

The Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) Has Reported a 1% Increase in the Country's Annual Inflation Rate for the Calendar Month to Late August, as Consumer Price Index Had Reached 370.5 in the Year to August 22, an Increase of 36.3% From the Year Before

IRAN NEWS

Russia and China Upbraided a Move by Britain, France and Germany to Unleash the Snapback Mechanism of Sanctions on Iran, Warning Against the Repercussions of Imposing Curbs on the Islamic Republic's Peaceful Nuclear Program

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Iran Emerged Victorious in Israeli-U.S. War



TEHRAN (PressTV) - A senior Iranian military commander says the Islamic Republic emerged victorious in the 12-day war of aggression by the United States and the Israeli regime in June and managed to impose defeat on the enemy.

"The enemy, using advanced weapons and full-scale hybrid warfare, sought to overthrow the Islamic establishment within a week, but it made a mistake in its calculations," Deputy Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces for Cultural and Software Affairs, Brigadier General Abolfazl Shekarchi, said in a ceremony to honor media activists and reporters on Thursday.

He added that the Iranian nation's steadfastness, the wise leadership of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei and great efforts of the Armed Forces played a crucial role in the country's victory against the enemies in the imposed war.

He noted that many Western countries supported the Israeli regime in its imposed war on Iran, saying they had no choice but to propose a ceasefire.

The Iranian commander emphasized the importance of paying attention to soft and media war, and praised Iranian media workers and reporters who helped the brave fighters in the war and played an effective role in the country's final victory.

Inspections of Nuclear Sites Contingent on Agreement on IAEA Cooperation



TEHRAN (IRNA) - The spokesperson for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) says any inspection of the nuclear sites by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will be possible if there is an agreement on the framework of cooperation between the Agency and Tehran.

Behrouz Kamalvandi made the remarks during an interview when asked about the presence of IAEA inspectors in the country, as well as conditions and details of Iran's cooperation with the UN nuclear watchdog.

He said that in line with the scheduled operation of the Bushehr nuclear power plant and the need to ensure a timely electricity supply to the national grid, it has been agreed that IAEA inspectors will supervise the plant's fuel replacement.

Kamalvandi added, "It is clear that any inspections will take place only after Iran and the IAEA reach an agreement on the framework of cooperation arrangements and after the approval of the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), in accordance with the recent parliamentary legislation."

Following two rounds of talks between Iran and the IAEA in Tehran and Vienna, the agency's inspectors have returned to Iran, with the consent of the SNSC, to oversee technical operations at the Bushehr plant.

Earlier, Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi, after a meeting with the Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Commission, explained that the presence of IAEA inspectors was necessary once the decision to replace fuel at the Bushehr plant had been made.

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK



Iranian Nation Proved to World Steadfastness in Defending Homeland in 12-Day War

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - President Masoud Pezeshkian has lauded the sacrifices of the Iranian nation in the recent U.S.-Israeli-imposed war on the country, underlining that the public proved to the world their loyalty and steadfastness in defense of their homeland.

Pezeshkian made the statement in a meeting commemorating the martyrs of the 12-day war of US and Israeli aggression on Iran in June that claimed the lives of more than 1,000 innocent people, including women and children, as well as top military officials and scientific figures.

"They thought that by assassinating Iran's commanders and senior officials, they would paralyze the country, and then the Iranian people would support them, but not only did their sinister goal not materialize, but all the people of Iran, even those who had not previously treated well, stood firm and defended their country, because no free human being sells their homeland and bows to bullying and coercion," the president said.

"The commitment and resilience of the Iranian nation in the 12-day war once again proved their loyalty and steadfastness in defending their homeland to the world," he added. "Today, we grieve before them and will utilize all our capabilities to serve them and resolve the country's problems through interaction with neighboring, friendly, and aligned countries. We are certain that together, we will build a bright future for our country."

Pointing to the double standards and hypocrisy of the so-called democracy and human rights advocates regarding the crimes of the Israeli regime against the Iranian nation in June, Pezeshkian said, "A handful of tie-wearing individuals, with false pretenses, speak of human

rights from the platforms at their disposal, while the regime they support bombs innocent women and children. What sin or crime did these beloved ones, who were at sleep in their homes, commit to be massacred by this criminal regime?"

The Iranian president underlined that the countries claiming to support democracy and human rights, "with ultimate audacity, do not see the brutal crimes of a regime that terrorizes and kills throughout the region, but accuse the Iranian nation, which is itself a victim of terrorism, of stoking insecurity in the region."

Stressing that the goal of the pressures exerted by the US and Western countries against the Islamic Republic is to turn our country into a disarmed, weak, and defenseless nation against their brutal attacks and aggression, Pezeshkian said, "We fear no threat... We detest war and seek peace and tranquility, but we will respond decisively to any aggression."

The Israeli regime launched a blatant and unprovoked onslaught against Iran on June 13, triggering a 12-day war that killed at least 1,064 people in the country, including military commanders, nuclear scientists, and ordinary civilians.

The United States also jumped on the bandwagon by bombing three Iranian nuclear sites in a grave violation of international law.

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

On June 24, Iran, through its successful retaliatory operations against both the Israeli regime and the US, managed to impose a halt to the terrorist aggression.

Iran's Intel Command Crushed Enemy's Plot in 12-Day Israeli War

TEHRAN - The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) says Iran's intelligence operations inside Israel drove the success of the Islamic Republic's missile and drone strikes against the occupying entity in the 12-day war, calling the regime's intelligence failures a key factor in its defeat.

In remarks on Thursday, IRGC spokesman Brigadier General Ali Mohammad Naini stressed that that intelligence operations inside the Zionist regime managed to resolve many existing ambiguities and further complete the IRGC's information bank.

"This information bank was highly effective in each of the missile and drone attacks, using data obtained through hacking, infiltration, and the collection of new intelligence, and one of the main reasons for the enemy's defeat in the war was their intelligence failure," he said.

On June 13, Israel launched a blatant and unprovoked act of aggression against Iran, triggering a 12-day war that killed at least 1,064 people in the country, including military commanders, nuclear scientists, and ordinary civilians.

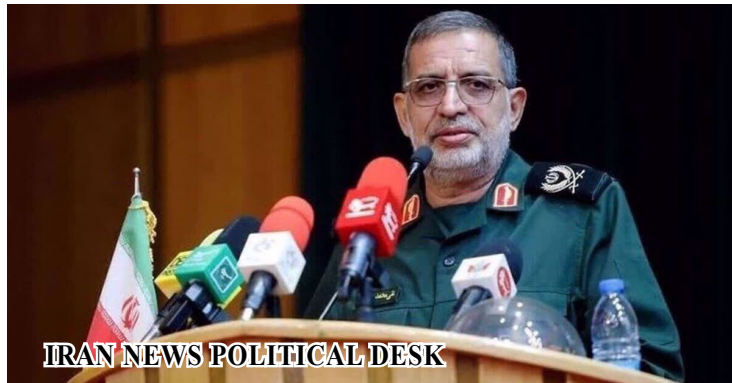
The United States also entered the war by bombing three Iranian nuclear sites in a grave violation of international law.

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

Referring to the success of the IRGC's operations in uncovering and neutralizing terrorist networks and arms trafficking in Tabriz, Mazandaran, Isfahan, and other regions, General Naeini said "these measures played a decisive role in preventing enemy attacks."

"Most of the counter-revolutionary leaders were arrested before the start of the war, and during the twelve days of the war, not a single terrorist operation by organized groups took place," the deputy of public relations the IRGC stressed.

IRGC spokesman also touched on the extensive details of the enemy's planning against the Islamic Republic before and during the 12-day war, saying, "The counter-revolutionaries had already divided responsibilities, and terrorist operations were planned for Tehran from the



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northwest, southeast, and even inside Iraq and Pakistan, but all of these plots were thwarted."

Furthermore, he also pointed to special successes gained by the IRGC in confronting major arms smugglers in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region and Pakistan, as well as operations against the Mujahedin Khalq (MKO) terrorist group.

Elsewhere in his remarks, General Naeini referred to the sense of victory and confidence among the Iranian people following the Israeli-

US military aggression against Iran, stressing, "Eighty-two percent of the nation's people believe in Iran's victory."

"Credible global polls show that more than 60 percent of public opinion in the region and over 80 percent of the Iranian people believe that Iran emerged victorious in the war, and that the enemy failed to achieve any of its strategic objectives, including creating a rift between the nation and the government. On the contrary, national cohesion was strengthened," he emphasized.

On June 24, Iran, through its successful retaliatory operations against both the Israeli regime and the US, managed to impose a halt to the terrorist aggression.

"Despite sanctions and pressures, the country's economy did not collapse, prices stabilized, and daily life continued. The chain of command, control, and response was preserved and implemented quickly. Even with the martyrdom of some commanders, operations continued without interruption, and more than 120 countries and international organizations condemned the actions of the Zionist regime," General Naeini added.

Separately on Thursday, Deputy Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces for Cultural and Software Affairs, Brigadier General Abolfazl Shekarchi, also stressed that Iran emerged victorious in the 12-day war of aggression in June, saying that the enemy "made a mistake in its calculations" that led to its defeat against the Islamic Republic.

Iran Says Europe Lacks Legal Jurisdiction to Trigger Snapback



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi has rejected efforts by Britain, France, and Germany—known as the E3—to reinstate UN sanctions lifted under Resolution 2231 (2015), calling the move "invalid and ineffective."

In a letter to European Union foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas, who coordinates the nuclear deal's Joint Commission, Araqchi stressed that Resolution 2231 "must expire according to its scheduled timeline on October 18, 2025."

"Attempts by the E3 to revive UN Security Council resolutions that were terminated under Resolution 2231 are invalid and ineffective," Araqchi wrote, a day after the E3 triggered the snapback mechanism, starting a 30-day window to potentially restore UN sanctions on Tehran.

He accused the European powers of lacking "legal jurisdiction to initiate the automatic restoration" of sanctions and said their actions ignored "essential facts and procedural history" of the 2015 nuclear agreement.

Araqchi reiterated that Iran was the first party to activate the deal's dispute resolution mechanism after the U.S. withdrew in 2018, citing letters and Joint Commission meetings earlier that year.

He dismissed the E3's 2020 attempt to trigger the mechanism as "illegitimate," noting it was rejected by Iran, Russia, and China.

Iran Slams E3's Obedience to U.S. After Snapback Activation



TEHRAN (PressTV) - The spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry has slammed the European signatories to the US-abandoned 2015 nuclear deal for triggering the restoration of UN sanctions against the country, saying the move shows the E3's "obedience" to Washington.

Esmail Baghaei made the remarks in an X post on Friday, one day after the European trio triggered the snapback mechanism defined in Resolution 2231, which opens a 30-day period before the restoration of previously terminated UN Security Council sanctions against Iran.

He said that the Europeans' measure "is driven not by legal necessity or sound judgment, but ... signifies their obedience" to the National Security Presidential Memorandum-2 (NSPM-2) signed by US President Donald Trump in February to re-impose his so-called maximum pressure policy on Tehran.

"The E3 are demonstrating what passes for a 'credible' negotiating partner in the so-called 'rules-based international order,' where might makes right and where the 'violate' dictates the rules of the game," he added.

Baghaei also attached to his post a picture of Trump's meeting with top European leaders earlier last month at the Oval Office, where the US president positioned his guests around his work desk, evoking a scene of power imbalance and quiet humiliation.

Meanwhile, he censured the US for causing "a chain of subsequent vicious events" by its unilateral withdrawal from the Iran nuclear agreement, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

The spokesman further described the United States as "the tremendous spoiler & violator of JCPOA".

IRAN NEWS



Five New Aircraft Join Iran's Aviation Fleet

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iran has added five new aircraft to its national aviation fleet as part of wider efforts to modernize transportation infrastructure and boost non-oil exports, a senior government official announced on Thursday. Masoumeh Aghapour, Economic Advisor to the President, highlighted the strategic importance of the Aras Corridor for Iran's non-oil trade during her remarks at the 6th International Transport, Logistics and Related Industries Exhibition in Tehran. "Without a strong transportation and logistics system, effective exports are not possible," Aghapour told reporters. "For shipping goods across the world, we need a smart and integrated logistics network."

Expulsion of Ambassador Has Little Impact on Bilateral Exchanges



TEHRAN - The Vice President of the Iran-Australia Joint Chamber of Commerce has downplayed the impact of Australia's recent decision to expel Iran's ambassador and close Tehran's embassy in Canberra, describing the move as "symbolic and aimed at gaining concessions from Israel." He said these measures will not significantly affect trade between the two countries, given that commercial exchanges were already limited.

According to Mohammad Hossein Didevar, citing data from Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), bilateral trade between Iran and Australia reached about 667.3 million Australian dollars in the 2023-2024 fiscal year.

He explained that Iran's exports to Australia stood at 166.6 million Australian dollars, while imports from Australia reached 500.7 million dollars. Iran mainly exports fruits, nuts, and floor coverings to Australia.

Didevar noted that the recent diplomatic tensions are unlikely to have much effect on trade, as political relations between the two countries had already been weak, limiting trade volume for years.

Responding to questions about what goods could be exchanged, Didevar said Iran could have exported industrial machinery and high-tech products, while importing minerals, iron ore, wheat, and meat from Australia. However, he added, political obstacles left trade largely confined to dried fruits and nuts.

"Whether there is an ambassador in Australia or not, we remain under sanctions. Expelling the ambassador may affect administrative and diplomatic procedures, but it won't have a major impact on bilateral trade," he said.

60% of Iran's Food Needs Met Domestically



TEHRAN - Minister of Agriculture Jihad, Gholamreza Nouri, announced that around 60 percent of the country's food requirements are currently being produced domestically through the efforts of farmers, producers, agricultural stakeholders, and nomadic communities. The remainder, he said, is supplied through imports and trade.

According to official statistics, Nouri highlighted that agriculture is the only sector in Iran's Seventh Development Plan to have reached its expected growth target of 5.5 percent. The sector moved from a negative growth rate of -2.4 percent last year to +3.2 percent this year, representing a 5.6 percent increase — slightly above the program's target.

The minister noted that in the past year, agriculture recorded growth across various sub-sectors: medicinal plants (23%), cage aquaculture (12%), caviar production (27%), tropical fruits (54%), horticultural crops, poultry (1%), red meat (2%), eggs (2%), and milk (5%).

Nouri stressed that agriculture is the first non-oil sector to achieve targeted economic growth. He reported a 32 percent rise in the value of agricultural exports, alongside a 6 percent decline in imports of agricultural goods. As a result, the sector's trade deficit narrowed from -\$11 billion to -\$8 billion, reflecting a \$3 billion positive shift.

He added that agriculture's share of the national economy has grown from 6 percent to 7 percent, underlining its importance despite existing resource limitations.

Discussing future priorities, Nouri said Iran aims to achieve 90 percent self-sufficiency in essential goods and 40 percent in oilseeds by the end of the Seventh Development Plan. Currently, a significant share of tropical fruits, 20 percent of red meat, and 25-30 percent of sugar are imported.

"By the end of the 14th government, we plan to achieve self-sufficiency in sugar, red meat, and tropical fruits — particularly bananas," he stated, adding that meeting

these goals requires adequate financial resources.

He noted that agricultural budget allocations have significantly increased this year compared to last year, which could support the achievement of these targets.

On the issue of water resources and crop planning, Nouri said that before the next farming season, a scientifically based cropping pattern tailored to regional conditions will be announced. This model, designed according to available water resources and domestic as well as export needs, aims to prevent shortages, price hikes, and crop waste.

He urged farmers to comply with the new guidelines, particularly reducing the cultivation of water-intensive crops in water-stressed regions. A dedicated online platform has been launched for farmers and experts to raise concerns or suggest modifications.

Nouri confirmed that the guaranteed purchase price of wheat for the new farming year will be announced by the end of September, allowing farmers to plan accordingly. Committees are currently reviewing expert opinions and farmer feedback to determine a fair price.

Reassuring the public, Nouri emphasized that securing essential goods and ensuring food security remain top government priorities. He explained that basic commodities are procured 6-12 months in advance, ensuring stable supplies despite challenges.

"Thanks to coordinated efforts, essential goods have been adequately stocked, and people can access their food needs without concern," he said, recalling that even during the hardships of the 12-day war period, the government ensured nationwide food distribution.

"With the current management capacity, there is no cause for concern regarding the supply of essential goods," he concluded.

Chabahar to Become Eastern Iran's Transit Hub



TEHRAN - The Executive Vice President of Iran announced that Chabahar is set to become the country's main transit hub in the east, highlighting significant progress on major road and rail infrastructure projects in Sistan and Baluchestan Province.

During a field visit on Thursday to the Zahedan-Khash highway project, Executive Vice President Mohammad Jafar Ghaempanah said the road will be completed by 2026 as part of the strategic Chabahar-Zahedan corridor.

"Given its borders with Afghanistan and Pakistan and access to southern open waters, Sistan and Baluchestan holds a unique geopolitical position," Ghaempanah said. "Chabahar will emerge as one of Iran's most important trade and transit ports, and road and rail development in the region must be pursued as a priority."

According to the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development, construction of the Chabahar-Zahedan highway is progressing in multiple sections, while contractors remain active on the Zahedan-Khash route. The Zahedan-Khash highway is expected to be completed by the end of 2026.

Ghaempanah also noted that work on Chabahar's railway station, previously delayed, is now moving forward. Around 80 workers are currently engaged at the site, with foundation work underway. The station is expected to be completed in the coming months, while the Chabahar-Zahedan railway line is projected to become operational by late 2025.

6th Int'l Exhibition of Transport, Logistics, and Related Industries Opens



TEHRAN - The Sixth International Exhibition of Transport, Logistics, and Related Industries officially opened, showcasing the latest innovations in transport and logistics while underscoring the sector's crucial role in boosting exports and expanding national trade. The event places special emphasis on building an integrated logistics network and strengthening the share of rail transport alongside the modernization of other key modes.

According to the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, the exhibition was inaugurated this morning with the participation of senior officials, industry leaders, and more than 100 domestic and international companies. Despite global disruptions and recent conflicts, organizers reported higher-than-expected turnout compared to previous years.

Sidif Beikzadeh, CEO of the Iran International Exhibitions Company, told reporters at the opening ceremony that the exhibition highlights one of the country's most strategic infrastructure sectors.

"This exhibition is among the key national events," he said. "It presents the supply chain as the foundation for economic growth, while also acting as a platform for knowledge transfer between participants and visitors."

Beikzadeh noted that rail, air, sea, and road transport companies, along with logistics providers and related service firms, are all represented this year. He added that the exhibition has evolved beyond a showcase of products and services, becoming a venue for policy discussions and market analysis.

"Such platforms allow companies to understand market needs firsthand and prepare strategies to meet them," he said. "Without a coherent and smart logistics system, achieving competitive exports will be impossible."

Masoumeh Aghapour, economic adviser to the president, also spoke with journalists on the sidelines of the exhibition, outlining the current state of the transport sector. She noted that nearly 80 percent of freight transport in Iran is handled by road, while rail accounts for less than 15 percent.

A New Opportunity to Boost Iran's Exports to Brazil in H2



TEHRAN - The head of the Iran-Brazil Joint Chamber of Commerce has highlighted new opportunities for increasing Iran's exports to Brazil in the second half of this year, particularly in the field of petrochemical raw materials.

Fakhr al-Din Amerian, President of the Iran-Brazil Joint Chamber of Commerce, told Iran Chamber Online that trade volume between the two countries during the first five months of this year remained largely unchanged compared to last year.

According to Amerian, Iranian exporters are still unable to ship goods directly to Brazil due to international shipping sanctions. Instead, they must route shipments through third-country ports such as the UAE, Oman, and Turkey, making it difficult to accurately measure the true size of bilateral trade. "For example, exports to Oman and the UAE may reach \$100 million, but we cannot precisely determine how much of that ultimately goes to Brazil," he explained.

He noted that Brazilian law also poses challenges for traders, as payments for imported goods must be deposited directly into the account of the Brazilian importer; any other arrangement is considered an offense.

Amerian pointed to recent U.S. tariff policies as a potential opening for Iranian exporters. He said that former U.S. President Donald Trump's decision to impose a 50% tariff on Brazilian goods had created an opportunity for other countries to fill the gap. "Goods that previously went to the U.S. can now be diverted to our market," he said.

While Brazil has not yet imposed retaliatory tariffs on U.S. products, Amerian believes such measures are likely in the near future—creating further opportunities for Iranian exporters. "This is especially important in the supply of petrochemical raw materials, where we already have a good market in Brazil. With this advantage, we can significantly increase our exports in the second half of the year," he emphasized.

He further noted that Brazil has been one of Iran's reliable trade partners for over 120 years and has never cut trade ties with Iran despite sanctions. Many of the essential goods Iran imports from Brazil are exempt from sanctions, although challenges such as money transfers and restrictions still weigh heavily on export volumes.

Iran Identifies Five Key Export Opportunities in Tanzania

TEHRAN - The Research Center of Iran Chamber of Commerce has released a report titled "Review and Identification of Export Opportunities for Iran in Tanzania," aimed at strengthening trade relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Tanzania while paving new pathways for exports and investment.

The report highlights Tanzania as one of East Africa's emerging economies, strategically positioned along the Indian Ocean and serving as a gateway to the East African Community (EAC) and wider regional markets.

With access to Dar es Salaam Port—the largest in East Africa—Tanzania plays a central role in linking landlocked countries such as Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Malawi, and Zambia to the global economy. This geographical advantage has turned the country into one of Africa's leading logistics and trade hubs. Tanzania's membership in the EAC and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) has further expanded its commercial potential.

The study underscores Tanzania's steady economic growth, averaging 5-6 percent over the past decade, placing it among Africa's high-growth economies. Agriculture (26% of GDP), services (45%), and industry (29%) remain the main pillars of the economy. Recent reforms by the Tanzanian government to attract foreign investment and develop infrastructure have created favorable conditions for economic cooperation with Iran.

Five Key Export Opportunities for Iran in Tanzania
Agriculture and Food Industries: Despite its strong production of crops such as coffee, tea, tropical fruits, and spices, Tanzania faces shortcomings in food processing and agro-industries. Iran could benefit by exporting fertilizers, agricultural machinery, and investing in food processing technology.

Pharmaceuticals and Medical Equipment: Tanzania's high dependency on imported medicines and hospital equipment opens significant opportunities for Iran's pharmaceutical and medical device industries.



Engineering and Technical Services: Rapid urbanization and growing demand for infrastructure in transport, energy, and construction sectors provide space for Iranian engineering firms.

Energy and Mining: With vast reserves of gold, natural gas, and coal, Tanzania presents prospects for Iran to supply mining equipment and share renewable energy and hydropower expertise.

Construction Materials: Large-scale urban development projects have created strong demand for cement, steel, tiles, and other building materials.

The report also points to challenges in trade with Tanzania, including geographical distance, maritime transport constraints, intense competition from China, India, and Turkey, as well as the lack of direct banking channels. Nonetheless, it stresses that mechanisms such as barter trade, proactive economic diplomacy, establishing representative offices, and active participation in trade fairs could mitigate these barriers.

Proposed Measures by the Iran Chamber of Commerce:
 Formation of a special Iran-Tanzania task force within the Chamber of Commerce to identify and support business opportunities.

Cooperation to expand direct sea and air transport links between the two countries.

Establishment of marketing, warehousing, and distribution centers at Dar es Salaam Port.

Pursuit of bilateral trade agreements to lower tariffs and resolve customs barriers.

Support for Iranian export consortia to ensure coordinated entry into the Tanzanian market.

The report concludes that Tanzania is not only a direct export destination for Iran but also a strategic gateway to East and Southern Africa. By focusing on agriculture, pharmaceuticals, energy, engineering, and construction materials, Iran could build sustainable and profitable ties with Tanzania. With a clear trade roadmap and institutional support, bilateral economic relations hold significant potential for expansion.

Microsoft Fires Four Workers for On-Site Protests

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – Microsoft has fired four employees who participated in protests on company premises against the firm's ties to Israel as it wages war in Gaza, including two who took part in a sit-in this week at the office of the company's president.

Anna Hattle and Riki Fameli received voicemails informing them that they were fired, the protest group No Azure for Apartheid said in a statement on Wednesday.

It added on Thursday that two more workers, Nisreen Jaradat and Julius Shan, were fired. They were among protesters who had recently set up encampments at Microsoft headquarters.



Japan Seeks Record Defense Budget, to Triple Drone Spending



TOKYO (Dispatches) - Japan in recent years has been shedding its strict pacifist stance, moving to obtain "counterstrike" capabilities and doubling military spending to two percent of GDP.

The defence ministry's new budget request made on Friday for the coming fiscal year starting April 1, seen by AFP, is for 8.8 trillion yen (\$59.9 billion).

It surpasses the world's fourth-largest economy's previous record of 8.7 trillion yen, secured for this fiscal year ending in March 2026.

Eighty years after World War II and the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan's constitution still limits its military capacity to ostensibly defensive measures.

But the new budget increase reflects the "severely intensifying security environment" around Japan, a defense ministry official told reporters in Tokyo on condition of anonymity.

The budget request asks to roughly triple spending on various types of unmanned vehicles to 313 billion yen.

The ongoing war in Ukraine since Russia's invasion in 2022 has highlighted the destructive power of drones and their growing role in modern warfare.

Under the plan unveiled Friday, Tokyo is eyeing the use of drones to strengthen a planned coastal defense system it dubs "SHIELD".

In the worst-case scenario where Japan's long-distance "standoff" missiles are bypassed by enemy troops, it is hoped SHIELD – Synchronised, Hybrid, Integrated and Enhanced Littoral Defense – could block any invasion nearer land, the official said.

Indonesian Students Vow More Protests



JAKARTA (Dispatches) - Tensions have risen in Indonesia's capital following a protest call by students at Jakarta's police headquarters on Friday in response to the death of a motorcycle ride-sharing driver hit by a police vehicle.

The driver was hit at the site of violent clashes on Thursday near the parliament as police were trying to disperse demonstrators protesting against a number of issues including lawmakers' pay and education funding.

The protest call for Friday afternoon in the capital of Southeast Asia's largest economy prompted a number of schools to allow students to leave early and banks and businesses asking employees to work from home. The military has been deployed in some areas, visuals broadcast by local media showed.

Muzammil Hsan, head of Indonesia's largest student union, told Reuters that students will protest against police violence on Friday afternoon, and he expected other student groups to attend.

President Prabowo Subianto, in a specially recorded video message, called for calm, expressed condolences for the death of the driver, Affan Kurniawan, and ordered a thorough probe of the incident.

"I am shocked and disappointed by the excessive actions of the officers," Prabowo said, adding, "I have ordered a thorough and transparent investigation...and officers involved must be held accountable."



Hundreds of UN Staff Pressure Rights Chief to Call Gaza a Genocide

GENEVA (Dispatches) - Hundreds of U.N. staff at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk have written to ask him to explicitly describe the Gaza war as an unfolding genocide, according to a letter seen by Reuters.

The letter sent said the staff consider that the legal criteria for genocide in the nearly two-year Israel-Hamas war in Gaza have been met, citing the scale, scope and nature of violations documented there.

"OHCHR has a strong legal and moral responsibility to denounce acts of genocide," said the letter signed by the Staff Committee on behalf of more than 500 employees, which called on Turk to take a "clear and public position."

"Failing to denounce an unfolding genocide undermines the credibility of the U.N. and the human rights system itself," it added.

It cited the international body's perceived moral failure for not doing more to stop the 1994 Rwanda genocide that killed more than 1 million people.

Turk has the full and unconditional support of U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, said U.N. spokesperson Stephane Dujarric, adding: "Labelling of an event as a genocide is up to a competent legal authority."

Israel's Foreign Ministry said it does not respond to internal U.N. employees' letters "even if they are false, baseless, and blinded by obsessive hatred towards Israel."

Israel has previously rejected accusations of genocide in Gaza, citing its right to self-defence following the deadly October 7, 2023, Hamas attack that killed 1,200 people and resulted in 251 hostages, according to Israeli figures.

The subsequent war in Gaza has killed almost 63,000 people, according to the Gaza Health Ministry, while a global

hunger monitor says part of it is suffering from famine.

The Geneva-based agency was created in 1993 and tasked with promoting and protecting human rights for all.

The appeal to Turk, an Austrian lawyer who has worked for the United Nations for decades, was backed by around a quarter of his 2,000 global staff.

Some rights groups like Amnesty International have already accused Israel of committing genocide and an independent U.N. expert Francesca Albanese has also used the term, but not the United Nations itself.

U.N. officials have in the past said it is up to international courts to determine genocide.

In 2023, South Africa brought a genocide case against Israel's actions in Gaza to the International Court of Justice but the case has not yet been heard on its merits – a process that can take years.

"The situation in Gaza has shaken us all to our core," said OHCHR spokesperson Ravina Shamdasani, citing difficult circumstances faced by the office as it tries to document facts and raise the alarm. "There have been and will continue to be discussions internally on how to move forward," she said in reference to the letter.

Turk, who has repeatedly condemned Israel's actions in Gaza and warned of the increasing risk of atrocity crimes, said the letter raised important concerns.

"I know we all share a feeling of moral indignation at the horrors we are witnessing, as well as frustration in the face of the international community's inability to bring this situation to an end," he said in a copy of his response seen by Reuters, calling for employees to "remain united as an Office in the face of such adversity."

Russian Missiles Pound Ukraine, Damage EU, British Offices

KYIV (Dispatches) - Russia pounded Ukraine with deadly missiles and drone strikes early on Thursday in a sweeping attack that the U.S. special envoy on Ukraine said undermined President Donald Trump's peace efforts.

At least 23 people were killed in the capital, Tymur Tkachenko, head of Kyiv's military administration, said on Telegram. As of 11 p.m. (2000 GMT) rescue efforts were still underway.

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White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said Trump "was not happy about this news, but he was also not surprised," given that the two countries had been at war for a long time.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the strike, the second-largest attack since Russia launched a full-scale invasion in February 2022, was Moscow's answer to diplomatic efforts to end its war.

U.S. special envoy Keith Kellogg commented on X: "The targets? Not soldiers and weapons but residential areas in Kyiv - blasting civilian trains, the EU & British mission council offices, and innocent civilians."

The European Union and Britain summoned Russian envoys to protest. There were no reports of casualties at either site.

Zelenskyy said the strikes also damaged a Turkish enterprise and the Azerbaijan embassy.

Leavitt told a regular briefing that Trump would have more to say about the situation later.

Leavitt said the Russian attacks had been deadly and that Ukrainian attacks had done significant damage in August to Russian oil refineries.

"Perhaps both sides of this war are not ready to end it themselves," she said. "The president wants it to end but the leaders of these two countries need it to end and want it to end."



The strikes took place less than two weeks after Trump hosted Russian President Vladimir Putin at a summit in Alaska, a meeting the U.S. president hoped would advance his peace efforts.

"Russia chooses ballistics instead of the negotiating table," Zelenskyy said on X, calling for new sanctions on Russia. "It chooses to continue killing instead of ending the war."

Russia said its attack had hit military-industrial facilities and air bases, and that Ukraine had attacked Russian targets. The Kremlin said it was still interested in pursuing peace talks.

Moscow has regularly denied targeting civilians. Ukrainian officials say scores of civilians have died in Russian strikes on densely populated areas in recent months, and thousands since the start of the war.

Item 1 of 10 Rescuers work at the site of an apartment building which was hit by Russian missile and drone strikes, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Kyiv, Ukraine August 28, 2025. REUTERS/Thomas Peter

During the attack on Kyiv, explosions rang out as clouds of smoke rose into the night sky. Drones whirred overhead.

Mayor Vitali Klitschko described it as one of the biggest attacks on the city in recent months. At least 63 people were wounded in the hours-long assault, which damaged buildings in all city districts, officials said.

Across the country, Ukraine's military said Russian attacks struck 13 locations. National grid operator Ukrenergo said energy facilities were hit, causing power cuts.

A push by Ukraine and its allies to end the invasion has yielded little, despite Trump's meetings this month with Putin, then Zelenskyy.

Russia has stepped up air strikes on Ukrainian towns and cities far behind the front lines and pushed a grinding offensive across much of the east in an effort to pressure Ukraine into giving up territory.

"This is another grim reminder of what is at stake. It shows that the Kremlin will stop at nothing to terrorize Ukraine, blindly killing civilians and even targeting the European Union," EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen told reporters in Brussels.

She said two missiles had struck near the EU office within 20 seconds of each other.

EU countries would soon come up with a 19th package of sanctions against Russia and were advancing work on how to use frozen Russian assets to help Ukraine, she added.

"We discussed our diplomatic efforts to stop the killings, to end this unprovoked Russian aggression, and to guarantee real security for our people," Zelenskyy wrote on X after talks with von der Leyen.

No Way U.S. Can Invade Venezuela

CARACAS (Dispatches) - Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro said there was "no way" U.S. troops could invade Venezuela after Washington deployed five warships and 4,000 troops to the Caribbean to pressure the leftist strongman.

The United States said the deployment to the southern Caribbean, near Venezuela's territorial waters, is an anti-drug trafficking operation.

Venezuela has responded by sending warships and drones to patrol its coastline and launching a drive to recruit thousands of militia members to bolster its defenses.

"There's no way they can enter Venezuela," Maduro said, vowing that his country was well prepared to defend its "peace, sovereignty and territorial integrity."

The United States has, however, made no public threat to invade.

Maduro, who claimed a disputed third term in the July 2024 elections, has been



in US President Donald Trump's sights ever since the Republican's first term in office.

Since returning to power in January, Trump's attacks on Venezuela have focused chiefly on its powerful gangs, some of which operate inside the United States.

Washington accuses Maduro of heading a cocaine trafficking cartel, Cartel de los Soles, which the Trump administration has designated a terrorist organization.

The United States recently doubled its bounty to \$50 million for Maduro's capture to face drug charges.

Maduro, who succeeded socialist firebrand Hugo Chavez in 2013, has accused Trump of attempting to effect regime change.



Swiatek Survives Scare as Sinner Cruises at U.S. Open

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Iga Swiatek weathered an unexpected storm to reach the U.S. Open third round on Thursday, while defending men's champion Jannik Sinner delivered a masterclass and Naomi Osaka rediscovered her groove at Flushing Meadows.

But the day's most dramatic moments belonged to Coco Gauff, who wiped away tears mid-match before rallying to beat Donna Vekic and avenge her Olympic heartbreak from Paris.

Second seed Swiatek, fresh from her Wimbledon triumph and Cincinnati title, was forced to grind it out against unseeded Suzan Lamens in a 6-1 4-6 6-4 thriller on Arthur Ashe Stadium that proved far trickier than expected.

"It got a bit complicated in the second set, but I'm happy that I could reset and start playing better in the third," said the 2022 champion, who sealed victory with an ace to set up a clash with 29th seed Anna Kalinskaya.

World number one Sinner had no such trouble, dismantling Australian Alexei Popyrin 6-3 6-2 6-2 in ruthless fashion to book a third-round date with Canadian 27th seed Denis Shapovalov.

Osaka, the 23rd seed, rolled past American Hailey Baptiste 6-3 6-1 to reach the tournament's third round for the first time since 2021.

"I was just really trying to focus and not give her any free points and just be positive," said the two-time champion. "I'm really excited to be moving better."

She then weighed in on the raging debate at the tournament after Wednesday's heated on-court row between local hope Taylor Townsend and Jelena Ostapenko, condemning the Latvian for her comments toward her opponent.

The night session brought high drama as defending champion Gauff struggled with her serve against Vekic, the Croatian who had beaten her at last year's Paris Olympics.

After weeping into her towel following a service break in the first set, Gauff found inspiration from an unlikely source in the stands.

"I saw her and ... she helped me pull it out," Gauff said of gymnastics icon Simone Biles. "I was thinking like, 'If she can go on a six-inch beam and do that with all the pressures of the world, then I can hit the

ball in the court.'"

Stefanos Tsitsipas was knocked out by Germany's Daniel Altmaier in the final match of the day on the Grandstand, with the Greek 26th seed falling 7-6(5) 1-6 4-6 6-3 7-5 in a marathon that lasted well over four hours.

German third seed Alexander Zverev beat British qualifier Jacob Fearnley 6-4 6-4 6-4 in the first evening session match on Louis Armstrong Stadium and will next face familiar foe Felix Auger-Aliassime.

Two early finishes allowed organizers to move a highly-anticipated first-round doubles match involving 45-year-old Venus Williams to the second-largest stadium, where fans packed the house.

Seven-times major winner Williams, who lost in the mixed doubles and women's singles first rounds, found inspiration from Canadian partner Leylah Fernandez as they beat sixth seeds Lyudmyla Kichenok and Ellen Perez 7-6(4) 6-3.

"This is the best partner I've ever played with outside Serena," said Williams, who this summer became the oldest player to win a WTA singles match since 2004. "We're a great team."

Australian hope Alex de Minaur beat Japan's Shintaro Mochizuki 6-2 6-4 6-2, but there was bad news for his compatriot Maya Joint, who fell 7-6(2) 6-2 to eighth seed Amanda Anisimova in the final match on Louis Armstrong.

Meanwhile Carlos Alcaraz stormed into the third round of the U.S. Open with a straight-sets victory as Novak Djokovic overcame an early scare to advance.

Alcaraz, who could face Djokovic in the semi-finals if the draw holds, swept aside Italy's Mattia Bellucci 6-1, 6-0, 6-3 in just one hour 36 minutes on Arthur Ashe Stadium.

"I played great to be honest, from the beginning until the last ball," said the 22-year-old Spaniard, who will next meet 32nd seed Luciano Darderi of Italy. "The less time I spend on court the better for me, to go to bed early."

Djokovic, chasing a record 25th Grand Slam singles title, dropped the first set against American qualifier Zachary Svajda before recovering to win 6-7 (5/7), 6-3, 6-3, 6-1. The 38-year-old Serbian will face Britain's Cameron Norrie in the next round.

Messi Scores Twice, Inspires Inter Miami Comeback Win



FORT LAUDERDALE (Dispatches) - Lionel Messi erupted for two goals and an assist inside the final 15 minutes, leading Inter Miami to a 3-1 victory over 10-man Orlando City in a Leagues Cup semifinal.

Telasco Segovia added the other goal for Miami, which advanced to the final for the second time in three years. The Herons will play the final on the road against the Seattle Sounders on Sunday, with the winner guaranteed a place in the round of 16 in the 2026 CONCACAF Champions Cup. Seattle beat the Los Angeles Galaxy 2-0 in the second semifinal yesterday.

Miami won the 2023 Leagues Cup, defeating Nashville on penalties after a 1-1 draw in a final played in Tennessee.

Marco Pasalic scored in first-half stoppage time for Orlando, which had defeated Miami twice in league play this season.

However, the Lions were reduced to 10 men in the game's pivotal moment that sparked Miami's rally and set up Messi's first goal of the competition.

In the 74th minute, the Herons' Tadeo Allende earned a penalty when he got behind David Brekalo and directed a header at goal. Pedro Gallese saved the header, but referee Walter Lopez ruled that Brekalo had pulled Allende back.

Brekalo received his second yellow card of the night and was sent off. Messi converted the spot kick in the 77th minute, shooting low to the right, with Gallese guessing correctly but failing to reach it in time.

Messi struck again from open play 11 minutes later. As he had often done alongside Jordi Alba at FC Barcelona, Messi combined with his former teammate down the right to slice through Orlando's short-handed defence before finishing into the same bottom-right corner from close range.

Minutes later, Messi linked up with Segovia, who finished from close range early in second-half stoppage time to seal the win.

Pasalic had earlier put Orlando ahead just before halftime, combining with Cesar Araujo, Martin Ojeda and Luis Muriel before capitalising on a rebound off Maximiliano Falcon to smash a half-volley past Oscar Ustari.

PSG to Face Bayern, Barcelona in Champions League Opening Stage

MONACO (Dispatches) - Champions League holders Paris St Germain will play Bayern Munich and Barcelona in this season's league phase while record 15-times winners Real Madrid will face Manchester City and Liverpool after Thursday's draw set up some blockbuster encounters.

PSG will also meet Premier League sides Tottenham Hotspur and Newcastle United along with Atalanta and Bayer Leverkusen in the new league phase format which started last season, where each club plays eight games -- four at home and four on the road.

Real Madrid will play Manchester City again for a fifth consecutive season and make a trip to Liverpool in what will be a homecoming for Trent Alexander-Arnold, the English fullback who left Anfield to join Real in the close season.

Real also take on Juventus at home while they have a long flight to Eastern Europe in store when they take on Kazakhstan side Kairat Almaty, who stunned Celtic in the playoffs to qualify for the first time.



Last season's league phase table toppers Liverpool will also face Inter Milan, Atletico Madrid and Eintracht Frankfurt, while Bayern play Chelsea, Arsenal and Club Brugge.

Pep Guardiola's City host Dortmund, Leverkusen and Napoli while they make two trips to Spain to face Real and Villarreal.

Last season's runners-up Inter Milan host Liverpool and Arsenal, and the Italian side will travel to Borussia Dortmund and Atletico Madrid.

Barcelona, LaLiga champions and last year's semi-finalists, host PSG and face away games at Chelsea and Newcastle.

Arsenal, semi-finalists last season, also play Atletico Madrid and Club Brugge but their biggest opponents are Bayern, who they have faced 14 times in the competition. They have also failed to beat the German side in the last five encounters.

Hamilton Just Wants to Have Fun at Ferrari



ZANDVOORT (Dispatches) - Lewis Hamilton says he wants to put the fun factor back in his Formula One career after a difficult start to his career at Ferrari.

The seven-times world champion cut a disconsolate figure at the last race before the August break, the Hungarian Grand Prix, when he branded himself "absolutely useless" after a dismal qualifying while teammate Charles Leclerc took pole.

Speaking at the Dutch Grand Prix on Thursday Hamilton, 40, told reporters he had unplugged over the break and shifted his aim for the final 10 races of the season.

"We're going to work hard, keep our heads down, try to change a few things in our approach and start to enjoy ourselves," he said.

"There's been so much pressure this first half of the season, it's not been the most enjoyable. I think it (fun) is probably the most important part. That's the reason I got into this sport.

"I think for anyone in whatever career you're in, if you're not enjoying what you're doing then why are you doing it? There can often be so much noise, you can lose sight.

"I just want to enjoy the team I've always dreamed of driving for. Now it's about time to move those things aside and focus on the pure love of it."

Hamilton said the team were going in the right direction after bringing upgrades at the Belgian Grand Prix which Ferrari have continued to fine-tune in the lead-up to Sunday's race.

The winner of 105 races, but still without a podium finish since last year, Hamilton said he could see plenty of potential and lots of positives.

Man United Crash out of League Cup

LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester United manager Ruben Amorim said his side were "completely lost" during an embarrassing League Cup exit to fourth-tier Grimsby that heaped more pressure on the Portuguese coach.

League Two side Grimsby won a marathon penalty shootout 12-11 after a 2-2 draw.

After a woe-filled first half United trailed 2-0 to goals from Charles Vernam and Tyrell Warren.

Bryan Mbeumo sparked a late rally from the Red Devils with his first goal for the club before Harry Maguire's header forced a shootout.

But after Matheus Cunha missed the chance to win the tie, Mbeumo hit the bar with the decisive spot-kick.

"I think the best team won, the only team that was on the pitch," said Amorim in a scathing critique of his squad. "One team can win against any group of players.

"The way we start the game without any intensity... We were



completely lost and that's why I think they (the players) spoke really loud."

Amorim was already facing scrutiny after a winless start to United's Premier League season.

The 20-time English champions finished 15th last season in their worst league campaign since being relegated in 1974.

Now one of their only two realistic shots at a trophy this season has disappeared in one of the worst results in the club's history.

Amorim made eight changes from the side that drew 1-1 at Fulham on Sunday, but still named a side that cost hundreds of millions of pounds, packed full of internationals.

Benjamin Sesko made his first United start after a £74 million (RM422 million) move from RB Leipzig, while Andre Onana returned on a night to forget for the United goalkeeper.

Grimsby had been waiting for a visit from United since 1948 and roared out the blocks to fully deserve their two-goal half-time lead.