

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei Says the United Nations Must Urgently Put an End to the Israeli Regime's Ongoing Genocide in the Gaza Strip

IRAN NEWS

The Iranian Economy Contracted Slightly in the First Quarter of the Calendar Year That Started in Late March, According to Figures by the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI)

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Iran Warns Snapback Sanctions Will Create New Conditions



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran warns that any move by Britain, France, and Germany to reinstate UN sanctions through the "snapback mechanism" would create "new conditions" that nullify its recent agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) signed in Cairo.

Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi made the remark on Monday upon arrival in New York at the head of a delegation for the 80th annual session of the United Nations General Assembly.

He said the agreement on cooperation with the IAEA was signed in the context of the US-Israeli acts of aggression in June against Iran, and the sides will face new conditions if the three European signatories to the 2015 nuclear deal trigger the snapback mechanism.

"In the press conference following the agreement with the IAEA, I emphasized that if the snapback is ultimately implemented, the agreement will also lose its validity," the top Iranian diplomat said.

Araqchi said that he will be meeting with most of his European counterparts in New York. "It is time for them to choose between cooperation and confrontation."

"We hope for a diplomatic solution, but rest assured, if that fails, Iran is prepared to take necessary measures," he added.

On September 9, the Iranian foreign minister and IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi reached an agreement on practical modalities to resume cooperation after a meeting in Cairo.

Tehran, Moscow to Sign Deals on Building New Nuclear Power Plants



TEHRAN (PressTV) - The head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran says Tehran and Moscow will sign agreements, during his visit to Russia, on the construction of more nuclear power plants in the country.

Mohammad Eslami arrived in the Russian capital on Monday at the head of a delegation to hold meetings with the country's officials and take part in events, which will be held on the occasion of the World Atomic Week in Moscow from September 25 to 29.

"The contract between the governments of the two countries envisages the construction of eight nuclear power plants by Russia, four of which are in [Iranian city of] Bushehr," Eslami told reporters upon his arrival.

According to the contract, he added, Iran had to notify the Russian side about the construction of the remaining power plants.

The Iranian nuclear chief noted that the negotiations and necessary studies for the implementation of the second part of the contract have been conducted and the location for the construction of the power plants has been chosen, prepared, and equipped.

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK



TEHRAN - President Masoud Pezeshkian met with Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei before travelling to New York to attend the 80th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) session.

Pezeshkian briefed the Leader on the planning done for his trip during the meeting on Monday evening.

Ayatollah Khamenei offered prayers and wished success for the president, and provided some remarks and recommendations.

World leaders are gathering in New York, where they are expected to address the General Assembly during the annual General Debate on September 23-29.

The theme of this year's debate, "Better together: 80 years and more for peace, development and human rights," reflects the anniversary of the UN's foundation and underscores the call for renewed global commitment to multilateralism, solidarity, and shared action for people and planet.

In an X post on Sunday, Mehdi Sanaei, the Iranian president's political advisor, said Pezeshkian is set to deliver his speech at the UNGA on Wednesday morning local time.

Meanwhile the President of Iran described the UN General Assembly as an exceptional opportunity to hear the statements of world leaders and present Iran's own positions.

Speaking before his departure to New York to attend and speak at the 80th session of the UN General Assembly, Masoud Pezeshkian said on Tuesday, that participation in the General Assembly provides a valuable and unique platform for expressing the viewpoints of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as representatives and officials from all countries around the world are present.

Referring to the theme of the 80th UN General Assembly, "Unity and Progress for All,"

Pezeshkian criticized global powers for pursuing unilateralism and totalitarian approaches. He stated that powerful countries often use their tools ruthlessly to harm other nations and people.

"As a human being, the noblest of creation, regardless of religion or faith, witnessing the death of children in Gaza from starvation, lack of medical care, and the bombings by Israel is unimaginable," he said, noting that Israel continues to receive support from countries that claim to be civilized, powerful, and champions of democracy and human rights.

Pezeshkian added that while these countries speak of unity, their idea of convergence means enforcing their will even if it results in death. True unity, he argued, means that everyone—regardless of ethnicity, race, or preference—has the right to live, provided they respect the rights of others.

He emphasized that during his trip, he will present Iran's positions based on beliefs in peace, security, justice, and humanity, and will meet with leaders of various countries, Iranian expatriates, and experts for dialogue.

The President also stressed that pursuing truth and justice should not lead to conflict, but mutual understanding requires dialogue and cooperation. "With those who seek to impose power, intimidate, or act maliciously, dialogue is impossible," he said.

Pezeshkian concluded that the UN General Assembly provides an opportunity to express Iran's positions, promote discussion, and align with the principles of justice, territorial integrity, and the right to life for all. "It is not only Israel that has the right to security; this must be guaranteed for all people worldwide. We hope God helps us to clearly express our realities and beliefs," he added.

President Dismisses Divisive Bids Targeting Iran-Azerbaijan Ties

TEHRAN - President Masoud Pezeshkian has dismissed attempts aimed at sowing discord and disunity between Muslim nations, especially Iran and Azerbaijan.

The chief executive made the remarks during a meeting with the visiting Azerbaijani Deputy Prime Minister Shahin Mustafayev in Tehran on Monday.

The former pointed to the underway hostile efforts, which seek to obstruct the formation of productive relations in the region, asserting, "Given the determination and willpower of the leaders of the Muslim world, such attempts by ill-wishers are doomed to fail."

The Islamic Republic's foreign policy approach, he added, has historically accorded priority to strengthening of relations and consolidation of unity and brotherhood with Muslim countries.

The president went on to make specific reference to the Islamic Republic's relations with Azerbaijan, describing the ties as brotherly, rooted in deep cultural and religious commonality, and inseparable.

"We are keen to see these relations expand across all political, economic, and cultural spheres, and there are no obstacles to the development of [our] bilateral cooperation and interaction."

For his part, the Azerbaijani official conveyed President Ilham Aliyev's warm greetings, noting how the Azeri head of state attached "great importance" to expansion of the bilateral relations.

Mustafayev hailed Pezeshkian's visit to Azerbaijan in April for opening a "new chapter" in the ties, besides presenting a detailed report on the achievements that were made towards



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

enhancement of the relations during the trip. Baku, the official noted, was pursuing implementation of the memoranda of understanding signed throughout the visit "with seriousness and commitment."

Pezeshkian traveled to the Azeri capital at the head of a senior delegation in April. The visit featured a joint statement covering the various aspects of the trip, as well as the signing of MoUs on political consultation, transportation, cultural exchanges, healthcare cooperation, media, and investment.

In August, Azerbaijan and neighboring Armenia signed a United States-mediated "peace deal" that led to concerns about American interventionism.

Officials from both Baku and Yerevan, however, assured Tehran afterwards about their countries' determination to preserve

their neighborly relations with the Islamic Republic and prevent the ties from being adversely affected by third parties.

The Azeri official, meanwhile, roundly dismissed media rumors about Baku's "cooperation" with the Israeli regime and the United States during their unprovoked war on Iran in June.

"Azerbaijan, based on its adherence to [the principle of] good neighborliness and respect for the territorial integrity of its neighbors, has never allowed and will never allow its territory or airspace to be used by any party towards waging aggression against the Islamic Republic," he said.

"We consider any rumor or claim in this regard to be false and categorically reject it."

The Ten Manifestations of a Staunch Defense

During the 12-day confrontation between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Zionist regime, many of those tied to the West expected that Israel, using its military power, U.S. and European support, and the help of Arab countries, would be able to quickly deliver a heavy blow to Iran. But the result was exactly the opposite: not only did this regime fail to achieve its main objective, but it also encountered multiple limitations and weaknesses.

First, the reason for this failure was Iran's extensive defensive, offensive, and combat capabilities. For years Iran has invested in missile, drone, and defense networks, enabling it to repel many attacks and in turn deliver painful and irreparable responses.

Second, Iran is not confined to its own borders. The presence and support of allied groups in the region caused Israel to come under pressure from multiple fronts, making it impossible to fully focus on Iran.

Third, Iran's vast geography and the dispersion of its infrastructure prevented the execution of any decisive and short-term operation. In reality, the enemy could not strike any vital point that would cause a rapid collapse.

Fourth, Israel's internal situation was extremely fragile. Political divisions, social protests, and economic crisis tied the hands of this regime's leaders and deprived them of the ability to mobilize fully.

Fifth, the resistance of the Iranian people and national spirit were strengthened during these days. Instead of creating fear and retreat, the attacks led to unity and an increased spirit of resistance.

Sixth, Israel could not enter into an all-out war, because it feared a strong reaction from global powers and the disruption of regional balance. The U.S., Europe, and the Arabs clearly did not want a wider war to ignite.

Seventh, with a smart deterrence policy, Iran demonstrated that no attack would go unanswered. This shifted the cost-benefit equation to Israel's disadvantage—since relying on its expensive war machine was breaking the back of this regime.

Eighth, within such a short time frame, no military operation can "bring a country with Iran's vast capacities to its knees." Global experiences have also shown that blitz wars against countries with strategic depth are doomed to failure. It became clear that the Zionist regime and its allies acted hastily and delusionally in designing plans to divide and overthrow Iran's system.

Ninth, during this period the world, inflamed by the Zionist regime's crimes in Gaza and Palestine, shifted its support toward Iran. Through demonstrations, gatherings, and rallies under the flags of Iran and Palestine, the global news environment was pushed toward triumphant analyses in Iran's favor.

Tenth, the method of employing the variety and application of missiles and drones, in coordination between the Army and the IRGC, together with the media coverage of such operations—especially through real-time broadcasting on news networks—displayed hope and superiority. This served as proof of the national foundation and authority that emerged from those decisions.

In the end, this 12-day battle, rather than yielding achievements for Israel and its allies, revealed its weaknesses. Once again it proved that with the continuation of the Islamic Revolution and religious vitality in the region and the world, the balance of power in the region has completely shifted in favor of Iran.

Iraq Insists It Needs Turkmen Gas Supplies Via Iran



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iraq has rejected reports it has abandoned a deal to import natural gas from Turkmenistan via Iran because of U.S. objections, saying it desperately needs Turkmen gas supplies to respond to rising demand for fuel in its power plants.

The spokesman of Iraq's Ministry of Electricity said on Monday that gas imports from Turkmenistan would be the best available option for the Arab country to keep its power plants running in the next summer when electricity demand hits its peak.

Ahmad Musa said that Iraq is still trying to persuade the U.S. to approve the deal and make it exempt from its sanctions on Iran.

The comments came days after the Reuters news agency claimed in a report that Iraq had failed to secure U.S. approval to import more than 5 billion cubic meters per year of Turkmenistan's gas via Iran under a swap deal signed between the three countries last year.



Iran’s Economic Growth Contracts by 0.1% in Q1 With Oil

TEHRAN (ILNA) - Iran’s economy recorded a 0.1% contraction in GDP including oil and a 0.4% contraction without oil in the first quarter of the Iranian year 1404 (March-June 2025), according to the latest quarterly national accounts released by the Statistical Center of Iran.

At constant prices of 1400, Iran’s GDP with oil stood at 24,270 trillion rials, compared with 24,302 trillion rials in the same period last year. Without oil, GDP was 18,064 trillion rials, down from 18,143 trillion rials a year earlier.

Iran Faces Intensifying Drought as Autumn Rains Fail to Arrive



TEHRAN - The head of Iran’s Water Research Institute has warned that autumn rainfall will fall short of normal levels, with even sharper declines expected in northern regions of the country.

According to IRNA, the situation is already dire: Iran’s dams—its main sources of surface water—are only 36 percent full, while precipitation in the current water year (from early 2024 to September 2025) has dropped by 40 percent compared to previous years. This marks the fifth consecutive dry water year, a trend further confirmed by recent forecasts from the national meteorological agency pointing to a dry autumn.

Mohammadreza Kavianpour, head of the Water Research Institute, stressed that the severity of reduced rainfall and prolonged drought cannot be resolved with short-term one- or two-year plans.

Kavianpour explained that rainfall levels, already low in recent years, are expected to decline further this autumn, particularly in the west and north—traditionally the wettest parts of the country.

He noted that the Ministry of Energy routinely adjusts water management plans based on forecasts from the Meteorological Organization and the Water Research Institute. However, he emphasized that “the decline in rainfall and lengthening of drought periods are so serious that they cannot be addressed through short-term measures.”

Kavianpour urged a shift in consumption patterns across agriculture, industry, and households. With studies indicating that drought conditions may persist for decades, he argued that efficiency, reduced water use, and production of high-value crops that ensure food security must be prioritized. Personal water use and irrigation for green spaces also need stricter management, he added.

\$100m in Customs Tariff Reductions Through Eurasian Free Trade Agreement



TEHRAN - The International Affairs Advisor at Iran’s Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) announced that if Iran’s exports and imports with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) reach at least last year’s levels, the recently implemented Eurasian Free Trade Agreement will generate around \$100 million in economic benefits for traders and businesses.

According to the TPO, a meeting titled “Opportunities to Enter the Russian Market by Showcasing Export Capabilities in the Construction Industry” was held to highlight the advantages of the free trade deal with the EAEU. The agreement provides new opportunities for Iranian exports—particularly in building materials—given Russia’s strong demand in this sector.

During the session, TPO’s International Affairs Advisor, Mirhadi Seyyedi, emphasized the vast potential of the Eurasian market. He said that following the implementation of the Eurasian Free Trade Agreement on May 14, promising prospects have opened up, especially for construction materials exports.

Seyyedi described the agreement as a “bridge” that took eight years to build, stressing that now it is up to Iranian traders and businesses to cross it. He explained that the deal eliminates tariff barriers, reducing tariffs on 87% of HS codes to zero for trade with EAEU members.

“If Iranian exports to Eurasia reach last year’s level, traders will save about \$50 million in customs tariffs this year,” Seyyedi said. “Likewise, the same applies to imports, meaning a total of about \$100 million in economic benefits for Iranian businesses.” He further underlined that this is a permanent agreement and urged Iranian companies to adopt a long-term, strategic outlook toward the Eurasian market.

Iran Seeks to Make China Its Top Tourism Partner



TEHRAN - Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Seyed Reza Salehi Amiri, said that Tehran aims to make China its primary partner in the tourism sector, just as Beijing is already Iran’s top trade partner.

Speaking at the 21st Strategic Council meeting of the ministry, held at its Fajr Hall, Salehi Amiri noted that around 160 million Chinese tourists travel abroad each year, a figure expected to rise to 200 million by 2030. “We must secure our share of this market,” he said, adding that negotiations between the two countries are planned to achieve this goal.

“The objective is for the Chinese to accept being our first tourism partner. The foreign minister is pursuing this matter, and I believe that within the next year new relations in tourism will be established between Iran and China,” the minister stated.

Salehi Amiri emphasized that attracting foreign tourists is essential to sustaining 1.6 million jobs in the sector and keeping 22,000 accommodation centers, 6,000 travel agencies, 15,000 tour guides, and 3,000 ecotourism lodges active.

He outlined Iran’s tourism priorities, starting with Central Asia, the Caucasus, and neighboring Gulf countries, particularly Iraq. The next targets, he added, are major Islamic nations such as Egypt and Indonesia.

According to the minister, Iran hosted 6.2 million foreign tourists in 2023 and 7.39 million in 2024. Although the ministry aimed for 25 percent growth this year, the 12-day conflict in June-July caused a temporary decline. “The situation is now being rebuilt,” he said.

Under Iran’s Seventh Development Plan, the country seeks to attract 15 million foreign tourists, requiring annual growth of about 19.5 percent. Salehi Amiri said strategic meetings are focused on identifying challenges and finding ways to overcome them, including proposals from the parliament’s Research Center to revive tourism after the recent downturn.

Salehi Amiri also highlighted the role of the Iranian diaspora, calling them “our greatest asset” with the potential to drive social, cultural, and economic transformation.

“All Iranians, wherever they live, are attached to their homeland. If they feel secure, they will return,” he said. He stressed that building trust is essential, noting that the Foreign Ministry has established a special office to facilitate engagement with Iranians abroad.

At the same meeting, Babak Negahdari, head of the Iranian Parliament’s Research Center, stated that the center is connected to more than 17,000 information sources and is among the world’s leading research institutions in terms of output—second only to the United States. He said 98 percent of its reports are publicly available.

Iran Highlights Opportunities in Russia’s Construction Market



TEHRAN - The Iranian Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) has emphasized new opportunities for the country’s construction industry in Russia, following the implementation of a free trade agreement (FTA) with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). The agreement, which came into effect on May 14, removes tariff barriers and paves the way for stronger exports of Iranian goods, particularly building materials.

During a seminar titled “Opportunities for Entering the Russian Market Through Export Capacities in the Construction Industry,” TPO officials underlined the potential benefits of the agreement for Iranian businesses.

According to Mirhadi Seyyedi, the TPO’s International Affairs Advisor, the Eurasian market offers significant prospects for Iranian exporters. He described the agreement as a “bridge built over eight years” and urged business leaders to make use of it. “This FTA eliminates tariff barriers, reducing tariffs to zero for 87 percent of HS codes. If Iran’s exports to Eurasia match last year’s volume, exporters will save around \$50 million in customs tariffs this year. On the import side, the same value of goods will also be exempt from tariffs. This effectively translates into an economic benefit of nearly \$100 million for traders,” Seyyedi explained.

He stressed that the FTA is permanent, calling on Iranian businesses to adopt a long-term and strategic view toward the Eurasian market.

Mahmoud Bazari, Director of the TPO’s Project for Reviving and Launching Commodity Offices, also spoke at the event, identifying Russia as a particularly promising market within

Negahdari explained that a Strategic Council has been formed within the center to enhance the impact of its reports, prepare operational packages for the government, and submit oversight packages to parliamentary commissions.

He also announced a memorandum of understanding with the Chinese Academy to expand research cooperation, pledging full support for the Ministry of Cultural Heritage in its work.

Meanwhile later in another meeting Salehi Amiri announced that the government has approved the establishment of a museum dedicated to the “12-Day War.” He said artifacts from that conflict will be displayed alongside those of the Sacred Defense at the Holy Defense and Islamic Revolution Museum in Tehran.

Speaking at a ceremony honoring veterans of the Iran-Iraq war, Seyed Reza Salehi Amiri congratulated the nation on the occasion and paid tribute to the martyrs of both the Sacred Defense and the 12-Day War. He added that the proposal to register the IRIB Glass Building—damaged during Israeli attacks—has been submitted to the government and was approved.

“War was the guarantor of our revolution, and its commanders were the standard-bearers of independence, dignity, and national honor. We must never forget this spiritual legacy,” Salehi Amiri said.

He stressed that Iran’s confrontation with Saddam Hussein was not merely a conflict with a neighboring adversary. “From within the Islamic Revolution, a discourse of resistance and jihad emerged. The West and the world of that time understood that Iran was not a land to covet. Today, that discourse—war, jihad, knowledge, humanity, and love of Iran—continues. The younger generation should take pride in living in a country that has never surrendered to the enemy. In both the Sacred Defense and the 12-Day War, the Iranian people and the spirit of resistance led to victory and honor,” he said.

The minister announced that following the 12-Day War, 31 festivals will be held across Iran’s 31 provinces in cooperation with cultural institutions. Their goal, he said, is to showcase Iran’s ancient and beautiful heritage to younger generations and deepen their attachment to the nation.

Salehi Amiri added that while wars are often seen globally as divisive, in Iran they became a source of unity. “The Sacred Defense and the 12-Day War united our people. I ask the media to encourage war commanders to speak about the discourse of war, its spiritual motivations, and its virtues. During the conflict, our fighters competed in selflessness and sacrifice—messages that must be passed on to the youth.”

Eurasia. He noted that the post-Ukraine war environment has opened new avenues for Iranian products in Russia. However, he emphasized the importance of meeting Russian standards and regulations.

“Understanding Russia’s construction and infrastructure networks is essential,” Bazari said, adding that Iran’s trade counselors in Russia are actively gathering and sharing relevant information with Iranian companies.

Bazari acknowledged past challenges in exporting agricultural and food products to Russia but said recent bilateral protocols have eased many restrictions. He highlighted the dynamic nature of Russia’s construction sector, which increasingly aligns with international standards. “Before exporting, businesses must carefully assess regulatory and infrastructure requirements. Entering Russia’s construction market can also influence the perception of Iranian products across other EAEU member states,” he added.

Sohrab Salimi, Director-General of the TPO’s Office of Knowledge-Based Products and Engineering Services, presented the capacities of Iran’s technical and engineering sector in Eurasia, encouraging economic players to pursue opportunities in this field.

Meanwhile, Alireza Jafari, Secretary of the Secretariat for the Third Eurasia International Trade Exhibition and Head of the Iran Trade Center in Russia, outlined further market opportunities for Iranian construction industry stakeholders in Russia.

President Calls for Giving Manufacturers Time to Improve Production Processes



TEHRAN - President Masoud Pezeshkian has stressed the need to provide domestic manufacturers with sufficient time to improve their production processes and bring their products in line with international standards.

Speaking on Monday, at the 118th meeting of the Supreme National Standards Council, attended by ministers, senior judiciary officials, and members of parliament, the president underlined that “standardization is not about punishment.” Instead, he said, it is about preventing waste and inefficiency. “If a person consumes more than what is available, or uses tools that waste energy, this goes beyond the defined standards and amounts to extravagance,” he explained.

Pezeshkian emphasized that government intervention must be adapted to prevailing conditions. He said the administration stands ready to remove barriers facing factories and support them in upgrading production. “Successful implementation of laws requires engagement with process owners,” he noted, stressing that regulations or directives should only be issued after hearing feedback from stakeholders. “Otherwise, such directives lack enforceability.”

On the issue of exports, the president highlighted the importance of quality and certification. He said obtaining standard marks is a prerequisite for sustainable exports, since international markets demand safe and high-quality goods.

Pezeshkian also called for closer cooperation between lawmakers, government, and producers in drafting regulations. “Consultation ensures a common language and prevents obstacles in implementation, ultimately boosting productivity,” he said.

Proposal to Launch Iran’s Export Capabilities Exhibition in Amman



TEHRAN - In a meeting with Khalil Al-Haj Toufic, President of the Jordan Chamber of Commerce, held on the sidelines of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Development board session in Amman, Samad Hassanzadeh, President of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture, stressed the need for closer ties between Iranian and Jordanian traders. He announced Iran’s readiness, with the support of the Jordan Chamber of Commerce, to organize a specialized exhibition showcasing Iran’s production and export capacities in Amman.

Hassanzadeh highlighted the importance of expanding economic and trade cooperation among Islamic countries, pointing to the vast resources, national wealth, natural advantages, and potential in sectors such as industry, agriculture, engineering services, and modern technologies. He said these capacities present a major opportunity for shared progress and development in the Islamic world.

He underlined that chambers of commerce across Islamic nations bear a significant responsibility to advise governments, international organizations, and Islamic cooperation institutions to ensure that the private sector and economic actors receive the necessary support as the driving force of economic growth in the Islamic world.

Addressing the Jordanian Chamber president as the host of the Amman board meeting, Hassanzadeh expressed hope that representatives of Islamic countries’ chambers of commerce will adopt a unified policy to remove unlawful trade and customs barriers and to strengthen financial and banking mechanisms.

North Korea to Strengthen Ties With China More Vigorously

SEOUL (Dispatches) - North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said he would promote relations with China “more vigorously,” state media KCNA reported on Tuesday.

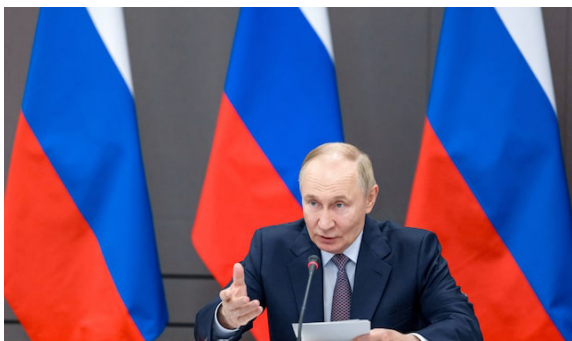
Kim’s comments were made in a reply to Chinese President Xi Jinping’s congratulatory message on North Korea’s founding anniversary, KCNA said.

Kim also said he could “feel well enough” China’s support during his visit earlier this month to Beijing where he watched a military parade alongside Xi, KCNA added.

Xi stood side-by-side with Kim during the World War Two anniversary event in Beijing and held a separate bilateral meeting, their first in six years.



Putin Offers Trump One-Year Extension to Nuclear Weapons Treaty



MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday offered to voluntarily maintain the limits on deployed strategic nuclear weapons set in the 2010 New START accord after it expires in February if the U.S. agreed to do the same.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said Putin’s proposal sounded “pretty good,” but she added that U.S. President Donald Trump would address the offer himself.

The agreement is the last U.S.-Russia strategic nuclear arms control accord. It allowed for only one five-year extension, which Putin and former U.S. President Joe Biden agreed to implement in 2021.

The offer, which comes as Ukraine tries to convince Trump to impose harsher sanctions on Russia, was made public by Putin at a meeting of his Security Council.

“Russia is prepared to continue adhering to the central numerical limits under the New START Treaty for one year after February 5, 2026,” he said.

“Subsequently, based on an analysis of the situation, we will make a decision on whether to maintain these voluntary, self-imposed restrictions.”

Trump in July said he would like to maintain the limits on deployed strategic nuclear weapons set in the 2010 New START pact after it expires on February 5.

Russia and the United States have by far the biggest nuclear arsenals in the world, and many experts fear that ending the limits could fuel an arms race as both sides boost strategic weapons deployments.



Macron Defies Israel, Recognizes Palestinian State at Landmark UN summit

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - French President Emmanuel Macron officially recognised a Palestinian state at the United Nations, spurring a wave of Western moves to defy Israel in making the landmark — if symbolic — move.

Macron, speaking at a summit that Israel and its chief backer the United States did not attend, called for an end to the war in Gaza.

“The time for peace has come, as we are just moments away from no longer being able to seize it,” Macron said in an address in the General Assembly.

“The time has come to free the 48 hostages held by Hamas. The time has come to stop the war, the bombings of Gaza, the massacres and the displacement.”

Macron, however, said France would not open an embassy to a Palestinian state until a ceasefire is in place in Gaza and all hostages released.

The Palestinian Authority hailed France’s “historic and courageous” decision and its delegation gave him a standing ovation.

Australia, Britain, Canada and Portugal also recognised a Palestinian state, piling pressure on Israel as it intensifies its war in Gaza.

Monaco, Belgium, Andorra, Malta and Luxembourg then all recognised from the General Assembly podium, bringing the total number of recognitions to three-quarters of UN membership.

Spain, Ireland and Norway already recognised a Palestinian state in May, and Sweden did so in 2014.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed not to allow a Palestinian state and far-right members of his cabinet have threatened to annex the West Bank to make statehood impossible.

Israel’s UN ambassador Danny Danon said Israel “will take action.”

“They are not promoting peace. They are supporting terrorism,” he said.

US President Donald Trump “believes (recognising) is a reward to Hamas,” White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told AFP ahead of the summit: “We should not feel intimidated by the risk of retaliation.”

The war was unleashed when Hamas attacked Israel from Gaza on October 7, 2023, bringing a relentless counterattack by Israel.

An independent state would be centered around the Palestinian Authority, which exerts limited control in the West Bank, and is the rival of Gaza-based Hamas.

Israel has sought to minimize the distinction between the two, and Washington, in an unusual step, refused to allow Palestinian Authority president Mahmud Abbas to attend.

The 89-year-old veteran Palestinian leader, forced to address the summit virtually, called on Hamas to surrender its weapons to his Palestinian Authority.

“We also condemn the killing and detention of civilians, including Hamas actions on October 7, 2023,” he said.

France co-hosted the summit with Saudi Arabia, which has flirted with normalisation with Israel, a top goal for Netanyahu.

The Saudi foreign minister, Prince Faisal bin Farhan, told the summit that concluded late yesterday that all countries should follow suit and recognise a Palestinian state.

Germany, Italy and Japan, while all critical of Israel’s actions in Gaza, are among major US allies that declined to recognise a Palestinian state.

“A negotiated two-state solution is the path that can allow Israelis and Palestinians to live in peace, security and dignity,” German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul said.

Britain, which backed a Jewish homeland in 1917, said it would back off recognising a Palestinian state if Israel agreed to a Gaza ceasefire.

Instead, Israel launched a massive new campaign aimed at seizing Gaza City.

But recognition, while historic, is unlikely to change facts on the ground.

“Unless backed up by concrete measures, recognising Palestine as a state risks becoming a distraction from the reality, which is an accelerating erasure of Palestinian life in their homeland,” said the International Crisis Group’s Israel-Palestine project director, Max Rodenbeck.

Pro-Palestinian Protesters Fight Police in Milan, Italian Ports Blocked



MILAN (Dispatches) - Protesters against Israel’s Gaza offensive clashed with police in Milan and other Italian cities on Monday as tens of thousands marched in Rome and dockworkers blocked ports in solidarity with Palestinians.

Police in riot gear fired tear gas to try to disperse protesters at the central station in Milan, a Reuters witness reported. The protesters, some dressed in black and others waving the Palestinian flag, used a pole to smash a window at the station and hurled a chair at police during the clashes.

More than 10 people were arrested in Milan and around 60 police officers suffered bruising or more serious injuries, Italy’s ANSA news agency reported.

The protests were part of a nationwide strike called by trade unions against the mass killings of Palestinians in Gaza.

At the port in Venice, police deployed water cannon to help break up demonstrations. Workers also staged protests at ports in the cities of Genoa, Livorno and Trieste.

The dockworkers say they are seeking to prevent Italy from being used as a staging post for the transfer of arms and other supplies to Israel used in its war against Hamas in Gaza.

Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni condemned the scenes in Milan, Italy’s financial capital and co-host of the Winter Olympics next February.

West, Russia Clash at UN After Incidents in NATO Air Space

UNITED NATIONS (Dispatches) - NATO allies accused Russia at the United Nations on Monday of violating the alliance’s air space in Estonia and Poland -- actions that Britain said risked triggering an armed conflict.

Confronting Russia at a meeting of the United Nations Security Council, British Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper said: “Your reckless actions risk direct armed confrontation between NATO and Russia. Our alliance is defensive but be under no illusion we stand ready to defend NATO’s skies and NATO’s territory.”

“If we need to confront planes operating in NATO space without permission then we will do so,” she said.

Estonia said on Friday that three Russian MiG-31 fighter jets had entered Estonian airspace without permission and stayed for a total of 12 minutes before they were forced to withdraw in an episode that Western officials said was designed to test NATO’s readiness and resolve.

The Security Council convened on Monday to discuss the issue. NATO consultations were due to take place on Tuesday. The incident occurred just over a week after more than 20 Russian drones entered Polish airspace,



prompting NATO jets to shoot some of them down.

Cooper’s comments were echoed by other Western ministers in the Security Council, including EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas, who suggested the multiple incidents could not be considered an accident.

Ukraine’s foreign minister said such actions by Moscow should be met robustly and renewed an offer by Kyiv to integrate its air defenses into those of neighbouring Western countries to counter the Russian front.

“A strong response means that a threat should not be escorted, neither for 12 minutes, nor for one minute. It should be neutralized,” said the minister, Andrii Sybiha.

The United States’ new envoy to the U.N., Michael Waltz, making his first appearance since taking his post, said Moscow needed to defuse tensions, not exacerbate them.

“I want to take this first opportunity to repeat and to emphasize the United States and our allies will defend every inch of NATO territory,” Waltz said.

Russia’s deputy ambassador to the UN, Dmitry Polyanskiy, said there was no evidence backing their claims and accused European powers of levying baseless accusations.

“We won’t be partaking in this theater of the absurd,” he said. “When you decide that you want to engage in a serious

discussion about European security, about the fate of our common continent, about how to make this continent prosperous and secure for everybody, we’ll be ready.”

White House Rejects Maduro’s Call for Talks

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The White House on Monday dismissed Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro’s appeal for direct talks with Donald Trump, as Washington’s show of force in the Caribbean drew both warnings of ‘undeclared war’ from Caracas and support from key opposition leaders hoping to hasten Maduro’s fall.

The White House on Monday dismissed a request by Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro for talks with counterpart Donald Trump to de-escalate tensions between the two arch-foes.

The brush-off came as two Venezuelan opposition leaders backed a US naval build-up near the South American country, calling it critical for the restoration of democracy.

Trump has dispatched eight warships and a submarine to the southern Caribbean in an anti-drug operation Venezuela fears could be the preamble to an invasion.

U.S. forces have destroyed at least three suspected Venezuelan drug boats in recent weeks, killing over a dozen people.

On Sunday, the Venezuelan government released a letter that leftist Maduro had



sent to Trump.

In the missive, Maduro -- whose July 2024 reelection was rejected as fraudulent by Venezuela’s opposition and much of the international community -- rejected as “absolutely false” US allegations that he leads a drug cartel and urged Trump to “keep the peace.”

Reacting on Monday, White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said Maduro’s letter contained “a lot of lies.”

She added the Trump administration’s position on Venezuela “has not changed” and it viewed the regime as “illegitimate.”

The U.S. deployment is the biggest in the Caribbean in years.

Maduro has accused Trump -- who during his first term tried unsuccessfully to expedite the Venezuelan president’s ouster -- of trying to affect regime change.

His defense minister, Vladimir Padrino Lopez, last week accused the United States of waging “an undeclared war” in the Caribbean, underlining that occupants of alleged drug boats were “executed without the right to a defense.”



PARIS (Dispatches) - Paris Saint-Germain winger Ousmane Dembele won the Ballon d'Or yesterday as a reward for his starring role in the club's Champions League triumph last season, while Spain's Aitana Bonmati claimed the women's prize for the third year in a row.

Dembele, 28, edged out Barcelona sensation Lamine Yamal to succeed Manchester City and Spain midfielder Rodri, who took the trophy in 2024, as the winner of the most prestigious individual prize in football — an award that for many years had been dominated by Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo.

Former Borussia Dortmund and Barcelona forward Dembele, who was part of the France team that won the World Cup in 2018, scored 35 goals in all competitions as PSG claimed a French league and cup double as well as winning the Champions League.

With Dembele converted into a centre-forward following Kylian Mbappe's departure for Real Madrid, PSG went on to hammer Inter Milan 5-0 in the final in Munich to win the European Cup for the first time in their history.

"I really don't have the words. It was an incredible season with PSG," an emotional Dembele said on the stage at the Theatre du Chatelet in central Paris.

He added that his boss Luis Enrique — who won the award for club coach of the year — had been "like a father" to him.

"It is an individual trophy but it was really the collective that won it," insisted Dembele, who was one of nine members of the triumphant PSG team from last season to be nominated for the prize.

"The Ballon d'Or has not really been an objective for me in my career but I worked hard for the team to win the Champions League."

The 18-year-old Yamal, who was a teammate of Dembele's at Barcelona when he first broke through in 2023, did earlier win the Kopa Trophy for the best player aged under 21 — the second year running he has taken that award.

Dembele was at the ceremony to pick up his prize while his PSG teammates were losing 1-0 in a Ligue 1 game in Marseille at the same time — that match had been scheduled for Sunday but was put back 24 hours due to bad weather in the south of France.

Barcelona and Spain midfielder Bonmati won the women's prize by edging out her international teammate Mariona Caldentey, with whom she played in the Spain side who were beaten on penalties by England in the Women's Euro 2025 final.

Eagles Return Blocked FG for TD in Wild Finish to Win Over Rams

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Jordan Davis blocked Joshua Karty's game-winning field-goal try as time expired and returned it for a touchdown as the Philadelphia Eagles rallied for a 33-26 victory against the visiting Los Angeles Rams.

It was the second consecutive blocked field goal for the Eagles (3-0), who overcame a sluggish first half and erased a 19-point, second-half deficit to stun the Rams (2-1). Jalen Carter also blocked a Karty field goal with 8:46 left.

Philadelphia quarterback Jalen Hurts scored a rushing touchdown on the opening drive and threw his first three touchdown passes of the season in the second half to erase what was a 26-7 Los Angeles lead less than a minute into the second half. A.J. Brown caught six passes for 109 yards and a TD.

Rams QB Matthew Stafford passed for 196 yards with two touchdowns and an interception. Puka Nacua caught 11 balls for 112 yards and Kyren Williams rushed for 94 yards with a touchdown catch. Stafford's third-quarter TD pass to Williams after a Jared Verse strip-sack was the 382nd of his career, moving him past Matt Ryan (381) for ninth place in NFL history.

Bears 31, Cowboys 14

Caleb Williams threw four touchdown passes and Chicago Bears forced three Dallas Cowboys turnovers in the fourth quarter as the host Bears picked up head coach Ben Johnson's his first career win with 31-14 victory.

Cowboys quarterback Dak Prescott completed 31 of 40 passes for 251 yards and a touchdown but was relieved by backup Joe Milton late in the fourth quarter. Prescott threw two interceptions



and Milton one to end Dallas' final three drives of the game.

Williams' first five completions went for 135 yards and two touchdowns, a 35-yarder to Rome Odunze and a 65-yard bomb down the left sideline to rookie receiver Luther Burden III on a flea-flicker to stake the Bears (1-2) to a 14-3 lead. The Cowboys (1-2) lost receiver CeeDee Lamb for the game to an ankle injury in the first half.

Chase McLaughlin's fifth field goal was a 36-yarder with no time remaining to give Tampa Bay Buccaneers a 29-27 victory over visiting New York Jets, which had taken the lead with 1:49 left on a blocked field goal returned 50 yards for a touchdown by Will McDonald IV.

McLaughlin's winning kick came after the Buccaneers blew a 17-point, fourth-quarter lead. Baker Mayfield completed 19 of 29 passes for 233 yards, including a touchdown pass to Mike Evans, who left during the fourth quarter with a hamstring injury. With

the victory, Tampa Bay is off to its first 3-0 start since 2005.

Tyrod Taylor started in place of Justin Fields for the Jets and was 26-of-36 passing for 197 yards, two touchdowns and one interception. He also rushed for a team-best 48 yards. Garrett Wilson had 10 catches for 84 yards and a touchdown for New York, which is 0-3 for the first time since 2021.

Andre Szmyt kicked a 55-yard field goal at the gun to give host Cleveland Browns a stunning comeback 13-10 victory over Green Bay Packers to snap an eight-game losing streak which dated back to last season.

The Browns (1-2) scored 13 points over the final 3:38, including a pair of field goals from Szmyt.

Rookie Quinshon Judkins ran for 94 yards on 18 carries, scoring the tying touchdown with 3:01 left after Grant Delpit returned an interception inside the 5-yard line. The Browns sacked Green Bay QB Jordan Love five times.

Love threw for 183 yards, one touchdown and one interception on 18-of-25 passing. His 3-yard scoring pass to John FitzPatrick with 3:23 remaining in the third put the Packers (2-1) ahead 10-0.

Justin Herbert passed for 300 yards and Cameron Dicker made a 43-yard field goal as time expired to give Los Angeles Chargers a 23-20 win over Denver Broncos in Inglewood, Calif.

Keenan Allen had seven receptions for 65 yards with a touchdown and Quentin Johnston had six catches for 89 yards while Dicker made all three of his field goals. The Chargers opened the season with victories over all three of their AFC West rivals. It's their first 3-0 start since 2002.

Record Number of Countries Win Medals at World Championships



LONDON (Dispatches) - A record number of nations won medals at the World Athletics Championships in Tokyo, with a total of 53 countries making it on to the medal table at the 20th edition of the event which concluded on Sunday.

The previous record of 46 was set in Osaka in 2007 and equalled in Budapest two years ago, with Samoa, Saint Lucia and Uruguay winning their first ever World Championships medals at this year's competition.

There was one world record set in Tokyo, with Sweden's Mondo Duplantis breaking the pole vault world record for the 14th time with a leap of 6.30 metres.

American sprinter Melissa Jefferson-Wooden completed a sprint treble in the 100m, 200m and 4x100m relay while two other athletes won double gold in individual events, Kenyan distance runner Beatrice Chebet and Spanish race walker Maria Perez.

"What we have seen over the past nine days here in Tokyo is an indelible and compelling celebration of human sporting endeavour," World Athletics President Sebastian Coe said.

"Tokyo has set the stage for some of our sport's most extraordinary performances."

Napoli Survive Pisa Scare



NAPLES (Dispatches) - Napoli maintained their lead at the top of Serie A with Monday's 3-2 win over promoted Pisa which continued the champions' perfect start to their domestic campaign.

Lorenzo Lucca's first goal for his new club, thumped home in the 82nd minute, ended up being the winning goal in a narrow win for Napoli who have 12 points from four league matches.

That put Napoli two points ahead of second-placed Juventus following their great rivals' draw at Verona on Saturday, and three ahead of Roma and AC Milan who complete the top four in Italy.

Napoli head to the San Siro next weekend to take on Milan who were to have an Italian Cup fixture against Lecce last night.

"Obviously we're happy for four wins out of four in a league where there are six or seven teams at a really good level," said Conte to Sky.

"We've got a lot of new players who have come here and have the Scudetto (for winning last season's title) on their shirt. And that carries pressure."

Conte has a reputation for struggling with the rhythm of playing European and domestic football and it was an underwhelming performance from Napoli in the wake of Thursday night's 2-0 defeat at Manchester City in the Champions League.

"The teams that play European football every year are settled in, we're not. That's why playing every three days can create physical and mental stress," added Conte.

"We need to have patience."

Lucca's late strike saved Antonio Conte's team from a draw which looked on the cards when M'Bala Nzola calmly levelled the scores from the penalty spot in the 60 minute.

Nzola's strike cancelled out Billy Gilmour's first ever goal in professional club football, deflected home in the 39th minute at the Stadio Diego Armando Maradona.

Leonardo Spinazzola scored his first goal since February out of nowhere in the 73rd minute with a long-range drive, and then Lucca lashed home to give Napoli the points.

Musetti Rolls Into Chengdu Final

LONDON (Dispatches) - Top-seeded Lorenzo Musetti of Italy will seek his third ATP Tour title in the Chengdu Open final against Chilean qualifier Alejandro Tabilo.

Musetti crushed Kazakhstan's Alexander Shevchenko 6-3, 6-1 and Tabilo eliminated No. 4 seed Brandon Nakashima 6-4, 7-6 (0) in Monday's semifinals in China.

Musetti won 92 percent (24 of 26) of the points on his first serve and never faced a break point. Tabilo trailed 6-5 in the second set before leveling the match and sweeping the tiebreaker. He struck 11 aces and likewise never faced a break point.

No. 3 seed Alexander Bublik fired 19 aces and joined elite company by defeating Chinese home favorite Wu Yibing 6-3, 6-3 in the semifinals.

Bublik became the fourth man to reach finals on all three surfaces this season, joining Carlos Alcaraz, Jannik Sinner and



Alexander Zverev. He finished Monday's 61-minute victory with 28 winners and just six unforced errors.

With wins this season on clay (Gstaad, Kitzbuhel) and grass (Halle), Bublik will try to add a hardcourt title against French qualifier Valentin Royer. Royer saved both break points and defeated fourth-seeded countryman Corentin Moutet 6-3, 6-2 to reach his first tour-level final.

Meanwhile a tenacious Iga Swiatek battled back from the brink of defeat to capture the Korea Open title, surviving a fright in the first set before taming Russian Ekaterina Alexandrova 1-6 7-6(3) 7-5.

Swiatek, who cruised through her first three matches in Seoul, looked out of sorts in the opening two sets, committing several double faults and sending many shots flying long and wide.