

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei Has Congratulated Iran's Greco-Roman Wrestling Team for Securing the World Championship Title at the 2025 World Wrestling Championships in Croatia

IRAN NEWS

President Masoud Pezeshkian Sent Separate Messages of Congratulations to the President, Prime Minister, and the People of the Republic of Armenia on the Occasion of Their Country's Independence Day

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2 DOMESTIC



Iran Ranked Sixth Globally in Space Industry

> SEE PAGE 2

3 INTERNATIONAL

Western Powers Recognize Palestinian State in Historic Break With Decades of Policy

> SEE PAGE 3



Snapback Mechanism Will Not Affect Production



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The Deputy for Planning, Innovation, and Smart Systems at the Ministry of Industry, Mine, and Trade (MIMT) stated that the snapback mechanism has largely created psychological effects in the market but will not impact actual production.

Speaking to reporters on Monday, Saeed Shojaei emphasized that all necessary operational preparations regarding transportation and warehouse inventories have been made, and efforts to facilitate and expedite the foreign currency allocation process are ongoing.

He added that the Ministry, in cooperation with the private sector, has developed various scenarios to ensure that essential household goods will be supplied under any circumstances while maintaining production lines.

Referring to the extension of the support package for affected units, Shojaei explained that a working group under the government's Infrastructure Commission has been established within the Ministry. "By next week, the items eligible for extension will be finalized and submitted to the Cabinet as part of the Commission's resolution. Any unit that suffers damage will be covered under this directive," he said.

Shojaei highlighted that industrial electricity rates have increased by 320% over the past four years. According to the Law on Removing Barriers to Electricity Industry Development, the Ministry of Energy, in collaboration with the MIMT and under the supervision of a parliamentary representative, updates industrial electricity tariffs annually.

Implementation of Operational Mechanisms for Iran-China 25-Year Agreement Underway



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Hadi Mohammadpour, a member of the Iranian Parliament's Economic Commission, emphasized that the operational aspects of the 25-year strategic cooperation agreement with China are currently being implemented, reinforcing the longstanding economic and political ties between the two countries.

In an interview with ILNA, Mohammadpour highlighted that China has historically been a key trading and political partner for Iran. He stated that, in line with the country's leadership directives and broader national policies, the 25-year agreement with China was carefully designed, and its operational pathways are now being put into practice.

"The international community recognizes China as one of the world's economic superpowers, and Iran has successfully established multiple memoranda of understanding and contracts with China," Mohammadpour explained. "Given the current global economic landscape, enhancing economic relations with China is crucial for Iran. Without strengthening these ties, efforts to increase national revenues may not be fully realized."

Iran Expects China to Implement Global Governance Initiative in Practice



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - President Masoud Pezeshkian says the Islamic Republic expects China to do more to implement its "valuable" initiative regarding global governance to promote multilateralism and counter unilateralism.

Pezeshkian made the remarks in a recent interview with China Central Television (CCTV) during his visit to Beijing, where he attended the 25th Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit. He expressed admiration for Chinese President Xi Jinping's vision of global governance, which emphasizes equal interaction among nations, regardless of their size or wealth.

He said Iran and China should adhere to "what is today referred to as governance or the proposals that have been previously raised, including global security, global peace, global development, and global civilization," and implement them in practice.

China, which is leading such a policy, is expected to prepare the ground for achieving its lofty goals, he added.

Otherwise, the United States and Israeli regime will continue with their adventurism in the region, bombing any opposition and assassinating political leaders, ordinary people, and scientists, the Iranian president warned.

He noted that historical relations between Iran and China date back several thousand years, and the two countries have very ancient and deep-rooted civilization.

Pezeshkian pointed to double standards in dealing with countries in the world and said, "The Zionist regime violates every law and takes any action, but no one stops it."

However, he emphasized, if another country wants to take an action, all international organizations and European countries will immediately accuse that state of disregarding regulations and human rights.

He said the Israeli regime blocks the access of people of a land to water, food, and bread before the eyes of the world, allowing them to die from weakness.

Pezeshkian criticized countries that claim to play a global role and defend human rights in the United Nations for supporting the Israeli regime instead of preventing its crimes, saying, "This double standard is absolutely unacceptable."

He noted that the Chinese president's global governance proposal is one of the fundamental principles of adherence to the law, which should not be double-edged.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the president said Iran did not and does not have any issues with the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and inspections of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

However, the IAEA released false information and inaccurate reports about Iran under pressure from European countries and their lobbies, which led to the issuance of unreal resolutions and a tarnished image of the Islamic Republic, Pezeshkian explained.

"This is while the highest level of inspections in the world has been applied to Iran's nuclear activities, and this volume of inspections has been unprecedented," he emphasized.

He said Iran has allowed the IAEA to inspect all the necessary facilities, and the Agency's inspectors have conducted inspections multiple times.

"Therefore, there is no reason for facilities that are run in accordance with the views of the International Atomic Energy Agency and are under its supervision to be bombed. This action is completely against international law," he added.

He reiterated the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear activities and emphasized that Tehran has no plan to act in violation of the IAEA frameworks.

Holy Defense, the Foundation of Independence

On September 22, 1980, the Ba'athist Iraqi army under the command of Saddam Hussein launched a full-scale invasion of Iranian territory, beginning a war that lasted eight years. This military aggression, supported extensively by global powers, was met with the unparalleled resistance of the Iranian people. Sacred Defense Week, commemorated annually in Iran from September 22 to September 29, is a reminder of the eight years of heroic defense by the Iranian nation against the military aggression of the Ba'athist regime of Iraq. This period, recognized as the longest conventional war of the 20th century, stands as a symbol of resistance, sacrifice, national unity, and the independence of Iranians following the victory of the glorious Islamic Revolution.



Bye Hamid Reza Naghashian

The Sacred Defense was not merely a military war, but also a scene of national solidarity, faith, and the determination of a nation to preserve its territorial integrity and revolutionary values. The massive presence of people on the battlefronts—including youth, students, workers, and farmers—demonstrated the depth and breadth of this resistance.

The perseverance of the Iranian people throughout the eight years of the Sacred Defense brought numerous achievements: Preserving the territorial integrity of the country; Increasing defensive capability and military self-sufficiency; Strengthening the spirit of independence and self-reliance; Promoting national unity and social cohesion; and consolidating the regional position of the newly established Islamic Republic of Iran.

Sacred Defense Week is an opportunity to: Honor the martyrs, the war veterans, and the freed prisoners of war; Pass on the values of the Sacred Defense to the younger generation; Reevaluate the achievements of the Sacred Defense era; and promote the culture of sacrifice and resistance.

Various programs during this week—including memorial ceremonies, visits to operational zones, exhibitions, and the publication of cultural and artistic works—serve to keep alive the memory of those sacred and divine days.

The Sacred Defense imparts valuable lessons to future generations about resisting oppression, persevering under difficult conditions, and the importance of national unity. Preserving and transmitting these values is an invaluable legacy essential for the continuation of the nation's path toward progress and independence.

Sacred Defense Week is not only a reminder of past bravery but also a beacon for the future, recalling the significance of resistance, unity, and faith in the face of challenges and threats. The very act of publicizing and remembering the foundation of resistance itself has a deterrent effect.

The European troika, along with the United States, witnessed the 12-day imposed war by the Zionist regime against Iran and have admitted that Iran's resilient military capability and independence-seeking spirit—rooted in its sacred unity—do not allow the imposition of their demands.

The attempt to reinstate the sanctions of Resolution 129, which lacks legal legitimacy within today's international framework and will undoubtedly be ineffective, is analyzed and carried out in the shadow of this very resistance capability.

In confronting Western cultural erasure, the Iranian nation regards every failed Western-standard action as an experience, turning it into a foundation for deeper understanding of Western colonialist intentions.

Armenian Envoy Terms Tehran-Yerevan Ties as Strategic



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Armenia's Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Iran, Grigor Hakobyan, has described the relations between Tehran and Yerevan as strategic.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with IRNA, Hakobyan stressed the long-standing and friendly relations between the two countries.

Iran was among the first countries to recognize Armenia's independence, he added.

The two nations enjoy long-standing historical and cultural ties, he added.

Over these years, Armenia and Iran have always maintained friendly and good-neighborly relations, which is of vital importance, he noted.

Referring to President Masoud Pezeshkian's recent visit to Armenia, he stated that the two sides explicitly declared their readiness to elevate relations to a strategic level.

Iran Will Respond to Threats with Force "Beyond Imagination"

TEHRAN - The Chief of Staff of Iran's Armed Forces, Major General Seyed Abdolrahim Mousavi, has declared that the Islamic Republic is fully prepared to confront any hostile action with a response "timely, decisive, regret-inducing, and beyond the enemy's imagination."

In a message issued on the occasion of Sacred Defense Week, commemorating the eight-year Iran-Iraq War, Mousavi highlighted the resilience of the Iranian people and the continued readiness of the nation's military forces to counter threats.

He pointed to the recent 12-day conflict, in which Iran and its allied forces faced off against what he described as "the child-killing and racist Zionist regime" supported by the United States. According to Mousavi, Iran's indigenous defense capabilities, regional partnerships, and forceful retaliation led to the failure of the enemy's objectives.

"Iran will never remain passive," Mousavi stressed. "Rather, it transforms every threat into an opportunity to demonstrate national, regional, and international power."

Mousavi's statement paid tribute to the martyrs of the Iran-Iraq War, which he described as not merely a conventional conflict but "a great university" that instilled faith, determination, and resilience in the Iranian nation. Drawing inspiration from the Karbala narrative, guided by Imam Khomeini, and aligned with the leadership of the Supreme Leader, Iranian forces, he said, succeeded in defeating a heavily armed enemy backed by global powers.

According to Mousavi, the Sacred Defense left enduring lessons: reliance on divine power as the key to victory, self-reliance that achieved defense independence and technological progress, national unity that transformed threats into opportunities, and a culture of sacrifice that ensured success against global arrogance.

"These lessons," he noted, "remain an inexhaustible source of strength for the Iranian nation."

Referring to the recent hostilities, Mousavi said the confrontation was designed to undermine national unity and the integrity of the Islamic Republic. Yet, he argued, Iran demonstrated once again that it could neutralize threats early on by relying on domestic



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

defense strength, regional influence, and calculated deterrence.

"This was a clear message to our enemies," he said. "Iran not only refuses to be subdued but turns each threat into an opportunity that disrupts the enemy's calculations."

Mousavi emphasized the importance of advancing modern defense technologies, strengthening deterrence, and preparing for hybrid warfare, particularly cognitive warfare. He called on military institutions to place these priorities at the forefront of strategic planning.

He assured the Iranian nation: "The Armed Forces, equipped with strategic surprises and innovations, are fully prepared to respond to the arrogant and oppressive powers of the world with a decisive and unimaginable counteraction."

In his message, Mousavi praised the steadfastness of the Iranian people, the support of political leaders, and the sacrifices of military families. He described the families of martyrs, veterans, and resistance fighters as "torchbearers of the culture of sacrifice" whose support continues to strengthen national resolve and endurance.

Mousavi reaffirmed loyalty to the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, describing his guidance as the source of Iran's national cohesion and strategic strength. He declared that under this leadership, the Armed Forces would continue to transform threats into opportunities, deepen security, and enhance Iran's standing in regional and global strategic balances.

Finally, Mousavi honored the memory of fallen commanders and soldiers from both the eight-year war and the recent 12-day conflict, including senior figures such as Mohammad Bagheri, Gholamali Rashid, and Hossein Salami, whom he named as martyrs of Iran's strategic defense.

"With humility and devotion," he concluded, "we pray to Almighty God to continue blessing the great Iranian nation and its powerful Armed Forces, guiding them in pursuit of their lofty ideals and the path toward the dawn of a new Islamic civilization."

IRAN NEWS



Iran Condemns Attack on Civilians in Sudan

TEHRAN (IRNA) – Iran’s Foreign Ministry in a statement has condemned the drone attack on a mosque in the city of Fasher, Sudan.

The statement, which was released on Sunday night said that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran considers and condemns the drone attack on a mosque in the city of Fasher, Sudan, which resulted in the death and injury of a group of innocent Sudanese worshippers, as a clear violation of the rules of international humanitarian law.

The statement stated, “The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, expressing its sympathy with the survivors of this incident and wishing the injured a speedy recovery and good health, emphasizes the need to immediately stop attacks on civilians and vital infrastructure in Sudan and to resolve the current crisis in the country through Sudanese-Sudanese dialogue.”

Lifting of Chabahar Sanctions Waiver Has No Real Impact



TEHRAN - The recent U.S. decision to revoke the sanctions waiver for Iran’s Chabahar Port will have little to no practical effect, according to a former senior official in Iran’s ports authority.

Mohammad Rastad, former head of the Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO), told Iranian media that the exemption was largely “symbolic and psychological” rather than a meaningful concession. He explained that the waiver only covered limited cargo transfers from India to Afghanistan through the Shahid Beheshti terminal at Chabahar, and did not extend to international shipping lines.

“Foreign shipping lines had already stopped calling at Iranian ports after the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA in 2018, and they were unwilling to take the risk of entering our ports,” Rastad said. “The waiver never changed that reality.”

Rastad, who also served as deputy minister of roads and urban development, stressed that the exemption did not create significant openings for Chabahar, as it never enabled unrestricted international traffic. “As long as Iran remains under sanctions, maritime transport, port operations, and all related services will continue to face limitations,” he noted.

He questioned what tangible benefits the waiver had actually brought to Chabahar. “If there were no concrete achievements during the exemption period, how can its removal create new restrictions?” he asked. He emphasized that sanctions extend beyond port operations, affecting financial channels, equipment procurement, and cargo handling.

One of the key obstacles has been the inability of the Indian terminal operator to deliver on its contractual commitments. “The operator repeatedly cited sanctions as the reason for failing to supply equipment,” Rastad said. “Even when tenders were issued for purchasing port machinery, no international company was willing to participate because of U.S. sanctions.”

Iran Builds Strategic Drug Reserves Amid Sanctions Risks



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran has begun building strategic reserves of medicines to safeguard against potential disruptions if the UN “snapback” mechanism is activated, a senior health official announced on Sunday.

Mehdi Pirsaebehi, Deputy Health Minister and head of the Food and Drug Administration, said while medicines are not directly sanctioned, indirect effects through shipping inspections and financial transactions could cause difficulties. “The direct impact of snapback on pharmaceuticals is low, but challenges mainly arise in transportation—inspections of planes and ships can delay deliveries,” he explained at a press briefing ahead of the 10th Iran Pharma International Exhibition.

Pirsaebehi emphasized that the unpredictable behavior of the international community complicates planning. “The world often acts irrationally. When attacks target our nuclear facilities, there is silence. So, we cannot predict whether they might also extend sanctions to medicines, ignoring humanitarian concerns,” he said.

To counter such risks, Iran began stockpiling essential medicines in June, a process that will continue for two months. “Our priority is the domestic market. Strategic reserves are being created without tapping into existing supplies,” he said, adding that purchases are being made gradually from domestic producers to avoid market disruption.

He acknowledged that some medicines sourced from Europe already face currency transfer issues, even without snapback restrictions. He urged physicians and patients to turn to Iranian and Asian brands when shortages of European products occur.

Pirsaebehi confirmed that certain medicines are distributed in limited quantities under direct FDA supervision to prevent sudden depletion. “Some drugs require careful planning. If released all at once, shortages could occur later,” he said. These medicines are allocated in specific numbers to designated pharmacies.

Iran Ranked Sixth Globally in Space Industry



TEHRAN - Iran’s space industry currently holds the sixth position in the world, according to Vahid Yazdanian, head of the Iranian Space Research Institute. He emphasized that while Iran aims to send an astronaut to space by the end of its 10-year national space program, which began in 2022, the real importance of the space industry does not lie in human spaceflight alone.

Yazdanian noted that Iran’s high global ranking stems from its indigenous ability to design and manufacture satellites, unlike many countries that purchase space technology from abroad.

“Iran is a satellite builder, not an importer,” he said. “Many nations may have sent astronauts into space or launched satellites under their flag, but these achievements often relied on outsourcing technology to the United States, Russia, China, or other advanced space powers. What distinguishes us is that we have developed the knowledge and technology for satellite construction ourselves.”

He explained that when countries are ranked based on space industry knowledge and technological capacity—not merely on symbolic feats—Iran falls between sixth and eighth place worldwide. This ranking is further supported by Iran’s strong academic output in the field, with numerous research papers and projects contributing to the body of space science.

Asked why Iran has not yet sent its own astronaut into space, Yazdanian pointed out that while human spaceflight remains part of the country’s 10-year plan, the current global approach to space exploration has shifted away from Cold War-style displays of power.

“During the U.S.-Soviet rivalry, sending astronauts into orbit was largely symbolic—each side wanted to demonstrate its superiority,” he said. “Today, the mission has changed. Astronauts now travel to space stations mainly to carry out research or to repair and overhaul technical equipment.”

Yazdanian added that Iran’s priority is to ensure that its space program delivers tangible services to its citizens. Satellites, he stressed, play a critical role in communications, navigation, and Earth observation—services that impact daily

life and economic development far more directly than sending an astronaut on a short-term orbital mission.

Despite this pragmatic focus, Yazdanian confirmed that Iran’s roadmap includes human spaceflight. “By the end of the 10-year space industry program, which began in 1401 [2022], an Iranian astronaut should be launched into space,” he said. That milestone would come by 1411 in the Iranian calendar, corresponding to 2032–33.

However, he cautioned that such a mission depends on broader infrastructure, such as the creation of a national space station or participation in international orbital platforms. “Do we currently have a space station that requires an astronaut?” he asked rhetorically. “Until that is achieved, our resources are better directed toward satellite constellations that provide real services to the public.”

Yazdanian emphasized that the global trend in space technology is toward satellite constellations—networks of dozens, even hundreds, of satellites launched together to create seamless communications and data coverage.

“In today’s world, companies like Elon Musk’s SpaceX are deploying 50 or more satellites at once to form communication constellations, similar to internet service networks on Earth,” he explained. “Iran, too, must move in this direction, focusing on communication and Earth-observation constellations to serve the needs of our people.”

He cited Iran’s existing projects, including the launch of the Nahid-2 communications satellite, as initial steps toward this vision. Still, much work remains before Iran can match the scale of global players in the constellation race.

In conclusion, Yazdanian stressed that Iran’s space industry must be judged not by dramatic gestures but by its ability to create value and deliver services. “Every effort we undertake should lead to services, added value, or new business opportunities,” he said. “When we eventually establish our own space station, that will be the right time to send an Iranian astronaut into orbit. Until then, our focus is clear: satellites that directly improve the lives of our citizens.”

Tourism Will Not Stop Even with the Snapback Mechanism



TEHRAN - Deputy Minister of Tourism at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage announced that the country has no restrictions on receiving foreign tourists, stressing that even the potential activation of the so-called “trigger mechanism” does not pose a greater threat than the challenges faced during the “12-day war.” He emphasized that Iran has a roadmap to navigate crises and will continue pursuing sustainable tourism development by relying on its unique strengths in pilgrimage, health tourism, and cultural heritage.

Speaking at a press conference outlining plans for Tourism Week, Anoushirvan Mohseni Bandpey highlighted that Iran successfully managed tourism during past crises and will once again rely on its distinctive advantages to advance strategic programs.

He noted that pilgrimage and health tourism remain two of the country’s strongest and most active sectors, even during the summer months.

“Iran’s civilizational capacities are unmatched in the world,” he said, adding that this invaluable heritage strengthens confidence and determination to advance the tourism sector with a responsible, forward-looking strategy.

Mohseni Bandpey confirmed Iran’s readiness to continue its visa waiver policy, stating that “there are no restrictions for lifting visa requirements,” and that 33 countries have already expressed interest in such agreements. He also pointed to ongoing talks to establish direct flights between Iran and key tourism markets, which he said could open new pathways for growth.

This year’s global theme from the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is “Tourism and Sustainable Transformation.” The deputy minister explained that sustainability requires comprehensive development and called for greater promotion of responsible travel. He said that environmentally responsible tourism—particularly green tourism—is a top priority for the ministry.

According to official figures, 6.2 million foreign tourists visited

Iran in 2023, while in 2022 the figure was 7.2 million. In April 2025, inbound tourist numbers grew by 48.5% compared with the same month the previous year, reflecting the resilience of Iran’s tourism market.

Although the recent war halted European tourist arrivals—reducing them to nearly zero—tourism from regional markets has continued strongly, with over 3.5 million visitors from Iraq and large numbers from Oman, Tajikistan, Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. The ministry aims to raise arrivals from Iraq alone to 5 million annually.

The deputy minister also acknowledged Iran’s infrastructure gap, noting that Tehran has only six five-star hotels, compared to 500 in Istanbul and more than 600 in Dubai. To address this, Iran’s national development plan includes building 100 new hotels annually, supported by financing mechanisms such as National Development Fund loans, bank facilities, and bonds to attract investors.

He added that tourism growth is closely linked to security and international diplomacy. Despite sanctions, Iran has increased its presence at global exhibitions and events, with the ministry covering booth costs to enable private companies to showcase the country’s tourism potential abroad.

Mohseni Bandpey concluded by outlining a 14-pillar comprehensive tourism strategy designed for the post-war period. The strategy emphasizes not only Europe but also broader engagement with all countries interested in Iran. Key measures include expanding unilateral visa waivers and launching direct air routes.

At the end of the press conference, the Tourism Week poster was unveiled. It was also announced that more than 20 eco-friendly hotels in Iran will receive Green Tourism Awards for initiatives related to water conservation, renewable energy, and responsible environmental practices.

Tourism Week in Iran will run from September 27 to October 3, 2025, featuring more than 400 events and programs nationwide.

ICCIMA Offers Training Support for Palestinians, Urges Islamic Nations to Buy Palestinian Goods



TEHRAN - The president of Iran’s Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) has pledged readiness to provide educational and training programs for the Palestinian people, in cooperation with the Islamic Chamber Research and Information Center (ICRIC). He also called on Islamic countries to commit to purchasing Palestinian products as a means of strengthening the territory’s economy.

Speaking at the 39th meeting of the Board of Directors of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Development in Amman, Samad Hassanzadeh said the plight of Palestinians after decades of conflict and displacement requires concrete economic action. “We bear a great responsibility toward all Islamic countries, particularly the oppressed nation of Palestine,” he said, adding that the suffering of Palestinians is a bitter experience for the entire world.

Hassanzadeh urged Islamic economic councils to support rebuilding Palestinian economic structures, develop small industries, expand agricultural and food production, and foster regional businesses and modern technologies. He stressed that such steps are essential to improve stability, peace, and welfare in Palestine.

Among his proposals were: Encouraging and committing Islamic countries to purchase Palestinian products; Hosting economic exhibitions and conferences to showcase Palestinian capabilities; Inviting Palestinian entrepreneurs to trade fairs and business summits; Sending chamber representatives abroad to promote Palestinian participation in global markets; Designating a “Day of Support for Economic Cooperation in the Islamic World” centered on Palestine; Allocating scholarships for Palestinian students in Islamic countries; and establishing scientific and cultural centers to train future generations with global educational standards.

5m State Employees Burden Economy, While Japan Runs With 350,000



TEHRAN - An Iranian lawmaker has warned that the country’s oversized bureaucracy is a major obstacle to economic reform, comparing Iran’s state workforce of about five million employees to Japan’s 350,000.

Speaking at the 10th National Selection Plan summit, Manouchehr Mottaki, a member of the parliament’s Economic Commission, argued that Iran’s economy is weighed down by two “tumors,” the first being the size of its government.

He noted that Norway, with a \$200 billion economy primarily based on oil and agriculture, employs only 8,000 government staff, while Japan—with its much larger economy—has about 350,000. “Meanwhile, Iran has nearly five million salaried employees on the government payroll,” he said.

Mottaki added that the massive public payroll leaves the government scrambling to meet its monthly obligations. “At the end of each month, the state struggles to fund wages and subsidies because revenues from its main resources are consumed by routine expenses,” he explained.

The lawmaker also stressed the importance of supporting exporters, calling them the “first trench of the economy” for their role in bringing in foreign currency. However, he said they lack adequate autonomy. “I am not against export commitments, but exporters’ voices must be heard,” he said.

Mottaki criticized the marginalization of the private sector, saying it will not be taken seriously until it takes itself seriously. He urged policymakers to implement the Supreme Leader’s vision under Article 44 of the Constitution, which promotes privatization. “Private sector representatives should be invited to major decision-making sessions and allowed to present their views,” he said.

UK Explores Plan to Abolish Visa Fees for Top Global Talent

LONDON (Dispatches) - British Prime Minister Keir Starmer is exploring proposals to abolish some visa fees for top global talent at a time when the U.S. has taken a tougher stance on immigration, the Financial Times reported on Monday. Starmer's "global talent task force" is working on ideas to lure to the UK the world's best scientists, academics and digital experts, seeking to boost economic growth, the report said.

The Treasury department and Downing Street did not immediately respond to Reuters' request for comment. U.S. President Donald Trump said his country would impose a \$100,000 fee for new H-1B visas from Sunday, in line with a wide-ranging immigration crackdown.



U.S. Warplanes Strike Drug Boat Off Dominican Republic



SANTO DOMINGO (Dispatches) - U.S. warplanes attacked a drug-running boat off the coast of the Dominican Republic, its drug enforcement agency and a U.S. official announced in an expansion of American military activity in the Caribbean.

The head of the DNCD anti-narcotics agency announced the strike at a joint press conference with a spokesperson for the U.S. embassy.

The latter official said this attack is the one President Donald Trump first announced Friday without saying where it had taken place, following several US attacks on alleged drug boats off Venezuela.

In this newly reported strike, American military jets attacked a speed boat carrying 1,000 kilos of cocaine 80 nautical miles from the Dominican island of Beata, DNCD spokesman Carlos Devers told the news conference.

A source close to the investigation of this case said the boat probably left originally from Venezuela.

The United States has now acknowledged three recent attacks in the Caribbean that have killed more than a dozen people.

It is attacking and destroying such vessels rather than seizing them and arresting their crew, which is the normal procedure in such anti-drug operations.

Trump said Friday the U.S. military had struck a drug trafficking boat in international waters, killing three people.

Unlike after previous attacks, Trump made no mention of Venezuela, where the U.S. Navy has deployed a small armada in a mission it says is designed to combat drug trafficking.

Trump Hails Charlie Kirk as American Hero at Memorial Service



WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - At the memorial service for Charlie Kirk, members of the Trump administration praised the assassinated conservative influencer, with the president referring to Kirk as a "martyr." The Turning Point USA founder's wife, Erika Kirk, said she forgives her husband's murderer.

President Donald Trump praised Charlie Kirk as a "great American hero" and "martyr" for freedom as he and other prominent conservatives gathered Sunday evening to honor the slain conservative political activist whose work they say they must now advance.

The memorial service for Kirk, whom Trump credits with playing a pivotal role in his 2024 election victory, drew tens of thousands of mourners, including Vice President JD Vance, other senior administration officials and young conservatives shaped by the 31-year-old firebrand.

"He's a martyr now for America's freedom," Trump said in his tribute. "I know I speak for everyone here today when I say that none of us will ever forget Charlie. And neither now will history."

Speakers highlighted Kirk's profound faith and his strong belief that young conservatives need to get married, build families and pass on their values to keep building their movement. They also repeatedly told conservative activists, sometimes in confrontational tones, that the best way to honor Kirk was doubling down on his mission to move American politics further to the right.

Western Powers Recognize Palestinian State in Historic Break With Decades of Policy



LONDON (Dispatches) - Britain, Australia, Canada and Portugal recognized the State of Palestine, a historic shift in decades of Western foreign policy that drew swift anger from Israel.

Though Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip welcomed the recognition as a victory, the move drew a furious response from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who vowed that a Palestinian state would never come to pass.

Other countries, including France, are due to follow suit at the annual UN General Assembly opening on Monday in New York.

Israel has come under huge international pressure over its war in Gaza, which has sparked a dire humanitarian crisis in the Palestinian territory.

Netanyahu denounced the push for recognition as "absurd", claiming it would "endanger" Israel's existence. "It will not happen. No Palestinian state will be established west of the Jordan River," the Israeli premier said.

He later vowed to expand Jewish settlements in the West Bank, which Israel has controlled since 1967 in an occupation considered illegal under international law.

Netanyahu spoke after UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer said Britain was formally recognising the State of Palestine "to revive the hope of peace for the Palestinians and Israelis, and a two-state solution".

The UK and Canada became the first members of the Group of Seven advanced economies to take the step.

It is a watershed moment for Palestinians and their ambitions for statehood, with the most powerful Western nations having long argued recognition should only come as part of a negotiated peace deal with Israel.

Three-quarters of UN members now recognize the State of Palestine, with at least 145 of the 193 member countries having done so, according to an AFP tally.

Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said the move "recognizes the legitimate and long held aspirations of the people of Palestine", while Portuguese Foreign Minister Paulo Rangel called the two-state solution "the only path to a just and lasting peace".

On the ground in Gaza, many saw recognition as an affirmation of their existence after nearly two years of war between Israel and Palestinian Islamist group Hamas.

"This recognition shows that the world is finally starting to hear our voice and that in itself is a moral victory," said Salwa Mansour, 35, who has been displaced from the southern city of Rafah to Al-Mawasi.

"Despite all the pain, death and massacres we're living through, we cling to anything that brings even the smallest bit of hope," she added.

Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas hailed the recognitions as "an important and necessary step toward achieving a just and lasting peace".

Although a largely symbolic move, it puts the four countries at odds with the United States and Israel.

U.S. President Donald Trump said last week after talks with Starmer that "one of our few disagreements" was over Palestinian statehood.

French President Emmanuel Macron insisted in an interview with a US TV network that despite France moving to extend recognition, releasing the hostages Hamas captured in 2023 would be "a requirement very clearly before opening, for instance, an embassy in Palestine".

A growing number of longtime Israeli allies have shifted their long-held positions as Israel has intensified its Gaza offensive, which began with Hamas's October 7, 2023 attack.

Since then, the Gaza Strip has suffered vast destruction, with a growing international outcry over the besieged coastal territory's spiralling death toll and a UN-declared famine.

The UK government has come under increasing public pressure to act, with thousands of people rallying every month on the streets.

The UK was pivotal in laying the groundwork for the creation of the State of Israel through the 1917 Balfour Declaration.

Starmer said that Britain was acting "in the face of the growing horror in the Middle East".

He renewed calls for a ceasefire and again demanded Hamas release the remaining Israeli hostages.

North Korea's Kim Recalls Fond Memories' of Trump, Signals Openness to U.S. Talks



SEOUL (Dispatches) - North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said he was open to future talks with the United States if Washington drops its demand that the country give up its nuclear weapons, state media said today.

Kim also said he had "fond memories" of U.S. President Donald Trump, who he met three times for high-profile summits during Trump's first term, before talks collapsed in Hanoi in 2019 over what concessions Pyongyang was prepared to make.

"If the United States discards its delusional obsession with denuclearization and, based on recognizing reality, truly wishes for peaceful coexistence with us, then there is no reason we cannot meet it," Kim said, according to the official Korean Central News Agency.

The demand that Kim give up his nuclear arsenal has long been a sticking point between the two countries, with Pyongyang under successive rafts of UN sanctions over its banned weapons programs.

Kim said that sanctions had only helped the North in "growing stronger, building endurance and resistance that cannot be crushed by any pressure".

"I still personally hold fond memories of the current US president, Trump," Kim added, in a wide-ranging speech to the country's rubber-stamp parliament.

Since the failed 2019 summit, North Korea has repeatedly said it will never give up its nuclear weapons and declared itself an "irreversible"

nuclear state.

Kim reiterated that denuclearization was not an option.

"The world already knows well what the United States does after it forces a country to give up its nuclear arms and disarm," he said.

"We will never give up our nuclear weapons."

Kim also said that he had "no reason to sit down with South Korea", even as Seoul's new President Lee Jae-myung has sought to ease tensions with the North.

"We make it clear that we will not deal with them in any form," he said.

North Korea has in recent years declared the South its principal enemy

and blown up rail links and roads that connect the two countries.

Analysts say that the North Korean leader has been emboldened by the war in Ukraine, securing critical support from Russia after sending thousands of North Korean troops to fight alongside Moscow.

North Korea has become one of Russia's main allies since Moscow invaded Ukraine three-and-a-half years ago, sending thousands of soldiers and container loads of weapons to help the Kremlin push Ukrainian forces out of western Russia, following Kyiv's shock incursion last year.

Moscow and Pyongyang signed a mutual defence pact last year when Russian President Vladimir Putin visited the exclusive state.

Seoul has repeatedly warned that Russia is stepping up support for Pyongyang, including the potential transfer of sensitive Russian military technology.

Trump is expected to visit South Korea next month, when the country hosts the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum (APEC) in its southern city of Gyeongju.

Kim, who visited Russia's Far East in 2023, rarely leaves North Korea. But he travelled to Beijing this month on an armoured train.

He stood beside Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping at a massive parade marking the 80th anniversary of Japan's World War II surrender.

Thousands Rally in Brazil Against Amnesty for Ex-President Bolsonaro

SAO PAULO (Dispatches) - Thousands of Brazilians marched Sunday against Congress moves to expand lawmakers' immunity and advance amnesty measures that could benefit ex-president Jair Bolsonaro. Critics accuse the conservative-dominated legislature of shielding itself while ignoring urgent social and economic issues, as Bolsonaro serves a 27-year sentence for attempting to stage a coup.

Thousands of Brazilians took to the streets Sunday in anger at moves by Congress to boost lawmaker's immunity and push for amnesty that could include far-right president Jair Bolsonaro, convicted of trying to stage a coup.

As Brazil grapples with the fallout from the divisive Bolsonaro trial, which saw him sentenced to 27 years in prison, the conservative-majority Congress has come under fire from critics who accuse it of putting its own interests above social and economic issues.

Demonstrations have been called in over a dozen cities Sunday, including Rio de Janeiro where octogenarian music icons Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil and Chico Buarque will perform a protest concert on Copacabana beach.

"We are here to protest this Congress, which is made up of criminals and corrupt



people dressed as politicians, who are pushing for a law that protects them", 34-year-old environmentalist Aline Borges told AFP at a protest in Brasilia.

On Tuesday, the lower house approved the so-called "Shielding Bill", under which lawmakers voting in a secret ballot must give the go-ahead for one of their own to be charged or arrested.

Further stoking anger, lawmakers on Wednesday fast-tracked a bill seeking amnesty for those convicted over an attack on the seats of government in January 2023 after Bolsonaro lost re-election -- which could include the former president.

House Speaker Hugo Motta, of the centre-right Republicanos party, defended parliament's efforts as protection against judicial overreach.

Mayra Goulart, political science professor at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, told AFP the "Shielding Bill" was a reaction to judicial moves against lawmakers' use of parliamentary amendments to channel resources to their territories, a practice which "guarantees their re-election."

These amendments are a key bargaining chip between lawmakers and presidents who need to get laws passed in a fragmented Congress.



Fritz Downs Zverev to Seal Team World Laver Cup Win Over Europe

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Taylor Fritz held off Alexander Zverev 6-3, 7-6 (7/4) to seal Team World's triumph in the Laver Cup on Sunday as two wins for Carlos Alcaraz on the final day proved too little for Team Europe.

Fritz fired a backhand volley winner on his first match point to give Team World a 15-9 victory over Europe in the global tennis event, sparking jubilant celebrations from his teammates and World captain Andre Agassi at Chase Center -- home of the NBA's Golden State Warriors.

"The energy from the team, it just feels the moments of winning feel so much better, the moments of losing feel so much worse because you're doing it for all these guys," Fritz said.

"It just fires me up so much," added the fifth-ranked American, who had beaten Alcaraz on Saturday when Team World swept all four matches to seize a 9-3 lead.

Fritz had raced through the opening set against a weary-looking Zverev.

The German stepped it up in the second set, but he was down a break and trailing 4-3 before he finally mustered his first break points of the night.

He converted his third to level the set at 4-4 to the delight of his Europe teammates and captain Yannick Noah.

A quick hold from Zverev left Fritz serving to stay in the set.

He held to love and they battled to the tiebreaker, where Fritz took a 3-0 lead only for Zverev to win three straight points before Fritz won four of the final five.

Alcaraz, fresh off his sixth Grand Slam title at the US Open, had kept Europe's title defense alive with a blistering 6-2, 6-1 victory over Argentina's Francisco Cerundolo.

Alcaraz and Casper Ruud had sliced Europe's deficit with a 7-6 (7/4), 6-1 doubles victory over Reilly Opelka and Alex Michelsen to open Sunday's action.

But Australian world number eight Alex De Minaur then beat Czech Jakub Mensik 6-3, 6-4 to push Team World's lead to 12-6, with 13 points needed to claim the Cup and each match on Sunday worth three points.

De Minaur, a late replacement on Team World for Frances Tiafoe, had nabbed two wins on Saturday -- beating Zverev in singles and coming through again in doubles.

Team World regained the title they surrendered to Europe last year in Berlin.

Europe have won five of eight editions of the event co-created by Swiss great Roger Federer, which will be held in London next year.

Sharma and Gill's Opening Stand Helps India to Six-Wicket Win Over Pakistan



DUBAI (Dispatches) - A 105-run opening stand between Abhishek Sharma and Shubman Gill helped defending champions India beat Pakistan by six wickets in their Asia Cup Super Four match on Sunday, a second victory over their arch rivals in the Twenty20 tournament.

Put in to bat first, Pakistan set India a target of 172, which they reached with seven balls remaining.

There was no handshake between the teams' players yet again with the match played amid lingering tensions between the two nations in the wake of the military conflict between the nuclear-armed neighbours in May this year.

The Indian openers exchanged some heated words with the Pakistani bowlers early on during the chase, with the umpire having to step in between Sharma and Haris Rauf at one point.

"The way they were coming at us for no reason, I didn't like it at all and this is the only way I could give medicine to them," said Sharma, whose score of 74 off 39 balls included six fours and five sixes.

A 72-run partnership between Sahibzada Farhan and Saim Ayub for the second wicket laid the foundation for Pakistan's innings after Fakhar Zaman (15) fell early.

Barcelona Cruise to 3-0 Win Over Getafe



BARCELONA (Dispatches) - Ferran Torres struck twice for champions Barcelona as they beat Getafe 3-0 to stay on Real Madrid's tails at the top of La Liga.

Dani Olmo was also on target for the Catalans, who trail leaders Madrid by two points after Xabi Alonso's side beat Espanyol on Saturday to maintain their 100 per cent record.

Atletico Madrid's stuttering start to the season continued in a 1-1 draw at Mallorca, in which their striker Julian Alvarez missed a penalty.

Playing at the 6,000 capacity Johan Cruyff stadium besides their training ground again as the club waits for the necessary licences to reopen their renovated Camp Nou home, Barcelona dominated an unambitious Getafe team.

Despite his brace against Newcastle in the Champions League, German coach Hansi Flick left Marcus Rashford on the bench, with Spanish media reporting that it was because the England international was late for a morning meeting.

Flick has dropped other players from the line-up for the same offence in the past, including defender Jules Kounde. "Rotation is normal because every three or four days we have a match, we need fresh legs on the pitch," said Flick, when asked why Rashford did not start.

Rashford's replacement as the stand-in for injured teenage superstar Lamine Yamal, Torres, took his chance with both hands.

"We have a lot of matches so it's really good to have everyone on this (level of) performance," added Flick.

The Spaniard opened the scoring with a powerful finish at the end of a slick move, with Olmo backheeling the ball into his path in the box.

Torres's second finish was even better, guided into the bottom left corner from outside the box after Raphinha sent him through on goal.

The forward crashed a shot off the bar as a first half hat-trick beckoned.

Several Barca players lost their temper before the break as Getafe put in several hard and late tackles, with Kounde the victim of many of them.

Flick sent on Rashford for Raphinha at half-time, perhaps in order to save the Brazilian from a potential red card.

Verstappen Wins in Baku as Piastri Crashes Out

BAKU (Dispatches) - Red Bull's Max Verstappen cruised to a dominant Azerbaijan Grand Prix victory while Oscar Piastri crashed on the opening lap and had his Formula One lead over McLaren teammate Lando Norris slashed to 25 points.

McLaren had hoped to secure their 10th Formula One constructors' title, and second in a row, on Sunday with a record seven rounds remaining but must now wait until Singapore on October 5 after their lowest scoring weekend of the season.

George Russell finished second for Mercedes, who moved up to second place and 333 points behind McLaren with 346 still to be won, and Carlos Sainz third for Williams's first podium finish since 2021.

Norris started and finished seventh in what will rank as a missed opportunity, with six points gained on his rival but his chances of more scuppered by a slow 4.1-second pitstop for the second successive race.

The win was Verstappen's second in a row and he led every lap from pole to flag, also setting the fastest lap for a "Grand Slam" that revived his slim title hopes with the reigning champion now 69 points behind Piastri.

He took the chequered flag 14.609 seconds clear of Russell, after being more than 32 seconds clear before taking his pitstop.

"I think this weekend has been incredible for us," said Verstappen after his 67th career win, fourth of the season and second in Baku after a 2022 victory. "For us to win here again is just fantastic.

"We had clean air all the time and you could then look after your tyres. And yeah, it was pretty straightforward."

Russell, recovering from sickness and starting fifth on the grid, was happy to see a rough weekend finish strongly while Sainz -- voted driver of the day -- was the happiest man on the podium.



"I cannot describe how happy I am and how good this feels. It tastes even better than my first ever podium," said the Spaniard, a four-times race winner with Ferrari who had started on the front row.

The big story came on the opening lap when Piastri, who crashed in qualifying and started ninth, jumped the start and went to the back of the field before ploughing into the wall at turn five.

The uncharacteristic errors ended the Australian's record of being the only driver to score in every race this season and also put the brakes on a run of 34 races in the points.

He had not failed to finish a race since his 2023 rookie season. "Certainly not my finest moment," the 24-year-old told Sky Sports. "I just anticipated the start too much and yeah...silly

simple error really."

Italian rookie Kimi Antonelli was fourth for Mercedes, redeeming himself after a poor home race weekend at Monza, with New Zealander Liam Lawson enjoying a career-high fifth for Racing Bulls.

Yuki Tsunoda was sixth for Red Bull with Ferrari's Lewis Hamilton and Charles Leclerc following Norris home in eighth and ninth, with the pair swapping places on team orders because Hamilton had fresher tyres.

French rookie Isack Hadjar made it a double points finish for Racing Bulls in 10th.

Piastri's crash brought out the safety car, a regular feature of races in Baku, and provided the main drama of the 51- lap race around the windy city streets where the threat of a downpour failed to materialise.

Norris lost a place to Hadjar and was then passed by Leclerc when the race re-started after the safety car period.

The Briton followed Leclerc past Hadjar, whose car had suffered a hydraulics problem before the start, and could have passed both Leclerc and Lawson had his pitstop not cost him critical seconds.

He ultimately passed Leclerc with 10 laps remaining but was unable to find a way past Tsunoda.

"I did the best I could yesterday, the best I could today," said Norris.

"Every race I didn't win was an opportunity missed, so of course today I wanted more. It was not a good result, but I couldn't do anything more today."

Arsenal Deny Man City With 93rd-Minute Equalizer

LONDON (Dispatches) - Gabriel Martinelli's 93rd minute equaliser saved Arsenal's Premier League title bid from a damaging defeat to Manchester City, while Aston Villa remain winless after a limp 1-1 draw at 10-man Sunderland.

The Gunners were heading to a second defeat in five Premier League games due to Erling Haaland's early strike on the counter-attack for City.

Martinelli came off the bench to score for the second time in a week to salvage a 1-1 draw, but both sides lost more ground to Premier League leaders Liverpool.

Arsenal went second, five points behind the champions, while City are eight points off the top in ninth.

"Very disappointed not to win," said Arsenal boss Mikel Arteta said. "I think we played better than last year when we beat them (5-1)."

Arteta's men had not conceded from open play in their first



five Premier League and Champions League games this season, but were opened up on nine minutes by the scintillating form of arguably the world's best striker.

Haaland started the move deep inside his own half with a lay-off to Tijjani Reijnders and then sprinted upfield to receive the Dutch international's pass before coolly slotting beyond David Raya.

The Norwegian already has 13 goals for club and country in just eight games this season.

At the other end, City are reaping immediate dividends from the signing of giant Italian goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma.

Noni Madueke's powerful near post strike was repelled by Donnarumma in what was Arsenal's best attempt in a flat first-half performance.

Mikel Arteta threw on the creative talents of Bukayo Saka and Eberechi Eze at the start of the second period.