

The U.S. Has Announced New Iran-Related Sanctions, Targeting What It Has Described as a Network of “Shadow Banking” That Has Facilitated Financial Transactions Resulting From Iran’s Oil Sales and Other Activities

IRAN NEWS

French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Barrou, in a Phone Call With His Iranian Counterpart Seyed Abbas Araqchi, Expressed Concern Over the Escalating Tensions and Emphasized the Importance of Maintaining a Space for Dialogue and the Necessity of Returning to a Diplomatic Path

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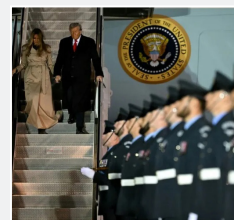


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Europe Toughens Stance Following Iran’s Cooperation Agreement With IAEA



TEHRAN - The head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization, Mohammad Eslami, said European countries have adopted a harsher stance since Iran signed a cooperation agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Speaking at the conclusion of his visit to Vienna and during the 69th IAEA General Conference, Eslami, who also serves as Iran's Vice President, described the trip as fruitful and said several positive steps were taken. He expressed gratitude to the Iranian diplomats in Austria and Iran's permanent mission to international organizations for their effective role and capable hosting during the visit.

"Thanks to God, it was a productive journey with positive outcomes. I especially appreciate the ambassadors, including Iran's ambassador to Austria and our delegation at international organizations, who played an important role in ensuring the visit's success," Eslami stated.

Eslami noted that the visit was necessary amid intense psychological, media, political, and pressure campaigns orchestrated by American and Zionist circles against Iran. He emphasized that Iran's presence was crucial to clarify the country's position, counter misleading narratives, and highlight the violations inflicted upon international law, the IAEA safeguards system, and the agency itself.

"This presence allowed us to ensure that the stage was not left empty and that the one-sided narrative attempting to portray Iran as non-compliant and deviating in its nuclear program was properly addressed," he added.

U.S. Pressuring Countries Not to Support Iran’s IAEA Resolution



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's ambassador to international organizations in Vienna has accused the United States of exerting political pressure on countries to block support for a resolution prohibiting attacks on peaceful nuclear facilities.

The draft, submitted by Iran and five other nations to the 69th General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), calls for a ban on any attack or threat against nuclear sites under the IAEA Safeguards.

Reza Najafi said on Tuesday that the U.S. has no valid argument against the resolution, which is rooted in longstanding international norms, including UN Security Council Resolution 487, which condemned Israel's 1981 strike on Iraq's nuclear reactor.

He said the resolution's principles align with the UN Charter, the IAEA Statute, and the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and have previously been endorsed at NPT review conferences.

Najafi also noted that IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi, though inadequately, affirmed that no attack should occur under any circumstances.

He warned that attacks on facilities containing nuclear material could have devastating environmental and public health consequences.

The resolution comes in the wake of the US-Israeli aggression against Iran in June, which targeted the country's nuclear facilities.

President Pledges Transformative Reforms in Iran's Healthcare System

TEHRAN - President Masoud Pezeshkian has affirmed the Iranian government's determination to implement transformative reforms in the country's healthcare system, emphasizing equity-driven policies to ensure the physical and mental well-being of all citizens.

Speaking at a ceremony commemorating the 50th anniversary of Iran's pre-hospital emergency services, Pezeshkian paid tribute to healthcare workers, emergency personnel, and the martyrs of the 12-day imposed war. He described the medical staff's commitment to selfless service as a living embodiment of the Persian saying, "Human beings are members of a whole," highlighting their dedication to providing care without discrimination based on race, ethnicity, social status, or beliefs.

"When attending to patients or accident victims, you do not ask who they are or what their status is," Pezeshkian said. "With compassion and professionalism, you aim to alleviate pain and address needs, reflecting the humanitarian values embedded in our religious and cultural teachings."

The president stressed that applying this human-centered approach across all levels of society, institutions, and organizations could resolve many disputes and strengthen national unity, making Iran more resilient against external threats.

Pezeshkian praised frontline healthcare workers for their tireless service and urged the medical system to provide the highest quality care nationwide in the shortest possible time, guided by scientific and professional standards. He called for special attention to vulnerable and low-income populations, who face greater health risks due to poverty, aging, and limited access to information, emphasizing that these groups must be prioritized in healthcare planning and service delivery.

Acknowledging the critical role of emergency personnel, the president described them as among the most capable and dedicated members of Iran's health system, urging them to expand their reach to benefit a larger segment of the population.



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

He also expressed gratitude for the cooperation of the Parliament's Health and Medical Commission in supporting government policies and programs in the healthcare sector. "With an equity-focused approach, the government is determined to undertake major and transformative initiatives in the healthcare system," Pezeshkian said. "It is our duty to guarantee the physical and mental health of every Iranian and to connect the different elements of the healthcare system to provide the best treatments in the shortest time possible."

Reflecting on the 12-day conflict, Pezeshkian praised the unity of the Iranian people and officials in thwarting enemy plans. He noted that even those previously discontent with the government stood in defense of the nation, demonstrating their commitment to protecting Iran's territorial integrity.

The president also condemned the atrocities committed by Israel in Gaza, criticizing the international community's inaction. "This regime has brutally killed thousands of innocent women and children while blocking access to water and food," he said. "Worse, the U.S. and certain European countries continue to provide financial and military support, claiming to lead in peace while perpetuating violence." Pezeshkian stressed the importance of unity among Islamic nations in countering aggression, adding that such solidarity would frustrate the enemies of the Muslim world.

Concluding his remarks, Pezeshkian reaffirmed his appreciation for the dedication of healthcare personnel, particularly emergency staff, describing their devotion as the foundation for a proud and dynamic nation. "With strength and faith, we stand together to advance Iran and overcome every challenge with dignity," he said.

The ceremony included the unveiling of a commemorative stamp marking the 50th anniversary of Iran's pre-hospital emergency services and recognized outstanding emergency personnel in eight categories, including education, technical services, development, and public relations. Families of health service martyrs were also honored during the event.

Iran Urges Activation of Border Markets and Economic Commission With Pakistan

TEHRAN - First Vice President, Mohammad Reza Aref, has called for the activation of the joint economic commission between Iran and Pakistan, emphasizing the need to implement bilateral agreements on border markets.

Speaking during a meeting with Pakistan's Minister of Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, on Tuesday, Aref highlighted the historical, cultural, and religious ties between the two neighboring countries, noting that these shared foundations provide a strong platform for enhancing cooperation across multiple sectors.

"Longstanding relations and shared cultural and historical experiences pave the way for growth and the strengthening of collaboration in various fields," Aref said. He expressed gratitude for the hospitality shown by the Pakistani government and people during visits by Iranian officials, particularly the recent trip of Iran's President, adding that the warm reception underscores the public's desire for deeper bilateral ties.

Aref affirmed Iran's readiness to expand cooperation in all areas, including economic, commercial, scientific, and cultural domains. He also praised Pakistan for its support of Iran during the 12-day imposed war, noting that Pakistan's unified stance at the time condemned aggression against Iran.

On regional and international issues, Aref said that Iran and Pakistan share similar viewpoints and that any minor disagreements could be resolved through dialogue. Both countries maintain a common stance on the Palestinian issue and have condemned the recent brutal attacks by Israel on Palestinian civilians. Aref emphasized the importance of Islamic unity, stating that a lack of cohesion among Muslim nations has allowed Israel and its allies to continue such attacks, and called for solidarity to prevent further aggression.

Highlighting regional cooperation, Aref suggested that Iran and Pakistan strengthen collaboration within multilateral organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), of which both countries are members. He also announced Iran's readiness to collaborate with Pakistan in advanced technologies, including artificial intelligence and quantum computing, stressing that such



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cooperation can significantly enhance public welfare.

Aref stressed the importance of tourism in expanding bilateral relations and encouraged boosting trade between the two countries, including through barter arrangements. He emphasized that activating the joint economic commission could facilitate the achievement of economic goals, remove trade barriers, and enhance commercial exchanges. In this context, he also highlighted the need to review customs tariffs to streamline trade and implement previously agreed-upon arrangements regarding border markets. He concluded by urging the acceleration of imports from Pakistan and expressed condolences over the recent flood fatalities in the country.

Responding, Pakistan's Minister of Commerce Jam Kamal Khan thanked Iran for its hospitality and extended condolences over the loss of Iranian commanders and civilians during the 12-day conflict. He affirmed Pakistan's condemnation of Israeli aggression during the war and praised Iran's mediation efforts between Pakistan and India.

Khan underlined the importance of activating the joint economic commission, noting that recent economic forums in Iran, attended by over 500 private-sector participants, could pave the way for deeper cooperation. He also pointed to the positive reception of Dr. Mohammad-Reza Pezeshkian's visit by the Pakistani public and business community, highlighting the significant potential to expand bilateral trade.

Acknowledging the close people-to-people ties, Khan noted that the Pakistani community in Iran could serve as a valuable bridge to strengthen bilateral relations. He concluded by stressing the importance of enhanced collaboration on food security, urging both nations to increase cooperation in this critical area.

The meeting reflects a renewed commitment by both Tehran and Islamabad to deepen economic, technological, and cultural ties, with a particular focus on facilitating trade through border markets, activating joint commissions, and leveraging regional and technological cooperation to benefit citizens in both countries.

Will Trump Bestow a Brexit Bonus on UK?

Donald Trump is one of the few U.S. presidents who had the honor of being invited to Britain by the English Crown more than once.

A working visit took place in July 2018. This trip was official but non-state. Trump met Queen Elizabeth II at Balmoral Castle in Scotland, not in London. This type of visit carries fewer formalities compared to a full state visit. The main purpose of the trip was primarily to discuss security and trade issues between the two countries, as well as Trump's participation in a business forum.

The state visit occurred in June 2019. This trip was formally a state visit with all the ceremonies and extravagances that come with it. It represents the highest level of hosting a country can provide to another leader. During the visit, there were official welcome ceremonies with a ceremonial parade, a state luncheon at Buckingham Palace, and a formal banquet.

During her more than 70 years on the throne, Queen Elizabeth II granted full state visits to only three U.S. presidents: Barack Obama (2011), Donald Trump (2019) and Joe Biden (2023) – though this visit took place after the Queen's death and was hosted by King Charles III.

Typically, each president receives only one official invitation for a state visit, usually late in their term. Trump's invitation for a working visit in 2018 followed by a full state visit in 2019 was truly an exception.

One possible reason for this exception was the implicit reward for Brexit, Britain's exit from the European Union and its rejection of cooperation with the euro. Although only implied, both sides clearly understood each other's intentions.

The special and unique relationship between Britain and the U.S. ("The Special Relationship") exists to maintain a bond vital for Britain's security and economy, and for American influence in Europe. Brexit was a major success for the U.S., and after Brexit, Britain urgently needed to negotiate a new, significant trade agreement with the U.S. Hosting Trump appropriately could help advance this objective.

Within the framework of diplomatic considerations, British officials may have felt that a full state visit for Trump was necessary to better manage relations and influence his policies.

Thus, the two distinct invitations—a working visit and a full state visit—were highly unconventional in British royal diplomatic protocol, reflecting the strategic importance of the U.S.-U.K. relationship and likely Britain's specific priorities at that time, particularly regarding the "reward" for Brexit.

Europe, of course, perceived this visit as a form of weakening and humiliation. It should be noted that the trip may also reflect Britain's differing stance from its European partners in the E3 on Middle Eastern issues, especially Iran and the "trigger mechanism" (snapback sanctions).

Historically, Britain has often opposed Europe and aligned with the U.S. over the past century, creating hidden and behind-the-scenes agreements.

We must wait and carefully analyze what sparks beneath the surface may ignite this time.



Bys Hamidreza Naghashian

Larijani Meets Saudi crown prince in Riyadh



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council Ali Larijani has met with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in Riyadh to discuss bilateral relations and regional developments.

The meeting took place at Al-Yamamah Palace in Riyadh on Tuesday. It marks a new phase in the Tehran-Riyadh diplomatic engagement.

Larijani traveled to Saudi Arabia at the invitation of the kingdom's defense minister, leading a delegation that included Deputy Secretary for International Affairs Ali Bagheri Kani and Persian Gulf Affairs Advisor Mohammad Ali Bek.

The visit follows a series of high-level exchanges between the two countries, including the Saudi defense minister's trip to Tehran earlier this year.

The meeting comes just one day after President Masoud Pezeshkian met with bin Salman on the sidelines of the emergency Arab-Islamic summit in Doha, where both sides expressed satisfaction with the growing momentum in bilateral ties in the wake of the China-brokered detente in 2023.

IRAN NEWS



50,000 Iranians Die Annually from Air Pollution

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Minister of Health, Treatment and Medical Education has warned that air pollution claims the lives of around 50,000 people in the country every year, urging all sectors to take urgent steps toward the development of solar and clean energy sources to confront this crisis.

Speaking on Tuesday during a meeting with the head, deputies, and directors of the National Standards Organization of Iran, Minister Mohammad Reza Zafarghandi stressed the importance of expanding scientific and international cooperation to reduce pollution levels and prevent pollution-related deaths.

Pakistan Seeks to Expand Economic Ties with Iran Amid Low Trade Levels



IRANNEWS/ECONOMICDESK

TEHRAN - Pakistan's Minister of Commerce and Trade, Jam Kamal Khan, has acknowledged that the level of trade and economic cooperation between Tehran and Islamabad remains unsatisfactory, stressing that Pakistan is determined to deepen its economic engagement with Iran.

Speaking at the Iran-Pakistan Business Forum on Monday—attended by Samad Hassanzadeh, President of Iran's Chamber of Commerce, and Farzaneh Sadeqh Malvajerd, Iran's Minister of Roads and Urban Development and head of the Iran-Pakistan Economic Commission—Khan highlighted the historical and cultural ties between the two neighbors. He said these shared bonds could pave the way for stronger economic collaboration.

Khan emphasized Pakistan's interest in activating cross-border trade mechanisms, including plans for joint trade markets and industrial zones along the border. He also noted that despite Pakistan's strong economic performance in 2024, the country continues to face challenges in industry and trade that require closer cooperation with Iran.

"We are working to revise the bilateral trade agreement at the ministerial level," Khan said, adding that Pakistan seeks to strengthen cooperation in banking, transportation, communications, agriculture, free trade zones, and shared markets.

The minister expressed hope that experts from both countries would finalize a new protocol—marking the 17th bilateral agreement—to boost trade to new levels. He invited Iranian businesses to participate in Pakistan's upcoming agricultural products exhibition in November, describing it as an opportunity to explore Pakistan's production and industrial capacity.

Iran to Boost Rail Freight Capacity With Pakistan Fivefold by Year-End



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The managing director of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways announced plans to increase rail freight transport between Iran and Pakistan fivefold by the end of this year.

Speaking to reporters at the sidelines of the 22nd Iran-Pakistan Joint Economic Commission, Jabarali Zakeri said that rail freight volume between the two countries reached only 24,000 tons in the past five months, but is expected to climb to 100,000 tons by year's end.

Zakeri explained that Iran's standard-gauge railway extends to Zahedan, where it connects with Pakistan's 94-kilometer track running from Zahedan to Mirjaveh, creating a direct rail link between the two countries.

He highlighted that the aging rail line from Zahedan to Quetta in Pakistan poses a major challenge. "For instance, Pakistan's axle load is 16 tons while ours is 25 tons. This means our trains cannot directly operate on their network, and cargo has to be transferred from Iranian wagons onto Pakistani ones," he said.

According to Zakeri, both sides agreed that Pakistan will complete feasibility studies for rail upgrades by the end of this year, paving the way for reconstruction work to begin in early 2026.

He added that during the rehabilitation period, Iran and Pakistan also plan to introduce regular scheduled freight services to enhance transit operations, including onward connections to Turkey, and increase current capacity up to fivefold.

Meanwhile Zakeri announced Iran's readiness to expand rail freight transport with Pakistan during a meeting with the head of Pakistan Railways in Tehran.

He emphasized the importance of strengthening railway diplomacy, boosting rail-based transit, and developing freight transport between the two countries. He reaffirmed Iran's preparedness to increase cargo capacity along the rail corridor.

The head of Pakistan Railways, Mazhar Ali Shah, welcomed Iran's regional transit strategy and acknowledged that the current level of rail freight exchange is below actual potential. He said Pakistan is prepared to address infrastructure challenges and provide additional wagons to improve connectivity.

Shah noted that work has begun on upgrading the Taftan-Quetta railway line. The project, aimed at increasing train speed and capacity, is scheduled for completion by early 2028.

Tripartite Trade Alliance Proposed Between Tehran, Almaty, and Khorgos



IRANNEWS/ECONOMICDESK

TEHRAN - The head of Kazakhstan's Association of Free Economic Zones, in a meeting with a Tehran Chamber of Commerce delegation led by its president, Mahmoud Najafi Arab, proposed establishing a commodity exchange mechanism linking Tehran, Almaty, and Khorgos, China. Under this arrangement, all three parties would be able to supply their goods to the market and meet their respective needs.

The Tehran Chamber delegation began its first day of work in Almaty, Kazakhstan's commercial capital, with a visit to Iran's Consulate General, followed by talks with the head of Kazakhstan's Free Economic Zones Association, who also heads the regional office of the World Free Zones Organization for Central Asia.

Najafi Arab introduced the Tehran Chamber as Iran's oldest civil institution, representing nearly 47,000 members—both individuals and companies—who account for about 45 percent of the country's GDP. He expressed readiness to expand cooperation with Kazakhstan's private sector through business delegations, targeted webinars, participation in trade and economic events, and linking counterpart associations in both countries.

Highlighting the capabilities of Iranian private companies across different economic sectors, he emphasized Iran's preparedness for joint investment and production, especially within Almaty's industrial parks and free zones. While acknowledging the challenges sanctions have created for Iran's economy, he noted that mutual determination could overcome such barriers.

Welcoming the Tehran Chamber's high-level delegation, Yerbol Bukhariyev, head of Kazakhstan's Free Economic Zones Association, underlined the long-standing ties and commonalities between Iran and Kazakhstan, while stressing the importance of adding China's Khorgos region as a third partner.

"My concrete proposal is to establish a commodity exchange between Tehran, Almaty, and Khorgos," Bukhariyev said. "This would allow all three sides to offer

their goods and meet their demands in one platform."

He recalled visits to Tehran prior to the 12-day imposed war in the region, and announced that Kazakhstan plans to hold a major exhibition on free and special economic zones in Tehran in 2026, inviting the Tehran Chamber to participate.

Mohammad Ali Rezaei, head of Iran's Union of Medicinal Plants, Food Products and Saffron Producers and Exporters, highlighted Iran's high demand for grains and the opportunities within the Iran-Eurasia trade agreement, of which Kazakhstan is a member. He suggested joint projects in grain and seed production, noting that Iranian companies have the capacity to cultivate and supply Eurasia's needs in Kazakhstan.

Rezaei also pointed to issues in saffron exports, explaining that although 120 tons of Iranian saffron reaches China annually, only 30 tons are exported directly from Iran, with the remainder re-routed through third countries. He said a Tehran-Almaty-Khorgos trade hub could facilitate direct exports, leveraging zero tariffs between Iran and Kazakhstan as well as Kazakhstan and China, ensuring mutual benefits.

Ali Akbar Shamani, Deputy for Customs Affairs at Iran's Customs Administration, emphasized the role of customs in easing trade. He noted that Iran has signed multiple customs cooperation agreements, citing the successful "green corridor" initiative with Russia as an example. He proposed establishing a similar framework with Kazakhstan to streamline bilateral trade.

Concluding the meeting, Najafi Arab announced that the Tehran Chamber will form a special working group to explore overseas cultivation in Kazakhstan and structured commodity exchanges between Tehran, Almaty, and Khorgos. He also encouraged bringing a delegation of knowledge-based startups to Almaty for matchmaking sessions with Kazakh counterparts.

He stressed the need for the private sector to be pragmatic and committed to following up on the proposals raised.

Iran Exports Advanced Gas Turbine to Russia Amid Sanctions



PHOTO: Ahmad Moosini Jam
IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Minister of Energy announced that the country has exported an advanced gas turbine to Russia for the first time, marking a milestone achievement for the Iranian power industry despite international sanctions.

Speaking at the National Event for Exporters of Technical and Engineering Services, Goods, and Knowledge-Based Products in the Water and Power Industry, Minister Abbas Aliabadi said: "For the first time, we managed to export an advanced Iranian-made gas turbine to Russia. This achievement was realized despite unjust sanctions against our country."

Aliabadi also revealed that Iran has exported generators and other electrical equipment to Russia and has recently succeeded in repairing aircraft engines. He stressed that exports are most valuable when they are knowledge-based and create added value, rather than relying on raw materials and unprocessed commodities.

Highlighting Iran's track record abroad, he noted that Iranian specialists have built and repaired power plants in Syria and Iraq, underscoring the capability of the nation's power industry in international markets. The minister emphasized that true success in exports requires collaboration across the entire value chain, including financing. He pointed out that Iran's electricity sector has even managed to finance certain international projects.

Aliabadi called for stronger cooperation among Iranian companies to gain a more powerful foothold in global markets. "Exports today are not just an option but a national strategy," he said, adding that the Ministry of Energy is committed to facilitating exports of engineering services and power and water industry goods.

He urged Iranian firms to deliver landmark projects worthy of the nation's reputation, insisting that the sector has achieved a level of quality that enables competition with leading global companies. However, he also acknowledged challenges, citing a recent case where an international project was awarded to another country due to political interference, despite Iran offering better quality and lower prices.

While recognizing that sanctions are harmful, the minister argued that they can also be turned into opportunities. "There are thousands of opportunities within sanctions that we must identify and seize," he said. He further encouraged the use of international finance mechanisms to support Iranian exporters, stressing the need for smart policymaking and streamlined export regulations.

Aliabadi concluded by noting that the world is nearing the end of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and moving toward the Fifth, urging Iranian companies not to remain stuck in the past but to move forward with intelligence and foresight.

Iran's Exports to Iraq Drop 18% on Lower Gas and Steel Shipments



IRANNEWS/ECONOMICDESK

TEHRAN - Iran's exports to Iraq fell 18% in the first five months of the current year, largely due to declining gas and rebar shipments, according to the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPO).

Abdolamir Rabihi, Director General for West Asia at the TPO, said Tuesday that exports to Iraq began declining from May, though part of the shortfall has since been offset. "The main reasons for the drop were reduced exports of two key commodities—natural gas and rebar," he said at the first meeting of the joint special economic relations committee.

Rabihi reported that gas exports to Iraq fell from USD 1.6 billion in the first five months of 2024 to USD 950 million this year, a decline of USD 650 million. Rebar exports also fell by USD 174 million over the same period.

He noted that the fall in gas exports significantly impacted Iran's overall trade balance, which dropped by USD 2 billion in the five-month period, with USD 850 million of that tied to reduced trade with Iraq. Gas export statistics, he added, are not reported through customs but periodically provided by the National Iranian Gas Company, meaning September figures may still change.

Rabihi further highlighted the composition of Iran's exports to Iraq, saying that 53% consisted of raw or primary goods. Industrial products accounted for USD 1.4 billion, petrochemicals for USD 1.035 billion, and agricultural products for USD 491 million.

Meanwhile, Yahya Al-Eshaq, head of the Iran-Iraq Chamber of Commerce, said Iran's exports to Iraq stood at USD 4.58 billion in the first five months of last year, representing 20.9% of Iran's total exports. This year, the figure has fallen to USD 3.75 billion, reducing Iraq's share to 17.9%. Imports from Iraq also declined, reaching USD 176 million, largely due to lower gold imports.

Iran Ranks as World's Third-Largest Date Producer



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iran has secured its position as the third-largest producer of dates globally, with an annual output of approximately 1.68 million tons, according to the Ministry of Agriculture Jihad.

Zahra Jalili Moghadam, Director General of the Tropical and Semi-Tropical Fruits Department, announced the figures on the occasion of Iran's National Date Day, noting that the country possesses more than 400 varieties and genotypes of dates, making it one of the richest genetic reserves of this valuable fruit worldwide.

Among the most renowned Iranian date varieties are Pyram from Hormozgan, Shahani from Fars, Kabkab from Bushehr, Estameran from Khuzestan, Mazafati from Kerman, and Rabbi from Sistan and Baluchestan — all of which have gained international recognition.

Iran exported around 430,000 tons of dates last year, valued at nearly \$395 million. Jalili Moghadam emphasized that with improvements in quality, packaging, and targeted marketing, Iran could significantly increase its foreign currency earnings from date exports.

She outlined several initiatives by the Agriculture Ministry aimed at strengthening the date industry, including the modernization of orchards, promotion of mechanization, development of processing and complementary industries, organized seedling production, and the introduction of high-demand commercial varieties. Other programs involve supporting healthy seedling production, developing promising genotypes, producing domestic harvesting equipment, and registering orchards with traceable certification systems.

"Dates are more than just a fruit," Jalili Moghadam noted. "They are rich in natural energy, fiber, vitamins, and minerals, making them one of the healthiest alternatives to sugar. Beyond their nutritional and medicinal value, dates hold a special cultural and traditional place in Iranian households."

Japan Won't Recognize a Palestinian State Given U.S. Ties

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Japan will not recognize a Palestinian state for now, a decision likely taken to maintain relations with the United States and to avoid a hardening of Israel's attitude, the Asahi newspaper reported on Wednesday, citing unidentified government sources.

Several governments, including those in Britain, France, Canada and Australia, have said they will recognize a Palestinian state at the UN General Assembly this month, adding international pressure on Israel over its actions in the territory.

The U.S. had prompted Japan to forgo the recognition of a Palestinian state through several diplomatic channels, while French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot had strongly urged his Japanese counterpart to recognize it, Kyodo news agency reported last week.



Thousands Rally Across Slovakia Against Economic, Pro-Russian Policies



BRATISLOVA (Dispatches) - Thousands of Slovaks rallied on Tuesday in 16 cities, including Bratislava, to protest the economic and pro-Russian policies of populist Prime Minister Robert Fico. The nationwide demonstrations marked one of the largest shows of opposition since his return to power last year, organizers said.

Thousands rallied across Slovakia on Tuesday in a nationwide mass protest against the economic and pro-Russian policies of populist Prime Minister Robert Fico.

The rallies took place in 16 major cities and towns, including the capital of Bratislava.

They latest wave of protests has been fueled by a trip by Fico to China where he met Russian President Vladimir Putin for the third time since the Russian all-out invasion of Ukraine. A package of austerity measures recently approved by the government further angered the protesters.

The government says the measures are necessary to cut a budget deficit that at 5.3% of GDP was the second highest last year among the countries using the common European currency, the euro. The deficit is expected to surpass 5% this year, exceeding the limit of 3% required by the European Union.

The measures include increases in health and social insurance, income tax for higher earners, and value added tax on some food products, as well as a possible reduction of national holidays.

Labor unions and other critics charged ordinary people will be hit most while businesses complain the measures do not include anything to boost the economy.

"The Slovaks are fed up with that," Michal Šimečka, the head of the Progressive Slovakia party told the crowd at the Freedom Square in Bratislava.

Prosecutors to Seek Death Penalty for Charlie Kirk's Accused Assassin



PROVO (Dispatches) - Utah prosecutors vowed to seek the death penalty for the accused assassin of conservative activist Charlie Kirk and revealed new details of their case, including text messages in which he was alleged to have privately confessed to the fatal shooting.

"I had enough of his hatred," Tyler Robinson, 22, told his roommate and romantic partner when asked why he had committed the murder, according to transcripts of messages attributed to the suspect in court documents filed by prosecutors.

He is accused of firing the single rifle shot from a rooftop that pierced Kirk's neck last Wednesday on the campus of Utah Valley University in Orem, about 40 miles (65 km) south of Salt Lake City.

The office of Utah County District Attorney Jeffrey Gray charged Robinson with seven criminal counts on Tuesday, including aggravated murder, obstruction of justice for disposing of evidence and witness tampering for asking his roommate to delete incriminating texts.

Some politicians, including U.S. President Donald Trump, have called for capital punishment in the case.

At a press conference, Gray said he had made the decision to seek the death penalty "independently, based solely on the available evidence and circumstances and nature of the crime."

Trump Gets Royal Welcome in UK



LONDON (Dispatches) - U.S. President Donald Trump arrived in Britain on Tuesday for an unprecedented second state visit, with the UK government rolling out a royal red carpet welcome to win over the mercurial leader.

"A lot of things here warm my heart," the 79-year-old Republican told reporters after he arrived with First Lady Melania Trump. "It's a very special place."

King Charles III will host Trump at Windsor Castle for a lavish banquet and carriage ride, before Trump meets Prime Minister Keir Starmer at his country residence on Thursday.

In a sign of the pomp and pageantry to come, a guard of honour greeted the Trumps as they stepped off Air Force One at Stansted Airport near London.

Trump then expressed his admiration for the British monarch.

"He's been a friend of mine for a long time, and everyone respects him, and they love him," Trump said as he arrived by helicopter at Winfield House, the US ambassador's residence in London, where he will spend the night.

"Tomorrow's going to be a very big day."

Trump is the first US president to be invited for two state visits, after previously being hosted by Queen Elizabeth II during his last term in office in 2019 - as Britain tries to keep the so-called special relationship alive.

The British government has been unapologetic about its efforts to get on the right side of Trump, whose mother was Scottish and who owns a number of golf courses in the UK.

But the British public will be kept far away from Trump, with the visit taking place entirely behind closed doors and heavy security.

A large anti-Trump demonstration has been called in London on Wednesday, while protesters projected images of Trump and convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein onto the towers of Windsor Castle late Tuesday.

The shadow of the Epstein scandal has hung over Trump for weeks after his administration declined to release files on the issue.

It has also embroiled British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, who sacked his ambassador to Washington Peter Mandelson on the eve of the visit over the envoy's emails to Epstein.

Starmer's government is however counting on the sheer scale of the state visit to keep Trump onside, despite his unpredictability over everything from tariffs to Ukraine and Gaza.

In Windsor, Trump will get a ceremonial carriage ride and a flypast by both UK and US jets in what officials call the largest military show for a state visit in living memory.

King Charles will host Trump for a lavish state dinner where both men will give speeches.

Trump may also relish the royal part of the visit as a chance to escape a turbulent period at home, where the killing of right-wing activist Charlie Kirk has caused turmoil.

Politics will take over again on Thursday when Starmer hosts Trump at his country residence Chequers for talks focusing on trade and the wars in Ukraine and Gaza.

The visit has been timed to line up with announcements of several investments in Britain -- the latest being a pledge by Microsoft to spend \$30 billion over four years.

Russia Close to Cutting Oil Output Due to Drone Attacks

LONDON (Dispatches) - Russia's oil pipeline monopoly Transneft has warned producers they may have to cut output following Ukraine's drone attacks on critical export ports and refineries, three industry sources said on Tuesday.

In a statement on its website, Transneft described the news as "fake" and part of the West's "information war" against Russia.

Kyiv has stepped up attacks on Russian energy assets since August in a bid to impede Moscow's war effort in Ukraine and reduce the Kremlin's revenues as attempts to secure an end to the conflict through peace talks have stalled.

Oil and gas revenues have accounted for between a third and half of Russia's total federal budget proceeds over the past decade, making the sector the single most important source of financing for the government.

Ukrainian drones have hit at least 10 refineries - cutting Russia's refining capacity by almost a fifth at one point - and damaged its leading Baltic Sea ports of Ust-Luga and Primorsk, Ukrainian military officials and Russian industry sources said.

Russian authorities have not publicly commented on the extent of the damage or its impact on production and exports.

However, Transneft, which handles more than 80% of all the oil extracted in Russia, has in recent days restricted oil firms' ability to store oil in its pipeline system, two industry sources close to Russian oil firms told Reuters.

Transneft has also warned producers it may have to accept less oil if its infrastructure sustains further damage, the two sources said.

The attacks could force Russia, which accounts for 9% of global oil production, to ultimately cut output, said the two sources and a third source familiar with oil pumping operations.



The three sources asked not to be named due to sensitivity of the issue.

"The appearance of such fake news with reference to some unnamed sources in the Russian fuel and energy complex causes damage to the image of PAO Transneft," Transneft said in its statement.

"It can only be caused by the attempts to destabilize the situation within the framework of the information war unleashed by the West against the Russian Federation," it added.

The West has imposed successive waves of sanctions on Russia over its invasion of Ukraine, focusing heavily on its oil and gas sector. But Moscow has managed to re-route most oil exports to Asia, where India and China are its primary buyers.

Last week, Ukrainian drones hit Russia's biggest oil port of Primorsk for the first time since the war began in 2022, temporarily forcing operations there to shut down.

Primorsk has capacity to export more than 1 million barrels of oil per day, or more than 10% of Russia's total oil production.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the strikes had inflicted significant damage and called attacks on Russian oil infrastructure "the sanctions that work the fastest".

Reuters could not verify the extent of the damage from the strikes.

Russia, unlike leading OPEC producer Saudi Arabia, does not have significant capacity to stockpile oil.

Primorsk partially resumed operations on Saturday, though it remained unclear how long it may take to complete full repairs, the two sources said.

Russian had already lost some oil exporting capacity following another drone attack targeting the Ust-Luga oil terminal on the Baltic Sea in August, according to industry sources.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies including Russia - a group known as OPEC+ - have been increasing production since April after years of cuts aimed at supporting the oil market.

Under the latest OPEC+ agreement, Russia's oil production quota is due to rise to 9.449 million barrels per day this month from 9.344 million bpd in August.

"Russia's ability to ramp up oil production is now under threat due to limited storage capacity," U.S. bank J.P. Morgan said in a note.

Refinery outages, meanwhile, will also weigh on production due to crude storage congestion from lower refinery runs, Goldman Sachs wrote.

Syria and Israel Inch Toward Security Deal

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) - Under U.S. pressure, Syria is accelerating talks with Israel for a security pact that Damascus hopes will reverse Israel's recent seizures of its land but that would fall far short of a full peace treaty, sources briefed on the talks said.

Washington is pushing for enough progress to be made by the time world leaders gather in New York for the U.N. General Assembly at the end of this month to allow President Donald Trump to announce a breakthrough, four of the sources told Reuters.

Even a modest agreement would be a feat, the sources said, pointing to Israel's tough stance during months of talks and Syria's weakened position after sectarian bloodshed in its south inflamed calls for partition.

Reuters spoke to nine sources familiar with the discussions and with Israel's operations in southern Syria, including Syrian military and political officials, two intelligence sources and an Israeli official.

They said Syria's proposal aims to secure the withdrawal of Israeli troops from territory seized in recent months, to reinstate a demilitarized buffer zone agreed in



a 1974 truce, and to halt Israeli air strikes and ground incursions into Syria.

The sources said talks had not addressed the status of the Golan Heights, which Israel seized in a 1967 war. A Syrian source familiar with Damascus's position said it would be left "for the future."

The two countries have technically been at war since the creation of Israel in 1948, despite periodic armistices. Syria does not recognize the state of Israel.

After months of encroaching into the demilitarized zone, Israel abandoned the 1974 truce on December 8, the day a rebel offensive ousted Syria's then-president Bashar al-Assad. It struck Syrian military assets and sent troops to within 20 kilometres (12 miles) of Damascus.

Israel has shown reluctance during the closed-door talks to relinquish those gains, the sources said.

"The U.S. is pressuring Syria to accelerate a security deal - this is personal for Trump," said an Israeli security source, who said the U.S. leader wanted to present himself as the architect of a major success in Middle Eastern diplomacy.

But, the source said, "Israel is not offering much."



Arsenal, Real Madrid, Spurs Start With Wins

PARIS (Dispatches) - Arsenal won 2-0 away to Athletic Bilbao as the league phase of this season's Champions League kicked off yesterday, with two Kylian Mbappe penalties giving Real Madrid a narrow win over Marseille while Juventus and Borussia Dortmund drew an eight-goal thriller.

Tottenham Hotspur also won on the tournament's opening night which saw outsiders Union Saint-Gilloise and Qarabag claim first ever victories in the Champions League proper.

Arsenal are eager to make a big impression again in Europe's elite club competition, following their defeat by eventual champions Paris Saint-Germain in the semi-finals last season.

They got off to an ideal start in the Basque Country, with Gabriel Martinelli and Leandro Trossard scoring late goals to settle the game.

The Brazilian had only just come on when he ran through to open the scoring in the 72nd minute at San Mames. Arsenal then went on to seal the victory late on as Trossard—another substitute—scored with the aid of a deflection.

"We started to grow throughout the game. In the second half we were more fluent, dominant, and the finishers made the impact for us to win the game," said Arsenal coach Mikel Arteta.

Real Madrid came from behind to beat Marseille 2-1 at the Santiago Bernabeu, despite playing the closing stages of the game down to 10 men.

Marseille, winners of the inaugural Champions League in 1993, stunned the home crowd by taking the lead through Timothy Weah midway through the first half.

The record 15-time European champions grabbed an equaliser before the interval when Mbappe

converted from the spot for the first time after Rodrygo was fouled in the area.

Xabi Alonso's side lost Trent Alexander-Arnold to injury early on and were reduced to 10 men in the second half when his replacement, Dani Carvajal, was sent off following a VAR check for a headbutt on Marseille goalkeeper Geronimo Rulli.

But the home side still snatched all three points thanks to another Mbappe penalty late on after Facundo Medina was harshly penalised for handball.

"For me it's a penalty, but I understand there are people who don't (think so), we're all lost with this rule," Mbappe, who reached 50 goals for the club, told broadcaster Movistar.

Thomas Frank's Spurs, who qualified for the Champions League after winning last season's Europa League, edged Villarreal 1-0 in North London.

The match was decided by a farcical early own goal from Villarreal goalkeeper Luiz Junior, who contrived to let Lucas Bergvall's cross trickle into the net.

The victory maintained Tottenham's impressive form under new boss Frank. "It was a very even game that we just edged," he told broadcaster Amazon Prime.

Juventus against Dortmund in Turin was a repeat of the 1997 final won by the Germans, and the fixture more than lived up to its billing, finishing in a spectacular 4-4 draw.

Remarkably the first half ended goalless, with the breakthrough coming seven minutes after half-time when Karim Adeyemi put the visitors ahead from a fine low strike.

Aston Villa Finally Score, But Exit League Cup at Brentford



LONDON (Dispatches) - Aston Villa ended their goal drought but their poor start to the season continued as they were knocked out of the League Cup by top-flight rivals Brentford on penalties on Tuesday after the third-round tie had ended 1-1.

Harvey Elliott, who joined from Liverpool on a season-long loan on transfer deadline day, put Villa ahead in the 43rd minute, his side's first goal of the season.

Aaron Hickey's first goal for Brentford levelled the tie in the 57th minute although Villa will feel they should have spared themselves penalties by winning in normal time.

As it was the hosts won 4-2 on penalties as keeper Hakon Valdimarsson saved spot kicks from John McGinn and Matty Cash.

Crystal Palace also needed penalties to get past second-tier London rivals Millwall for whom Ryan Leonard scored a last-minute equalizer in a 1-1 draw at Selhurst Park.

Chris Richards had given Palace the lead.

Fourth-tier Grimsby Town, conquerors of Manchester United in the previous round, continued their adventure as they won 1-0 at struggling Championship side Sheffield Wednesday thanks to a headed goal by Jaze Kabia.

Grimsby are in the fourth round for the first time since 2001-02.

Panthers Sign 2 to Fill Roster Spots of Injured Corbett, Robert Hunt



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - The Carolina Panthers reached into the practice squads of the Cincinnati Bengals and Baltimore Ravens to fill two roster spots available when starting offensive linemen Austin Corbett and Robert Hunt went on injured reserve.

The Panthers signed former Bengals linebacker Maema Njongmeta, 24, originally an undrafted rookie from Wisconsin, played in 17 games (one start) for the Bengals last year, primarily on special teams. He had 13 tackles.

Cade Mays replaced Corbett and Chandler Zavala replaced Hunt, a Pro Bowl selection in his first season in Carolina in 2024, in the lineup on Sunday.

Meanwhile the Minnesota Vikings are placing running back Aaron Jones on injured reserve due to a hamstring injury after already ruling him out for Sunday's home game against the Cincinnati Bengals, according to multiple reports on Tuesday.

Jones, 30, will have to miss at least four games. He started both games for the Vikings (1-1) and has 13 carries for 46 yards and three receptions on four targets for 44 yards and one touchdown. He was injured in the home loss on Sunday night to the Atlanta Falcons.

Running back Jordan Mason is set to start for Minnesota, which already will be without starting quarterback J.J. McCarthy (high ankle sprain).

The Vikings are signing running back Cam Akers, 26, to the practice squad, per the reports, marking his third stop in Minnesota.

Jones started all 17 regular-season games in his first season in Minnesota in 2024 and rushed 255 times for 1,138 yards - both career highs -- and five TDs, and caught 51 passes on 62 targets for 408 yards and two scores.

Kipyegon Destroys the Field for Fourth 1500m World Gold

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Kenya's peerless Faith Kipyegon underlined her status as one of the greatest athletes of all time when she convincingly claimed a fourth 1,500 metres world title on Tuesday to go with her three Olympic golds and world record in the event.

Kipyegon delivered a gun-to-tape run that destroyed the field as she came home clear in 3 minutes 52.15 seconds.

Fellow Kenyan Dorcus Ewoi ran a personal best 3:54.92 for silver while Jessica Hull won Australia's first medal in the event when she just held on for bronze in 3:55.16.

Kipyegon now matches Hicham El Guerrouj (1997-2003) by claiming four world 1,500m golds and she will also go for a second world 5,000m title later this week.

"Being able to defend my title and to win a fourth gold feels really special," Kipyegon said.

"After setting the world record in Eugene (in July), I said to myself, 'I have to go to Tokyo and defend my title.' I knew I could run it under control.

"I won here in the 2021 Olympics just after becoming a mother, so being back here,



winning again, means I can show a new gold medal to my daughter."

Kipyegon, 31, set her stall out from the start on Tuesday, setting an early pace that strung out the busier-than-usual field after extra athletes were reinstated following semi-final falls.

However, she seemed to ease off slightly on the third lap and Ewoi and Olympic silver medallist Hull, who has spent most of her career watching Kipyegon's back disappear into the distance, were right on her shoulder at the bell.

There was nothing to worry about, however, as Kipyegon quickly took control again and by the time she crossed the line she was 30 metres clear.

"I knew after hitting 62 seconds for 400 that I couldn't slip back and I wanted to just keep on pushing and pushing," she said.

"To see my teammates being on the board here is so special because I knew the three of us, we can do magic because winning a gold medal, silver and bronze was possible."

Paolini Helps Italy Beat China to Reach BJ King Cup Semis

LONDON (Dispatches) - Defending champions Italy booked their place in the Billie Jean King Cup semi-finals by defeating hosts China 2-0 after world number eight Jasmine Paolini battled past Wang Xinyu 4-6 7-6(4) 6-4 in Shenzhen.

Earlier, Elisabetta Cocciaretto produced a gritty comeback to edge out Yuan Yue 4-6 7-5 7-5, rallying from a set and 2-5 down and 0-4 behind in the decider to give Italy the opening point. Both matches lasted nearly three hours.

After seeing Yuan's final shot sail beyond the baseline, the 24-year-old Cocciaretto threw herself to the floor with her hands on her face in disbelief.

"Thanks to my captain, my team, my coach, I came back and fought until the last point. For sure it's an incredible feeling. We put in extra energy when we play for our flag," Cocciaretto said.

Paolini had looked on the brink of defeat when trailing 3-5 in the second set, but the Italian broke back and dominated the tiebreak, sealing it with a forehand winner before withstanding a third-set



surge from Wang.

Wang, ranked 34th, looked on course to finish the job when she moved 5-3 ahead in the second but world number eight Paolini fought back to level.

The Italian surged 2-0 ahead in the decider before Wang responded with back-to-back breaks but Paolini broke back and won the next three games to close out the match.

Italy next play the winners of Wednesday's quarter-final between five-times champions Spain and Ukraine.

"Xinyu is playing really good tennis and today was a bit tough for me, but I tried to stay there for everybody who was on the bench, for the Italian fans here, for my country and somehow I turned the match around," Paolini said.

Paolini reached two Grand Slam finals in 2024 and won the Olympic doubles gold medal with Sara Errani as well as spearheading Italy's Billie Jean King Cup triumph.