

Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade, Mohammad Atabak, Inaugurated the Country's Largest Coal Mine Rescue and Relief Center in Tabas on Saturday as the Facility Is Designed to Respond to Mining Accidents

# IRAN NEWS

President Masoud Pezeshkian Congratulated Iran's National Greco-Roman Wrestling Team After It Secured the World Championship Title in Zagreb, Croatia, Marking Iran's First Triumph in the Discipline in More Than a Decade

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### Iran Will Suspend Cooperation With IAEA After Re-Imposition of Sanctions



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TEHRAN - Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) says Tehran will suspend its cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) after the United Nations Security Council voted not to permanently lift sanctions on Tehran.

In a statement on Saturday, Iran's top security body condemned the "ill-considered" moves by Britain, France, and Germany — known as the E3 — regarding the Islamic Republic's peaceful nuclear program.

On Friday, the 15-member Security Council failed to adopt a resolution that would have prevented the reimposition of UN sanctions on Iran after the E3 triggered the "snapback" mechanism, accusing Tehran of failing to comply with the 2015 deal, formally called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Iran rejected the illegitimate move by the European troika, pointing out that the United States had already pulled out of the deal and accusing the European trio of siding with illegal sanctions instead of honoring their own commitments.

In a Saturday session, chaired by President Masoud Pezeshkian, the SNSC addressed the latest situation in the region and the Israeli regime's adventurism, the statement said.

"Despite [Iranian] Foreign Ministry's cooperation with the Agency and the proposals presented to settle the [nuclear] issue, the actions of European countries have effectively suspended the path of cooperation with the Agency," the SNSC emphasized.

According to the statement, Iran's top security body tasked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with continuing its consultations within the framework of the SNSC decisions to safeguard the national interests.

### Armed Forces condemn Ecuador's Unlawful Blacklisting of IRGC



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - The General Staff of Iran's Armed Forces has strongly condemned the Ecuadorian government's "despicable and unlawful" decision to designate the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) as a terrorist organization.

In a statement on Saturday, the General Staff of the Armed Forces said that "the irrational, desperate, and illegal" decision of the Ecuadorian government is in line with serving the global hegemonic system led by the terrorist-sponsoring United States and the fake Zionist regime.

The anti-IRGC move could prepare the ground for the US to increase its acts of evil and insecurity in the world and embolden the child-killing Zionist regime to commit genocide in Gaza, Palestine, and even other countries in the region, it added.

It emphasized that the IRGC is directly involved in the fight against terrorist groups, which are proxies of the US and the Israeli regime, and defends the Iranian nation, land, and territorial integrity.

The Palestinian resistance movement Hamas and the Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah are fighting to defend the people of Palestine and Lebanon in the face of the Zionist occupiers, it noted.

## Any New Enemy Miscalculation Will Be Met With Another Lethal, Salutary Response

TEHRAN - The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) said in a statement marking the start of Sacred Defense Week that any new miscalculation or act of aggression by the enemy would be met by the Islamic Republic of Iran with decisive initiative on the battlefield and "another lethal and instructive response."

The IRGC's full statement says: Sacred Defense Week is, in truth, a celebration of popular resistance — a reminder of one of the brightest chapters in the history of the Islamic Revolution, a source of national pride and a generator of resistance on a global scale. The Sacred Defense was a period in which the Iranian nation, relying on faith, unity and divine leadership, thwarted a comprehensive, international aggression against Iran's territorial integrity, the Revolution and the Islamic system, and preserved the nation's dignity, independence and territorial integrity with honor.

The greatness of the Sacred Defense becomes clear when we reflect on the outcomes of wars that preceded it: beyond surrender, defeat, political and social humiliation and loss of territory, there were no comparable achievements to remember. In the 37 years since the Sacred Defense, inspired by its lessons and achievements and by the guidance of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution and Commander-in-Chief, Imam Khamenei, the country's armed forces have, on a scale comparable to world wars, reached an effective level of self-sufficiency, deterrence and combat readiness — manifestations of which were visible to all during the recent 12-day Sacred Defense.

As we commemorate the start of the forty-fifth year of the Sacred Defense, coinciding with this 12-day season of Sacred Defense that has showcased national unity and cohesion and the failure of Zionist and American aggressors to achieve their sinister aims against the Revolution and the Islamic system, we reassure the great nation of Iran that the powerful, popular IRGC, together with other armed forces, increases its combat capabilities, offensive and defensive power and strategic capacities every day.

The experiences of the first and second Sacred Defense have shown that "effective deterrence is the product of constant preparedness, creativity in designing strategy, tactics and operations against enemies, and the continuous development of advanced defensive and military technologies and systems in all arenas." Accordingly, the process of strengthening the armed forces in various fields will not stop, and should any new miscalculation or



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aggression occur by the enemy, the Islamic Republic of Iran will hold the initiative on the battlefield and will deliver another lethal and instructive response.

The recent imposed war experience demonstrated that even under the harshest conditions of economic sanctions and maximal, multi-layered pressures by enemies across various sectors, the country's armed forces — relying on domestic knowledge and capabilities — have achieved a level of self-sufficiency, maturity and deterrence in the military and defense sphere, supported by a strong command structure, enabling them to carry the fight to the advanced armies of the world while preserving the initiative and denying the enemy its goals.

The failure of enemies in two full-scale, intense, global wars against the Islamic Republic, and their shortcomings in other security, political, economic, psychological and media battles and attempts to create unrest and destabilize the country, demonstrate that the Iranian nation, with vigilance, insight and sacred unity, stood like an iron fortress against the enemy's combined warfare and foiled their plans. The Iranian people remain ready, if necessary, to teach new lessons to any aggressor or intervener.

As Imam Khomeini (may his soul rest in peace) said: "Every day of the Sacred Defense brought us a blessing." These blessings are now visible across fields — from the development of advanced defensive technologies to the enhancement of scientific and social capabilities — and remind us that the path of resistance and progress is the route to guaranteed independence and national security.

The IRGC, while honoring the memory, names and heroism of the martyrs, veterans and fighters of the eight-year and 12-day Sacred Defense, and thanking the wisdom and sacred unity of the brave Iranian people for confronting any threat or aggression from the enemy camp against the Islamic homeland, warns that any hostile error by the enemies — especially the false and criminal Zionist regime and the arrogant, deceitful U.S. ruling apparatus — against Iran's national interests, security or territorial integrity will be met with a decisive, crushing, timely and regret-inducing response by the armed forces and the country's steadfast defenders, particularly the "valiant Guardians of the Islamic Revolution." Comprehensive combat readiness, strategic planning, people-centered security, intelligence capability, ground, naval and air defense, missile and cyber capabilities and unwavering support for resistance and other field elements are at the highest level of preparedness for counteraction.

## Commemorating Sacred Defense Week With Emphasis on Resistance Culture

TEHRAN - The head of the Foundation for the Preservation of Sacred Defense and Resistance Values outlined plans for the upcoming Sacred Defense Week, emphasizing the continuation of a culture of sacrifice and resistance from the eight-year Iran-Iraq war to the 12-day confrontation.

Speaking at a briefing, Sardar Bahman Kargar detailed the schedule for the 45th anniversary of the Sacred Defense. He noted that 294 programs have been planned nationwide specifically for armed forces organizations, including 85 events by the Army, 90 by the Revolutionary Guards, 43 by the Police, 11 by the Ministry of Defense, and 65 organized independently by the Foundation.

In addition, 992 programs have been proposed across government institutions, encompassing 3,337 activities distributed among the three branches of government and various ministries. Overall, 1,286 events are expected to take place, comprising nearly 5,900 activities.

"The main goal this year is to present the values of sacrifice, martyrdom, and resistance in an engaging way to the younger generation," Sardar Kargar said. Programs will draw inspiration from both the eight-year Sacred Defense and the recent 12-day conflict, aiming to strengthen young people's historical and strategic awareness.

Key initiatives include live storytelling sessions with veterans and commanders, short dramatic reenactments, street theater involving students, and short films connecting images of the eight-year war with the 12-day battle. The Foundation is also responsible for documenting historical archives,



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with many materials set to be publicly released during the week.

Virtual visits to battlefields, enhanced by AI-guided narratives of martyrs, are planned nationwide. Social media campaigns and hashtag initiatives are also included, linking the legacy of the eight-year Sacred Defense with the 12-day confrontation. Educational workshops at universities and schools will examine strategic similarities and differences between the two conflicts, while student competitions will encourage reflection on the role of individuals in today's defense culture.

Highlighting the role of media, Sardar Kargar noted that modern conflicts are heavily influenced by information campaigns, and stressed the importance of multi-layered scientific, cultural, and media strategies to counter misinformation. The Foundation has also established centers for cultural monitoring,

public opinion research, and AI-driven social media analysis.

The week's observances, starting Monday, September 21, will include thematic daily focuses such as honoring veterans, promoting youth engagement, celebrating women and families, recognizing martyrs, and fostering national resilience. Ceremonial events will feature visits to martyrs' graves, school commemorations, museum tours, cultural and sports competitions, and special initiatives like "Resistance Day" school bells and Jihad camps in underprivileged areas.

### Iran Will Not Bow to Aggression



TEHRAN - President Masoud Pezeshkian declared that the country will never yield to excessive demands or attempts to block its progress, emphasizing national resilience and self-reliance in the face of obstacles.

Speaking at a ceremony honoring the 38 Iranian students who won medals in the 2025 International Science Olympiads, Pezeshkian praised the young talents as the country's "real wealth," surpassing natural resources like oil, gas, and gold. He highlighted that nations with limited natural resources have advanced by investing in skilled human capital and urged Iran to similarly leverage its young innovators to solve national challenges.

"By giving creative individuals the space and tools to act, we can overcome all obstacles," Pezeshkian said. He noted that while adversaries might try to destroy Iran's scientific achievements, it is the country's scientists and engineers — the builders of these achievements — who constitute the nation's true assets.

Pezeshkian underscored that a key focus of his administration over the past year has been transforming Iran's educational system to identify, nurture, and empower talented youth, enabling them to address societal challenges and secure the country's future. "Our educational system should cultivate awareness of problems and motivation to solve them," he said.

Reflecting on recent international tensions, including a decision by the UN Security Council, Pezeshkian stressed that determination and ingenuity will always find a way forward. "It is enough to believe that we can overcome obstacles. No enemy can block our path. We will never submit to excessive demands or bow our heads. Those with will and ability must be trusted, and change is possible," he said.

### Iran Warns It Will Terminate IAEA Deal If UN Sanctions Are Reimposed



TEHRAN (PressTV) - A senior Iranian diplomat has stated that the recent Tehran-IAEA agreement reached in Cairo will be terminated if the UN sanctions are reinstated or the so-called snapback mechanism is triggered.

Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi made the remarks in a phone conversation with IRIB News in response to Europe's move to reinstate the UN Security Council resolutions, despite Iran's maximum cooperation with the European Troika and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in recent days.

The UN Security Council on Friday voted against a draft resolution that would have permanently lifted sanctions linked to Iran's nuclear program.

Gharibabadi said that although the UN Security Council adopted a resolution challenging Resolution 2231 and the nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), by attempting to extend sanctions relief for Iran, the measure was ultimately defeated after failing to secure the necessary votes.

Nine members opposed the measure, while Russia, China, Pakistan, and Algeria backed it, and two abstained. As a result, the UN sanctions against Iran will be re-imposed by September 28 if no agreement is reached.



### Iran’s Steel Chain Exports Reach \$3b in Five Months

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The Iranian Steel Producers Association has released export statistics for the first five months of the Iranian calendar year 1404, showing that the country’s iron and steel exports rose by 17 percent, equivalent to 796,000 tons. The value of iron and steel chain exports increased by 10 percent during this period, reaching nearly \$3 billion. This comes despite a decline recorded in the first-quarter figures. Exports of raw materials in the steel production chain continued their upward trend. Iron ore concentrate exports rose by 80 percent compared to the same period last year, raising concerns among steelmakers.

### No Restrictions on Legal Foreign Workers in Iran’s Job Market



TEHRAN - The Deputy Minister for Entrepreneurship Development and Employment at the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labor, and Social Welfare announced that there are no restrictions on employers hiring authorized foreign workers in Iran, emphasizing that the ministry’s national plan is to ensure transparent participation of legal foreign nationals in the labor market.

Speaking on Saturday on the sidelines of the Mazandaran Provincial Planning Council meeting—attended by the Vice President for Women and Family Affairs in Sari—Seyed Malek Hosseini told IRNA that governors across the country have been informed: if foreign labor is needed due to a lack of Iranian volunteers or insufficient workforce, work permits for foreign nationals can be issued with the approval of the provincial security council.

He added that the ministry facilitates and issues work permits for foreign workers in the shortest possible time, reiterating that the central strategy is the transparent presence of authorized foreign nationals in the labor market.

Hosseini explained that before hiring foreign workers, employers must first register their job openings on the ministry’s employment platform. “If no Iranian applicants come forward, employers will be allowed to hire eligible foreign workers without difficulty,” he said.

The deputy minister stressed that foreign labor is not limited to workers from a single country, such as Afghanistan, but can include qualified workers from any country depending on the needs and skills required.

He underlined that the government’s approach is to prevent businesses from shutting down or suffering losses due to workforce shortages. “Therefore, whenever there are no or few Iranian job applicants in certain fields, employing authorized foreign nationals under the regulations will face no restrictions,” Hosseini affirmed.

## 60% of Iran’s Airline Fleet is in Private Hands



TEHRAN - The Deputy Head of Iran’s Civil Aviation Organization (CAO) has announced that nearly 60 percent of the country’s active airline fleet is now operated by the private sector, stressing that many of the high-profile claims about launching new carriers remain little more than promotional campaigns. He noted that despite earlier promises, including those surrounding “Dot One Airlines,” no aircraft have yet been delivered.

Seyed Hamidreza Sanaei, Deputy for Aviation Affairs at the CAO, told ILNA’s economic desk that the growing number of applications to establish airlines in Iran appears paradoxical at a time when existing operators consistently report financial losses due to the country’s economic difficulties and international sanctions.

“Global restrictions on Iran have created a unique ecosystem in which demand in some industries actually rises,” Sanaei said. “Unlike the rest of the world, we cannot directly purchase aircraft or rely on financing mechanisms such as low-interest loans or leasing agreements. As a result, anyone wishing to enter this sector must pay cash up front, which limits opportunities to only those who have the capital readily available.”

According to Sanaei, there are no companies or individuals in Iran currently able to purchase planes through standard leasing or lease-to-own arrangements. This has forced operators to pool smaller investments. At the same time, he argued, limited trust in the broader Iranian economy and poor experiences in stock and capital markets have driven some investors to aviation, where buying just two aircraft can provide an entry point. “The government also welcomes this model of investment,” he added.

Currently, about 60 percent of Iran’s operational fleet is in private hands. “These private airlines are the ones driving air transport in the country today. Without them, we would be left only with the state-owned carriers Iran Air and Aseman—both of which are already struggling,” Sanaei noted.

He admitted that many operators claim the sector is loss-making, but emphasized that aviation has never lacked investors or participants. “The real

losses become apparent once aircraft that were once profitable age and lose efficiency. Running an airline is a tough business, but it continues to attract players,” he said.

Iran currently has 27 active airlines, compared with 47 in Turkey. Yet Sanaei stressed that not all attempts to launch carriers are genuine. “Many who announce plans to establish airlines only go as far as publicity. Dot One Airlines, for instance, was introduced months ago with promises of 30 to 50 aircraft. To date, not a single plane has been imported, and they have only secured preliminary approval,” he explained.

Iranian law places few barriers on the number of airlines that can be established. According to Sanaei, a carrier can be licensed with just three aircraft—one owned outright and two leased. Moreover, under Article 44 of Iran’s constitution, no government body can block new license applications even if the market seems saturated. Sanaei also pointed to the practice of trading Air Operator Certificates (AOC) at inflated prices as a side effect of this regulatory environment.

Despite the media attention, Sanaei said the actual number of serious applications for new airlines is currently fewer than four. Looking ahead, the CAO is studying a shift toward the “air carrier” model used in the United States, where there are 170 such operators. These companies own fleets but do not engage in direct commercial sales. Instead, their aircraft capacity is marketed under the brands of established airlines through code-sharing and rebranding agreements. “This model would allow Iranian airlines to expand sales and operations without the overhead of acquiring entire fleets themselves,” Sanaei explained.

He concluded by emphasizing the need for careful management in an industry constrained by sanctions, high costs, and limited trust in financial institutions, while also acknowledging the role of private investment in keeping Iran’s aviation sector afloat.

### Israeli Attacks on Iran Put Workers’ Job Security at Risk



TEHRAN - The recent Israeli assault on the Islamic Republic of Iran has inflicted severe damage on workers and endangered their job security, a senior Iranian lawmaker warned during an international meeting in Geneva.

According to the Islamic Consultative Assembly’s news service, Mohammad Sargazi, head of the Legal and Judicial Commission of Iran’s Parliament, made the remarks during a meeting with Gilbert F. Hounbo, Director-General of the International Labour Organization (ILO). Sargazi traveled to Geneva to participate in the Global Human Rights Summit and used the opportunity to highlight the consequences of military aggression against Iran on the labor force.

Emphasizing the wide-ranging human and social impact of the attacks, Sargazi stated that during the most recent Israeli strikes, more than 1,100 Iranian citizens were killed, many of whom were workers. “These attacks have not only resulted in the massacre of civilians but also destroyed parts of the country’s workforce and reduced job opportunities,” he said.

The Iranian lawmaker underlined that the destruction extended beyond human casualties, reaching into the country’s economic and industrial infrastructure. He explained that the bombardments had disrupted normal work activities, caused significant damage to production facilities, and ultimately reduced employment opportunities across multiple sectors.

In addition, Sargazi pointed out that a combination of sanctions and military aggression had compounded the situation for Iran’s workforce. He argued that workers now face declining incomes, higher unemployment, and restricted access to essential services such as healthcare and education. “This has created particularly harsh conditions for vulnerable workers, deepening their economic and social hardships,” he added.

### Iran–Afghanistan Passenger Train Awaiting Border Solutions



TEHRAN - The managing director of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways announced that the launch of a passenger train service between Iran and Afghanistan is pending resolution of key border issues, while Tehran and Islamabad have reached an agreement to significantly boost rail freight.

Speaking to Iranian media, Jabar Ali Zakery, head of the national railway company and deputy minister of roads and urban development, said Afghanistan remains interested in establishing a passenger service with Iran. However, customs and passport procedures at border crossings must first be streamlined before the project can move forward.

Zakery also addressed the allocation of funds from oil barter agreements for railway development, noting that while permission has been granted by the Supreme Leader, these resources have not yet been utilized for rail projects.

On relations with Pakistan, he confirmed that Iran and Pakistan have agreed to increase rail freight volumes by five times. Currently, around 23,000 tons of goods pass along the rail link between the two countries. Under the new agreement, this figure is set to reach 100,000 tons in the coming months, significantly expanding regional trade and transit.

He acknowledged infrastructure challenges along the route. While Iran has built standard-gauge railways, the 94-kilometer stretch from Zahedan to Mirjaveh lies on Pakistani territory and connects to an aging line from Mirjaveh to Quetta. The outdated condition of this segment, combined with differing axle load capacities — 25 tons in Iran compared to 16 tons in Pakistan — has created a bottleneck. As a result, Iranian trains cannot directly enter Pakistan’s rail network, forcing freight transfers between wagons.

### Iran Eyes Expansion of Shrimp Exports to China



TEHRAN - The Commercial Counselor of the Islamic Republic of Iran in China has highlighted the potential of Iran’s shrimp production industry and announced plans to leverage the Iran Trade Center in Shanghai to facilitate shrimp exports to the vast Chinese market.

According to the Public Relations Office of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, Masoud Ostadhossein stated that the global shrimp market is one of the most dynamic sectors of aquaculture. With an annual output of 60,000 to 70,000 tons, Iran currently ranks 12th worldwide. While this figure is modest compared to major producers such as Ecuador and China, Iran holds a prominent position in the Middle East.

Ostadhossein emphasized the importance of tapping into Iran’s shrimp production capacity for exports to China. He noted that the world’s top five shrimp producers—Ecuador, China, India, Vietnam, and Indonesia—account for 74% of global production. Ecuador, with an output exceeding one million tons, remains the largest producer. However, with 28 years of experience in shrimp farming, Iran has the potential to increase its production to 130,000 tons.

He pointed to Iran’s competitive advantages in shrimp farming, including access to the warm waters of the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, the sunny climate of southern provinces, and the ability to cultivate shrimp for two to three cycles per year due to favorable weather conditions.

Highlighting China’s market potential, he said: “China is the world’s largest consumer of shrimp and, at the same time, one of the largest producers. Despite this, the country still has a pressing need for imports. In the first half of 2024, China imported 483,000 tons of shrimp, making it the world’s leading shrimp importer.”

He further explained that China encourages imports of high-quality shrimp through low tariffs. While Iran will need to compete with India and Vietnam, its competitive strengths include high product quality, antibiotic-free farming, favorable geographical proximity for faster shipping, and the possibility of building long-term strategic trade relations.

## Iraq Remains Iran’s Leading Tourism Partner, Says Minister

TEHRAN - Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts announced that despite ongoing regional and international crises, cooperation between Iran and Iraq in the fields of cultural heritage, tourism, and handicrafts continues to expand. He emphasized plans to boost land border crossings, ease pilgrimage, leisure, and health tourism, and strengthen strategic ties.

Speaking about his upcoming visit to Iraq in mid-October, Minister Seyed Reza Salehi Amiri said that deepening cooperation with Iraq in these sectors is a top priority. He added that during the visit and related events, the focus will be on activating bilateral agreements and strengthening institutional partnerships.

Highlighting the resilience of ties with Iraq despite global tensions, including the potential activation of the so-called “snapback” mechanism on sanctions, Salehi Amiri said: “Because of Iraq’s deep cultural, religious, economic, and political ties with our country, it is less affected by regional crises involving Iran. This makes reinforcing cooperation even more crucial.”

The minister referred to the upcoming Iran-Iraq Tourism Roadshow, scheduled for October 6–9 in Basra, Baghdad, and Karbala, as an important platform for promoting bilateral tourism. He noted that large numbers of Iraqi travelers already visit Iran for pilgrimage and leisure, while many Iranians regularly travel to Iraq, particularly for religious purposes. This, he said, provides considerable capacity for further growth.

In line with a new tourism approach, Iran plans to expand land



travel alongside air routes, making it easier for families, pilgrims, leisure travelers, and medical tourists to cross borders. While some crossings such as Shalamchek are already active, more routes are expected to open.

During his meeting with Iraq’s Minister of Tourism in Baghdad, Salehi Amiri said he will emphasize facilitating cross-border travel with private cars and expanding medical tourism. Iranian healthcare centers in provinces such as Khuzestan, Ilam, Kermanshah, West Azerbaijan, and East Azerbaijan are preparing to welcome more Iraqi patients.

Calling the Iraq roadshow a “major opportunity” to present Iran’s tourism potential to the large Iraqi market, Salehi Amiri underlined that Iran’s tourism strategy is to distribute opportunities fairly across all provinces, not concentrate them in only a few destinations.

Iraq remains the top source of foreign tourists to Iran, with around 3.5 million Iraqis visiting annually for pilgrimage and medical services. A similar number of Iranians, mostly pilgrims, travel to Iraq each year. In recent years, Iraqis have consistently accounted for more than half of all foreign arrivals in Iran.

Officials from both countries now hope that through joint initiatives such as tourism roadshows, land travel facilitation, and new tourism routes, the level of exchanges between Iranian and Iraqi travelers will continue to rise.

## Hamas Warns Hostages Face Fate of Missing Pilot

GAZA CITY (Dispatches) - Hamas' armed wing published "farewell" photographs of most of the remaining hostages in Gaza, warning that Israel's assault on Gaza City could endanger them.

With the images, it evoked the case of an Israeli pilot missing since 1986 after being shot down over Lebanon. Of the 251 people seized by Palestinian militants during their attack on Israel in October 2023, 47 remain in Gaza, including 25 the Israeli military says are dead.

"Due to (Prime Minister Benjamin) Netanyahu's obstinacy and (military chief Eyal) Zamir's submission.... a farewell photograph taken at the start of the operation in Gaza" City, the Brigades wrote alongside the photos.



## Israel Presses on With Gaza City Assault, at Least 60 Palestinians Killed



GAZA CITY (Dispatches) - Israel's military kept up its assault on Gaza City and the wider Gaza Strip on Saturday, dismantling underground shafts and booby-trapped structures in attacks that killed at least 60 Palestinians, according to Gazan health authorities.

The assault came as 10 countries, including Australia, Belgium, Britain and Canada, are scheduled to formally recognise an independent Palestinian state on Monday, ahead of the annual leaders' gathering at the U.N. General Assembly next week.

Israel's intensified military demolition campaign targeting high-rise buildings in Gaza City began this week alongside a ground assault.

Its forces, which control Gaza City's eastern suburbs, have been pounding the Sheikh Radwan and Tel Al-Hawa areas from where they would be positioned to advance on central and western parts of the city.

Most of Gaza City's population is sheltering in those parts.

The military estimates it has demolished up to 20 Gaza City tower blocks over the past two weeks. It also believes, according to Israeli media, that more than 500,000 people have left the city since the start of September.

The militant group Hamas, which controls Gaza, disputes this, saying just under 300,000 have left and around 900,000 remain, including Israeli hostages.

On messaging site Telegram, Hamas' military wing earlier released a montage-type image of Israeli hostages, warning that their lives were at risk due to Israel's military operation in Gaza City.

## Taiwan Determined to Defend Itself



TAIPEI (Dispatches) - Taiwan's message to the international community is that it is determined to defend itself and that people should not believe any claim it has surrendered in the event of invasion, President Lai Ching-te said on Saturday, capping a week of defense events.

Democratically-governed Taiwan has faced stepped up military pressure from China, which views the island as its own territory. Taiwan's government rejects those claims, saying only the island's people can decide their future.

Addressing a forum on Taiwan's efforts to boost its preparations for natural disaster or war, Lai referenced the government's new civil defence handbook, which was launched on Tuesday as part of efforts to get people ready for a possible Chinese attack.

The handbook gives vital information on how to stay safe, he said to an audience that included Western envoys to Taipei.

"More importantly, we tell everyone, 'In the event of a military invasion of Taiwan, any claim that the government has surrendered or that the nation has been defeated is false,'" Lai said, quoting one of the key messages in the handbook.

"As commander-in-chief of the armed forces of the Republic of China, I want to tell my fellow citizens and the international community that this is Taiwan's position," he said, using Taiwan's formal name.

"We are determined to defend freedom and democracy and a sustainable Taiwan."

## Cyberattack Snarls European Airports, Disruption Set to Continue



BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - A cyberattack at a provider of check-in and boarding systems disrupted operations on Saturday at several major European airports including London's Heathrow, the continent's busiest, causing flight delays and cancellations.

The disruption is the latest in a string of hacks targeting governments and companies across the world, hitting sectors from healthcare and defence to retail and autos. A recent breach at luxury carmaker Jaguar Land Rover brought its production to a halt.

The problems were centred on MUSE software made by Collins Aerospace, which provides systems for several airlines at airports globally, airports said.

RTX, Collins Aerospace's parent company, said it was aware of a "cyber-related disruption" to the software at selected airports, without naming them.

Heathrow Airport said it was among those affected. Brussels Airport and Berlin Airport were also affected, they said separately. Hours later, Dublin Airport said it was also facing minor impact from the issue, along with Cork Airport, Ireland's second biggest after Dublin.

"The impact is limited to electronic customer check-in and baggage drop and can be mitigated with manual check-in operations," RTX said in an emailed statement, adding that it was working to fix the issue as quickly as possible.

It did not give any information on who might be behind the attack.

At Heathrow, Berlin and Brussels, 29 flight departures and arrivals had been cancelled as of 1130 GMT, aviation data provider Cirium said. In total, 651 departures were scheduled from Heathrow, 228 from Brussels and 226 from Berlin yesterday.

Officials in Brussels said there had been four flight diversions, as well as "delays on most of the departing flights." Brussels Airport said it had asked airlines to cancel half of their scheduled departing flights today to avoid long queues and late cancellations, signalling that the disruption would continue through the weekend.

A European Commission spokesperson said there were currently no indications of a "widespread or severe attack" and that the origin of the incident was still under investigation.

These kinds of sweeping outages are typically the result either of ransomware attacks, where online extortionists paralyse corporate networks in the hope of payment, or deliberate digital sabotage.

Rafe Pilling, director of threat intelligence at cybersecurity company Sophos, said the impact of the incident highlighted "the fragile and interdependent nature of the digital ecosystem underpinning air travel."

"We've seen huge impact across retail and currently automotive in the UK this year," he said. "The threat is significant and very real."

Several breach-tracking websites have previously said that Collins Aerospace was hit by ransom-seeking hackers in 2023. The company did not return a message seeking comment on those allegations or details about yesterday's incident. Passengers with a flight scheduled for Saturday were advised by the affected airports to confirm their travel with airlines before heading to the airport.

Berlin Airport said on its website there were longer waiting times at check-in and it was working on a quick solution. Frankfurt Airport, Germany's largest, was not affected, a spokesman said.

"I arrived here at the airport station at about quarter past nine, and we haven't been told anything except that there was a technical fault," Kim Reisen told Reuters at Berlin Airport.

"Of course, online you can read that it was probably a cyberattack, and now we're waiting here to see what happens."

Another traveller, Siegfried Schwarz, said such an attack was "incomprehensible".

"I also find it inexplicable that, with today's technology, there's no way to defend yourself against something like that." EasyJet, among Europe's biggest airlines, said it was operating as normal and did not expect the issue to impact its flights for the rest of the day.

Ryanair RYA.I and British Airways owner IAG did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

US carrier Delta Air Lines said it expected minimal impact, adding it had implemented a workaround to minimise disruption. United Airlines said the issue was "causing minor departure delays," but it had not cancelled any flights.

British transport minister Heidi Alexander said she was receiving regular updates on the situation.

British and German cyber defence authorities said they were in touch with their respective airports over the matter.

## Zelensky to Meet Trump on Sidelines of UN assembly

KYIV (Dispatches) - Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Saturday he would meet U.S. counterpart Donald Trump on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly next week as Russia intensified deadly strikes across his country.

Russia carried out one of its largest aerial attacks, firing 40 missiles and some 580 drones at Ukraine in a nighttime barrage that killed at least three people and wounded dozens, Zelensky said.

A Ukrainian strike killed four people in Russia's southwestern Samara region, the local governor said, in one of the deadliest Ukrainian strikes since Russia launched its invasion in 2022.

Zelensky said he would discuss security guarantees for Ukraine and sanctions on Russia during the talks with Trump in New York.

Ukraine has insisted on Western-backed security guarantees to prevent future Russian attacks. Russian President Vladimir Putin has however warned that any Western troops in Ukraine would be unacceptable and legitimate targets.

A U.S.-led push for a quick end to the war has stalled and Russia effectively ruled out a Putin-Zelensky meeting -- something that Kyiv says is the only way towards peace.

"We expect sanctions if there is no meeting between the leaders or, for example, no ceasefire," Zelensky said in comments released by the Ukrainian presidency.

"We are ready for a meeting with Putin. I have spoken about this. Both bilateral and trilateral. He is not ready," Zelensky added.

In Russia's latest aerial assault, "a missile with cluster munitions directly struck an apartment building" in the central city of Dnipro, Zelensky said on social media.

He posted pictures of cars and a building on fire and rescuers carrying a person to safety amid rubble scattered nearby.



In the Dnipropetrovsk region, the strikes killed one person and wounded at least 30 people, with one man in a serious condition, regional governor Sergiy Lysak said.

The strikes come a day after three Russian fighter jets violated the airspace of Estonia -- a NATO member on the alliance's eastern flank -- an allegation Moscow denied.

But it triggered fears in the West of a dangerous new provocation from Moscow after Poland last week complained that around 20 Russian drones overflew its territory.

Zelensky repeated the call for "joint solutions" to shoot down drones over Ukraine "together with other countries".

Russia, which has been chipping away at Ukrainian territory for months,

announced on Saturday its troops had captured the village of Berezove in the Dnipropetrovsk region.

In the northeastern Kharkiv region, there were "intense actions" in the key area of Kupiansk, Zelensky said, referring to a rail hub Ukraine recaptured in a 2022 offensive.

In Russia, four people were killed "in an enemy drone attack last night," Samara governor Vyacheslav Fedorishchev said on social media.

He earlier said "fuel and energy facilities" were targeted, without specifying the damage.

Ukrainian General Staff said "strategic objects of the Russian aggressor were struck", adding its forces "inflicted damage" on the Saratov Oil Refinery and struck the Novokuybyshevsk Oil Refinery in the Samara region.

A source in Ukraine's SBU security agency said Ukrainian drone strikes "have stopped the operation of a number of oil pumping stations in Russia". "It is this infrastructure that brings oil-dollar superprofits to the Russian budget, which fuel the war against Ukraine. Work to block these cash flows will continue," the source said.

The Russian defense ministry said its air defense alert systems "intercepted and destroyed" 149 Ukrainian drones overnight, including 27 over the Saratov region and 15 over the Samara region.

Three rounds of direct talks between Russia and Ukraine in Istanbul this year only produced prisoner exchanges. Russia has maintained hardline demands, including that Ukraine fully cedes the eastern Donbas region -- parts of which it still controls.

Kyiv has rejected territorial concessions and wants European troops to be deployed to Ukraine as a peacekeeping force, something Moscow considers unacceptable.

## Trump Warns Venezuela to Take Back Prisoners

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - U.S. President Donald Trump on Saturday warned the Venezuelan government that it must accept the return of all prisoners whom he said Venezuela had forced into the U.S., or else "the price you pay will be incalculable."

Trump issued the threat in a post on his Truth Social platform. He did not elaborate on which prisoners he was referring to, except to say that some were "people from mental institutions." He also did not specify what action he might take.

Meanwhile Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro offered to engage in direct talks with the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump days after the first U.S. strike on a boat from the South American country that Trump says was carrying drug traffickers.

In a letter to Trump that was viewed by Reuters, Maduro rejected U.S. claims that Venezuela played a big role in drug trafficking, noting that just 5% of drugs produced in Colombia are shipped through Venezuela - of which he said 70% were neutralized and destroyed by Venezuelan authorities.



"President, I hope that together we can defeat the falsehoods that have sullied our relationship, which must be historic and peaceful," Maduro wrote in the letter. "These and other issues will always be open for a direct and frank conversation with your special envoy (Richard Grenell) to overcome media noise and fake news."

He noted that Grenell had helped quickly resolve earlier allegations that Venezuela was refusing to take back migrants, adding, "To date, this channel has functioned flawlessly."

Twice-weekly deportation flights moving illegal migrants to Venezuela from the U.S. have continued uninterrupted despite the U.S. strikes, sources familiar with the matter told Reuters.

Maduro's letter was dated September 6, four days after a U.S. strike on a vessel that the Trump administration has claimed, without evidence, was carrying drug traffickers. The strike killed 11 people who Trump said were members of the Tren de Aragua gang and engaged in drug trafficking.

The White House had no immediate comment.



## Man United Edge Chelsea, Liverpool Stay Perfect

LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester United beat Chelsea 2-1 in a chaotic match at Old Trafford to earn vital breathing space for beleaguered manager Ruben Amorim as Liverpool stayed perfect in the Premier League.

But Graham Potter's future as West Ham boss appears bleak after a fourth defeat in five matches left the club firmly rooted in the relegation zone.

All eyes were on a rain-lashed Old Trafford for the early evening kick-off, with Amorim in desperate need of a win after a terrible start to the season.

The home side were given a huge helping hand when Chelsea goalkeeper Robert Sanchez was sent off in the fifth minute of a stormy encounter.

Chelsea boss Enzo Maresca made frantic personnel changes to compensate for the loss of Sanchez but the match immediately became an exercise in attack versus defence.

United captain Bruno Fernandes made the breakthrough in the 14th minute, prodding home from close range in his 200th Premier League game.

Casemiro doubled the lead before the Brazilian midfielder was shown a second yellow card on the stroke of half-time for tugging back Andrey Santos.

Trevoh Chalobah brought Chelsea back into the match with a bullet header 10 minutes from time.

But United survived some nervy moments to record just their second win of the season, lifting them into ninth place as Chelsea suffered their first league loss this term.

"Every win especially in this moment is important, against a great opponent," Amorim said.

"We started the game in the right way, really aggressive. The red card helped us dominate the game but we were already there.

"We scored two goals and then we tried to complicate our game again. It's always complicated

with us. It should have been different, this game."

In the early kick-off, Arne Slot's Liverpool were two up against Everton inside half an hour through Ryan Gravenberch and Hugo Ekitike and seemingly coasting to a fifth straight league win.

But they had to withstand an impressive fightback from their Merseyside rivals to secure a tense 2-1 victory.

The champions took the lead in the 10th minute when Gravenberch collected Mohamed Salah's lifted cross before hooking a rasping shot over Everton goalkeeper Jordan Pickford.

France international Ekitike finished off a silky move in the 29th minute, with Gravenberch turning provider.

Liverpool have not made things easy for themselves this season, relying on a series of late winners, and Everton made them sweat when Idrissa Gueye pulled a goal back in the 58th minute.

But Liverpool held on to make it six victories out of six in all competitions as they hunt down a record 21st English title.

"We needed mentality today in a different fashion than the few times before," said Slot, who left Florian Wirtz and Alexander Isak — costing a combined £225 million (\$303 million) — on the bench.

"You can see how well we can play when we are fresh in the first 45 minutes. We ran out of energy a bit but we didn't run out of mentality."

West Ham boss Potter admitted that his side's 2-1 loss to Crystal Palace was a "tough moment" as he fights to keep his job.

Asked whether he felt he still had the support of the Hammers' hierarchy, he replied: "I've no reason to think not.

## De Minaur, Cerundolo Propel Team World to Laver Cup Lead Over Europe

LONDON (Dispatches) - Europe led 3-1 after day one, but with victories worth two points on Saturday, Team World pulled level on Australian De Minaur's 6-1, 6-4 win over world number three Alexander Zverev of Germany.

Argentina's Cerundolo then out-last-d Denmark's Holger Rune 6-3, 7-6 (7/5) to put the World side captained by Andre Agassi ahead 5-3.

World number eight De Minaur, a late replacement for injured Frances Tiafoe, raced through his opening set and held firm as third-ranked Zverev kept it close in the second.

"I knew it was only going to get harder," said De Minaur, who claimed just his third victory over Zverev in 11 encounters.

All three of those wins have come in team events, the first two at the ATP Cup and United Cup.

"I think it brings a different type of energy," De Minaur said. "I enjoy when there's a bench, teammates I'm playing for."

De Minaur used his speed and a deft touch at the net. A dominant force on hard courts this season, he said he needed a wide variety on the unusually slow Laver Cup surface.



"These courts and conditions are so slow and the ball bounces so low, so ultimately against someone like (Zverev), I'm not going to be able to hit through him," De Minaur said. "So I've got to bring variety, I've got to bring my core craft, I've got to not only use my legs to recover balls but also try to take time away."

Cerundolo pocketed the first set against Rune with one break of serve.

Rune recovered an early break in the second set and fended off three break points in the fifth game as the second set evolved into a dogfight.

But the Dane couldn't covert his own four break chances in the sixth game and they battled to the tiebreaker, where Cerundolo gave himself a match point with a service winner and fired a forehand winner to seal the victory.

World number one Carlos Alcaraz headlined the night session trying to get Europe back on level terms when he took on fifth-ranked American Taylor Fritz.

Rune was then due to team with Casper Ruud in doubles against De Minaur and American Alex Michelsen.

## U.S. Overcome Britain to Book Italy Final in Billie Jean King Cup

SHENZHEN (Dispatches) - The United States stayed on course to capture a record-extending 19th trophy in the Billie Jean King Cup by battling to a 2-0 win over Britain in the second semi-final, with reigning champions Italy awaiting them in the title clash.

The first meeting between the two countries in the elite women's team competition for more than 33 years was settled by Jessica Pegula, who handed the Americans an unassailable lead after beating British number two Katie Boulter 3-6 6-4 6-2.

"It's the first time I'll be in a final," said Pegula.

"I think everybody in the team, it'll be our first time so it'll be a new experience for us, but there's nobody else that I would rather share it with.

"We have an awesome team and awesome coaches. We're excited to be back and hopefully we'll take the title."



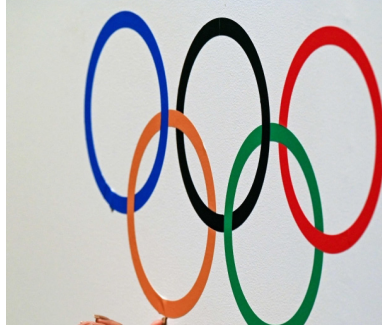
World number seven Pegula took control of a see-sawing clash by grabbing a crucial break in the fifth game of the decider and held firm from there to send her country through with a booming forehand shot that Boulter returned into the net on matchpoint.

Emma Navarro earlier put the U.S. ahead 1-0 when the world number 18 fought back from a set down in another contest full of momentum shifts to beat Sonay Kartal 3-6 6-4 6-3 in front of a loud crowd at the Shenzhen Bay Sports Centre Arena.

"I had a ton of support from the ladies in my team. I feel a ton of pride playing for my country, it means the world to me to have the American flag on my chest," Navarro said.

"I was hearing you guys cheering me on. Britain (fans) were pretty loud in this match, so I needed all the help I could get."

## IOC to Again Allow Russians Under Neutral Flag at 2026 Winter Olympics



MILAN (Dispatches) - The International Olympic Committee yesterday announced that athletes from Russia will once more be allowed to compete at the 2026 Winter Olympics under a neutral banner if they meet strict conditions.

"The Executive Board will take the exact same approach that was done in Paris," said IOC president Kirsty Coventry, referring to last year's Olympics where Russian athletes could only take part under a neutral flag and in individual events.

Those athletes were also required to undergo checks to prove they did not actively support the war in Ukraine or have any links with the army.

They will not be allowed to take part in the opening ceremony for the Milan-Cortina Games, which will be held from February 6-22, nor will their achievements be recognised in the medals table.

The sanctions were introduced in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The same measures also still apply to athletes from Belarus, an ally of Moscow.

The decision at a meeting in Milan on Friday to stick with the same policy was "expected", Russia's Sports Minister Mikhail Degtyarev said on the Telegram social media channel.

## Red-Flag Frenzy in Baku, Verstappen Tip-Toes to Pole



BAKU (Dispatches) - Max Verstappen tip-toed through the hazards of a wild qualifying session featuring six red-flag stoppages to claim pole position for the Azerbaijan Grand Prix.

As series leader Oscar Piastri crashed and his McLaren team-mate and title rival Lando Norris struggled for outright speed on his final lap, Red Bull's four-time champion made the most of treacherous damp conditions to end a near-crazy two-hour session on top.

The Dutchman clocked a best lap in one minute and 41.117 seconds to finish 0.478 seconds ahead of Williams' Carlos Sainz and half a second clear of Racing Bulls' rookie Liam Lawson, who secured his best qualifying result.

Sainz had made the most of his opportunity in Q3 to go quickest before Ferrari's Charles Leclerc crashed to bring a sixth red-flag stoppage that wrecked his hopes of a fifth straight Baku pole — and deliver a mixed up grid.

Mercedes' under-pressure rookie Kimi Antonelli and George Russell were fourth and fifth ahead of Yuki Tsunoda in the second Red Bull and Norris, who qualified seventh.

Racing Bulls' second rookie Isack Hadjar was eighth ahead of Piastri and Leclerc with two-time champion Fernando Alonso taking 11th for Aston Martin and seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton 12th for Ferrari.

It was Verstappen's first pole in Baku, his sixth of the season and the 46th of his career.

"It was difficult to get a lap together, with all the red flags," said Verstappen.

"In the final lap, you just have to send it. I wasn't even on the best tyres. So, I am happy with the weekend!"

The chaos began in gusty conditions with light drizzle expected and rain threatening for today's race.

"We nailed it today by being on the right tyres at the right time," said Sainz. "So tomorrow I will try to stick it on the podium."

As Q1 began, Piastri was in the pits for a new front wing while his rivals hurried for an early banker lap, but as he started his first lap, a red flag halted the action when Alex Albon hit the barriers, leaving the Australian in danger of elimination.