in economic forums. Yet no real action has been taken to prevent these obvious damages from continuing.

Among these harms are: Removal of the government's policymaking authority over the nation's monetary sovereignty; Permanent dominance of the monetary economy over the real (financial) economy; The hidden, unquantifiable realm of money creation; Constant competition to keep interest rates high; Continuation of usurious banking transactions; Directed allocation of loans according to hidden dictates from think tanks; Prolonged imbalance in operational accounts and debts to the central bank; Failure to implement socially resilient laws and resolutions; and unauthorized entry into business ownership and focus on non-banking operations.

These are only a small part of the destructive areas in Iran's economy—areas that no power seems able to halt.

In a country that claims to follow religion and the Qur'an, selling money and profiting from the mere existence of money is considered permissible, and the Qur'anic declaration of war against usury is ignored. We both consume and pay usury, staining the very soul of the Iranian Muslim nation with this forbidden practice.

Members of parliament—at least those who genuinely worry about people's livelihoods and suffer from the continuation of inflation above 40%—naïvely believe that with new laws they can equip the Central Bank to control the mafia-like flow of money. But they fail to realize that the very establishment of these banks was the doing of the Central Bank. If the Central Bank were not aligned with this system, we would not be where we are today.

Look at the exchange rate: other than the Central Bank, who raised it from 70 rials to 900,000 rials?

Look at the growth of the monetary base: who else but the Central Bank has increased its figures every year—indeed almost every month?

Look at the banks' imbalances: who, other than the Central Bank, has been responsible for their supervision and control?

If there weren't another “bowl behind this bowl” (hidden hands at work), would things have reached this point?

The Minister of Economy has little authority over the economic sphere.

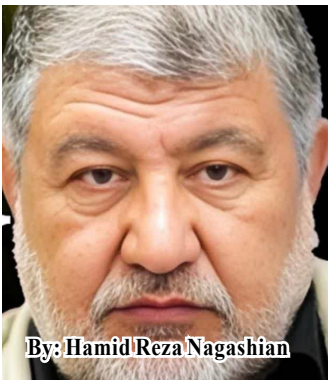
The sentence I used as the title of this brief article encapsulates everything said and unsaid: As long as this banking system exists, the world belongs to the Yankees—meaning that this banking system does nothing to benefit the Iranian people. Rather, its actions serve the interests of the inherent enemies of the Islamic Republic: the British and the Americans.

The way to save the nation lies in merging all banks into the Central Bank under governmental stewardship, with an oversight body similar to the Supreme Audit Court to supervise operations.

For more than 30 years, I have believed that the salvation of Iran's economy lies in a unified banking system with ten specialized branches. Until this is achieved, this economic patient will only deteriorate further with each passing day.

With the hope—and prayer—for the rise of genuine revolutionary resolve, not fake resolve.

May God help us all.



By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

## Pezeshkian Warns Against U.S. Hegemonic Schemes in Caucasus

TEHRAN - President Masoud Pezeshkian says regional countries must remain vigilant and cautious in the face of possible schemes by the United States to pursue its hegemonic goals in Caucasus.

In a phone conversation with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on Monday, Pezeshkian warned that the US may use a project on the construction of a transportation corridor in the Caucasus region to achieve its objectives under the guise of economic investment or promotion of peace.

He said the project must preserve Armenia's sovereignty and prevent any foreign military and security intervention.

“It must be ensured that this corridor will truly be a path of peace and development and not a tool for materializing the hegemonic goals of foreign powers.”

“The Islamic Republic of Iran, as a harbor of peace, stability, and security in the region, welcomes any agreement that leads to the promotion of peace, notably among the regional countries,” Pezeshkian said.

Azerbaijan and Armenia signed a US-brokered peace agreement on August 8 during a meeting with US President Donald Trump after decades of tensions over the long-disputed region of Karabakh.

The region has always been internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijani troops retook the region a 24-hour offensive in September 2023.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said on August 10 that Tehran welcomes any peace agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan.



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

Elsewhere in his remarks, Pezeshkian said “strategic” ties between Iran and Armenia have always been constructive and based on good neighborliness and respect for the territorial integrity of each country.

He said Tehran and Yerevan firmly oppose any attempt to disrupt deep-rooted mutual relations.

The Iranian president said Tehran has always prioritized common interests in regional relations, particularly with its neighbors.

Iran is also confident that neighboring countries also pursue a similar approach as one of their fundamental priorities, he said.

Pashinyan, for his part, praised Iran's insistence on the need to preserve Armenia's integrity and sovereignty.

He said Armenia signs no agreement unless there are guarantees that the deal will observe the interests, considerations and sensitivities of the friendly country of Iran.

Meanwhile, the prime minister's office said in a readout on Monday that Pashinyan presented to the Iranian president the outcomes of the August 8 talks in Washington.

The office underscored the opportunities the peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan is opening for the region.

The office also underscored that regional routes will function within the framework of the principles of territorial integrity, sovereignty and jurisdiction and based on reciprocity.

Pashinyan thanked the Iranian president for his objective assessments about the Washington accords.





## Iran’s Iron and Steel Export Volume Up 13%

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The Iranian Steel Producers Association has announced that iron and steel exports increased by 13% in volume during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (starting on March 21) compared to the same period last year.

The export value of iron and steel chain products in the first four months of the current year rose by 7%, reaching over \$2.3 billion.

The export volume of billet and bloom, which had experienced an 8% decline in the three months, reversed its trend in the four-month report, registering a 15% growth.

## Iran to End Insulin Imports Within Two Years



TEHRAN - Iran is set to eliminate its dependency on imported insulin and plasma within the next two years through domestic production, a senior official announced.

Mostafa Ghane'i, Secretary of the Biotechnology, Health, and Medical Technologies Headquarters at the Vice Presidency for Science, said the expansion of local production capacity is aimed at reducing foreign currency outflows and strengthening the national economy.

Speaking at a briefing on achievements in the health and medical equipment sector, Ghane'i noted that annual plasma imports cost Iran over \$400 million, while insulin imports also require significant currency expenditures. "With the completion of domestic infrastructure and production lines, the need for importing these products will be removed within two years," he said.

Emphasizing the importance of developing homegrown technology, Ghane'i stressed that Iran must continue its push for self-sufficiency, particularly in the face of ongoing international pressures in health and pharmaceuticals. "This is not only about saving foreign currency," he said. "Subsidies that previously went to foreign producers will be redirected back into the national economy."

Ghane'i highlighted Iran's strong standing in biopharmaceuticals, noting that the country currently ranks first in the region and fifth in Asia. "Even during the toughest sanctions, there was no shortage of biological medicines, which clearly demonstrates our domestic capabilities," he said.

Addressing another area of dependency, Ghane'i said Iran has launched a program to improve the genetic quality of the domestic Arian chicken breed. This, he explained, will enhance feed conversion efficiency and eventually eliminate the need to import day-old chicks. In the fisheries sector, he added, new technologies are being applied to boost productivity in response to climate change challenges.

## Declining Stigma of Smoking Among Women



TEHRAN - The Director General of the Mental, Social, and Addiction Health Office at Iran's Ministry of Health has warned that the stigma surrounding smoking among women is fading, noting that cultural changes are increasingly visible on city streets.

Mohammadreza Shalbafan, in an interview with ILNA, discussed the relative rise in addiction rates in the country. He said various studies on the prevalence of mental health disorders and substance use have been conducted, including the second National Mental Health Survey, completed in 2022 (1401 in the Iranian calendar) and recently published.

According to Shalbafan, official data on drug use — including prevalence rates — is provided by the Anti-Narcotics Headquarters. The ministry's available figures are compiled from multiple surveys and institutional sources.

"Unfortunately, it seems that for certain substances, especially in recent years, there has been a rise in both prevalence and incidence," Shalbafan said. "A significant part of this increase relates to higher consumption among women, particularly in the case of tobacco products such as cigarettes. This is due to several factors, including the overall rise in usage across society and, importantly, the influence of cultural and social issues."

Shalbafan noted that social harms have also increased alarmingly in recent years. He pointed to shifts in cultural attitudes as one of the main reasons behind the surge in substance use.

"We can clearly see these changes on the streets of our cities," he said. "The extent of tobacco use among women has risen noticeably compared to previous years. This is visible not only in public spaces but also in cinemas, streaming platforms, and other media. In many films and series, scenes now show women consuming alcohol, drugs, or tobacco."

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK



## President Calls for Product Identification System to Combat Smuggling and Hoarding

TEHRAN - President Masoud Pezeshkian emphasized the urgent need for implementing a nationwide electronic system to assign identification codes to all domestically produced and imported goods, saying it could significantly curb smuggling, prevent hoarding, and reduce national costs.

Speaking during a visit to the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance on Tuesday, Pezeshkian told the minister and senior officials that product traceability could be piloted at the provincial level before nationwide implementation. "If we can electronically register every product produced or imported, we will prevent many violations. This could transform the economy and save the country," he said, adding that universities could play a key role in the project.

The president also outlined decentralization as a core strategy for his administration, urging the transfer of more authority to governors and local officials. He noted that local tax collection would likely cause less public dissatisfaction because it could address province-specific conditions.

Pezeshkian stressed the importance of completing projects before launching new ones, criticizing the country's tendency to start many initiatives without seeing them through: "It's like digging hundreds of 90-meter wells and never reaching water, instead of digging one well 100 meters deep."

On social welfare, he said subsidies must be targeted toward vulnerable groups. "Some subsidy allocations were wrong from the start," he remarked, suggesting the

reallocation of funds from unproductive organizations to needy households. He also proposed shorter working hours in some government offices to cut energy use.

The president criticized inefficiencies in state-run institutions, comparing public hospitals unfavorably to profitable private ones. He also warned against unchecked urban expansion in Tehran and other major cities, citing severe water shortages and environmental risks. He urged incentives for industries to relocate toward the south and Persian Gulf regions.

Addressing customs operations, Pezeshkian called for greater private-sector involvement, closure of unprofitable customs offices, and stronger focus on export markets in Central Asia and Afghanistan.

On economic monopolies, he argued that lifting certain import restrictions would lower prices for essential goods, even when bought at free-market exchange rates. Regarding privatization, he suggested transferring management of industrial units rather than selling them at undervalued prices, predicting that this would improve profitability.

Pezeshkian reaffirmed the government's commitment to protecting low-income citizens, encouraging the use of local expertise for economic policy-making. He acknowledged surplus staff in some public offices but proposed redefining their duties rather than dismissals, alongside better cost management to free up resources for the underprivileged.

## Iran's Petrochemical Sector Needs \$24b Investment to Meet 7th Plan Targets

TEHRAN - The Special Assistant to the Deputy Oil Minister for Petrochemical Affairs has announced that Iran's total nominal petrochemical production capacity must reach 131.5 million tons by the end of the 7th Development Plan. Achieving this goal will require an estimated \$24 billion in investment, making innovative financing models essential.

Afshin Gholamali-Pour, in an interview with IRNA, outlined Iran's petrochemical roadmap, describing technical know-how as the key to maintaining a competitive edge in global markets. He noted that the current industry reflects both decades of achievements and the accumulation of longstanding challenges.

He said that in 2024 (Iranian year 1403), the sector's nominal capacity reached 96.6 million tons annually, with 76 complexes operating in fields ranging from methanol to polymers and aromatic products. Actual production reached about 66 million tons, with \$11 billion worth sold domestically and nearly \$13 billion exported.

Feedstock and fuel for the industry are primarily supplied by oil refineries, gas plants, NGLs, and gas fields — equivalent to 1.2 million barrels of crude oil per day. Despite its vast infrastructure, the sector faces feedstock shortages, investment hurdles, and the urgent need for technology upgrades.

Under the 7th Plan, total capacity should rise from 96.6 million tons to 131.5 million tons, with the propylene chain growing 344% — from 1.03 to 4.6 million tons. The methanol downstream chain is projected to grow 391% (from 2.4 to 11.6 million tons), while the ethylene downstream chain (excluding polyethylene) will expand 287% (from 0.18 to 0.7 million tons). Polyethylene capacity will rise from 5.15 to 8.6 million tons, and aromatics from 2.28 to 3 million tons, marking a shift from raw material exports to value-added products.

Sixty-six projects form the backbone of this expansion, including downstream ethylene and propylene facilities, GTO and MTO units, methanol and its derivatives, urea and ammonia plants, aromatic production, and infrastructure and utility projects.

Stable feedstock supply is described as the industry's "lifeline," with any disruption quickly affecting the entire production and



export chain. In 2023 (Iranian year 1402), feedstock gas shortages reached around 42% of nominal capacity due to declining gas field pressure, seasonal limitations, competition from other energy consumers, and weaknesses in transmission infrastructure.

Proposed solutions include upstream field development with investment from petrochemical holding companies, flare gas recovery, using alternative feedstocks like coal, SNG, and naphtha, improving energy efficiency, and allocating saved gas to petrochemical plants.

Several upstream development projects are already underway, such as Bakhtar Petrochemical Group and Petrofarhang Company's participation in the Gordian and Pazanan gas fields. These projects are at various stages, from data exchange to final contract signing.

Financing options under consideration include long-term loans from foreign banks and institutions (especially China), forming public joint-stock companies, creating private investment funds, issuing Sukuk and hybrid securities in the capital market, using National Development Fund facilities, establishing banking consortia for mega-projects, and short-term foreign currency loans for strategic initiatives.

Gholamali-Pour identified technical expertise as the heart of competitiveness, highlighting the role of the Petrochemical Research and Technology Company in localizing licenses, partnering with foreign firms for R&D, and negotiating with technology-transfer-ready companies. Equipment procurement remains hindered by customs issues, currency allocation delays, non-release of priority goods, and unreliable domestic suppliers.

On regulatory and management challenges, he cited complex approvals, environmental restrictions, conflicts with local stakeholders, weak contractor teams, and the need to revise currency adjustment rates. He called for amending government resolutions, revising laws, improving EPC contractor qualifications, and strengthening the National Petrochemical Company's regulatory role in policymaking, monitoring, and arbitration.

## Pasargadae: Cradle of Iranian Culture and Civilization



TEHRAN - The Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, emphasizing the unparalleled role of this region in Iran's historical identity, stated that the protection of cultural heritage must simultaneously uphold national sovereignty and citizens' rights, and achieving this balance requires solidarity between the government and the people.

Seyed Reza Salehi-Amiri, Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, during his field visit to Pasargadae on Monday, August 11, 2025, and in a meeting with the media, described Pasargadae as "a source of pride and the unique birthplace of Iranian culture and civilization." He added:

"This land is not merely a geographical location — it is the identity and spiritual birth certificate of the Iranian nation, to which every Iranian, anywhere in the world, belongs and cherishes."

Referring to the importance of carefully managing the boundaries, core zones, surrounding highlands, and construction activities in this historic site, Salehi-Amiri stressed:

"In facing these challenges, we follow two parallel and equally important principles — the 'right of national sovereignty' and the 'rights of the people' — because preserving national heritage is impossible without safeguarding citizens' rights and public interests."

He added that any decision regarding the protection of this invaluable heritage must take into account both public and private rights, and the people, like the government, must play an active and committed role in this process.

The minister expressed his appreciation for the efforts of the parliamentary representative of Marvdasht, Pasargadae, and Arsanjan, noting that parliamentarians and local officials are working diligently alongside the ministry to address issues in the region. He assured that the concerns of local residents are fully heard and pursued.

Highlighting the governor's prioritization of cultural heritage, civilization, and tourism in Fars Province, Salehi-Amiri said this strategic cooperation will pave the way for tangible advances in the protection and development of tourism in the region.

## Iraq's Ban on Iranian MD Aircraft Unrelated to Safety



TEHRAN - The spokesperson for Iran's Civil Aviation Organization has clarified that Iraq's ban on MD aircraft is not related to flight safety concerns, but rather to ground service limitations at Iraqi airports.

Mehdi Ramazani told ILNAK that Iraqi airports lack the necessary handling facilities for MD-type aircraft. "This restriction is not exclusive to Iranian airlines. Other foreign carriers operating MD aircraft are also subject to the same ban," he said.

Ramazani noted that, following negotiations, Iraq has agreed to temporarily allow MD aircraft during the Arbacen pilgrimage period, adding around 100,000 seats to available capacity. "Our main goal is to increase capacity and improve services for Arbacen pilgrims," he stressed.

According to Ramazani, extra flights have been scheduled for the pilgrimage season, and ticket availability is being regularly updated on approved sales websites. He advised passengers to book both outbound and return tickets early, as demand for return flights typically spikes closer to Arbacen.

He explained that while outbound Arbacen flights are spread over more than two weeks, the bulk of return flights occur within just three days, creating a surge in demand.

Ramazani also confirmed that there have been no reports of ticket overpricing during this period, with all authorized vendors complying with pricing regulations.



## EU Will Work on 19th Russia Sanctions Package

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - European Union foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said on Monday that the EU will work on a 19th package of sanctions against Russia and warned against concessions to Moscow.

“As far as Russia has not agreed to full and unconditional ceasefire, we should not even discuss any concessions,” Kallas said in a statement.

“The sequencing of the steps is important. First an unconditional ceasefire with a strong monitoring system and ironclad security guarantees,” she said, adding that “we will work on a 19th package of sanctions”.



## Macron Calls for UN-Backed Gaza Mission



PARIS (Dispatches) - French President Emmanuel Macron on Monday denounced Israel's plan to expand military operations in Gaza City as a “disaster waiting to happen”. He pushed for a permanent ceasefire and a UN-mandated international coalition to stabilise the Gaza Strip, protect civilians and support Palestinian governance, and urged the Security Council to act quickly.

Macron on Monday condemned Israel's plan to expand its operations and take control of Gaza City as a disaster waiting to happen and proposed an international coalition under a United Nations mandate to stabilise Gaza.

“This war must end now with a permanent ceasefire,” Macron said in a statement, adding Israel's plan to take control of Gaza City was “a disaster of unprecedented gravity and a headlong rush into permanent war”.

Last week, Israel's security cabinet approved a plan to take control of Gaza City, in a move that expanded its military operations in the shattered Palestinian territory and drew strong criticism at home and abroad.

“The Israeli cabinet's announcement of an expansion of its operations in Gaza City and the Mawasi camps and for a re-occupation heralds a disaster of unprecedented gravity waiting to happen and of a drift towards a never-ending war,” said Macron.

“Israeli hostages and the people of Gaza will continue to be the primary victims of this strategy,” Macron said.

# UN, EU, Media Groups Condemn Israeli Strike That Killed Journalists in Gaza

GAZA CITY (Dispatches) - Condemnations poured in from the United Nations, the EU and media rights groups Monday after an Israeli strike killed an Al Jazeera news team in Gaza, as Palestinians mourned the journalists and Israel accused one of them of being a Hamas militant.

Dozens of Gazans stood amid bombed-out buildings in the courtyard of Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City to pay their respects to Anas al-Sharif, a prominent Al Jazeera correspondent aged 28, and four of his colleagues killed on Sunday.

Hospital director Mohammed Abu Salmiya said a sixth journalist, freelance reporter Mohammed Al-Khaldi, was killed in the strike that targeted the Al Jazeera team.

Mourners including men wearing black journalists' flak jackets carried their bodies, wrapped in white shrouds with their faces exposed, through narrow alleys to their graves.

Israel confirmed it had targeted Sharif, whom it labelled a “terrorist” affiliated with Hamas, alleging he “posed as a journalist”.

Al Jazeera said four other employees — correspondent Mohammed Qreiqeh, and cameramen Ibrahim Zaher, Mohammed Noufal and Moamen Aliwa — were killed when the strike hit a tent set up for journalists outside the main gate of Al-Shifa.

An Israeli military statement accused Sharif of heading a Hamas “terrorist cell” and being “responsible for advancing rocket attacks” against Israelis.

The military released documents alleging to show the date of Sharif's enlistment with Hamas in 2013, an injury report from 2017 and the name of his military unit and rank.

According to local journalists who knew him, Sharif had worked at the start of his career with a Hamas communication office, where his role was to publicise events organised by the group that has ruled the Gaza Strip since 2006.

Sharif was one of Al Jazeera's most recognisable faces working in Gaza, providing daily reports on the now 22-month-old war.

Media freedom groups have condemned the Israeli strike on journalists, which the UN human rights agency called a “grave breach of international humanitarian law”.

The European Union's foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said Monday that “the EU condemns the killing of five Al Jazeera journalists.”



A posthumous message, written by Sharif in April in case of his death, was published online saying he had been silenced and urging people “not to forget Gaza”.

In July, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) called for his protection following online posts by an Israeli military spokesman.

The group had accused Israel of a “pattern” of labelling journalists militants “without providing credible evidence”, and said the military had levelled similar accusations against media workers in Gaza including Al Jazeera staff.

“International law is clear that active combatants are the only justified targets in a war setting,” Jodie Ginsberg, CPJ's chief executive, told AFP.

Unless Israel “can demonstrate that Anas al-Sharif was still an active combatant, then there is no justification for his killing.”

Al Jazeera called the attack “a desperate attempt to silence voices exposing the Israeli occupation”, and described Sharif as “one of Gaza's bravest journalists”.

The Qatari broadcaster also said the strike followed “repeated incitement” and calls by Israeli officials to target Sharif and his colleagues.

Reporters Without Borders says nearly 200 journalists have been killed in the war, which was sparked by Hamas's deadly October 2023 attack on Israel.

Israel prevents international reporters from entering Gaza, except on occasional tightly controlled trips with

the military.

The strike on the news team in Gaza City came days after the Israeli security cabinet approved plans to send troops into the area, a decision met with mounting domestic and international criticism.

Netanyahu on Sunday said the military will conquer the remaining quarter or so of the territory not yet controlled by Israeli troops — including much of Gaza City and Al-Mawasi, an Israeli-designated safe zone where huge numbers of Palestinians have sought refuge.

The plan, which Israeli media reported had triggered bitter disagreement between the government and military leadership, drew condemnation from protesters in Israel and numerous countries, including Israeli allies.

Notably Germany, a major weapons supplier and staunch ally, announced the suspension of shipments of any arms that could be used in Gaza.

Australia said it would join a growing list of Western nations in recognising a Palestinian state.

## Colombian Presidential Hopeful Uribe Dies Two Months After Shooting



BOGOTA (Dispatches) - Colombian Senator and presidential hopeful Miguel Uribe, who was shot in the head at a campaign event two months ago, died in the early hours of Monday at the age of 39, the hospital treating him said.

Uribe, a member of a prominent political family and a lawmaker for the right-wing opposition, was shot in Bogota on June 7 where he was speaking to try to secure his party's nomination for 2026 elections.

His wife, Maria Claudia Tarazona, announced his death on social media. “I ask God to show me the way to learn to live without you,” she wrote. “Rest in peace, love of my life, I will take care of our children.”

The attack was the worst outbreak of political violence in some two decades and evoked memories of the turbulent years of the 1980s and 1990s, when four presidential candidates were murdered in separate attacks blamed on drug cartels.

“The investigation should be deepened. It will be the appropriate authorities, helped by international experts, who will give information when the time comes,” President Gustavo Petro said in a post on X. “Every time a Colombian is murdered, it is a defeat for Colombia and for life.”

The capital's Santa Fe Foundation hospital - where supporters held regular vigils during Uribe's treatment and repeated operations - said over the weekend his condition had worsened because of a hemorrhage in his central nervous system. On Monday, it said he had died at 1:56 a.m. (0656 GMT).

# U.S. Extends Tariff Truce With China for 90 Days

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - U.S. President Donald Trump on Monday ordered a delay in the reimposition of higher tariffs on Chinese goods, hours before a trade truce between Washington and Beijing was due to expire.

The White House's halt on steeper tariffs will be in place until November 10.

“I have just signed an Executive Order that will extend the Tariff Suspension on China for another 90 days,” Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform.

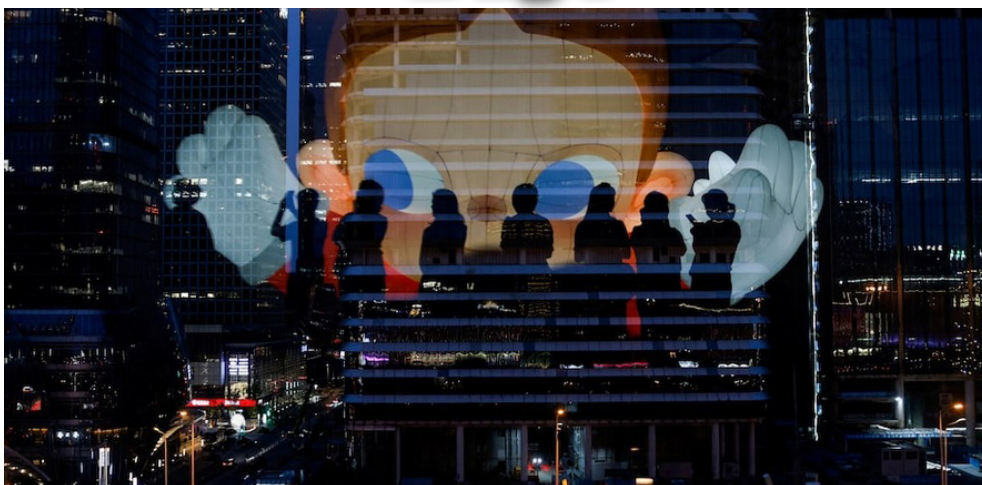
While the United States and China slapped escalating tariffs on each other's products this year, bringing them to prohibitive triple-digit levels and snarling trade, both countries in May agreed to temporarily lower them.

Their 90-day halt of steeper levies had been due to expire Tuesday.

Around the same time that Trump confirmed the new extension, Chinese state media Xinhua news agency published a joint statement from US-China talks in Stockholm saying it would also extend its side of the truce.

China will continue suspending its earlier tariff hike for 90 days starting August 12 while retaining a 10-percent duty, the report said. It would also “take or maintain necessary measures to suspend or remove non-tariff countermeasures against the United States, as agreed in the Geneva joint declaration,” Xinhua reported.

In the executive order posted Tuesday to its website, the White House reiterated its position that there are “large and persistent annual U.S. goods trade deficits” and they “constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and economy of the United States.”



The order acknowledged Washington's ongoing discussions with Beijing “to address the lack of trade reciprocity in our economic relationship” and noted that China has continued to “take significant steps toward remedying” the U.S. complaints.

The 90-day extension means the truce is now set to expire just after midnight on November 10.

“Beijing will be happy to keep the US-China negotiation going, but it is unlikely to make concessions,” warned William Yang, an analyst at the International Crisis Group.

He believes China sees its leverage over rare earth exports as a strong one, and that Beijing will likely use it to pressure Washington.

U.S.-China Business Council president Sean Stein said the current

extension is “critical to give the two governments time to negotiate an agreement” providing much-needed certainty for companies to make plans.

A trade deal, in turn, would “pave the way for a Trump-Xi summit this fall,” said Asia Society Policy Institute senior vice president Wendy Cutler.

But Cutler, herself a former US trade official, said: “This will be far from a walk in the park.”

Even as both countries reached a pact to cool tensions after high level talks in Geneva in May, the de-escalation has been shaky.

Key economic officials convened in London in June as disagreements emerged and US officials accused their counterparts of violating the pact. Policymakers met again in Stockholm last month.

Trump said in a social media post Sunday that he hoped China will “quickly quadruple its soybean orders,” adding this would be a way to balance trade with the United States.

As part of their May truce, fresh U.S. tariffs targeting China were reduced to 30 percent and the corresponding level from China was cut to 10 percent.

Separately, since returning to the presidency in January, Trump has slapped a 10-percent “reciprocal” tariff on almost all trading partners, aimed at addressing trade practices Washington deemed unfair.

This surged to varying steeper levels last Thursday for dozens of economies.

Major partners like the European Union, Japan and South Korea now see a 15-percent US duty on many products, while the level went as high as 41 percent for Syria.

# Trump Deploys Troops, Takes Control of Washington DC Police in Crime Crackdown

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Donald Trump deployed military and federal law enforcement to curb violent crime in Washington, seeking to cement his claim to be a “law and order” president with a crackdown that he said could be expanded to other major U.S. cities.

The Republican leader said he would place the capital's Metropolitan Police under federal government control while also sending the National Guard onto the streets of the US capital.

The overwhelmingly Democratic city faces allegations from Republican politicians that it is overrun by crime, plagued by homelessness and financially mismanaged — although violent offences are down.

“This is Liberation Day in DC, and we're going to take our capital back,” the president told reporters at the White House.

Trump — a convicted felon who granted blanket clemency to nearly 1,600 people involved in the 2021 U.S. Capitol riot in Washington — has complained that local police and prosecutors aren't tough enough.



The administration says 800 DC National Guardsmen — potentially backed up by other “specialised” Guard units — will be deployed to the city of 700,000.

The move was slammed by Democrats, including House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, who said the aim was to “further the personal and political agenda of a wannabe king.”

Richard Stengel, a former undersecretary of state in Barack Obama's administration, pointed out that Washington is not among the most dangerous US cities.

“Throughout history, autocrats use a false pretext to impose government control over local law enforcement as a prelude to a more national takeover,” he posted on X.

“That's far more dangerous than the situation he says he is fixing.”

As Trump was speaking at the White House, several dozen demonstrators gathered outside.



## Zverev Rolls Past Home Hope Into Cincinnati Third Round



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - German third seed Alexander Zverev swatted aside home hope Nishesh Basavareddy 6-3 6-3 in the second round of the Cincinnati Open, as Canadian Open winner Ben Shelton advanced when Argentina's Camilo Ugo Carabelli retired injured.

The 2021 champion Zverev never faced a break and closed out the evening programme on the Grandstand with one of a dozen aces across the match, as he tuned out the rowdy U.S. crowd that was squarely in his opponent's corner.

He will meet American Brandon Nakashima in the third round.

Fresh off winning the biggest title of his career in Toronto, American Shelton was up a set and a break when Ugo Carabelli stopped short and clutched his knee in pain in the fourth game of the second set.

The Argentine tried to play on after taking a medical timeout but could not continue, clearing a path for Shelton to next face Spaniard Roberto Bautista Agut, who beat Briton Cam Norrie 6-4 6-3 earlier in the day.

Meanwhile world number one Aryna Sabalenka kept her Cincinnati Open title defence alive by claiming a 7-6(3) 4-6 7-6(5) victory over Emma Raducanu in a marathon third-round clash, while men's top seed Jannik Sinner overcame Canadian Gabriel Diallo.

Fresh off their third-round clash at Wimbledon last month, Sabalenka and Raducanu produced another epic contest, featuring a 13-deuce game in the third set, before the 27-year-old Belarusian sealed victory in three hours and nine minutes.

Sabalenka relied on her trademark powerful serve to hold firm in the key moments, winning two tiebreaks to take her tally to 18 for the season, the most by any women's singles player in the professional era.

Despite the defeat, Raducanu seems to be finding her best form just in time for this month's U.S. Open at Flushing Meadows, where she triumphed in 2021. The 22-year-old Briton outscored Sabalenka in total points won, 125-123.

"I'm really happy to see her healthy. I can see she's improving," Sabalenka said of Raducanu.

"Happy to get through this match. I really hope tomorrow I have a day off."

Sabalenka next faces Spaniard Jessica Bouzas Maneiro in the last 16.

Men's defending champion Sinner reached the last 16 with a 6-2 7-6(6) victory over Diallo, stretching his winning streak on hardcourts to 23 matches.

The 23-year-old four-times Grand Slam, whose clash with Diallo was delayed by a fire alarm before the players continued through the noise, next faces the winner of Tommy Paul and Adrian Mannarino.

"I feel like today was a very difficult day at the office," Sinner said. "He was serving very well, especially in the second set. Against big servers you always have to find the right balance at the back of the court.

"Today I struggled a bit at times. But still very happy. I need these tough matches ... Getting used to very difficult situations. I'm very happy this happened before a Grand Slam.

## Rose, Fleetwood Clinch Ryder Cup Spots



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - With their performances at the FedEx St. Jude Championship, England's Justin Rose and Tommy Fleetwood clinched spots on Team Europe for the Ryder Cup next month against the United States.

Rose, who won the \$20 million tournament in Memphis in a playoff, and Fleetwood, who struggled down the stretch to finish one shot off the pace, earned enough points to join Northern Ireland's Rory McIlroy as automatic qualifiers for the competition on Sept. 26-28 at Bethpage Black in Farmingdale, N.Y.

Team Europe captain Luke Donald is required to select the top six players in the Europe Team Rankings when the British Masters concludes on Aug. 24. Donald gets to choose the other six golfers to round out his team, which will defend the Cup it won in 2023 in Italy.

"Amazing to have both of these guys back on the Team," Donald wrote on X above a Ryder Cup Europe post on Rose and Fleetwood making the team. "They bring so much both on and off the course. Let's Go!"

Scotland's Robert MacIntyre, England's Tyrrell Hatton and Austria's Sepp Straka hold fourth through sixth place heading into this week's play. MacIntyre will be part of the BMW Championship field at Caves Valley Golf Club in Owings Mills, Md. Straka, however, withdrew from the \$20 million tournament on Monday for family reasons. Hatton will be playing the LIV Tour event in Indianapolis, where he can not collect points.

Ireland's Shane Lowry, Denmark's Rasmus Hojgaard and Sweden's Ludvig Aberg are within striking range of being automatic qualifiers. Lowry trails Straka for sixth by just 21.16 points. As long as Lowry completes the BMW Championship this weekend, he'll earn enough points to climb past Hatton and Straka. Competitors at the BMW Championship receive 1.5 points for each \$1,000 they earn.

## Steelers DT Heyward Willing to Miss Games in Contract Dispute



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Pittsburgh Steelers star defensive tackle Cameron Heyward insinuated Monday that he is willing to sit out some regular-season games to get a better contract.

The disgruntled Heyward has been with the team in training camp but recently began sitting out practice sessions amid a hold-in.

"My goal is to be out here, and I don't know what's going to happen," Heyward told reporters on Monday. "I've had to be honest with myself to be ready for every option. And has it gone the way I wanted to go? No.

"If it did, I would be out there playing and practicing, but I'd like to put this in the rearview mirror and worry about ball and worry about the New York Jets (in) Week 1."

Heyward, a seven-time Pro Bowl selection, signed a two-year, \$29 million extension with the Steelers last September. It keeps him with the team through the 2026 season.

Defensive player salaries have spiked upwards and Pittsburgh linebacker T.J. Watt received a three-year, \$123 million deal in the offseason with \$108 million guaranteed. The \$41 million annual average set a record for defensive players.

The 36-year-old Heyward wants his piece of the financial pie.

"I'm looking to be valued," Heyward said. "... I know what I bring to this team and what I'm capable of on and off the field, so it's hard for me, after the year I've had (in 2024), to really justify playing at the number I'm playing at.

"I understand. I signed a contract last year, but to be completely honest with you, when I signed that, I told him when I have an All-Pro year expecting me to come back and you can look at the contract and see what it was. But I think everybody kind of giggled a little bit, but in my head, I used it as motivation to go out there and prove it."

## Liverpool Need to Be Better After Community Shield Defeat

LONDON (Dispatches) - After his Liverpool team lost the Community Shield in a penalty shootout to Crystal Palace, their manager, Arne Slot admitted the difficulty of bedding in the summer's new signings.

"Sometimes you need some time to adapt offensively or defensively," said Slot. Two new arrivals in striker Hugo Ekitiké and right-back Jeremie Frimpong got on the scoresheet but Palace, who might have won the game in normal time during their impressive second-half showing, exposed the Premier League champions' weaknesses.

Florian Wirtz in a No 10 role and Milos Kerkez as an overlapping left-back on the opposite side of Frimpong made for a highly attacking Liverpool lineup. "In the whole pre-season we saw we are able to create more opportunities, chances, we dominate maybe even more," said Slot. "Now we are better in creating and getting promising situations than we were in the whole of last season but it is also true that we have conceded two against [Athletic Club] Bilbao and two again today.

"We need to be better defensively," Slot admitted: "It is disappointing of course, if you go in front and you are not able



to win the game. It was close and there were points where I thought we could win it but it went to penalties and they were better in that moment."

Slot refused to panic before his team's defence of the Premier League title, which kicks off on Friday against Bournemouth. He said: "We are Liverpool, the pressure is always on. Even if we bring 10 players in, or no players in, there is always pressure when you wear a Liverpool shirt."

He offered measured credit to Wirtz and Ekitiké: "These are players we have brought in for quite a lot of money so they know how to handle the pressure. Both of them played a good game."

The Palace manager Oliver Glasner was delighted to add further silverware to last season's FA Cup. He said: "I have to give big credit to the players for this win today, we came back and were able to decide the game on penalties. We were on the same level as Liverpool and it was a big performance."

## Palace Lose Appeal Against Europa League Demotion at CAS

LONDON (Dispatches) - Crystal Palace's appeal against UEFA's decision to drop them from the Europa League to the third-tier Conference League was dismissed by the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

UEFA demoted Palace while allowing Olympique Lyonnais to play in the Europa League as, at the time of assessment on March 1, the Eagle Football Group were majority owners of Lyon while their chairman John Textor owned a controlling stake in Palace.

Nottingham Forest, who finished seventh in the Premier League last season, will replace Palace in the Europa League.

"After considering the evidence, the panel found that John Textor, founder of Eagle Football Holdings, had shares in CPFC and OL and was a board member with decisive influence over both clubs at the time of UEFA's assessment date," the CAS said in a statement.

