

President Masoud Pezeshkian Will Attend the Extraordinary Islamic-Arab Summit in Doha on Sunday and Monday, a Meeting Called by Qatar to Rally Support for Palestinians in Gaza and to Respond to Israel's Recent Strike on the Qatari capital

IRAN NEWS

Brigadier General Yahya Saree, in a Statement, Said Yemen's Armed Forces Say They Have Launched Successful Missile and Drone Attacks Targeting Israeli Occupied Areas in Support of the Palestinian Cause

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Iran Backs Qatar's Self-Defense Right After Israeli Aggression



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's ambassador and permanent representative to the United Nations says the Islamic Republic resolutely advocates for Qatar's right to self-defense against the recent Israeli aggression targeting the political leadership of the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas on its soil.

Amir Saeed Irvani made the remarks on Thursday in a statement prepared for an emergency session of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to discuss Israel's September 9 strikes on the Qatari capital of Doha, which assassinated several top Hamas officials as well as Qatari civilians.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran unequivocally and decisively condemns the terrorist aggression and armed attacks by the Zionist regime against the government of Qatar, which resulted in the martyrdom and injury of a number of Palestinian and Qatari civilians, and declares the solidarity and support of the Islamic Republic of Iran with the government of Qatar," Irvani said.

Araqchi Slams European States for Ignoring U.S., Israeli Aggression Against Iran



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Foreign Minister Seyyed Abbas Araqchi has denounced the three European nations for their "irresponsible" approach to the recent aggression against Iran by the United States and Israel, as well as their threat to restore the canceled UN Security Council resolutions, which he believes will only exacerbate the existing tensions.

Araqchi made the remarks on Thursday night in a telephone conversation with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. He emphasized Iran's commitment to protecting the rights and interests of its people in accordance with the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

He urged the United Nations and its member countries to take a definitive stance against the illegal attacks on Iran's peaceful nuclear facilities.

Highlighting Iran's cooperative approach in engaging with international bodies, Araqchi noted the constructive discussions aimed at fulfilling Iran's safeguards obligations, particularly in light of recent aggressions against its nuclear capabilities.

He stressed the importance of European nations and UN Security Council members recognizing and supporting this diplomatic progress.

Araqchi also addressed the ongoing humanitarian crisis in occupied Palestine, condemning the genocide perpetrated by Israel and calling it a pressing global concern.

The top Iranian diplomat underscored the collective duty of the international community and the UN, including the Secretary-General, to halt such aggression and address the ongoing tragedy in Gaza.

FM Says Nuclear Material Buried at Bombed Sites, Rejects Unrestricted IAEA Access



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran says its nuclear materials remain under rubble from recent attacks, stressing that any inspections by the UN must follow new rules and rejecting Western demands for unrestricted access amid ongoing diplomatic tensions.

"What relates to our nuclear materials is all under the debris caused by attacks on the bombed facilities," Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said on national television IIRB's "Special News Program" Thursday night.

"Whether these materials are accessible or not, and the status of some of them, is currently being evaluated by the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran," he added.

Araqchi said that once this evaluation is complete, the report will be submitted to Iran's Supreme National Security Council, which will decide on any subsequent actions considering Iran's security concerns.

He said the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has accepted that the current conditions differ from the past and that Iran's cooperation with the agency "cannot be as before."

On Tuesday, Araqchi and IAEA Director-General Rafael Grossi reached an agreement on practical modalities to resume inspection activities inside Iran after their three-hour meeting in Cairo.

The agreement follows months of suspended cooperation. Tehran had halted access for IAEA inspectors after a 12-day military assault on its nuclear facilities in June and July by Israel and the US.

Following the unprovoked aggression, the Iranian parliament passed a law banning the return of inspectors without guarantees for the protection of Iran's nuclear sites.

Araqchi said the IAEA had acknowledged the attacks on Iran's nuclear sites as unacceptable and recognized that cooperation must now follow a new framework consistent with Iran's parliamentary law and decisions by the Supreme National Security Council.

"The IAEA has accepted that there are new conditions and that cooperation cannot continue as previously. They have also agreed that the law passed by the parliament and the Supreme National Security Council's views must be respected."

He further elaborated that no inspections are currently authorized at the damaged sites to allow for environmental remediation, and future inspections will require further negotiations and approval from the Supreme National Security Council.

Araqchi also addressed discrepancies between his account and that of Grossi after signing the agreement in Cairo.

While Grossi said the agreement "contemplates access to all facilities and installations in Iran", Araqchi reiterated that no such access has yet been given and that future talks will determine the nature and timing of any cooperation.

"In every agreement, each side has its own narrative. Mr. Grossi must report to the Board of Governors in a manner that satisfies them. He states his version, which may differ from ours, but the text of the agreement is the same," the Iranian foreign minister said Thursday.

In Cairo, Araqchi had made it clear that "access is only permitted in the case of the Bushehr nuclear power plant, and only due to its fuel replacement process — a decision already approved by the Supreme National Security Council."

Araqchi reaffirmed that all decisions regarding cooperation, inspections, and information sharing with the IAEA are under the exclusive authority of the Supreme National Security Council, ensuring that past grievances of espionage and unilateral agency access will not recur.

This comes amid heightened tensions following sabotage attacks on Iran's nuclear sites,

which Iran has blamed on Israel.

The attacks have complicated the already fragile relations between Tehran and Western powers over Iran's nuclear program and the future of the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Araqchi said all diplomatic efforts are carried out in full coordination with relevant authorities and in line with defined mandates, adding that Tehran would not compromise on national security or be swayed by external pressure.

"We will never back down from defending the rights and security of the people," he said. "We are not influenced by propaganda, and we will act with strength and stability to protect the interests of the Iranian people."

Araqchi rejected conditions set by the European troika — France, Germany and the UK — for the extension of UN Security Council Resolution 2231, calling the terms "unrealistic" and incompatible with Iran's national interests.

"At one point, they proposed certain conditions under which, if fulfilled, the said mechanism would be extended and, as they put it, 'a new opportunity for diplomacy' would be created," he said. "But these conditions were never accepted by us. In fact, we do not recognize any such right for them. Their conditions were neither realistic nor reasonable, and they did not align with our national interests."

Resolution 2231, adopted in 2015, endorsed the JCPOA — the Iran nuclear deal — and laid out a timetable for lifting international sanctions in exchange for limitations on Iran's nuclear program. The so-called "snapback mechanism" allows for the reimposition of UN sanctions if Iran is found to be in significant non-compliance.

Araqchi said the dispute over the resolution is ongoing, and that Iran's delegation in New York is holding "intensive consultations" in coordination with Russia, China, and "some other Security Council members" to address the issue.

"We never gave any consideration to their conditions," he said.

The Iranian diplomat emphasized that Iran's cooperation with the IAEA is a completely separate matter and is not tied to the European conditions.

"Even before they proposed those conditions, we had already begun our consultations with the Agency," Araqchi said.

He added that despite attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities, cooperation with the IAEA carries both strategic benefits and legal obligations for Iran.

"Although developments and attacks occurred and our nuclear facilities were bombed, cooperation with the Agency brings us benefits and also entails obligations," he said.

"As a committed member of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, we are bound to observe international requirements as long as we remain in the agreement."

He warned that if the snapback sanctions mechanism were triggered, "the form and type of Iran's reaction will be decided by the Supreme National Security Council," which has become a key body for such foreign policy decisions.

"At times, even the option of withdrawal from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) has been considered, but Iran has options beyond withdrawal," he said, stressing that foreign policy is dynamic and decisions must be made "according to conditions and in their own time."

Araqchi added that snapback, like military action against Iran's nuclear facilities, would complicate rather than resolve issues. "If Europeans pursue snapback, they will lose their last leverage and be excluded from negotiations. It is a major mistake and will lead to no results."

Houthi Slams Arab States for Weak Response to Israeli Attack on Qatar



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

SANAA (Dispatches) - The leader of Yemen's Ansarullah movement has criticized Arab states for their weak response to Israel's attack on Qatar, stating that their inaction—including their failure to sever diplomatic ties—violated the dignity of the entire region.

Speaking in a televised speech on Thursday, Abdul-Malik al-Houthi expressed regret over the position of Arab countries that have limited themselves to issuing a statement in response to the Israeli regime's aggression against Qatar.

On Tuesday, Israeli warplanes launched airstrikes on the headquarters of the Hamas resistance movement in the Qatari capital, Doha, in what Israeli media described as an "assassination operation."

The airstrikes came as Hamas leaders had reportedly convened to discuss the latest US proposal for a ceasefire in Gaza.

Houthi noted that targeting Qatar was an aggression against a country "with sovereignty, regional status, and active participation with various countries, including in negotiations related to Gaza."

"This action is also considered an aggression against all countries in the Persian Gulf," he added.

According to Houthi, Israel's aggression against Qatar constituted two crimes: first, the targeting of the Palestinian negotiating team, and second, an attack on Qatari sovereignty.

He stated the aim of these acts was to "expand the equation of aggression" against regional countries.

He underscored that Israel carried out the crime with absolute certainty of US backing, which it fundamentally depends on.

Israel is trying to complete the process of establishing "full domination over all of Palestine and then expand beyond its borders," he said, referring to the regime's plot to take over Gaza City.

He added that Tel Aviv is carrying out destructive activities in neighboring countries, including Lebanon and Syria, and is pursuing conspiracies against Jordan, Egypt, and Iraq.

Meanwhile, the US views the destruction of regional nations and the facilitation of the "Greater Israel" project as both "a sacred and

a highly significant mission", Houthi said.

"A serious danger from a specific party with a known history and clear objectives is endangering the Islamic Ummah," he said.

He cautioned that ignoring this danger is a sign of "misguidance and a weak stance," urging the Islamic Ummah to carefully and thoughtfully examine "the hidden motives behind America's position on regional issues, particularly regarding Palestine."

Houthi identified the absence of practical measures by Arab and Islamic governments as the source of Israel's bullying behavior, stating that this vacuum has allowed the occupiers to grow increasingly arrogant.

"Our nation has raised the flag of jihad in support of the Palestinian people while many parties have become weak and retreated in the face of this oppression," he emphasized.

Trump Knows No Friends



By Hamid-Reza Naghashifan

We Iranians, when we think about seeking friendship with America, find milestones where we have extended the hand of friendship and America has bitten it.

The instinct of savagery and impulsiveness in an animal like Ronald Trump is more apparent than in other bloodthirsty American leaders. According to the Supreme Leader, this petty man exposed all the vile, ugly, and hidden intentions of America.

The plot to deceive Hamas leaders into talks for peace and ceasefire and to give Netanyahu intelligence to strike Hamas's residential areas in Qatar will not be the last act of this supreme bloodthirsty figure and his "puppy." Qatar? Qatar? Qatar and the United States have had close strategic relations, and this relationship has manifested in the form of aid, investments, and various collaborations.

The idea that this ferocious beast would do such a thing to its friend is astonishing.

Allow me to point to some of Qatar's aid to the United States. These aids generally fall into several main categories:

Apparently humanitarian and development aid (through the Qatar Fund for Development)

Qatar, through its development fund (Qatar Fund for Development), has provided significant support to apparently humanitarian and reconstruction projects in regions of interest to the United States.

The most well-known examples:

Afghanistan: Qatar played a key role in aiding the reconstruction of Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban in 2001. At the request of the United States, it provided millions of dollars for educational, health, and infrastructure projects in Afghanistan.

Embassy construction: Qatar covered the costs of building the new United States embassy in Beirut, Lebanon.

Aid to Gaza: Qatar has continuously provided substantial financial support to assist civilians in the Gaza Strip. This aid, often coordinated with the U.S. and the UN, is used to pay health sector staff salaries and to help repair infrastructure. This has helped reduce regional tensions, which is important to the United States.

Qatar Investment Authority

The Qatar Investment Authority (QIA) is one of the largest sovereign wealth funds in the world, making massive investments in the U.S. economy. These investments indirectly contribute to U.S. economic growth and job creation. Some key areas include:

Real estate: Purchasing buildings and famous hotels like the Empire State Building in New York and shares in major real estate companies.

Investment in U.S. energy companies and oil and gas projects.

Technology and banking: Acquiring shares in tech giants such as Uber and banking giants like Barclays and Credit Suisse.

Retail: Owning reputable brands like Harrods in London and shares in the Kering fashion group.

In the eyes of media and the global public, Qatar is essentially considered an important security ally of the United States in the Persian Gulf.

Al-Udeid Air Base: Qatar hosts the largest U.S. military base in the Middle East. This base serves as the command center for U.S. operations in the region (USCENTCOM) and has played a vital role in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as anti-ISIS operations.

Weapons procurement: Qatar is one of the largest buyers of U.S. weapons. It has signed multi-billion-dollar contracts for the purchase of F-15 fighter jets, Apache helicopters, and Patriot missile defense systems, which significantly support the U.S. defense industry.

Security intelligence sharing: Qatar shares important security information with Western partners, including the U.S.

Diplomatic mediation: Qatar has often acted as a neutral intermediary between the U.S. and other parties. This role has helped the U.S. find diplomatic solutions without direct conflict.

Qatar hosted the Taliban's political office in Doha and played the role of main host and facilitator in U.S.-Taliban negotiations, which led to the Doha peace agreement in February 2020.

Qatar has also played a role in transmitting messages between the U.S. and Iran, acting as an indirect communication channel. It has mediated in the release of American citizens held as spies in Iran and other locations.

In short, Qatar's "aid" to the U.S. has mostly been in the form of large economic investments, strategic security cooperation (hosting military bases), humanitarian aid in crisis regions, and acting as a vital diplomatic intermediary. These relationships have made Qatar a highly important and influential partner for the United States in the Persian Gulf. But you saw what the joint plan of Trump and Netanyahu did in Qatar.

In fact, I wonder how these foolish elements in Iran think one can have friendship with the United States. The U.S. entering any sphere with Iran is like inviting an armed thief into one's home.

I wish it were possible to awaken those who are asleep, though of course, such a thing is impossible within the structure of wrongful governance.

IRAN NEWS



Iran, China Expand Cooperation in Postal Technology, Infrastructure

TEHRAN - The head of Iran's National Post Company says China has significant capacity to transfer technical expertise and support infrastructure, technology, and innovation for standardizing Iran's postal processes. According to the National Post Company, Mohammad Ahmadi, Deputy Minister of Communications and Managing Director of Iran Post, met with Zhao Chongjiu, Director General of China's State Post Bureau, on the sidelines of the 28th Universal Postal Union Congress in Dubai. Ahmadi highlighted Iran Post's plan to establish a new sorting and exchange center and invited China Post to participate in the project. He also emphasized Iran's determination to expand cross-border e-commerce in light of the two countries' strong trade relations, noting that challenges in this area could be addressed through joint expert teams and shared experience.

Iran Proposes Joint Border Operations Center with Iraq to Combat Drug Trafficking



TEHRAN - Iran has proposed the establishment of a joint border operations center with Iraq to strengthen cooperation in the fight against drug trafficking. The proposal was made by Hossein Zolfagari, Representative of the President and Secretary-General of Iran's Anti-Narcotics Headquarters, during the second meeting of the Iran-Iraq Joint Anti-Narcotics Committee in Baghdad.

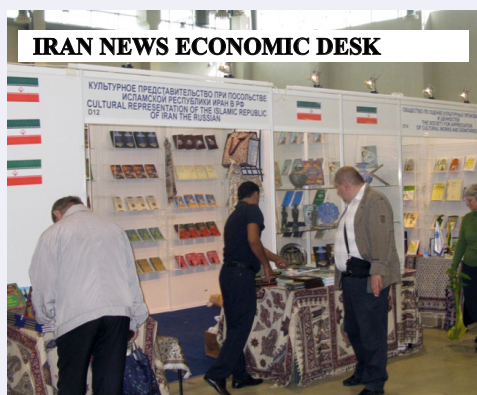
Zolfagari stressed that cooperation between the two neighbors is an "unavoidable necessity" given their deep historical, cultural, and civilizational ties, as well as the shared challenges posed by narcotics and transnational organized crime.

"Our common geography, which should serve as a source of prosperity and development, has unfortunately become a target for drug traffickers, threatening national security, public health—particularly that of our youth—and the economic stability of both nations," he said.

The Iranian delegation visited Iraq at the invitation of the Iraqi Minister of Health, who chairs Iraq's National Anti-Narcotics Commission. During the meeting, Zolfagari thanked the Iraqi government and people for their hospitality, especially in hosting pilgrims of Imam Hussein (AS), and acknowledged Iraq's efforts in organizing the joint committee session.

Zolfagari outlined Iran's proposals to deepen cooperation, including the creation of a joint border operations center staffed by liaison officers from both countries. Such a center, he said, would enable real-time intelligence exchange and better coordination of cross-border operations.

Permanent Exhibition of Iranian Products in Moscow Deemed Essential



TEHRAN - The head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), Mohammadali Dehghan Dehnavi, emphasized the need to boost exports to Russia through diversifying export goods and establishing a permanent exhibition of Iranian products in Moscow.

According to the TPO, Dehnavi made the remarks on Tuesday during a meeting with Kazem Jalali, Iran's ambassador to Russia, stressing the importance of facilitating trade activities. He noted that Iran's trade strategies with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and Russia have become more prominent in recent years, and Tehran is determined to expand its commercial ties with Moscow.

Highlighting the implementation of the free trade agreement between Iran and the EAEU, Dehnavi said: "Russia plays a key role in the Eurasian Union. The TPO has prioritized promotional activities to ensure Iran's effective presence in this market."

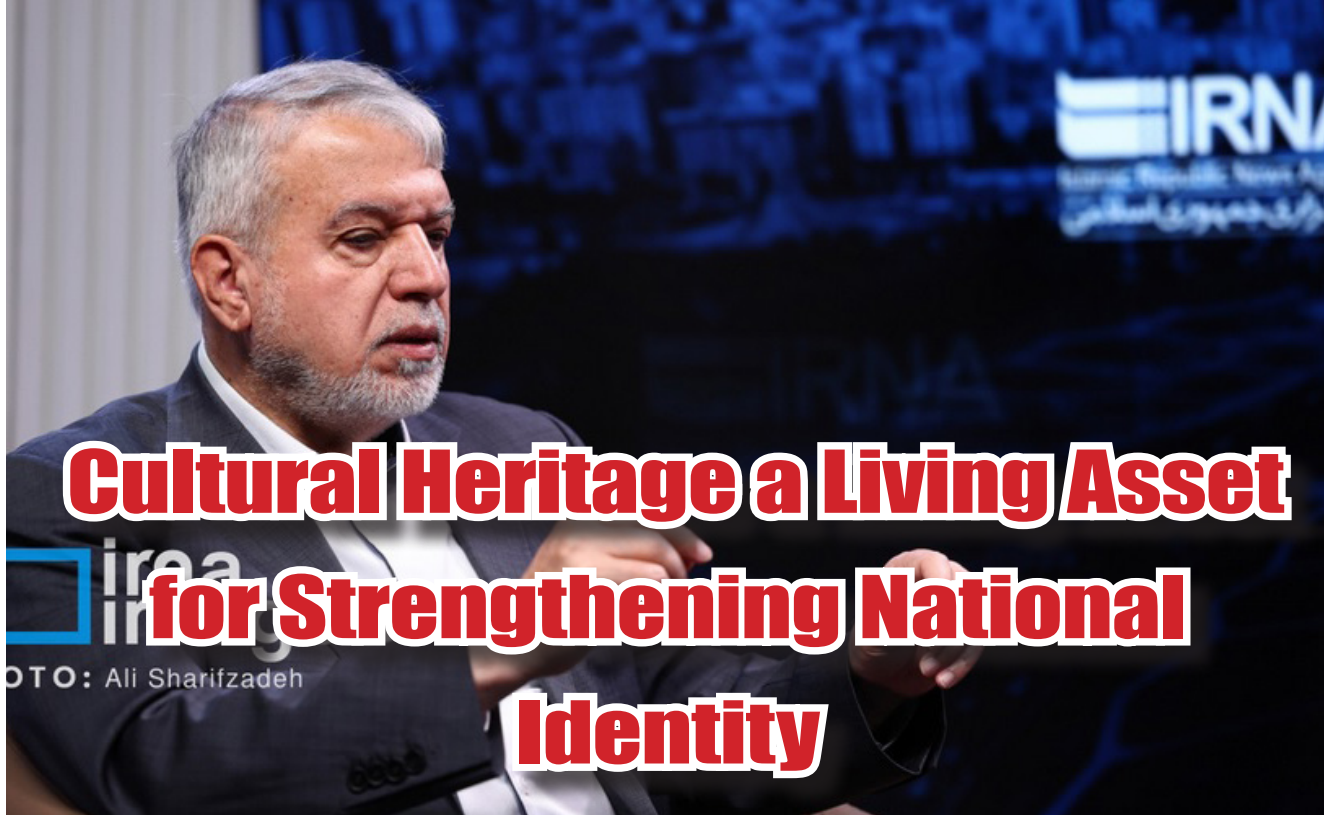
The deputy minister of industry, mining, and trade noted that agricultural and food products have traditionally been Iran's main export items to Russia. However, he added, "Iran's exports to Russia have now exceeded \$1 billion, with nearly half consisting of industrial goods. This indicates a positive shift in the composition and diversification of our exports."

Dehnavi urged Iranian exporters to focus on moving up the value chain by offering products with higher added value. "For example, opportunities exist to place Iranian goods in major retail chains across Russia," he said.

He also pointed to Russia's demand for construction materials, stressing that capable Iranian companies could expand their presence in Russian trade fairs. "In addition, permanent exhibitions of Iranian products could be established in major Russian cities," Dehnavi suggested.

During the meeting, Ambassador Jalali highlighted the long-standing history of Iran-Russia trade relations. He noted that the current conditions provide a broader opportunity for Iranian goods to enter the Russian market, especially since many European companies have exited Russia following the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war.

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK



Cultural Heritage a Living Asset for Strengthening National Identity

TEHRAN - Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts stated that cultural heritage is not merely a historical relic, but a living and dynamic asset that strengthens national identity, enhances social capital, and promotes public vitality.

According to the Ministry's Public Relations Department, Seyed Reza Salehi Amiri made the remarks at the 20th Strategic Council meeting of the ministry, held with the participation of Kerman Governor Mohammad Ali Talebi.

Salehi Amiri emphasized the significance of the recent meeting between the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, the President, and members of the Cabinet, describing it as a turning point in the country's governance. He praised President Masoud Pezeshkian's comprehensive report during the meeting, calling it proof of the government's maturity in its first year, and noted that the Leader endorsed the report several times with a supportive and fatherly approach.

Highlighting the cultural diplomacy dimension, Salehi Amiri referred to the performance of the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra at the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Persepolis. He described the event as a remarkable cultural achievement stemming from Iran's recent high-level delegation visit to Armenia. Outcomes of that visit, he added, included agreements on expanding overland tourism, organizing a handicrafts exhibition, and restoring the Blue Mosque of Yerevan. The concert at Persepolis, which featured a performance of the national anthem "Ey Iran," symbolized cultural and artistic convergence between the two nations.

The minister also pointed to the presence of over 4,000 Persian-language students in Armenia, calling it an unparalleled capacity for expanding scientific, cultural, and social ties between the two countries, and a solid foundation for strengthening

regional connections.

Referring to the public celebration of the inscription of prehistoric sites in Khorramabad Valley on the UNESCO World Heritage List, Salehi Amiri said the enthusiastic participation of citizens reflected both national pride and greater social vitality. "Events like these demonstrate that cultural heritage is not just a historical souvenir but a living and dynamic resource for building national identity and enhancing social well-being," he stressed.

The minister further noted his recent meeting with Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi, describing it as positive, constructive, and forward-looking, with important implications for cultural and international cooperation. He also mentioned a recent session with sociologists, saying the academic and analytical discussions could give new depth and direction to the ministry's social and cultural policymaking.

Praising Kerman Governor Mohammad Ali Talebi, Salehi Amiri said his appointment was one of President Pezeshkian's best decisions. He described Talebi as energetic, reform-minded, and creative, noting that Kerman province has gained momentum in development under his leadership, particularly in the fields of cultural heritage and tourism.

In closing, the minister highlighted the launch of provincial strategic councils, established to socialize cultural heritage and address key local issues within the framework of national policies. Each council member, he explained, will act as a representative in a designated province to follow up on regional matters. This structure, he added, is a fundamental step toward deepening cultural justice, strengthening social cohesion, and achieving sustainable development at both national and regional levels.

Iran Ranks Eighth in Global Grape Production



TEHRAN - Iran has secured the position of the world's eighth-largest grape producer, with an annual output of 3.4 million tons cultivated across 310,000 hectares. Deputy Minister for Horticulture at the Ministry of Agriculture Jihad, Mohammad Mehdi Boroumandi, stressed the importance of boosting grape exports to enhance foreign currency earnings.

Speaking at the first Rainfed Grape Festival in Mamasani County, Boroumandi highlighted the vital role grape growers play in the national economy. He noted that current grape exports stand at 65,000 tons, while last year's raisin exports reached 150,000 tons, generating \$250 million in revenue.

Boroumandi praised Fars Province as a leading example in agriculture, pointing out that the region contains 365,000 hectares of orchards producing 3.3 million tons of fruit annually. "Except for kiwi, almost every orchard product cultivated nationwide can also be found in Fars," he said.

According to Boroumandi, vineyards alone account for 48,000 hectares in the province, including 25,000 hectares of rainfed land, yielding 450,000 tons of grapes. He also urged agricultural research and training centers to support efforts to address climate change and ensure sustainable development.

Emphasizing the importance of agricultural festivals, Boroumandi added that such events not only foster collaboration but also provide opportunities to address sectoral challenges and develop more effective strategies.

Also speaking at the event, Mohammad Javad Askari, Chairman of the Iranian Parliament's Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources, and Environment Committee, said the Seventh Development Plan is set to transform the agricultural sector.

He explained that, for the first time, a budget of 350 trillion rials (approximately \$700 million) has been allocated for watershed and aquifer management projects to mitigate recurring droughts. Strengthening agricultural insurance, due to the sector's

environmental vulnerabilities, was also highlighted as a government priority.

Askari announced additional measures, including directives to banks to streamline administrative processes and facilitate investment in processing industries that add value, generate jobs, and boost foreign exchange earnings. He further noted parliamentary support for major projects such as the Parsian Dam in Mamasani and the establishment of an agricultural export terminal.

Addressing land allocation for investment, Askari described it as one of the main challenges in attracting capital, stressing that executive bodies must act quickly to resolve the issue. He reaffirmed Parliament's commitment—guided by the Supreme Leader's directives—to removing barriers in agriculture, improving farmers' livelihoods, and ensuring sustainable food security.

Ehad Bahjat Haghighi, Acting Head of the Agricultural Jihad Organization in Fars Province, also underlined the urgent need to move away from traditional farming methods toward smart agriculture and modern processing industries.

"Given the country's ongoing drought, we have no choice but to shift from conventional practices," he said. "To preserve water resources and improve efficiency, agriculture must embrace digital and smart technologies."

Haghighi emphasized the importance of regional festivals in showcasing agricultural potential and attracting investment. He also described greenhouse farming as an essential solution to water scarcity and announced that attracting investment in processing and complementary industries will become a key benchmark for evaluating local agricultural officials.

Expressing gratitude to the people and officials of Mamasani County, Haghighi commended their resilience and hard work, expressing hope that joint efforts would create new opportunities for investment, agro-industrial growth, and regional economic prosperity.

Iran, Pakistan, Turkey Agree With ECO to Relaunch ITI Corridor Freight Train



TEHRAN - Representatives of Iran, Turkey, and Pakistan, in a meeting with the Secretary-General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) in Islamabad, agreed to resume monthly freight train operations along the 6,540-kilometer Istanbul–Tehran–Islamabad (ITI) corridor. The parties emphasized removing tariff, customs, and logistical barriers to enhance the speed and competitiveness of regional trade.

According to the ECO Secretariat, the two-day meeting in Islamabad, attended by delegations from the three countries, focused on restarting and facilitating freight train services on the ITI economic corridor.

The gathering, chaired by ECO Secretary-General Asad Majeed Khan alongside senior officials from Pakistan Railways, was described as a major step toward strengthening regional transport cooperation.

Participants stressed the need to eliminate obstacles hindering smooth cargo movement. Key agreements included adopting uniform and competitive freight tariffs, committing to reliable scheduling, ensuring full train loads in both directions, removing customs bottlenecks, and providing facilities for transshipment at border crossings. These commitments were formalized in an official memorandum.

A significant outcome of the meeting was the decision to operate at least one freight train per month on the ITI corridor. Given the corridor's capacity to cover the 6,540 km route in under 10 days—about one-third the time of sea transport—this initiative is expected to substantially cut trade costs and transit times among the three nations.

Officials highlighted that the move signals a brighter future for trade and transport cooperation in the region.

Iran Could Become a Strategic Partner for Côte d'Ivoire in Petrochemical Development



TEHRAN - The ambassador of Côte d'Ivoire to Iran highlighted Iran's extensive capacities in the petrochemical sector, expressing his country's interest in drawing on the expertise and technical capabilities of Iranian companies.

According to the National Petrochemical Company of Iran, Tahakoulo Ouattara made the remarks on the sidelines of the 19th IranPlast International Exhibition, noting that there is significant potential for cooperation between Iranian firms and players in Côte d'Ivoire's plastics and polymer industries.

He explained that this was his first direct meeting with a senior official of Iran's Ministry of Petroleum — Hassan Abbaszadeh, Deputy Oil Minister and CEO of the National Petrochemical Company — during the international event.

The Ivorian ambassador voiced hope that the talks would pave the way for expanding bilateral relations in industrial and energy fields.

Ouattara noted that Côte d'Ivoire had recently launched crude oil production and now has a pressing need to benefit from Iranian companies' technical knowledge and experience. He described Iran's petrochemical industry as rich in history and capacity, capable of playing a vital role in strengthening Côte d'Ivoire's energy infrastructure.

Referring to his discussions with the deputy oil minister for petrochemicals, he said Abbaszadeh showed a clear understanding of Côte d'Ivoire's economic situation and needs, which he found encouraging.

The envoy added that a more formal meeting is planned in the near future, which could include the signing of a cooperation memorandum. He also announced plans to invite an Iranian delegation to Côte d'Ivoire to meet with government officials and explore opportunities for cooperation in oil, petrochemicals, and downstream industries.

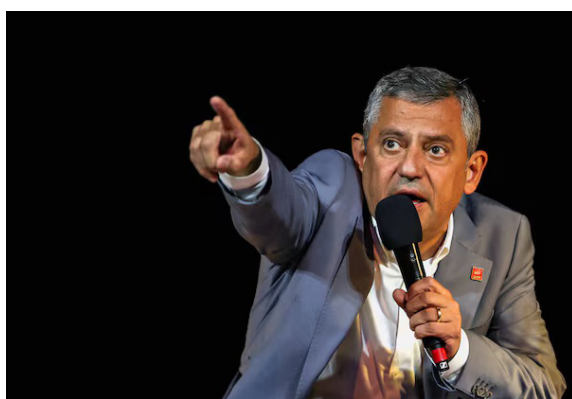
Nepal Set to Name Ex-Chief Justice Karki as Caretaker PM

KATHMANDU (Dispatches) - Nepal's former chief justice, Sushila Karki, is likely to be appointed as interim prime minister, a source aware of the talks told Reuters on Friday, after intense anti-graft protests led to the resignation of KP Sharma Oli.

The Himalayan nation's worst upheaval in years, which killed 34 people last week and injured more than 1,300 as police fought to control crowds, was sparked by a social media ban, now rolled back. The violence subsided only after Oli resigned. "Sushila Karki will be appointed interim prime minister," said a constitutional expert consulted by President Ramchandra Paudel and army chief Ashok Raj Sigdel, who sought anonymity as the negotiations are sensitive. "They (Gen Z) want her. This will happen today," the source added, referring to the 'Gen Z' protesters whose popular name derives from the age of most participants.



Turkish Court Could Oust Opposition Leader in Deepening Political Crisis



ANKARA (Dispatches) - A Turkish court will decide on Monday whether to oust the head of the main opposition, in what some see as a test of the country's shaky balance between democracy and autocracy after a nearly year-long legal crackdown on the party.

Hundreds of members of the Republican People's Party (CHP) have been jailed pending trial in a sprawling probe into alleged corruption and terrorism links, among them President Tayyip Erdogan's main political rival - Istanbul Mayor Ekrem Imamoglu.

The unprecedented crackdown, which has eroded the CHP's leadership ranks, has also sharpened concerns over what critics call Turkey's autocratic slide in which the courts, media, military, central bank and other formerly more independent institutions have bent to Erdogan's will over his 22-year reign.

The centrist CHP, which denies the charges against it, is neck-and-neck with Erdogan's Islamic-rooted, conservative AK party (AKP) in the polls, and its scrappy, hoarse-voiced leader Ozgur Ozel has risen to prominence since Imamoglu's detention.

After headlining several dozen big anti-Erdogan street rallies this year, Ozel has emerged as the president's next biggest rival.

His political future is at stake in Monday's ruling, when an Ankara court will decide whether to overturn the CHP's congress in 2023 over alleged procedural irregularities. If it does, as most analysts expect, Ozel would be stripped of the CHP chairmanship he won at the meeting.

Germany's Army Needs to More Than Double in Size



BERLIN (Dispatches) - Germany's army needs to add 100,000 active troops to its existing 62,000 to meet new NATO targets intended to boost preparedness for the growing threat of Russian aggression, its commander says in a confidential paper seen by Reuters on Thursday.

"It is imperative for the army to become sufficiently ready for war by 2029 and provide the capabilities Germany pledged (to NATO) by 2035," Army Chief Alfons Mais wrote in a letter dated September 2, addressed to the chief of the defence staff, Carsten Breuer.

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He said achieving these objectives was impossible with currently approved personnel levels, which also include 37,000 non-active troops.

Germany has already begun increasing its commitments to allies in eastern Europe, not least with the establishment of a German brigade in Lithuania, set to number some 5,000 troops, and a naval patrol deployment in the Baltic to counter undersea sabotage.

Mais called for an increase of roughly 45,000 active troops by 2029 - the year the U.S.-led alliance has said it expects Russia to be capable of a large-scale attack on Western allies.

Russia, Belarus Start "Zapad 2025" Drills, Putting NATO on Edge

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia and its key ally Belarus started major joint military drills on Friday, putting NATO on edge days after Poland accused Moscow of escalating tensions by firing attack drones through its airspace.

The exercise was scheduled well before the drone incident took place.

"The objectives of the drills are to improve the skills of commanders and staffs, the level of co-operation and field training of regional and coalition groupings of troops," the Russian defence ministry said on Telegram.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Thursday that the drills, including near the Polish border, were not aimed against any other country.

The "Zapad" exercises also come as Russian forces are grinding across the sprawling front line in Ukraine and escalating aerial attacks on Ukrainian cities.

Russia on Friday said it downed 221 Ukrainian drones, one of the highest tallies in the war.

Moscow's defense ministry said its alert systems had "intercepted and destroyed" the drones overnight, over half of which flew over the regions of Bryansk and Smolensk.

NATO's eastern flank members that border Belarus - Poland, Lithuania and Latvia - are on high alert over the drills, which Belarus says will be held near Borisov, a town east of the capital Minsk.

All three countries have ramped up security ahead of the exercises, with Poland ordering the complete closure of its border with Belarus for their duration.

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk warned of "critical days" for his country.

He said Poland was closer to "open conflict" than at any point since World War II, after Poland and its NATO allies scrambled jets to down Russian drones flying across its airspace early Wednesday.

Moscow has downplayed the concerns.

"These are planned exercises, they are not aimed against anyone," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters Thursday, rejecting Poland's claim that the drills were an "aggressive" show of force.

But Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky also issued a warning over Moscow's intentions.

"The meaning of such actions by Russia is definitely not defensive and is directed precisely against not only Ukraine," he said in Kyiv on Thursday.

Usually held every four years, the 2025 iteration of Zapad is the first during the conflict in Ukraine, and is to run until September 16.

Moscow sent around 200,000 troops to similar drills in 2021, just months before it launched its Ukraine offensive.



Minsk said in August the exercises would involve Russia's new experimental nuclear-capable missile, dubbed Oreshnik, as well as nuclear strike training.

Moscow-based military analyst Alexander Khramchikhin told AFP the importance of the drills was being overblown, calling them "just a show" with little "special significance".

He said that similar exercises were held at this time every year, rotating between different parts of Russia and previously including nuclear simulations.

But Vasily Kashin, a military analyst and member of the Kremlin-linked Russian International Affairs Council, said the exercises were "both a demonstration and real combat training".

"We must be ready to defend Belarus, if necessary," he told AFP, noting that Poland and its allies planned to hold their own counter-drills through September.

Kashin added that the practice of rival drills by Russia and NATO's eastern members at the same time was probably here to stay, "just as it was during the Cold War".

FBI Hunts Utah Campus Shooter Over Conservative Leader Charlie Kirk's Killing

OREM (Dispatches) - U.S. investigators on Thursday released images of a person of interest in the fatal shooting of the influential conservative activist Charlie Kirk and said they had found the bolt-action rifle believed to have been used in the politically charged killing.

Kirk, a 31-year-old author, podcast host and close ally of U.S. President Donald Trump, helped build the Republican Party's support among younger voters. He was killed on Wednesday by a single gunshot as he gave a talk at a university in Utah in what Trump called a "heinous assassination."

Investigators have yet to publicly discuss any motive, but Trump told reporters that he had an indication of the killer's motivation. "We'll let you know about that later," he said, adding that law enforcement was making "big progress" in the investigation.

FBI and state officials said the killer arrived on the campus a few minutes before the start of the event, a debate led by Kirk titled "Prove Me Wrong" outdoors in front of 3,000 people at Utah Valley University in Orem, Utah, about 40 miles (65 km) south of Salt Lake City.

Security-camera videos show a person going up stairwells to get onto a roof before firing at Kirk, the officials told a press conference. Kirk, a staunch defender of gun rights, was answering an audience question about mass shootings when the bullet struck his neck. Audience members fled in panic.

The shooter jumped off the roof and fled into an adjoining neighbourhood, said Robert Bohls, the FBI special agent in charge.

Investigators found a "high-powered, bolt-action" rifle in a nearby wooded area, and were examining that along with palm prints and footprints for clues. With classes cancelled on Thursday, the roof of the building on the largely deserted campus and the woods were strung with yellow tape as investigators scoured them for evidence.

The shooter appears to be of college age and "blended in well" on the campus, Utah Public Safety Commissioner Beau Mason told reporters.



The shooter has not been publicly identified, though lawmakers, commentators and online sleuths have already filled social media and message boards with speculation and blame-casting about the killer's ideology.

FBI Director Kash Patel was travelling to Orem and would brief reporters later on Thursday, NBC News reported.

The FBI offered a \$100,000 reward for information leading to the killer's arrest and circulated grainy images taken from security cameras showing a

"person of interest" wearing a black top, black sunglasses and a dark baseball cap. The long-sleeved top was emblazoned with an image of a bald eagle flying across a U.S. flag.

Utah state officials called the person in the photos "the potential shooter."

Ammunition found so far appeared to have been engraved with messages, the Wall Street Journal reported. People familiar with the investigation told Reuters the engravings and their meaning were still being analysed.

Kirk - co-founder and president of the conservative student group Turning Point USA - was appearing at the Utah university on Wednesday as part of a planned 15-event "American Comeback Tour" of US college campuses. His killing stirred outrage and denunciations of political violence from Republicans, Democrats and foreign governments.

Trump said he would award Kirk the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honour. Vice President JD Vance cancelled his trip to New York to commemorate the attacks by al Qaeda on September 11, 2001, and instead travelled to Utah to see Kirk's family and to fly them and Kirk's casket home to Arizona aboard Air Force Two.

"Charlie Kirk was a great person, a great man - great in every way, especially with youth," Trump told reporters, saying he hoped that his killer would be apprehended soon. "Hopefully we'll have him and we will deal with him very appropriately."

Kirk began in conservative and right-wing politics as a teenager, a career he has described as shaped by his Christian faith. A little more than a decade later, some of the friends he made along the way are now at the highest levels of US government and media, with Vance recalling that he was in multiple group chats with Kirk.

Former Brazil President Bolsonaro Sentenced to More Than 27 Years for Coup Plot

SAO PAULO (Dispatches) - A majority of judges in Brazil's Supreme Court on Thursday found former president Jair Bolsonaro guilty of plotting a coup to remain in office despite his 2022 electoral defeat. He was sentenced to more than 27 years in prison.

A panel of Brazilian Supreme Court justices sentenced former president Jair Bolsonaro to 27 years and three months in prison Thursday after convicting him of attempting a coup to remain in office despite his 2022 electoral defeat.

Bolsonaro, who has always denied any wrongdoing, is currently under house arrest in Brasilia. He can appeal the ruling.

Four of the five justices reviewing the case in the panel found the far-right politician guilty on five counts, in a ruling that will deepen political divisions and likely prompt a backlash from the United States government. It makes Bolsonaro the first former Brazilian president to be convicted of attempting a coup.

US President Donald Trump said that he was "very unhappy" with the conviction.



Speaking to reporters as he departed the White House, he said he always found Bolsonaro to be "outstanding".

The conviction, he added, is "very bad for Brazil".

The sentence doesn't mean he will immediately go to prison. The court panel has now up to 60 days to publish the ruling. Once it does, Bolsonaro's lawyers have five days to file motions for clarification.

One of the justices, Carmen Lucia, said she was convinced by the evidence the Attorney General's Office presented against the former president. "He is the instigator, the leader of an organisation that orchestrated every possible move to maintain or seize power," she said.

Sen. Flávio Bolsonaro, the former president's eldest son, said on X the conviction was a "supreme persecution" and that history would show they were on the right side.



City, United Seek Redemption in High-Stakes Manchester Derby

LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester City will be desperate to avoid a third successive defeat when they face neighbours Manchester United as the Premier League returns this weekend, with Alexander Isak set for his Liverpool debut.

City boss Pep Guardiola and United manager Ruben Amorim are both under intense pressure just three games into the season while champions Liverpool boast the top division's only 100 per cent record.

Elsewhere, following the international break, Ange Postecoglou is back in management with Nottingham Forest, just three months after he was sacked by Tottenham.

The Manchester derby at the Etihad Stadium pits two troubled sides against each other, both of whom have just one win from three matches.

Manchester City's consecutive defeats against Tottenham and Brighton have raised questions about Guardiola's expensive overhaul of his side after last season's third-place finish.

Guardiola's problems have hardly eased in the two weeks since City blew the lead at Brighton, with Egypt forward Omar Marmoush ruled out of Sunday's derby with a knee injury.

Rayan Cherki and Mateo Kovacic remain sidelined and there are also questions over the fitness of John Stones, Rayan Ait-Nouri, Rico Lewis, Nico O'Reilly and Abdulkodir Khusanov, who all withdrew from international duty this week.

Manchester United needed a last-gasp penalty from Bruno Fernandes after another error-strewn display against Burnley as they finally clinched their first win of the season.

That dramatic victory came after Amorim's team were beaten by Arsenal, drew with Fulham and suffered a humiliating League Cup exit at fourth-tier Grimsby.

Isak says not everyone has the "whole picture" of the circumstances behind his record-breaking move to Liverpool, but Arne Slot's vision for the former Newcastle striker will start to become clear against Burnley on Sunday.

Liverpool paid a British-record £125 million to finally lure Isak to Anfield on transfer deadline day after a prolonged pursuit of the Sweden star, whose determination to push through the move antagonised Newcastle fans.

Having boldly declared his intention to create "history" at Liverpool, the 25-year-old trained with his new teammates for the first time this week and is expected to make his debut at Turf Moor.

Reds boss Slot has an embarrassment of riches in attack after a spending spree and it will be fascinating to see how he fits Isak into a forward line already featuring Mohamed Salah, Florian Wirtz, Hugo Ekitike and Cody Gakpo.

Chasing a record 21st English crown, Liverpool are already top of the table again with three successive victories, making Isak's arrival on Merseyside a daunting proposition for their title rivals.

De Minaur Vows to Make Life Difficult for Belgium in Davis Cup



SYDNEY (Dispatches) - World number eight Alex de Minaur pledged to "make life difficult" for Belgium as he strives to put Australia into the Davis Cup finals for a fourth straight year.

But he faces a tricky encounter against 91st-ranked Raphael Collignon in Saturday's opening singles rubber in their second-round qualifier at Sydney.

Collignon made his presence felt at the just-completed US Open, posting a career-best win over world number 12 and former finalist Casper Ruud en route to the third round.

"He's going to come after me and my job is to make his life difficult, basically," said De Minaur, who made the last eight at Flushing Meadows.

"We're playing at home, we're playing at a court that I love, and hopefully I can come out tomorrow, put some good tennis on the board and get us off to a good start."

Jordan Thompson will play the other singles clash against Belgian Zizou Bergs, ranked 31 places higher than him at 46, before the reverse singles and doubles on Sunday.

Belgium will have to overcome an eight-year drought against Australia to reach the final eight for the first time since 2018.

Steve Darcis, now Belgium captain, played in their 2017 World Group semi-final victory over Australia, beating Thompson before they lost to France in the final.

He admitted it will be a tough task to repeat the feat against the 28-time champions, who were runners-up in 2022 and 2023 and semi-finalists last year.

But Darcis has confidence in his team.

South Africa Beat England by 14 Runs in Five-Over Contest



CARDIFF (Dispatches) - Marco Jansen returned from injury to take two wickets as South Africa defeated England by 14 runs in the first Twenty20 International of a three-match series that was reduced to five overs in a wet Cardiff.

South Africa posted 97 for five in 7.5 overs after the game was initially a nine-over contest, before more rain meant it was reduced to the minimum of 30 deliveries for England's innings.

They were set a revised target of 69 but only Jos Buttler managed to get any momentum as he scored 25 from 11 deliveries before he was Jansen's second wicket.

The tall fast bowler produced figures of 2-18 in his two overs as the home side reached 54 for five.

"You can't read too much into that, the field was very wet in patches and we didn't execute as well as we could have (with the ball)," England captain Harry Brook said.

Asked if he thought the conditions were playable, Brook was non-committal.

"The big dogs above me make the decisions," he said.

England had sent the visitors in to bat and Donovan Ferreira finished unbeaten on 25 from 11 balls, with Aiden Markram (28 from 14 balls) and Dewald Brevis (23 from 10 balls) also making handy contributions.

Seamer Luke Wood took 2-22 in his two overs, while Sam Curran, on his return to the side, managed 1-11 in his only over.

"Happy to have got a pretty good score on the board and naturally the bowlers were always going to be under pressure, so to see them back up some good plans was very pleasing," Markram said.

"Marco has been out of cricket for a while and to run in with that energy and set the tone was very important for us."

FA Charge Chelsea With 74 Breaches of Rules Regarding Agents, Intermediaries

LONDON (Dispatches) - Chelsea were hit with 74 charges by the Football Association on Thursday after the London club were accused of breaching regulations covering football agents, intermediaries and third-party investment in players spanning more than a decade.

The FA did not elaborate on the charges but Chelsea said the matters were 'self-reported' by the club after the change in ownership in May 2022.

"The conduct that is the subject of the charges ranges from 2009 to 2022 and primarily relates to events which occurred between the 2010-11 to 2015-16 playing seasons," the FA said in a statement.

At the time, the London club was owned by Roman Abramovich, but the Russian billionaire put Chelsea up for sale in 2022 following sanctions after Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Abramovich, who bought the club in 2003, completed the sale to an investment group led by Todd Boehly and Clearlake Capital.

"During a thorough due diligence process



prior to completion of the purchase, the ownership group became aware of potentially incomplete financial reporting concerning historical transactions and other potential breaches of FA rules," Chelsea said in a statement.

"Immediately upon the completion of the purchase, the club self-reported these matters to all relevant regulators, including the FA.

"The club has demonstrated unprecedented transparency during this process, including by giving comprehensive access to the club's files and historical data.

"We will continue working collaboratively with the FA to conclude this matter as swiftly as possible."

The FA said Chelsea have until September 19 to respond to the charge.

A source at the club told Reuters they had opened their books to the FA so England's soccer governing body can make educated judgements on the historical payments.

India's Dube Credits Coach Morkel After Crucial Spell in Win Over UAE

DUBAI (Dispatches) - Shivam Dube impressed in India's crushing nine-wicket win over the United Arab Emirates at the Asia Cup and the all-rounder credited bowling coach Morne Morkel with the tactical tweaks and advice that led to his three-wicket haul.

UAE were skittled for 57 runs in the Twenty20 match, with Dube recording career-best figures of 3/4 and Kuldeep Yadav picking up four wickets, before India chased down their target in just 4.3 overs.

"Morne has been working with me since I came back into the Indian team for the England series," Dube told reporters.

"He told me to bowl a line that is slightly outside the off-stump. He also worked with me in developing a slower delivery and tweaked my run-up a bit. The head coach and the skipper had told



me that my bowling will have a role to play."

Dube's bowling has improved significantly in the past year, with half of his 16 wickets in 36 T20I matches coming in his last four innings with the ball, but he was quick to shut down any comparisons with established all-rounder Hardik Pandya.

"Hardik is like a brother from whom I tend to learn a lot as he has way more experience both in IPL and international cricket compared to me," Dube said.

"Comparison, I never thought of, as my only endeavour is to learn as much as I can from his vast experience."

India next play Pakistan on Sunday while UAE take on Oman the following day, with the tournament hosts looking to bounce back from a batting collapse which saw them record their lowest total in a T20I.