

On the 100th Anniversary of Iran-Hungary  
Diplomatic Relations, Foreign Ministers  
Abbas Araqchi and Peter Szijarto  
Affirmed Their Commitment to  
Strengthening Bilateral Ties

# IRAN NEWS

President Masoud Pezeshkian Extended  
Condolences for the Floods and the  
Resulting Loss of Life and Property to the  
Government and People of Pakistan and  
Offered Iran's Readiness to Help Victims of  
Floods in Pakistan.

VOL. XXIX, No. 8350 TEHRAN Price 50,000 Rials

www.irannewsdaily.com

SUNDAY AUGUST 31, 2025 SHAHRIVAR 09, 1404

2 DOMESTIC



## Iran's Exports Reach \$16.5b in First Four Months of Year

> SEE PAGE 2

3 INTERNATIONAL

## France, Germany Pledge to Ramp Up Pressure on Putin

> SEE PAGE 3



## Iran Rules Out Talks Under Pressure



TEHRAN - Iran has dismissed the idea of holding negotiations under "threats or coercion", describing a proposal from Russia and China toward resolving nuclear issues as a "practical step."

Speaking to a gathering of reporters on Friday in New York, Iranian Ambassador to the United Nations Amir Saeed Iravani categorically rejected the unlawful notification by France, Germany, and the United Kingdom to trigger the dispute resolution procedure under the 2015 nuclear deal, saying that it sidesteps the mechanism.

On Thursday, the three European states – Britain, France and Germany – invoked the anti-Tehran snapback procedure, a clause enshrined in the nuclear agreement, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The clause reinstates pre-JCPOA era sanctions on Iran over claims of the Islamic Republic's "significant non-compliance" with the landmark pact.

According to Iravani, the move has been done "with the sole intention of blackmailing Iran and exerting political pressure."

"The E3 has no legal or moral standing to use the so-called snapback. Their notification is null and void," he added.

The Iranian envoy stated that the E3 has failed to meet its own obligations, noting that several Security Council members, including China and Russia, agreed that the E3 had not followed the proper procedures.

"The E3 and the US violated the JCPOA first. They cannot now claim to act in good faith," he said.

## State-Society Ties Cannot Endure Without Transparency



TEHRAN - On the occasion of Government Week in Iran, government spokesperson Fatemeh Mohajerani stressed that the sustainability of relations between the state and the people depends on transparency, accountability, and direct communication.

In a statement published Saturday, Mohajerani wrote that Government Week is an opportunity to reflect on the path taken and renew the government's commitment to serving the public. She recalled the legacy of the late officials Mohammad-Ali Rajai and Mohammad-Javad Bahonar, describing them as symbols of selfless service and a reminder that the essence of governance lies in listening to the people.

Highlighting the priorities of the 14th administration, which began its work with the slogan "listening to the people's voice," Mohajerani underlined that the way forward requires strengthening genuine, continuous, and honest ties between state and society. "True power emerges from the people," she noted, "and the stronger this bond, the clearer the path to progress."

She pointed to recent challenges as evidence of this solidarity. During what she described as "the Israeli regime's war against Iran," Mohajerani said the Iranian people demonstrated patience and resilience, providing steadfast support to the system in difficult times. Likewise, public cooperation in managing electricity and water shortages during the summer allowed the country to weather a period of strain.

## Domestic Divisions, Not Foreign Threats, Pose the Greatest Risk

TEHRAN - President Masoud Pezeshkian said his greatest concern for Iran lies not in the threat of international sanctions or the reactivation of the UN "snapback" mechanism, but in the internal divisions that risk undermining the fragile sense of unity beginning to form in the country.

Speaking at a media roundtable with three political and media figures – Seyyed Mohammad Ali Abtahai, Abdollah Ganji, and Alireza Moezi – the President addressed both foreign policy pressures and domestic challenges, emphasizing repeatedly that Iran's strength depends less on weapons and more on unity, justice, and mutual respect among its people.

When asked about the government's position regarding the potential activation of the "snapback" mechanism, which would reinstate international sanctions, Pezeshkian was clear: "We are not at all seeking for the snapback to be triggered," he said. "But it is questionable that some European countries, themselves frequent violators of international law, accuse us of breaking frameworks. How can one accept such claims from those who consistently disregard international rules?"

The President noted that while international disputes are significant, they do not constitute his main concern. "Even before discussing snapback, what worries me most are the voices inside the country that aim to weaken the new and fragile unity we are trying to build," he warned.

Pezeshkian stressed that his true fear lies in domestic discord rather than foreign threats. "My worry is not snapback or external aggression," he said. "What troubles me is internal conflict – divisions, rivalries, and clashes that sometimes erupt over small matters. It is precisely these cracks that our enemies seek to exploit."

He argued that when citizen rights are ignored and power is monopolized by a select group, discontent festers. "In such a space, the other side exploits our shortcomings and places all blame on us," he explained. "Unresolved frustrations in people's hearts manifest as anger, dissatisfaction, or criticism of the state's larger direction."

For the President, the key to resilience lies not in armaments but in justice and fairness: "If honesty, justice, humanity and fairness flow in society, even without missiles or fighter jets, no one would dare covet our soil and water. But if we have missiles and not our people, then we have no real power."

Pezeshkian underlined that Iran's position is defensive rather than aggressive. "We are not looking for war, but if we are attacked, we will resist with full force," he declared. "From the very beginning we have said we do not want conflict, but we do not fear it either. Our people have proven that if war were to occur, it would only strengthen our unity."

Turning to domestic governance, the President highlighted key reforms aimed at tackling corruption and improving transparency.

"A team has been assigned to pursue four crucial areas," he said: Article 169 of the Tax Law, the land code, cadastral registry of benefits (known as G-NAF), and a three-dimensional location code. "If these systems are interconnected, then no son, brother, friend, or relative of mine could receive even a single payment without its origin and destination being clear," he noted.



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

Abdollah Ganji, one of the participants, raised the issue of domestic intellectual circles often blaming the Islamic Republic exclusively for tensions with the West and Israel. He questioned whether Iran's support for Palestine was truly the root of its difficulties, arguing that Israel's long-term strategy of regional dominance predates and transcends Iran's policies.

Pezeshkian replied by citing Islamic teachings: "The Qur'an says, 'Whatever misfortune befalls you is due to what your own hands have earned.' Yes, others act against us, but the other side of the story is ourselves. Imam Ali said that if a society is built on righteousness, it will be strong and bear fruit. If we face crises and divisions, that is a sign of internal shortcomings."

He stressed that inequality, discrimination, and exclusion within Iran are key factors in creating frustration and vulnerability. "If I treat a fellow Iranian as a second-class citizen, naturally he will reject me," the President said. "The solution lies in fixing our internal relations before blaming others."

Returning to his central theme, Pezeshkian insisted that Iran must live up to the principles it proclaims.

"We must implement what we preach about Islam and religion: truthfulness, justice, honesty, humanity, and fairness. If these values prevail, even if others possess F-35 fighter jets and we have none, they will not dare covet our land."

He acknowledged past shortcomings in Iran's political system, recalling his own experience of being barred from candidacy in earlier elections. "Why should the Supreme Leader need to intervene just so evaluations are carried out fairly? These are our internal issues. The criticism we hear is because we have not implemented the slogans we ourselves declared."

Alireza Moezi questioned whether the President had delivered on his campaign promises of promoting national reconciliation and relying on expert opinion in decision-making.

Pezeshkian pointed to steps his administration has taken: appointing Sunni and ethnic minority governors in Sistan and Baluchestan and in Kurdistan, involving women in senior executive positions,

and approaching sensitive social issues such as mandatory hijab with caution and respect for social capacity.

On the hijab question, he emphasized his personal belief in it while stressing tolerance for differing practices.

"My own family all wear the chador, but that does not mean those who do not are wrong or worthless," he said. "My concern was that enforcing a strict measure could create tensions that the government could not control, and I am not tasked with igniting such conflicts."

Throughout the session, President Pezeshkian circled back to his primary concern: Iran's internal cohesion. For him, the solution to both domestic challenges and external threats lies in strengthening social trust, ensuring fairness, and reducing divisions.

"External threats exist, but my real fear is internal discord," he repeated. "If we respect each other and uphold justice, then no enemy will be able to exploit our divisions. Unity and justice are the true sources of national strength."

## The Snapback Mechanism: The Outcome of the Battle of Siffin

The Battle of Siffin, which took place in the year 37 AH between the forces of Imam Ali (peace be upon him) and Muawiya ibn Abi Sufyan, after several months of heavy fighting, was on the verge of Muawiya's complete defeat. At this critical moment, the forces of Syria, through a cunning ruse (raising the Qur'an on spears), proposed arbitration to stop the war. Imam Ali (peace be upon him), with great reluctance but under intense pressure from his own troops, was forced to accept a ceasefire. This ceasefire turned into negotiations (arbitration) that had disastrous results for Imam Ali's camp, leading to the emergence of a new faction known as the Kharijites and severely weakening Imam's rule.

The war had been going decisively in Imam Ali's favor. The Iraqi forces had killed key Syrian commanders, and Muawiya's army was on the verge of total collapse. Muawiya and his crafty commander Amr ibn al-As realized they would be militarily defeated. Therefore, they devised a political tactic to save themselves. At Amr ibn al-As's command, the Syrian soldiers raised Qur'ans on their spears and shouted: "Let the Book of God judge between us!"

The real purpose of this act was to stop the war just as they were losing, not genuinely to submit to the Qur'an's judgment. It was a highly effective psychological war tactic. Now the infiltrators had to take the next step. Imam Ali (peace be upon him) clearly recognized this deception. He warned his troops that it was a trick and that the enemy had no claim to religiosity. He insisted that the battle must continue until final victory was secured.

But here lay the main problem: a group within Imam's army (led by Ash'ath ibn Qays and others), later known as the Qurra (reciters of the Qur'an), were deceived by this display. They pressured the Imam to submit to the "judgment of the Qur'an" and even threatened that if he refused, they would abandon him as they had abandoned Uthman (the third caliph), or even betray him. The pressure was so intense that Imam Ali (peace be upon him), despite his inner reluctance, in order to prevent internal rebellion and the fragmentation of his army, was forced to accept a ceasefire. Both sides agreed to appoint one arbitrator each, to judge between them based on the Qur'an (and not the Prophet's Sunnah).

From Imam Ali (AS)'s side, Abu Musa al-Ash'ari (a moderate but simple-minded and unstable man) was chosen.

From Muawiya's side, Amr ibn al-As (a shrewd and cunning politician) was chosen.

This very selection reflected the weakness of Imam's camp; influential figures in the army did not accept decisive individuals like Malik al-Ashtar or even the Imam himself.

After the war ended and the army returned to Kufa, some of those who had previously insisted on arbitration realized their mistake. They said: "Why did you appoint humans as judges when judgment belongs only to God?"

This group, initially called the Muhakkimah (supporters of the slogan "No judgment but God's"), and later known as the Kharijites (rebels), not only rejected the arbitration but also declared Imam Ali (peace be upon him) guilty of "disbelief" for accepting it. They withdrew their allegiance from the Imam and became a serious internal threat, eventually forcing Imam to confront them at Nahrawan.

Acceptance of Articles 36 and 37 of the JCPOA, which contained the "snapback mechanism" (trigger mechanism), was undoubtedly imposed on the Iranian nation and leadership by today's Ash'ath ibn Qays-like figures and infiltrators within the high-level decision-making structures of the Islamic Republic. Now, with its activation, the loyal defenders of the system are left helpless, and no wise path forward seems available.

The resolution, with near certainty, of the UN Security Council, gives the United States a pretext to bomb our oil facilities and to block our ability to sell oil and manage the system.

The result of appeasing infiltrators throughout the existence of the system has always brought heavy costs, and without confronting them, no path for resistance will remain.



Hamid Reza Naghashian

## Snapback Sanctions Move Will Turn Europe Into Permanently Spent Force

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi says a decision by the European troika to unleash the snapback mechanism of sanctions on Iran will turn the E3 into a permanently spent force.

Araqchi issued the warning in a post on his X account on Friday a day after the three European states – Britain, France and Germany – invoked the anti-Tehran snapback procedure, a clause enshrined in the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The clause reinstates pre-JCPOA era sanctions on Iran over claims of the Islamic Republic's "significant non-compliance" with the landmark pact.

The snapback mechanism, defined in UN Security Council Resolution 2231, opens 30 days before the restoration of previously terminated UN Security Council sanctions against Iran.

"Iran has cautioned that having been left out by the US on all global issues—even Ukraine on their own doorstep—Europe should not deceive itself about 'snapback' being leverage for it to play a role in at least one arena," Araqchi said.

He cautioned the European trio that pursuing such a path would turn them into a permanently spent force.

The Iranian minister censured the E3 for acting on behalf of the Israeli regime and the United States and maliciously pursuing pressure on the Iranian people, describing it as an "immoral, unjustified, and unlawful" folly.

It is disturbing that the European troika is now framing its reckless gambit as an endeavor to "advance diplomacy", the top Iranian diplomat said.



Araqchi pointed to Iran's five rounds of nuclear negotiations with the administration of US President Donald Trump this year and said on the eve of a sixth round of talks, Iran was first bombed by Israel and then by the United States.

"It is repugnant for Europe to now accuse Iran of having left the table and spurning dialogue," he added.

"The reality is that we are at a point where the West cannot even guarantee that it will cease further unlawful military strikes on my people while negotiations are held."

He said the E3's actions effectively reward the offender and punish the

victim.

Araqchi once again affirmed his country's full compliance with the JCPOA while the US unilaterally withdrew in 2018 and re-imposed sanctions on Tehran and the Europeans failed to fulfill their commitments to mitigate the economic impact of the US exit.

"It was also Europe, not Iran, that not only failed to implement their commitments on Transition Day (October 2023), but also imposed new illegal sanctions on Iranian civil aviation and shipping," he said.

The top Iranian diplomat once again warned that the E3's decision to trigger the so-called snapback mechanism will have "significant adverse impacts on diplomacy" and will "severely" undermine the ongoing dialogue between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

# IRAN NEWS



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

## Iran, Russia Discuss Boosting Transport Links

TEHRAN - Kazem Jalali, Iran's Ambassador to Russia, met with Andrei Nikitin, Russia's Minister of Transport, to discuss key issues in bilateral transport cooperation, including the strategic Rasht–Astara railway project.

According to the Iranian Embassy in Moscow, the meeting—also attended by Russian deputy ministers and senior transport officials—focused on accelerating ongoing projects, particularly the Rasht–Astara rail link, described as the missing segment of the western branch of the International North–South Transport Corridor (INSTC). The two sides also reviewed the schedule of upcoming meetings at ministerial, deputy, and expert levels in various transport sectors.

Citing a report by Russia's TASS news agency, Nikitin said road freight between Iran and Russia grew by 12.8 percent in 2024, reflecting an upward trend in bilateral trade logistics.

## Iran's Exports to Poland Hold Steady at \$48m in 2024



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - According to a report from the International Affairs Department of Iran Chamber of Commerce, trade between Iran and Poland has experienced a 20% decline over the past three years. Despite this downward trend, Iran's exports to Poland stabilized at \$48 million in 2024.

The report shows that total trade volume between the two countries dropped from \$103 million in 2022 to \$85 million in 2023, and further to \$82 million in 2024. This steady decline highlights an erosion of the two nations' trade potential.

Iran's exports to Poland decreased from \$61 million in 2022 to \$48 million in 2023, maintaining the same level in 2024. Analysts suggest this stability indicates the presence of specific Iranian goods that enjoy relatively consistent demand in the Polish market, despite ongoing restrictions.

Meanwhile, Poland's exports to Iran have followed a continuous downward path—falling from \$42 million in 2022 to \$37 million in 2023, and then to \$34 million in 2024. The report attributes this decline to Iran's reduced purchasing power, banking restrictions, and financial difficulties limiting its ability or willingness to import Polish goods.

The Chamber's analysis emphasizes that Poland, with its strong agricultural and industrial base, represents a potential partner for Iran. However, sanctions, competition from China, and pressure from the European Union remain significant barriers to growth in bilateral trade.

Experts note that lifting sanctions, improving infrastructure, and expanding cooperation could help raise trade levels and foster collaboration in key sectors such as agriculture and energy. Nevertheless, in the short term—through the end of 2025—limited growth and continuation of the current trade pattern appear more likely.

## Iran-Kuwait Land Trade Route to Open Soon



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The Iran-Kuwait Joint Chamber of Commerce announced that land trade between the two countries will soon begin, a move expected to significantly expand bilateral trade.

Ebrahim Gholamzadeh Zanganeh, head of the Iran-Kuwait Joint Chamber, told Iran Chamber Online that preparations are underway to establish a land transport corridor through Iraq, enabling direct shipment of goods from Iran to Kuwait.

"This development will reduce both the time and cost of transportation considerably," he said, highlighting Iraq's recent accession to the international TIR Convention as a key factor in making the route possible. The TIR system streamlines customs procedures for trucks crossing international borders, allowing faster loading and unloading without lengthy inspections.

According to Zanganeh, trade conditions between the two countries have already improved this year, with a notable increase compared to last year. He attributed this growth largely to the resolution of visa issues that had hindered travel for businesspeople since the COVID-19 pandemic. "Kuwait had suspended visa issuance after the pandemic, which restricted economic exchanges for a long period. Now, Iranian traders can easily obtain visas and resume their activities," he said.

The chamber president also noted progress in addressing previous obstacles in transportation, customs, inspections, and maritime transit through closer cooperation with Kuwaiti counterparts.

Trade between Iran and Kuwait was valued at around \$300 million last year. With the easing of visa restrictions and the launch of the new land corridor, Zanganeh predicted that the figure could multiply. Essential goods such as food, fruit, and vegetables are expected to benefit most from the faster, more efficient trade route.

The General Assembly of the Iran-Kuwait Joint Chamber of Commerce is scheduled to convene on September 21.

# Iran's Exports Reach \$16.5b in First Four Months of Year

TEHRAN - Iran recorded exports worth \$16.55 billion during the first four months of the current Iranian year, according to official figures released by the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPO). Although export volumes grew slightly compared with the same period last year, the overall value of exports fell by more than five percent, highlighting ongoing challenges in the country's foreign trade sector.

Mohsen Montazeri, Director General of Planning and Monitoring at the TPO, told IRNA that Iran exported 48.81 million tons of goods from March to July 2025. This marks a 1.5 percent increase in volume compared with the previous year. However, the export value of \$16.55 billion represented a 5.5 percent decline in dollar terms.

Montazeri noted that the average price of exported goods stood at \$339 per ton, a drop of seven percent from last year, reflecting both falling global commodity prices and competitive pressures in Iran's key markets.

Overall non-oil trade—including exports and imports—reached 61.02 million tons, valued at \$34.18 billion, during the same period. While trade volume rose marginally by 0.5 percent, the total value decreased by more than 10 percent.

Montazeri attributed the decline in value to global economic slowdowns, regional disruptions, and domestic policy shifts, particularly in foreign exchange management.

China remained Iran's largest export market, purchasing \$4.56 billion worth of goods and accounting for 27.6 percent of total exports. Iraq followed with \$2.94 billion (17.8 percent share), while the United Arab Emirates ranked third at \$2.12 billion (12.8 percent). Turkey and Afghanistan rounded out the top five destinations, with \$1.67 billion (10.1 percent) and \$709 million (4.3 percent), respectively.

Together, these five countries represented 72.5 percent of Iran's total exports.

Montazeri also detailed the breakdown of exports by sector: petrochemicals and oil-based products led with 49 percent of total exports, mining and mineral industries contributed 25 percent, industrial goods 17 percent, and agricultural products around 9 percent.

On the import side, Iran purchased 12.21 million tons of goods worth \$17.03 billion during the four-month period. Compared with last year, imports fell by 3 percent in volume and 14 percent in value.

The UAE was Iran's largest supplier, accounting for \$5.41 billion in imports, or 30.7 percent of the total. China followed closely at \$4.59 billion (26 percent share), while Turkey supplied \$2.6 billion (14.7 percent). India and Germany contributed \$669 million (3.8 percent) and \$628 million (3.6 percent), respectively. Altogether, these five countries provided nearly 79 percent of Iran's imports.

The average price of imported goods was reported at \$1,444 per ton—11 percent



ina images

: Ali Moarefi

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

lower than last year.

Imports were concentrated in intermediate goods, which made up 72 percent of the total, while consumer and capital goods each accounted for 14 percent. Notably, Iran also imported \$1.07 billion worth of gold in the first four months of the year.

Montazeri reported that Iran maintained a positive trade balance of \$5.8 billion with 81 countries during the period. However, trade deficits totaling \$6.9 billion were recorded with 60 other countries, reflecting structural imbalances in Iran's international commerce.

Despite the recent decline, officials highlighted broader achievements. Mohammad-Ali Dehghan Dehnavi, Deputy Minister of Industry, Mine, and Trade and head of the TPO, pointed to last

year's record non-oil exports of \$58 billion—the highest in Iran's history.

According to Dehnavi, the government has pursued a strategy of expanding free trade and preferential agreements, which has opened new opportunities, particularly with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). Since May 2025, Iran has implemented a major trade agreement with the EAEU, boosting exports to member states Russia, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, and Kyrgyzstan. Trade with this bloc grew by 22 percent in the past year.

Officials acknowledged that the 5.5 percent drop in exports during the first four months of the current year was partly due to external shocks, including the temporary shutdown of Shahid Rajaei Port, regional instability marked by a 12-day conflict, and the global economic slowdown.

Dehnavi added that currency policies have also discouraged exporters, but expressed optimism that multilateral trade agreements and new partnerships—such as the recently signed free trade accord with Pakistan—could offset recent setbacks. If ratified, the Iran-Pakistan agreement could significantly expand the current \$3 billion trade volume between the two neighbors, leveraging Pakistan's 250 million-strong consumer market.

Iran's trade officials emphasized that while short-term challenges persist, the government's focus on diversifying export markets, reducing reliance on oil revenues, and deepening regional trade ties offers a path to stability.

The balance between declining trade values and rising volumes suggests that Iran's exporters remain competitive in regional markets, but face pressure from falling prices and shifting global demand. How Tehran manages these challenges—particularly through trade diplomacy and currency reforms—will be key in determining whether Iran can sustain its record-setting trajectory in non-oil exports.

# Iranian Delegation Presents Proposals on Sustainable Development Criteria

TEHRAN - The Regional Meeting of the Working Group on Auditing Sustainable Development Goals and Criteria of the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI) was held in St. Petersburg, Russia, from August 26 to 29, with active participation from Iran's Supreme Audit Court (SAC).

Seyed Sharif Hosseini, Head of the Advisory Board of the SAC and head of the Iranian delegation, outlined Iran's perspectives and proposals for enhancing cooperation among INTOSAI member states. Fereydoun Hemmati, a member of Iran's Parliament Budget and Planning Commission, also took part in the delegation.

Speaking before representatives from 14 countries and online participants from other member states, Hosseini emphasized that sustainable development is the only viable path for overcoming today's global challenges and achieving good governance and stability worldwide.

He highlighted Iran's domestic initiatives in fields such as desertification control, forestry, and watershed management, stressing the importance of training human resources in advancing sustainable development.

Hosseini proposed establishing a communication mechanism among INTOSAI's member audit institutions to exchange experiences and tackle challenges more effectively—especially by making use of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence.

On the sidelines of the meeting, the Iranian delegation held bilateral talks with representatives from Russia, Egypt, Qatar, and Kuwait.

Hosseini noted that Iran and Russia had signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in 2015, and discussions with the Russian delegation—who chaired the St. Petersburg session—



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

focused on revitalizing its pending provisions and expanding cooperation.

He added that Qatar expressed interest in strengthening ties and learning from Iran's experiences in public auditing. Talks with Egypt, which will host the next regional INTOSAI meeting on sustainable development, and with Kuwait, also emphasized broader cooperation among Gulf and Arab countries.

In remarks to IRNA, MP Fereydoun Hemmati underlined the importance of INTOSAI's sustainable development committee, currently chaired by Russia. He explained that

Iran became a member of this committee last year following significant efforts by the SAC.

Hemmati stressed that the St. Petersburg meeting provided an opportunity for nearly 20 countries—14 of them in person—to present their experiences, challenges, and audit-related initiatives in the field of sustainable development.

He further warned that unilateral sanctions, particularly those imposed by the United States and Europe, could undermine global sustainable development by diverting it from the path of justice.

"True sustainable development requires justice and inclusiveness for all nations," Hemmati said, arguing that sanctions stand in contradiction to this principle. He pointed to key global concerns—such as environmental protection, poverty reduction, and public health—as shared responsibilities that all nations must pursue.

Hemmati described Iran's bilateral meetings in St. Petersburg as "positive and constructive," emphasizing the mutual interest in strengthening cooperation, particularly in professional training and international auditing standards.

## Iran-Eurasia Free Trade Agreement: A Key Achievement of the 14th Gov't



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The International Affairs and Trade Agreements Advisor at Iran's Trade Promotion Organization has described the implementation of the Free Trade Agreement between Iran and the five member states of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) as one of the most significant achievements of the 14th government in the field of trade.

Mirhadi Seyyedi congratulated the nation on Government Week and said that after years of negotiations, the Free Trade Agreement between Iran and the EAEU countries—Russia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Armenia—officially came into effect on May 14, 2024. Under the deal, most goods exported from Iran to the EAEU member states are exempt from customs tariffs.

Seyyedi pointed to the earlier Preferential Trade Agreement that had been in place since October 27, 2019, between Iran and the same five countries, noting that it had already produced positive results in boosting trade. Over the past five years, Iran's exports to the EAEU states more than tripled, rising from \$600 million to about \$2 billion in 2024.

The advisor expressed hope that the implementation of the new Free Trade Agreement would provide broader opportunities for expanding trade between Iran and the EAEU.

Seyyedi, who led Iran's negotiations with the five countries, emphasized that this is Iran's first comprehensive Free Trade Agreement to be fully implemented, making it essential for Iranian traders to become familiar with its provisions.

To this end, the Trade Promotion Organization has held seminars in 15 provinces to introduce the Iran-EAEU Free Trade Agreement, providing thousands of traders and economic actors with the necessary information.

## Iran, Belarus Sign Airworthiness Cooperation Agreement



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iran and Belarus have signed a cooperation memorandum in the field of aviation engineering and technology, with one of its key provisions focused on airworthiness collaboration between the two countries.

According to Iran's Civil Aviation Organization, the agreement was signed following President Masoud Pezeshkian's visit to Belarus. The initiative aims to strengthen bilateral aviation relations and create a framework for the export of engineering services, the expansion of maintenance and repair centers, the design and manufacture of aircraft, as well as the growth of knowledge-based companies.

Under the terms of the memorandum, airworthiness certificates will be mutually recognized by both countries. This measure will allow domestic companies to supply parts, equipment, and services in international markets, contributing to economic growth and the expansion of trade in the aviation sector.

Officials noted that the agreement could serve as a model for future aviation cooperation with other countries. Negotiations for similar memorandums with several nations are currently underway.

Politically, such agreements are seen as a step toward strengthening international relations, encouraging other states to pursue similar partnerships, and aligning regulatory frameworks of both nations with the standards of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

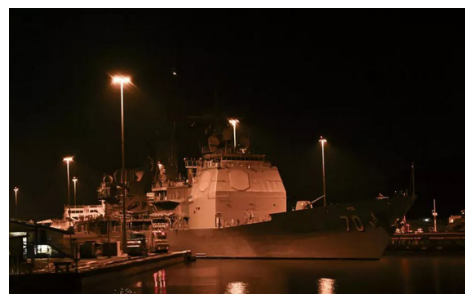
## U.S. Warship Enters Panama Canal

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - AFP journalists saw the naval vessel passing through one of the canal's locks at around 9:30 pm (0230 GMT Saturday) and navigating east toward the Atlantic.

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

"I didn't know the ship was going to pass... I was surprised," Alfredo Cedenio, a 32-year-old health technician, who took photos of the cruiser, told AFP.

The Lake Erie had been moored for the past two days at the Port of Rodman, at the canal's Pacific entrance. Washington has accused Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro of leading a drug cartel and has doubled the bounty for his capture to \$50 million.



## Israel Declares Gaza City a Dangerous Combat Zone Ahead of New Offensive



TEL AVIV (Dispatches) - The Israeli military declared Gaza City "a dangerous combat zone" ahead of a looming offensive to conquer the Palestinian territory's largest city after almost two years of devastating war.

Israel is under mounting pressure at home and abroad to end its offensive in Gaza, where the vast majority of the population has been displaced at least once and the United Nations has declared a famine.

The Israeli military, however, is gearing up to expand the fighting and seize Gaza City, with its Arabic-language spokesman saying on Friday: "We are not waiting."

"We have begun preliminary operations and the initial stages of the attack on Gaza City, and we are currently operating with great force on the outskirts of the city," Avichay Adraee said on X.

Late on Friday, Israeli military chief Lieutenant General Eyal Zamir said in a video statement his forces were "enhancing the strikes in the Gaza City area, and we will intensify our efforts in the coming weeks".

The UN estimates that nearly a million people currently live in Gaza governorate, which includes Gaza City and its surroundings.

The UN declared a famine in Gaza governorate last week, blaming "systematic obstruction" by Israel of humanitarian aid deliveries.

A military statement on Friday said that Gaza City now "constitutes a dangerous combat zone", and daily pauses in military activity that had allowed limited food deliveries would no longer apply there.

The military did not call for the population to leave immediately, but Adraee said earlier this week that the city's evacuation was "inevitable".

In southern Gaza City on Friday, AFP footage showed Palestinians picking through the wreckage of a building following an Israeli strike.

## Anger Erupts Nationwide in Indonesia Over Gig Driver's Death



MAKASSAR (Dispatches) - At least three people were killed by a fire started by protesters at a council building in eastern Indonesia's Makassar city, a local official told AFP Saturday, after demonstrations across the country following the death of a motorcycle taxi driver hit by a police vehicle.

The country was rocked by protests across major cities including the capital Jakarta on Friday, after footage spread of a gig motorcycle driver being run over by a police tactical vehicle in earlier rallies over low wages and perceived lavish perks for lawmakers.

Protests in Makassar descended into chaos outside the provincial and local city council buildings, both set on fire and vehicles set ablaze as protesters hurled rocks and Molotov cocktails.

Three people were killed as a result of the fire at the Makassar city council building, its secretary Rahmat Mappatoba told AFP.

"They were trapped in the burning building," he said, accusing protesters of storming the office to set the building on fire.

"This is beyond our prediction, usually during a demonstration, protesters only throw rocks or burn a tyre in front of the office. They never stormed into the building or burned it."

Two of the victims were staff at the local council and another was a civil servant. Two died at the scene while one died in hospital.

At least four people were injured in the fire and are being treated at hospital, the official said.



## France, Germany Pledge to Ramp Up Pressure on Putin

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - The leaders of France and Germany vowed to step up pressure on Russia over its war against Ukraine, warning that President Vladimir Putin was showing little appetite to end Moscow's three-and-a-half year onslaught against its neighbour.

French President Emmanuel Macron said that Putin would have "played" US President Donald Trump if he failed to fulfil a pledge to meet Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky.

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz added it looked like Putin was "unwilling" to hold such a meeting and said that the war looked like it would last "many more months".

In Kyiv, Zelensky said the death toll from Russia's barrage Thursday against the Ukrainian capital had risen by two to 25.

France and Germany agreed to send additional air-defence hardware to Ukraine following the deadly Russian attack on Kyiv, and to open a strategic dialogue about nuclear deterrence.

Trump moved to restore dialogue with Moscow at the start of his second presidency, but diplomatic efforts to end the conflict sparked by Russia's February 2022 invasion of its neighbour appear to have lost momentum.

Macron expressed hope that a Putin-Zelensky meeting would take place, but said if the Russian leader did not meet a Monday deadline to agree to the talks "it will show again President Putin has played President Trump".

But, he added, if the Russian leader did not meet a Monday deadline to agree to the talks "it will show again President Putin has played President Trump".

"I think this is not a good thing for us all. This cannot stay without response," said Macron.

"I hope it (the meeting between Putin and Zelensky) takes place but if not... we will push for primary and secondary

sanctions which will pressure Russia and force it to come to the negotiating table," he added.

Macron also expressed no regret for describing Putin earlier this month as an "ogre at our gates", comments that angered Moscow.

"We say there is an ogre at the gates of Europe... this is very much what the Georgians (after a 2008 invasion) and Ukrainians and many other nations feel very deeply," he said.

"That is a man who has decided to go down an authoritarian path and impose imperialism to change international frontiers."

After deadly drone and missile attacks on Kyiv on Thursday, Macron also warned that Putin had a habit of saying one thing at international talks and then acting differently.

"The gap between President Putin's positions at international summits and the reality on the ground shows how insincere he is," he said.

Merz said that Russia's war against Ukraine could yet go on for "many more months", adding that he had "no illusions" about the prospects of a swift conclusion.

He vowed that "we will not abandon Ukraine" but said it looked like Putin was showing "no readiness" to meet with Zelensky.

"To be frank that does not surprise me as this is part of this Russian president's strategy," the German chancellor added.

The two leaders' meeting in the southern French port city of Toulon came after Russian missiles and drones ripped through apartment blocks in Kyiv on Thursday, the deadliest attack on the capital in months.

## Most of Trump's Sweeping Tariffs Are Illegal

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - A U.S. appeals court ruled that many of President Donald Trump's tariffs, which have upended global trade, were illegal - but allowed them to remain in place for now, giving him time to take the fight to the Supreme Court.

The 7-4 ruling by the US Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit affirmed a lower court's finding that Trump had exceeded his authority in tapping emergency economic powers to impose wide-ranging duties.

But the judges allowed the tariffs to stay in place through mid-October - and Trump swiftly made clear he would put the time to use.

The appeals court "incorrectly said that our Tariffs should be removed, but they know the United States of America will win in the end," he said in a statement on his Truth Social platform lashing out at the ruling.

He added that he would fight back "with the help of the United States Supreme Court."

The decision marks a blow to the president, who has wielded duties as a wide-ranging economic policy tool.

It could also cast doubt over deals Trump has struck with major trading partners such as the European Union, and raised the question of what would happen to the billions of dollars collected by the United States since the tariffs were put in place if the conservative-majority Supreme Court does not back him.

The case, however, does not deal with sector-specific tariffs that the Trump



administration has also imposed on steel, aluminum, autos and other imports.

Since returning to the presidency in January, Trump has invoked the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) to impose "reciprocal" tariffs on almost all US trading partners, with a 10-percent baseline level and higher rates for dozens of economies.

He has invoked similar authorities to slap separate tariffs hitting Mexico, Canada and China over the flow of deadly drugs into the United States.

The Court of International Trade had ruled in May that Trump overstepped his authority with across-the-board global levies, blocking most of the duties from taking effect, but the appeals court later put the ruling on hold to consider the case.

Friday's ruling noted that "the statute bestows significant authority on the

President to undertake a number of actions in response to a declared national emergency, but none of these actions explicitly include the power to impose tariffs, duties, or the like, or the power to tax."

It added that it was not addressing if Trump's actions should have been taken as a matter of policy or deciding whether IEEPA authorizes any tariffs at all.

Instead, it sought to resolve the question of whether Trump's "reciprocal" tariffs and those imposed over trafficking were authorized, with the document noting: "We conclude they are not."

In a supplementary filing just hours before the appeals court released its decision, Trump cabinet officials argued that ruling the global tariffs illegal and blocking them would hurt US foreign policy and national security.

"Such a ruling would threaten broader US strategic interests at home and abroad, likely lead to retaliation and the unwinding of agreed-upon deals by foreign-trading partners," wrote Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick.

Lutnick added that they could also "derail critical ongoing negotiations" with partners.

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, meanwhile, warned that suspending the effectiveness of tariffs "would lead to dangerous diplomatic embarrassment."

Several legal challenges have been filed against the tariffs Trump invoked citing emergencies.

If these tariffs are ultimately ruled illegal, companies could possibly seek reimbursements.

## U.S. Bars Palestinian Leader Abbas From UN

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The United States said it will not allow Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas to travel to New York next month for a United Nations gathering of world leaders, where several U.S. allies are set to recognize Palestine as a state.

A State Department official said Abbas and about 80 other Palestinians would be affected by the decision to deny and revoke visas from members of the umbrella Palestine Liberation Organization and the West Bank-based Palestinian Authority.

Abbas had been planning to travel to New York for the annual high-level U.N. General Assembly at U.N. headquarters in Manhattan. He was also set to attend a summit there - hosted by France and Saudi Arabia - where Britain, France, Australia and Canada have pledged to formally recognize a Palestinian state.

Abbas' office said it was astonished by the visa decision and argued that it violated the U.N. "headquarters agreement."

Under a 1947 U.N. "headquarters agreement," the U.S. is generally required to allow access for foreign diplomats to the U.N. in New York. Washington, however, has said it can deny visas for security, extremism and foreign policy



reasons.

The State Department justified its decision by reiterating longstanding U.S. and Israeli allegations that the PA and PLO had failed to repudiate extremism while pushing for "unilateral recognition" of a Palestinian state.

Palestinian officials reject such allegations and say that decades of U.S.-mediated talks have failed to end Israeli occupation and secure an independent state of Palestine.

"(It) is in our national security interests to hold the PLO and PA accountable for not complying with their commitments, and for undermining the prospects for peace," the department said.

The State Department said that the Palestinian Authority's mission to the U.N., comprising officials who are permanently based there, would not be included in the restrictions.

U.N. spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said the U.N. would discuss the visa issue with the State Department, "in line with U.N. Headquarters agreement between the U.N. and the U.S."



## Djokovic Beats Back Issue to Blast Past Norrie at U.S. Open

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Novak Djokovic stayed in the hunt for a record 25th Grand Slam trophy on Friday by quickly recovering from a lower back problem to beat unseeded Briton Cameron Norrie 6-4 6-7(4) 6-2 6-3 and reach the fourth round of the U.S. Open.

The 38-year-old's battling victory under the lights of Arthur Ashe Stadium made him the oldest man to reach the last 16 at Flushing Meadows since American Jimmy Connors managed the feat at the same age in 1991.

Already the holder of the most Grand Slam titles (24) and match wins (395), Djokovic reached another milestone by surpassing Swiss maestro Roger Federer to become the man with the most hardcourt victories at the majors with his 192nd win.

The four-times New York winner also improved his record against Norrie to 7-0.

"I guess coming into the match, any match, you really want to win in straight sets without any drama and just ease through, but that's not possible," said Djokovic, who is playing in his first event since losing to Jannik Sinner at Wimbledon last month.

"My team wants me to suffer on the court so I can get some more minutes spent in match play. It's good that I get tested. I hadn't played any matches since Wimbledon and it's been for us quite a long time, five to six weeks.

"I'm still trying to find my groove and my rhythm on court," added the Serb, who said Friday's performance was an improvement on his first two matches.

Djokovic wasted no time in heaping the pressure on Norrie and broke for a 4-3 lead with a forehand winner before launching the ninth of his 18 aces during the contest in the following game to consolidate his early advantage.

"I think it was probably the best serving performance of the tournament," Djokovic added.

"So of course I'm glad. It's probably one of the most, if not the most important shot in the game. Yeah, I'm glad how I executed that shot."

Djokovic then began to feel the effects of a back problem after going up 5-4 and received treatment off the court before returning to serve out the opening set.

He called for more medical attention three games into the next set and his first-serve speed briefly dipped following that break in play.

However, he started to fire on all cylinders again and went toe-to-toe with Norrie, who had to fight back from a two-point deficit early in the tiebreak to go level in the match.

A sublime drop shot helped Norrie break in the opening game of the third set but Djokovic struck back to win three straight games, pausing along the way to bark at someone in the Arthur Ashe Stadium stands to stay quiet.

Djokovic continued to reassert himself from there, closing out the set comfortably and fully hitting his stride in the fourth to maintain his 100% record against Norrie and book a meeting with Jan-Lennard Struff.

Meanwhile Aryna Sabalenka got the revenge she craved on Friday by defeating Leylah Fernandez 6-3 7-6(2) to erase the sting of her 2021 U.S. Open semi-final upset and keep her dream alive of winning back-to-back Flushing Meadows titles.

The world number one had been waiting four years to settle the score with the Canadian, who stunned her in straight sets en route to the 2021 final in their only previous meeting.

"I really wanted this revenge," three-times Grand Slam champion Sabalenka said in her on-court interview after winning the third-round match. "I'm very happy with the win."

The match began ominously for Sabalenka though, as Fernandez earned multiple break points in a marathon opening game on Louis Armstrong Stadium, but the Belarusian's resilience shone through as she saved them all before eventually holding serve.

That early test seemed to settle the 27-year-old, who broke Fernandez's serve in the fourth game of the opening set when her opponent double-faulted on break point.

Sabalenka never looked back, facing only one more break point in the match, which she snuffed out with a service winner.

Still, the second set proved far more competitive, with both players trading holds until the tiebreak, where Sabalenka's experience told as she raced to a 6-1 lead before sealing victory with a forehand winner.

## Madushanka's Hat-Trick Heroics See Sri Lanka Hold Off Hosts Zimbabwe



HARARE (Dispatches) - Sri Lanka fast bowler Dilshan Madushanka took a last-over hat-trick to steer the tourists to a dramatic seven-run victory over Zimbabwe in their first One-Day International at the Harare Sports Club.

Zimbabwe needed 10 runs off the last over to win as they chased down an imposing 299-run target, but Madushanka bowled Sikandar Raza for 92 with the first ball of the over and then had Brad Evans caught as he scooped the next ball to fine leg.

The third ball of the over saw Madushanka bowl Richard Ngarava middle stump.

He conceded only two runs off the last three balls to ensure a narrow win as Zimbabwe finished on 291-8 in reply to Sri Lanka's 298-6.

Sri Lanka, who were put in to bat, piled on the runs near the end of their innings as Janith Liyanage and Kamindu Mendes led a recovery after they were reduced to 161-5 with 13 overs remaining.

Liyanage hit 70 not out off 47 balls and Kamindu 57 off 36 as they added 137 runs off 83 balls to set a daunting total for Zimbabwe to chase.

The home side's bid began disastrously as they lost their first two wickets in four balls, without scoring, but stand-in captain Sean Williams and Ben Curran put on 118 runs for the third wicket to give the home fans hope.

Curran scored 70 but it was a 128-run partnership for the sixth wicket between Raza and Tony Munyonga, who was 43 not out, that took Zimbabwe close before Madushanka's heroics. The Sri Lanka speedster ended with figures of 4-62.

Zimbabwe captain Craig Ervine was ruled out of the series after a calf tear on Thursday, with Williams taking over as skipper.

The last of the two-match ODI series is being played on Sunday followed by three Twenty20 internationals.

## Amorim Insists He Will Remain Man United Boss



LONDON (Dispatches) - Ruben Amorim is adamant he will still be in charge of Manchester United after the forthcoming international break despite the mounting pressure on the beleaguered boss.

Stunned by United's humiliating League Cup second round loss at fourth tier Grimsby on Wednesday, Amorim said "something has to change" at the club and he would "think things through" during next week's international break.

Amorim's outburst led to questions over his future at Old Trafford, with United winless in their first two Premier League games this term.

The Portuguese coach was already battling to change perceptions of his reign, which only started in November, after United suffered their worst league finish since 1973-74 last season.

But ahead of Saturday's visit from Burnley, Amorim explained his comments were made in the heat of the moment on a hugely frustrating night.

When asked if he would still be in the job when United visit Manchester City on September 14, Amorim said: "I don't know what is going to happen. That is my idea, but I'm not going to promise you nothing, what is going to be in the future.

"But I'm the manager of Manchester United, and I think that is not going to change."

Amorim responded to a question about his confidence in his ability to take United forward by simply saying: "Yes."

With a laugh, he added: "It depends on the day. But I'm confident because I saw these players play really well in tough matches. And I see it in training. That training is so much better.

## Staying at Red Bull in 2026 a Simple Decision

LONDON (Dispatches) - Four-time world champion Max Verstappen didn't get stressed by widespread speculation in recent months that he might leave Red Bull Racing for Mercedes in 2026.

In fact, he said "it was very, very simple" in making the decision to stay with Red Bull. He is under contract until the 2028 Formula 1 season but had a potential exit clause based on his championship points standing that ended up not being triggered.

"I only say what I want to say," Verstappen told ESPN in a report published Friday. "And I was never even stressed about it at all because ... of course naturally you always want to win. But at the same time, you just work on performance.

"People always come up with stories or ask questions. But for me, it was quite straightforward all the time."

For someone in an intense profession, this matter did not put him in duress.

"I think in general, I'm a person that is always quite



relaxed about it," said Verstappen, 27. "Like I don't stress out or go to bed massively overthinking stuff.

"I just live my life, you know, see what happens next. For me, there's nothing wrong with talking or listening (to offers) or whatever, but it was all under control."

What wasn't in his control were the statements coming from Mercedes boss Toto Wolff, who in Verstappen's own words has a good relationship with the driver. Wolff was openly interested in the possibility of signing Verstappen, even holding up contract extension negotiations with Mercedes star driver George Russell.

It didn't help that social media went viral with images of Wolff and Verstappen spending time together on a yacht this summer. Both were vacationing in Sardinia.

## Messi Lifts Miami Into Final, Sounders Vow to Spoil Party

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - The Seattle Sounders are conceding nothing as they prepare to host football's "greatest player" Lionel Messi and Inter Miami in the Leagues Cup final on Sunday.

Argentine superstar Messi returned from injury to score a late brace that propelled Inter to a dramatic 3-1 come-from-behind victory over Orlando City in the semi-finals.

The 38-year-old admitted he felt "scared" in the first half after suffering one setback already in his recovery from a right hamstring injury.

But the eight-time Ballon d'Or winner worked his magic with a second-half penalty and the game-winning goal in the space of 11 minutes.

Led by Messi and his former Barcelona teammates Luis Suarez and Jordi Alba, Miami have emerged from their mid-season Major League Soccer doldrums with nine victories, three draws and two defeats in 14 matches since the start of July.



They are aiming to add another Leagues Cup title to the one they captured in 2023 in Messi's magical first season with the MLS club.

But the Sounders – whose US\$16.7 million payroll is dwarfed by Miami's US\$46.8 million player compensation total – are quietly building a superb season themselves.

Tied with Orlando for most goals scored in MLS this season, Seattle have just one defeat in 14 matches since exiting the Club World Cup and have out-scored their Leagues Cup opponents 13-2 in five matches with eight different players scoring goals.

They are vying to go one better than their 2021 Leagues Cup final appearance – and if they can, they will become the first MLS team to win every North American trophy on offer.

They already own two MLS Cup crowns, an MLS Supporters Shield, four US Open Cups and a Concacaf Champions Cup.

"We're an organization that is always fighting for titles," Sounders defender Alex Roldan said.