

Iran Has Reiterated Its Unwavering Support for Syria's Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity, Deeming Any Attempts to Impose External Agendas or Fragment the Nation Unacceptable

IRAN NEWS

The U.S. Revoked the Sanctions Waiver for Iran's Chabahar Port, Threatening India's Multi-Million-Dollar Investment in the Strategic Project Amid Straining Ties Between Washington and New Delhi

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IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's ambassador to international organizations in Vienna says many member states of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) are under pressure and threats from the U.S. not to support a draft resolution sponsored by Iran and several other countries at the nuclear watchdog's General Conference.

"A considerable number of IAEA member states, in separate contacts with Iran and other sponsors of the draft resolution, have stated that they are under intense pressure and threats from the United States not to vote in favor of the submitted resolution," Reza Najafi said Thursday.

He made the remarks in Geneva where the 69th IAEA General Conference is being held from September 15 to 19.

The draft, submitted by Iran and five other nations to ongoing conference, calls for a ban on any attack or threat against nuclear sites under the IAEA Safeguards.

"According to the representatives of these countries, the United States has approached each country separately and threatened them to cast a negative vote or abstain from voting on Iran's resolution," Najafi said.

"A number of these countries have declared that an 'abstention' from this resolution does not reflect their true position, and therefore they have strongly requested Iran, in consultation with the other co-sponsors of the resolution, to defer action on the resolution to next year's conference."

Najafi stressed that Iran and the other sponsors of the resolution do not want to put the member states of the conference in a position where they must make an unreal decision, adding that the decision on how to proceed with this process is currently under discussion among the sponsors of the resolution.

Foreign Relations Provide Favorable Ground for Economic Cooperation



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Thursday that Iran's improving foreign relations and expanding engagement with regional and international organizations have created a favorable environment for Iranian entrepreneurs and economic actors to pursue opportunities abroad.

Speaking at a meeting with members of the Iranian Entrepreneurs' Forum, Pezeshkian stressed that the government's foreign visits are primarily designed to pave the way for the country's producers, exporters, and investors. "The central aim of our diplomatic trips is to facilitate the environment for your activity, production, and trade," he told participants.

According to the presidential office, the meeting—held on September 19 with 11 entrepreneurs, as well as the Governor of the Central Bank and the Ministers of Agriculture and Economic Affairs—focused on the concerns and proposals of the private sector. The president listened to their views and provided explanations regarding several key issues.

Highlighting Iran's growing ties with its neighbors and allies, Pezeshkian pointed to organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), BRICS, and the Eurasian Economic Union as valuable platforms. "Alongside the friendly atmosphere in our relations with neighboring countries, these unions also create excellent opportunities for cooperation with foreign partners," he said.

FM Urges UNSC to Choose Diplomacy Over Confrontation



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi has called on the United Nations Security Council to intervene and choose diplomacy over confrontation.

Araqchi said on Thursday that he presented a reasonable and actionable plan to the three European parties involved in the 2015 nuclear agreement to prevent an unnecessary and avoidable crisis.

He made his remarks just before a Security Council meeting intended to discuss the activation of the agreement's so-called snapback mechanism.

The UN Security Council will vote on Friday on whether to reimpose sanctions on Iran over its peaceful nuclear program, the Council's rotating presidency said.

Britain, France and Germany had triggered the vote. The three European countries, signatories to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPA) allege that Iran has broken its promises under that 2015 treaty.

Araqchi expressed frustration that instead of engaging with the substantive elements of the plan, the European troika has been offering a series of excuses, including the outlandish assertion that the Iranian Foreign Ministry does not represent the entire political establishment.

"I am pleased that President Macron has recognized the reasonableness of my proposal. However, he and the international community should be aware that I have the full backing of all bodies within the Islamic Republic of Iran, including the Supreme National Security Council," Araqchi stated.

French President Emmanuel Macron said in an Israeli television interview broadcast on Thursday that he expected international sanctions against Iran to be reinstated by the end of the month.

Araqchi pointed out that the troika's diplomatic efforts seem ineffective and emphasized the

escalate tensions.

Araqchi said the European push to restore the previously lifted UN Security Council sanctions lacked any "legal or logical basis," especially given Iran's cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

The 'snapback' is the 2015 nuclear deal's dispute resolution mechanism, under which parties who believe Iran has dishonored its commitments can move to restore six previous Iran-related Security Council resolutions adopted between 2006 and 2010.

The European parties have accused Iran of non-compliance over its decision to reduce commitments in response to the US withdrawal from the 2015 deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

Iran argues that the E3 cannot invoke the mechanism as they first violated the agreement by refusing to compensate for the US withdrawal, which prompted Iran to reduce its commitments.

necessity for the UN Security Council to prioritize diplomacy over confrontation.

The Iranian foreign minister highlighted that "Iran has already fulfilled its obligations" by signing a new cooperation agreement with the UN nuclear agency and offering a balanced proposal that addresses genuine concerns while being mutually beneficial.

He described Iran's proposal as "creative, fair, and balanced," stating that its implementation could quickly resolve key disagreements and avert a crisis.

Araqchi concluded by saying that there is still "a way forward, but Iran cannot be the only actor shouldering the responsibility for action."

Earlier in a joint phone call with the E3 counterparts and the EU's foreign policy chief, the Iranian foreign minister warned that triggering the snapback mechanism would undermine diplomacy and unnecessarily

European Troika Fails to Honor Commitments, Continues on Wrong Path



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister has accused the European troika of failing to uphold their commitments following Iran's recent agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), saying they have instead taken further "wrong steps" and pursued a path of political confrontation.

Speaking to Russia's RIA Novosti on Friday, Saeed Khatibzadeh said the three European countries—Britain, France, and Germany—had long claimed that they would respect and implement any agreement reached between Iran and the IAEA. "Yet once again, they have proven captive to their own inaction, politicizing every step taken by Iran," he said.

He noted that following the signing of a new agreement between Iran and the IAEA in Cairo, Director General Rafael Grossi expressed satisfaction and reported it to the agency. "Despite this, we have seen nothing from the Europeans but criticism and further missteps," Khatibzadeh added.

Khatibzadeh stressed that Iran remains committed to diplomacy, but said Tehran's future actions will depend entirely on the decisions of the other parties, particularly regarding the reimposition of sanctions.

He pointed out that Iran has formally written to the UN Secretary-General, stressing that the Europeans have no legal basis to invoke the so-called "snapback" mechanism under UN Security Council Resolution 2231. "At present, they are misusing this mechanism to advance political goals. Iran's response will be shaped by what unfolds," he said.

The deputy foreign minister emphasized: "We continue to believe the window for diplomacy is open. No military response can resolve this process, and we are convinced greater success is achievable through diplomacy."

In the same interview, broadcast from Geneva, Khatibzadeh warned that Iran will not accept any new nuclear deal if the three European countries persist with what he called "irresponsible and irrational behavior."

"We will not accept such an agreement on their terms," he said. "Any accord will be based solely on the principles set by our foreign policy and national interests."

Responding to another question, Khatibzadeh said Iran had agreed with the IAEA to explore new forms of cooperation, noting that attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities had "changed many realities."

He explained that access to facilities remains very limited due to environmental and human

risks. "In Cairo, we agreed to negotiate the conditions under which the IAEA can operate inside Iran. But at the same time, we are seeing a resolution put forward to the UN Security Council on reimposing sanctions," he said.

"Under these circumstances, IAEA access to Iranian facilities will only be possible once current tensions are resolved," Khatibzadeh added.

On September 8, 2025 (18 Shahrivar 1404), Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi and IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi signed a new framework for technical cooperation in Cairo.

The accord, dubbed the "Cairo Agreement," establishes practical mechanisms for cooperation in light of recent attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities, attributed to Israel and the United States, and ongoing threats of renewed strikes.

Previously, Iran-IAEA cooperation had been suspended following what Tehran described as illegal attacks on its peaceful nuclear sites. In July 2025, Iran's parliament passed legislation mandating suspension of cooperation until certain conditions were met. Subsequent negotiations led to the Cairo understanding, defining how cooperation could resume under new circumstances.

Following the signing, Araqchi stated the agreement would only remain valid as long as no hostile action—such as activation of the snapback mechanism—was taken against Iran. Grossi, for his part, hailed the Cairo Agreement as "an important and vital step" toward restoring trust in the non-proliferation system.

The Cairo Agreement was welcomed by several countries, including China and Russia. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian called it "a positive step toward reducing tensions in the Iranian nuclear issue and rebuilding mutual trust." Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova praised Iran's "responsible approach," urging the European troika to halt the snapback process.

Zakharova added that the agreement's positive outcomes could stabilize and significantly improve the tense overall situation.

Meanwhile, the Associated Press reported that the UN Security Council was scheduled to vote Friday, September 19, on a South Korean draft resolution concerning snapback sanctions on Iran. Under Resolution 2231, South Korea, as Security Council president, has presented a draft aimed at continuing the suspension of pre-2015 sanctions against Tehran.

Jewish Scientists and Their Role in the Advancement of Science in the World



By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

Jews, with a rich tradition of learning and respect for science and wisdom, have throughout history played a major role in the world's scientific progress. Although focusing on the ethnicity or religion of a scientist can sometimes overshadow other dimensions of their contributions, one cannot ignore the profound impact of Jewish researchers in shaping the modern world.

These contributions became especially evident in the twentieth century, following major events such as the mass migration of Jewish scientists from Europe during World War II (a phenomenon known as the "exile of knowledge"). Many of these scientists moved to the United States and other countries and played key roles in great scientific projects.

For example, among the most prominent and influential of these scientists in various fields are the following:

Albert Einstein — A familiar name, undoubtedly the most famous scientist in the world. By presenting the theory of relativity, he transformed humanity's understanding of space, time, and gravity, and earned the title "father of modern physics."

Niels Bohr — Although a Dane by nationality, he was originally of Jewish descent. He played a fundamental role in the establishment of quantum mechanics.

Richard Feynman — An American theoretical physicist who worked on quantum electrodynamics and won the Nobel Prize. He also participated in the Manhattan Project.

J. Robert Oppenheimer — The physicist known as the "father of the atomic bomb" and the scientific director of the Manhattan Project.

John von Neumann — One of the sharpest minds of the twentieth century, he played a key role in the development of game theory, computer architecture, and quantum physics.

Emmy Noether — A German mathematician who formulated the famous Noether's Theorem in theoretical physics, which is one of the foundations of modern physics today.

Sigmund Freud — The Austrian physician and founder of psychoanalysis, whose theories had a profound influence on psychology and popular culture, particularly in the West.

Jonas Salk — The American scientist who discovered the polio vaccine, protecting millions of lives around the world.

Gerty Cori — Nobel Prize winner in Physiology and Medicine for the discovery of the Cori cycle (glycogen metabolism).

Rosalind Franklin — The English chemist whose X-ray diffraction images were crucial for the discovery of the DNA double helix structure by Watson and Crick.

(Unfortunately, her role was not properly recognized during her lifetime, but after her death her scientific identity became world-renowned.)

Daniel Kahneman — Nobel Prize winner in Economics for integrating insights from psychology into economics.

The list of Jewish scientists goes far beyond these names and includes dozens of other Nobel Prize winners and distinguished researchers. These remarkable achievements have roots in a culture that values education, questioning, and learning.

The important point is that science knows no borders, and the achievements of these scientists—as well as those of non-Jewish scientists, particularly Muslims—are a heritage for all of humanity, not just for a particular people or religion. The study of the history of science teaches us that progress is best achieved when societies draw on the talents of all their members, regardless of their background, politics, or ethnicity.

Successful Iran-Russia Cooperation Heralds End of Unilateralism Era



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - President Masoud Pezeshkian says a "successful" model of cooperation among independent countries, including Iran and Russia, will prove that the era of unilateralism in the world is over.

"We will be able to lead our countries to development and progress without the need for or dependence on unilateral powers," Pezeshkian said in a meeting with Russian Minister of Energy Sergei Tsivilev and his accompanying delegation in Tehran.

He added that Iran and Russia are determined to implement the agreements previously signed between the two countries in the fields of transportation, energy and power plants, urging both sides' experts and ministers to make double efforts in this regard.

IRAN NEWS



Iran and Uzbekistan Cooperate to Revive Persian Carpet Exports

TEHRAN (ILNA) - Iran and Uzbekistan have launched a new partnership aimed at revitalizing the export of Persian handwoven carpets, a once-flourishing industry that has suffered a steep decline in recent years.

Iran's carpet exports, which exceeded \$2 billion a decade ago, have fallen to around \$40 million. Industry experts say that shortages of raw materials, particularly silk, have been among the biggest challenges facing producers.

According to the head of Iran's National Carpet Center, a joint meeting was recently held between the center and an Uzbek trade delegation to explore opportunities for cooperation in silk supply, sericulture, and training programs.

Iraq Commits to Sending 5m Tourists to Iran in Joint Tourism Roadshow



TEHRAN - Iraq has pledged to send five million tourists annually to Iran as part of a tourism roadshow held across several Iraqi cities. The initiative, attended by Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia' Al-Sudani, aims to strengthen bilateral ties and boost cultural exchanges between the two neighbors.

According to Iran's Association of Air Travel and Tourism Agencies, the Iran-Iraq Tourism Roadshow is being held from October 6 to 9 in Basra, Baghdad, Najaf, and Karbala. The event will culminate in the signing of a cooperation agreement between Iranian Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Ezzatollah Zarghami, and his Iraqi counterpart, Ahmed Fakak al-Badrani.

Currently, around 3.5 million Iraqis travel to Iran each year, with a similar number of Iranians visiting Iraq. This brings the total annual exchange to about seven million tourists. Under the new agreement, Tehran and Baghdad plan to raise that figure to ten million, with each side committing to sending five million tourists across the border.

Hormatollah Rafiei, head of Iran's Association of Air Travel and Tourism Agencies, noted that 31 Iranian travel agencies have already registered to take part in the roadshow, with more expected to join. Representatives from Iran's free trade zones, major airlines, universities, and hotel owners are also participating to explore cooperation opportunities with Iraqi tourism stakeholders.

Iran Moves to Eliminate Hazardous Pesticides from Agriculture



TEHRAN - Minister of Agriculture, Gholamreza Nouri, has announced that the country is pressing ahead with efforts to eliminate the use of hazardous pesticides in agricultural production, despite restrictions in supply channels.

Speaking on Wednesday at a meeting of the National Plant Protection Council, Nouri emphasized that the initiative is being advanced in line with global standards, with the cooperation of the Plant Protection Organization, the Agricultural Research, Education and Extension Organization (AREEO), academic institutions, and knowledge-based companies.

"The agricultural sector carries a heavy responsibility in securing the nation's food supply. Food safety is one of the four essential pillars of food security, alongside availability, access, and production," he stated.

Nouri stressed that ensuring the health of crops through regulated use of fertilizers and pesticides is a legal obligation under Iran's Seventh Development Plan. He added that safeguarding public health and maintaining credibility in international export markets remain top priorities for the ministry.

Highlighting Iran's pistachio exports, Nouri noted that the sector earned \$1.7 billion in foreign revenue thanks to compliance with EU health standards. He said agricultural exports overall grew by 32 percent last year and by 11 percent in the first four months of the current year, reflecting confidence in the quality and safety of Iranian products.

The minister also underlined the need to reform national dietary patterns, pointing out that Iranians currently consume 1.5 times more oil and sugar than international benchmarks. Cardiovascular disease and diabetes, he said, are major causes of mortality in the country, while heavy reliance on government-subsidized imports of oil (90%) and sugar (30%) imposes a significant economic burden, including on healthcare costs.

He called for education and public campaigns to promote healthier food choices, particularly greater consumption of dairy products and vegetables.

Addressing administrative reforms, Nouri clarified that government streamlining should not lead to the dissolution of vital agencies such as the Plant Protection Organization or the Veterinary Organization, both of which are recognized in international protocols. He said the government is working to implement structural reforms without compromising food safety, production continuity, or export capacity.

Trade With Europe Must Not Be Overlooked



TEHRAN - The head of the Iran-Germany Joint Chamber of Commerce has underlined the enduring importance of Europe, particularly Germany, as a strategic trading partner for Iran. He urged Iranian businesses and policymakers to prepare for the easing of current political and economic tensions with Europe, stressing that opportunities will arise and should not catch the country unprepared.

The comments came during a high-level roundtable titled "Challenges and Opportunities for Banking and Financial Cooperation between Iran and Germany", held at the chamber's headquarters in Tehran. The meeting brought together Shahin Asghari, president of the Iran-Germany Chamber, Iran's ambassador to Germany Majid Nili Ahmadabadi, former ambassador Ali Majedi, senior representatives of Iranian banks with branches in Europe, and a group of financial experts.

Opening the session, Asghari said that despite sanctions and mounting pressures, Europe remains essential to Iran's trade strategy. "Europe—and Germany in particular—has always been an important partner for Iran. Conditions are difficult due to sanctions, and we expect them to become even tougher. That is why we decided to convene these sessions with banks and experts, to prepare for the challenges ahead," he said.

He highlighted that a large share of Iranian industries depends heavily on German technology and equipment. "In 1975, Iran was Germany's second-largest export market after the United States. Today, our position has slipped to 79th. But Germany is still our most important partner in Europe, and this must not be ignored," he added.

Asghari criticized what he described as a tendency among some officials to downplay Europe's role. "The truth is that many of our industries require European—and particularly German—equipment that cannot be substituted," he said. Looking ahead, he argued that the current strained situation cannot persist indefinitely. "Eventually, agreements will be reached, tensions will ease, and conditions will improve. Our responsibility is to be ready for that day."

Joining the discussion via videoconference, Ambassador Majid Nili Ahmadabadi emphasized the embassy's readiness to assist businesses in navigating the challenges of sanctions and strained ties. "We are prepared to use all our capacity and connections to help Iranian traders. All parties must be ready to enter a new stage of cooperation," he said.

Former ambassador Ali Majedi, who served in Berlin from 2014 to 2017, offered a

historical perspective. Despite United Nations sanctions in place at the time, trade between Iran and Germany in 2014 reached \$2.4 billion, of which \$2 billion was German exports. Majedi recounted that he was able to secure the purchase of 1,000 ambulances from a German supplier despite restrictions.

He also noted that after the 2015 nuclear agreement, Germany was among the first to re-engage with Iran at the highest levels. "The deputy chancellor and economy minister were the first Western officials to come to Tehran, followed by representatives from all 16 German states," he recalled.

Majedi further explained Germany's strategic interest in Iran. Quoting Siemens' executives, he said that while Germany has strengths in technology and currency, it lacks energy resources and consumer markets. "For those, they looked to Russia and the Middle East. Among Middle Eastern states, Iran and Egypt were identified as key partners. Germany's focus has not been on Saudi Arabia, Qatar, or the UAE—it has been on Iran," he said.

Company representatives present at the meeting voiced frustration at delays caused by foreign currency allocation. Many expressed satisfaction with the support of Iranian banks but criticized the Central Bank for failing to provide timely allocations, which has left goods stranded in customs warehouses for months. They argued that with proper currency flows, trade exchanges could multiply significantly.

Concluding the session, Asghari repeated his call for forward-looking preparation. "We believe the current tense situation cannot last. After a difficult period, there will be openings. These meetings are aimed at ensuring that when that day comes, we are not starting from scratch. We must not repeat the experience after the 2015 deal, when German companies were ready, but Iran was not prepared to seize the opportunity," he said.

He also stressed the importance of maintaining existing links with German companies and protecting the hard-won presence of Iranian bank branches in Germany. "These institutions were established with great effort. We must preserve them," he added.

The session ended with agreement to continue specialized discussions on legal and banking issues, and to encourage banks to share their solutions and innovative practices for overcoming restrictions.

TCCIMA Signs Cooperation Agreement with China's Khorgos Region

TEHRAN - A high-level delegation from the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) traveled to Kazakhstan and China to explore trade opportunities in the Khorgos region. During the visit, the delegation held official talks with local officials and business leaders in Khorgos, China, culminating in the signing of a cooperation agreement between Mahmoud Najafi Arab, President of the Tehran Chamber, and Faming Ma, President of the Khorgos Chamber.

The agreement commits both sides to enhancing trade relations through the exchange of information and business delegations, facilitating introductions between entrepreneurs, showcasing economic capabilities, and laying the groundwork for broader commercial cooperation.

In his remarks, Najafi Arab emphasized China's role as Iran's top trading partner. "China is Iran's number one partner in foreign trade, both in imports and exports. Our economic relations go back centuries, to the days of the Silk Road," he said.

Drawing on his experience in pharmaceutical and medical equipment cooperation with Chinese companies, Najafi Arab highlighted how much of Iran's industrial production depends on Chinese raw materials, intermediate goods, and machinery. He urged Chinese partners to move beyond what he described as "conservative business attitudes" to accelerate joint projects.

Referring to the 25-year strategic partnership agreement between Iran and China, Najafi Arab stressed that the private sector is responsible for implementing its economic and commercial aspects. He noted that frameworks such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRICS could further advance bilateral trade.

The Tehran Chamber president pointed to Khorgos's strong potential in logistics, trade facilitation, and industrial development. He announced plans to establish an export management company, create a permanent showroom for Iranian products in Khorgos, and even open a Tehran Chamber office in the region.

Najafi Arab also underlined the potential of China's 100-million-strong Muslim population as a key market for halal Iranian products, while inviting Chinese investment in Iran's renewable energy and gas industries.

Zantao Li, Deputy Mayor of Khorgos, welcomed the Iranian delegation, highlighting the strategic location of the Khorgos Special Economic Zone, its rail and road infrastructure, and the advantages



of its dry port, which connects China by rail to Europe and by road to Russia.

He also noted favorable policies for foreign investors, including tax holidays of up to five years and customs duty exemptions. Li expressed support for the Tehran Chamber's plan to establish an office in Khorgos, stressing opportunities in agricultural and mineral exports from Iran to China, and the expansion of Chinese goods exports to Iran.

Li suggested that future cooperation could also extend to digital economy initiatives, e-commerce, ICT, and digital currencies.

Chang Li, a Chinese business leader, spoke about the formation of a global trade union last year with members from 39 countries and 87 chambers of commerce. He described it as a family-like network enabling multilateral trade in commodities ranging from Russian crude oil to Australian iron ore and Brazilian sugar. He noted the union also operates barter trade mechanisms through its international cross-border trade committee.

Ali-Akbar Shamani, Deputy for Customs Affairs at Iran's Customs Administration, who accompanied the Tehran Chamber delegation, briefed attendees on Iran's fully digitalized customs system, highlighting electronic declaration processes and risk management mechanisms.

Meanwhile, Fereydoon Verdinejad, Secretary-General of the Tehran Chamber, explained the chamber's current four-year strategic plan, which identifies eight priority value chains and eight target countries for trade expansion: China, Russia, Turkey, Kazakhstan, India, Oman, Indonesia, and Pakistan. With Khorgos located at the intersection of both China and Kazakhstan, he said, the region is of particular strategic importance.

Verdinejad described the new Tehran-Khorgos memorandum as a "solid cornerstone" for rapid and sustainable development of bilateral trade.

Farzin Ferdos, a member of the TCCIMA board, also addressed the meeting, stressing the need to leverage digital platforms to expand bilateral trade and services.

The event concluded with the official signing of a cooperation memorandum between the Tehran Chamber of Commerce and the Khorgos International Chamber of Commerce, formalized by Mahmoud Najafi Arab and Faming Ma.

Iran, Afghanistan Seek to Boost Trade and Investment Cooperation



TEHRAN - Minister of Industry, Mine, and Trade, Seyed Mohammad Atabak, emphasized the need to strengthen economic ties and remove barriers to trade and investment between Iran and Afghanistan, stressing that both countries should seek to expand trade "at a balanced pace."

Atabak made the remarks during the final day of his visit to Afghanistan in a meeting with Nooruddin Azizi, Afghanistan's Minister of Commerce and Industry. He noted that the Iranian government's foreign economic policy is focused on expanding cooperation with neighboring countries, including Afghanistan.

Azizi welcomed the talks, highlighting the willingness of both sides to facilitate trade. "The potential exists on both sides to make trade easier. We want to benefit from Iran's capacities," he said.

During his three-day visit, Atabak was accompanied by a high-ranking delegation including political, industrial, and mining officials. The trip was aimed at strengthening bilateral economic relations and addressing obstacles to joint trade and investment. In Kabul, Atabak met with Afghanistan's deputy prime minister for economic affairs and several ministers, before holding extended talks with Azizi. Both sides underscored the importance of gradually and steadily increasing trade volumes.

Iranian public and private sector representatives also held meetings with Afghan business leaders, particularly in the stone and iron industries. Iranian companies expressed readiness to cooperate in mining and metallurgy, offering technical expertise and training to Afghanistan.

Afghan officials stressed the priority of strengthening trade with neighboring countries, especially Iran. Minister Azizi set a target of raising annual trade volume between the two countries from the current level of about \$3 billion to \$10 billion.

Iran and Armenia to Expand Cultural Cooperation



TEHRAN - Cultural ties between Iran and Armenia are set to deepen following high-level discussions between senior officials of both countries.

Hojatollah Ayoubi, Advisor to the Minister and Head of the International Affairs Center at Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, met with Grigor Hovhannisyan, Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia to Iran, at the ministry headquarters. During the meeting, Ayoubi stressed the importance of strengthening cultural exchanges and described the centennial celebration of the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra at the UNESCO World Heritage site of Persepolis as an "unprecedented and historic experience."

According to a ministry statement, Ayoubi highlighted the symbolic significance of hosting such a performance at Persepolis, noting that the concert conveyed a powerful message of friendship, peace, and mutual respect between the Iranian and Armenian peoples.

He further emphasized the role of cultural diplomacy and suggested that, following the success of the Persepolis event, similar programs could be held across Iran. Ayoubi also announced ongoing efforts to invite Armenian music groups to participate in upcoming festivals in Iran.

"Armenian citizens are eager to travel to Iran, and with improved conditions for land travel, we can expect a rise in the number of Armenian tourists visiting the country," he added.

Ambassador Hovhannisyan expressed gratitude for Iran's warm hospitality and described the cultural relations between the two nations as "deep and enduring." He praised the Persepolis concert as a symbol of lasting friendship and said Armenia is prepared to send art groups and orchestras to perform in Iranian cities such as Tehran and Isfahan.

France Kicks Out Mali Diplomats

PARIS (Dispatches) - France has given two Malian diplomats until Saturday to leave the country and suspended its counter-terrorism cooperation with the country, weeks after a French envoy was arrested in Bamako. Paris is demanding the diplomat's release, calling the arrest 'unjustified', as Mali continues to accuse foreign powers of destabilising the country amid its ongoing security crisis. Paris has suspended counter-terrorism cooperation with Mali and ordered two Malian diplomats to leave after the arrest of a French envoy in Bamako, a French diplomatic source told AFP on Friday.

Authorities in the West African nation said last month that a French national had been arrested on suspicion of working for Paris's intelligence services, and accused "foreign states" of trying to destabilise the country.

The two Malian diplomats being expelled in response have been given until Saturday to leave France.



Gaza Hit by Telecoms Blackout as Israeli Tanks and Infantry Advance



GAZA (Dispatches) - Israeli tanks advanced along two gateways to the centre of Gaza City on Thursday while internet and phone lines were cut off for several hours, signaling a potential escalation in ground operations in the Palestinian enclave.

Israeli forces control Gaza City's eastern suburbs and in recent days have been pounding the Sheikh Radwan and Tel Al-Hawa areas, from where they would be positioned to advance on central and western areas where most of the population is sheltering.

"We are scared, but what can we do?" said Bassam Al-Qanou, a displaced man sheltering with around 30 family members in one of countless ragged improvised tent camps along the city's beach.

He said the family had no way to get out, and nowhere to go.

At least 85 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli strikes or gunfire across the Gaza Strip in the past 24 hours, most in Gaza City, according to the territory's health ministry.

The Israeli military said four of its personnel had been killed during combat in southern Gaza.

A total of 48 hostages remain in Gaza since their capture in a Hamas attack on southern Israel on October 7, 2023. Israeli officials say around 20 are still alive.

In separate developments, Israel attacked Hezbollah military targets in southern Lebanon, while two Israelis were killed at Allenby Crossing between the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Jordan, in what the Israeli military called a terror attack.

Israeli army spokesperson Nadav Shoshani said Israeli forces had been operating in the periphery of Gaza City for several weeks but since the night of Monday to Tuesday large numbers of troops had begun moving towards the inner city.



U.S. Vetoes UNSC Resolution on Ceasefire in Gaza

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - The U.S. vetoed a draft UN Security Council resolution on Thursday that would have demanded an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza, and that Israel lift all restrictions on aid deliveries. The text would also have demanded the immediate release of all hostages held by Hamas. It is the sixth time the U.S. had cast a veto in the Security Council since the war in Gaza began nearly two years ago.

The U.S. on Thursday again wielded its veto and thwarted a UN Security Council call for a ceasefire in Gaza, shielding its ally Israel from meaningful diplomatic pressure.

The 14 other members of the Council backed the resolution, initiated in August in response to the UN's official declaration of famine after nearly two years of Israel's war on Hamas in the Palestinian territory.

The vote came as Israeli tanks and jets pounded Gaza City, the target of a major new ground offensive, forcing Palestinians to flee south.

The resolution text had demanded "an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire in Gaza respected by all parties" as well as the immediate and unconditional release of hostages.

The U.S. has repeatedly rejected that approach multiple times, most recently in June when it used its veto to back Israel.

Thursday's vote was the sixth time the U.S. had cast a veto in the Security Council over the nearly two-year war between Israel and Palestinian militants Hamas.

"Let this resolution send a clear message, a message that the Security Council is not turning its back on starving civilians, on the hostages and the demand for a ceasefire," Denmark's UN ambassador Christina Lassen said ahead of the vote.

"A generation risks being lost not only to war – but to hunger and despair. Meanwhile Israel has expanded its military operation in Gaza City, further deepening the suffering of civilians as a result.

"It is this catastrophic situation, this humanitarian and human failure that has compelled us to act today."

Pakistan's ambassador Asim Ahmad called the veto a "dark moment in this chamber."

"The world is watching. The cries of children should pierce our hearts," he said.

The previous U.S. veto sparked an unusual show of anger from the 14 other members of the council, who are increasingly vocal in their frustration over their apparent inability to pressure Israel to stop the suffering of Gaza's inhabitants.

The UN Security Council vote came as Israeli tanks and jets pounded Gaza City, the target of a major new ground offensive. For the first time Tuesday, a UN-mandated international investigative commission gave its independent analysis, accusing Israel of committing "genocide" in Gaza since October 2023 with the intent to "destroy" the Palestinians.

The issue will be central to next week's annual UN summit in New York.

Israeli ambassador to the UN, Danny Danon, condemned the resolution, saying that "for some members of the Council, this is a performance. For Israel, this is a daily reality. The proposal was presented without condemnation of Hamas, without condemnation of the October 7 massacre."

Danon sparred repeatedly with Algeria's ambassador Amar Bendjama who asked Palestinian people to "forgive us because this Council could not save your children...our sincere efforts, shattered against the wall of rejection."

Canada, Mexico Vow Closer Ties

México, 18 de septiembre de 2025.



MEXICO CITY (Dispatches) - Canada and Mexico on Thursday pledged to deepen ties between their two countries, as well as strengthen the free trade pact they share with the United States, during a visit by Prime Minister Mark Carney to Mexico.

Speaking at a press conference, Carney and President Claudia Sheinbaum said they had agreed to expand economic and security ties and were committed to their partnership with the U.S.

Carney's visit comes as Canada, Mexico and the U.S. kicked off public consultations this week, ahead of a review of their free trade deal set for next year.

"I have full confidence, and so does the president (Sheinbaum) that we can find the adjustments needed to reinforce competition and competitiveness in our region," Carney said.

Mexico and Canada are the United States' largest and second-largest trading partners, respectively, while the U.S. is the No.1 trading partner for both of the others.

Carney arrived in Mexico City early on Thursday for a two-day mission designed to improve recently strained ties and seek a common front in crucial trade talks with the United States.

Carney's trip is the first bilateral visit by a Canadian prime minister to Mexico in eight years. Canadian officials briefing reporters on Wednesday described ties as excellent but conceded they could be closer.

France Paralyzed as Mass Protests Erupt Against Macron's Austerity Push

PARIS (Dispatches) - Hundreds of thousands of people protested across France on Thursday over President Emmanuel Macron's planned austerity policies, disrupting much of the country's public life.

Heeding a call from trade unions, protesters staged a day of actions that saw public transport stalled, schools closed and people taking to the streets for demonstrations marked by sporadic clashes with the police.

One trade union, the leftist CGT, said that more than a million people across the country had taken part in the demonstrations — higher than the 900,000 it says turned out for a June 2023 protest against the lifting of the retirement age to 64 from 62.

French authorities, whose counts are usually substantially lower than those of unions, said more than 500,000 people had demonstrated in the country, including 55,000 in Paris.

Interior Minister Bruno Retailleau said 309 people had been detained during the protests, with an alleged 7,300 "radicalised" protestors joining the demos.

He added that 26 officers had been injured.

Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu, Macron's seventh head of government since 2017, vowed a break from the past in a bid to defuse a deepening political crisis after taking office last week.

But the appointment of the 39-year-old former defence minister and close Macron ally has failed to calm the anger of unions and many French people.

"I reiterate my commitment to pursue a dialogue with all social partners" Lecornu said in a statement Thursday, adding that he would meet again soon with union leaders.



But many protesters took direct aim at Macron, who has just 18 months left in power and is enduring his worst-ever popularity levels.

Several placards urged him to resign, and demonstrators in the southern city of Nice threw an effigy of Macron into the air.

Sophie Larchet, a 60-year-old civil servant, said she came to protest in Paris because of Macron.

"We've had enough, he's tormenting France," she told AFP.

Others complained about a growing gap between ordinary people and elites, saying a series of austerity measures proposed by the government

would hit the poorest hardest.

"Every day the richest get richer and the poor get poorer," Bruno Cavalier, 64, said in Lyon, France's third-largest city.

Protesters remain incensed about the draft budget of Lecornu's predecessor Francois Bayrou, who had proposed a series of measures he said would save €44 billion to curb France's high debt.

Lecornu has tried to calm anger by promising to abolish life-long privileges for former prime ministers and halt a widely detested plan to scrap two public holidays.

More than 80,000 police officers were deployed, backed by drones, armoured vehicles and water cannon.

With unions calling for strikes, around one in six teachers at primary and secondary schools walked out, while nine out of 10 pharmacies were shuttered.

Commuters faced severe disruption on the Paris Metro, where only the three driverless automated lines were working normally.

Trade unions said they were pleased with the scale of the protests.

"We have recorded 260 demonstrations across France," said Sophie Binet, leader of the CGT union. "There are thousands and thousands of strikes in all workplaces."

Police in Paris and Marseille used tear gas to disperse early, unauthorised demonstrations. In Marseille, an AFP reporter filmed a policeman kicking a protester on the ground, while police said they had been confronted by "hostile" demonstrators.

On the outskirts of the northern city of Lille, protesters took part in an early morning action to block bus depots.

Starmer, Trump Hail Renewal of Special Relationship

CHEQUERS (Dispatches) - Donald Trump and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer hailed the renewal of their nations' "special relationship" on Thursday, drawing the U.S. leader's unprecedented second state visit to a close with a show of unity after avoiding possible pitfalls.

At a warm press conference when the two leaders glossed over differences on Gaza and wind power to present a united front, Trump said Russian President Vladimir Putin had "let him down" and he was disappointed other countries were still buying Russian oil because only a low oil price would punish Moscow.

After two days of his state visit to Britain, which the U.S. leader described as an "exquisite honour", Trump was in a relaxed mode at the final press conference while Starmer was focused on avoiding areas of disagreement.

Neither leader was tripped up by potentially embarrassing subjects, with both batting away questions over the late sex offender Jeffrey Epstein and his ties to Trump and to Starmer's former ambassador to the U.S.

"We've renewed the special relationship for a new era," Starmer told reporters.

"This partnership today is a signal of our determination to win this race together



and to ensure it brings real benefits in jobs, in growth, in lower bills, to put more hard-earned cash in people's pockets at the end of each month."

Trump also paid homage to the close ties enjoyed by the two countries, saying Starmer was a tough negotiator in securing the first tariff deal with the U.S., although Britain has still not got the lower U.S. tariffs on steel that it was seeking.

"We're forever joined, and we are forever friends and we will always be friends," Trump said.

Earlier, at the start of a business reception, some of the leading names in U.S. and UK business were welcomed by the two leaders to unveil a record 150 billion pound (\$205 billion) package of U.S. investment into Britain, part of a wider 250 billion pound package officials say will benefit both sides.

Starmer said the deals would "light up the special relationship for years to come". Trump was equally effusive. "The ties between our countries are priceless."

"We've done some things that financially are great for both countries ... I think it's an unbreakable bond we have, regardless of what we're doing today. I think it's unbreakable."



Barcelona Beat Newcastle, Man City See Off Napoli

PARIS (Dispatches) - Marcus Rashford scored twice as Barcelona kicked off their Champions League bid with a 2-1 victory away to Newcastle United on Thursday, while Erling Haaland notched his 50th goal in the competition in Manchester City's win over Napoli.

The third consecutive evening of action in the first round of games in this season's league phase also saw Eintracht Frankfurt, Sporting Lisbon and Club Brugge record big wins while FC Copenhagen held Bayer Leverkusen.

Rashford was still looking for his first Barcelona goals following his July loan move from Manchester United, and he got off the mark by heading in Jules Kounde's cross just before the hour at St James' Park.

The England international then doubled the Spanish champions' lead with a ferocious right-foot shot from outside the area high into the top corner midway through the second half.

Anthony Gordon pulled one back for Newcastle, but Barcelona — beaten in the semi-finals last season — held on to claim their first three points of the campaign.

"It's an amazing experience playing for Barcelona. I've always been a huge admirer of the club. We just want to win as much as possible," Rashford said.

Pep Guardiola's City, the 2023 Champions League winners, got off to an ideal start too as they saw off Serie A champions Napoli, claiming a 2-0 victory at the Etihad Stadium.

The game was conditioned by the sending-off midway through the first half of Napoli captain Giovanni Di Lorenzo, dismissed for wiping out Haaland as the Norwegian headed towards goal.

That led to Napoli coach Antonio Conte taking off Kevin De Bruyne just 26 minutes into the Belgian

playmaker's return to the stadium where he starred for a decade before departing at the end of last season.

Haaland then gave City the lead as he nodded in from a delightful Phil Foden assist early in the second half. That took him to 50 career Champions League goals from just 49 appearances.

Jeremy Doku then made it 2-0, leaving Napoli without a win in 13 visits to face English opposition in European competition.

Frankfurt were the night's biggest winners as they beat Galatasaray 5-1, despite the Turkish visitors taking an early lead through Yunus Akgun.

A Davinson Sanchez own goal brought Frankfurt level on 37 minutes, before Can Uzun and Jonathan Burkardt both netted in first-half stoppage time.

Burkardt struck again after the break, and Ansgar Knauff wrapped up a fine victory for the German club, who are top of the fledgling league standings.

Fellow Bundesliga side Leverkusen had to come from behind twice to snatch a point in a 2-2 draw away to Copenhagen in the Danish capital.

Jordan Larsson's early opener for the hosts was cancelled out by a brilliant Alejandro Grimaldo free-kick. Young Brazilian forward Robert restored the hosts' advantage on 87 minutes only for a Pantelis Hatzidiakos own goal in stoppage time to give Leverkusen a share of the spoils.

Club Brugge, who reached the last 16 last season, claimed a stunning 4-1 win at home to Monaco in Belgium, with an early penalty miss by Maghnes Aklouché for the visitors proving crucial.

U.S. Battle Past Kazakhstan to Set Up BJK Cup Semifinal With Britain

SHENZHEN (Dispatches) - The United States stayed on course for a record-extending 19th Billie Jean King Cup crown after Taylor Townsend and Jessica Pegula won the doubles decider to edge out Kazakhstan 2-1 on Thursday and set up a semi-final clash with Britain.

The tie hung in the balance after American Emma Navarro had dramatically saved two match points to outlast Yulia Putintseva 7-5 2-6 7-6(6), only for an aggressive Elena Rybakina to level matters by dismantling world number seven Pegula 6-4 6-1.

Kazakhstan, eyeing their first final appearance, then rolled the dice by selecting Rybakina and Putintseva for the decisive doubles clash.

But the Americans -- spearheaded by doubles world number one Townsend -- had other plans when skipper Lindsay Davenport teamed her up with Pegula.

The U.S. pair survived an early scare when they stared down three break points at 0-40 in their opening service game, but managed to hold serve before seizing control.

While Pegula patrolled the baseline, Townsend proved clinical at the net as both Rybakina and Putintseva dropped serve, helping the Americans pocket the first set.

Although Kazakhstan struck first in the second with an early break, the U.S. broke back immediately and forced a tiebreak which they dominated to seal a 6-2 7-6(1) victory.

"I haven't played with Taylor in such a long time, so that



was fun to get back playing with her," said Pegula, a former doubles world number one.

"I always love playing with a lefty. Makes my life a lot easier. I think our games complement each other really well. She's an amazing doubles player. She could probably play with anybody."

Britain are also seeking their first BJK Cup title and they cruised past Japan when Sonay Kartal and Katie Boulter won their singles matches.

Kartal, who reached the fourth round at Wimbledon for the first time this year, gave Britain the lead with a 6-3 7-6(4) victory over Ena Shibahara.

Japan's hopes of salvaging the tie fell on the shoulders of Moyuka Uchijima but she was no match for Boulter, who wrapped up a comfortable 6-2 6-1 victory in 68 minutes.

"Sonay put in a clinical performance so she makes it easy to follow," Boulter said.

"I stayed out there as much as possible and tried to focus on myself. I am super happy to be through and it is nice to have some British fans here.

"I am so pleased. This team qualified earlier in the year and we showed a lot of heart. The team deserves to be here and hopefully, we can go to the final. Hopefully, this is our time now."

Mourinho Back Where It All Started at Benfica

LISBON (Dispatches) - Jose Mourinho's managerial career took another intriguing twist when the Portuguese returned to Benfica on Thursday, almost exactly 25 years after he first cut his coaching teeth at the Lisbon giants.

The 62-year-old, who left Turkey's Fenerbahce last month, has signed a deal until the end of the 2026-27 season to return to the club where it all began.

"My promise is I will live for Benfica, live for my mission," Mourinho told reporters at the club's training ground in Seixal, near Lisbon.

"I'm the coach of one of the biggest clubs in the world... I'm not important, Benfica is important, Benfica fans are important. I'm here to serve.

"I feel a huge responsibility, but I feel more alive than ever. I want to win competitions... My desire is to fulfill my two-year contract successfully."



Mourinho left Fenerbahce by mutual consent two days after his Turkish side lost to Benfica in the Champions League playoffs.

But the former Chelsea, Real Madrid and Manchester United head coach will now get another crack at the competition he conquered twice, with Portugal's Porto in 2003-04 and Inter Milan in 2009-10.

Benfica President Rui Costa said he wanted a coach with a 'winning record' and described Mourinho as one of the most respected managers in the world.

Mourinho was approached after Benfica sacked Bruno Lage following their shock 3-2 home defeat by Qarabag in their Champions League group stage opener on Tuesday.

Mourinho, the self-proclaimed "Special One", will also face ghosts from his past in the group stage, with Benfica visiting Chelsea on September 30 before welcoming Real Madrid in their final group game on January 28.

Allen Tosses 3 TDs as Bills Take Charge Late to Beat Dolphins



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Josh Allen threw three touchdown passes, James Cook rushed for 108 yards and a score, and the Buffalo Bills took down the Miami Dolphins 31-21 Thursday night in Orchard Park, N.Y.

Allen completed 22 of 28 attempts for 213 yards, and his go-ahead strike to Khalil Shakir was the 200th regular-season TD pass of his career. Cook tied a franchise record by scoring a rushing touchdown for the seventh straight game dating to last season.

Terrel Bernard intercepted Tua Tagovailoa to end a late scoring threat and help Buffalo (3-0) stay undefeated. The Bills have won 13 of the past 14 regular-season meetings with the Dolphins.

Tagovailoa was 22-of-34 passing for 146 yards and two touchdowns before the crucial error. Miami fell to 0-3 for the first time since 2019.

Cook's 2-yard touchdown plunge made it 21-14 on the opening drive of the second half. The Bills had yet to punt at that point, but Miami finally forced punts on consecutive possessions before Tyreek Hill tied it with a 5-yard scoring grab with 12:18 left in the game.

The Dolphins would have forced a third straight punt, but Zach Sieler was penalized for roughing the punter and the Bills got a new set of downs. Shakir soon put Buffalo ahead on a 15-yard catch-and-run down the left sideline with 7:17 left to play.

Miami gained three first downs and reached the Bills' 21-yard line, but Tagovailoa forced a pass inside toward Jaylen Waddle and Bernard snagged it with three minutes to play. The Bills ran down the clock and Matt Prater tacked on a 48-yard field goal in the final seconds.

Salt Fires England to Win Over Ireland



DUBLIN (Dispatches) - Phil Salt blazed his way to 89 runs to help England chase down Ireland's imposing target of 197 and hand young Jacob Bethell a winning start on his debut as captain in the first Twenty20 international.

The 21-year-old became England's youngest captain in any format after winning the toss on a sunny day in Malahide, opting to bowl first on a pitch that proved a batsman's paradise.

Salt's fireworks display featured 10 boundaries and four sixes from just 46 balls, though he fell agonisingly short of what would have been a second consecutive century after his unbeaten 141 against South Africa last week.

"I enjoyed that, it's a pretty good wicket and a good ground to bat on when you get going. It was fun," Salt said. "There was no chat in the dressing room other than to bat, but it was a really good effort from Ireland, they did really well to get that total."

Earlier, Ireland had posted a challenging total thanks to a blistering 123-run partnership between Harry Tector (61 not out) and Lorcan Tucker (55) that came off just 68 deliveries, after openers Paul Stirling and Ross Adair had provided the platform.

Salt and Jos Buttler (28 off 10) then responded with a rapid 74-run opening stand, while Bethell chipped in with 24.

Although England lost six wickets, the tourists cruised home with 14 balls to spare to take a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

"It feels pretty special. Winning the first one is always nice," Bethell said.

"It was a good total. A ground like this was a bit of an unknown. Coming off we thought it was maybe a couple too many. Going into Friday and Sunday, we know the ground more, the dimensions and how to take wickets here."