

Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi Hit Back at Poland's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski Over His "Baseless Claims and Meddlesome Remarks" Against the Islamic Republic

IRAN NEWS

Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in a Telephone Conversation Have Exchanged Views on Regional Developments, Including the Situation in Gaza and Yemen

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2 DOMESTIC



Sharp Rise in Home Appliances Market Recession

> SEE PAGE 2

3 INTERNATIONAL

U.S., Australia Sign Critical Minerals Agreement to Counter China

> SEE PAGE 3



Iran, Azerbaijan Reaffirm Commitment to Expand All-Out Cooperation



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran and Azerbaijan have reaffirmed shared determination to deepen political, economic, and cultural cooperation and remove remaining barriers to stronger ties.

During a meeting in Tehran, Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi held wide-ranging talks with Khalaf Khalafov, special assistant to Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev.

The officials discussed ongoing bilateral cooperation, regional stability in the South Caucasus region, and existing prospects for future collaboration across various strategic fields.

The top diplomat underscored Tehran's firm will to advance relations with Baku on the basis of mutual respect, good neighborliness, and shared regional interests.

"Iran's policy is to develop and expand comprehensive relations with the Republic of Azerbaijan and to remove any obstacles in this process," he said, stressing that the countries' proximity, cultural bonds, and common interests formed a natural foundation for lasting friendship.

Touching on the broader regional context, Araqchi reiterated the Islamic Republic's principled position that peace and stability in the South Caucasus were vital for all the nations populating the region.

He reaffirmed Tehran's stance on respecting countries' sovereignty and territorial integrity, rejecting any geopolitical changes to the region, and identifying diplomacy as the only path to resolving disputes.

Iran Is Among World's Top Missile Powers



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Defense Ministry spokesperson Brigadier General Reza Talaei-Nik says the country's "indigenous, advanced and knowledge-based" missile industry ranks among the top in the world.

Speaking to reporters, Talaei-Nik said the experience of Iran's missile industry can serve as a model for neutralizing sanctions in other areas as well.

Iran has succeeded in achieving a high level of missile power despite more than 40 years of sanctions by neutralizing them, he added.

The general emphasized that the main features of the missile industry have created a "strategic offensive advantage for defense power of the Iranian nation."

Pointing to 12 days of the Israeli-US imposed war against Iran in June, Talaei-Nik said the country's offensive missile power dealt a heavy blow to the enemies.

On June 13, Israel launched an unprovoked war against Iran, assassinating many high-ranking military commanders, nuclear scientists, and ordinary civilians.

More than a week later, the United States also entered the war by bombing three Iranian nuclear sites in a grave violation of the United Nations Charter, international law, and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

Leader Mocks Trump's Claim of Dismantling Iran's Nuclear Program

TEHRAN - Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has sharply rebuked US President Donald Trump for his recent comments boasting about bombing Iran's nuclear facilities, saying the American president has no authority to dictate what other countries can or cannot do.

"Fine, keep dreaming," Ayatollah Khamenei said in reference to the US president's boastful claim that he had destroyed Iran's nuclear industry. "But who do you think you are to make any prescriptions about whether a country can or cannot have a nuclear industry?"

The Leader made the remarks during a Monday meeting with hundreds of Iranian athletes and medalists from various sports and international scientific Olympiads, whom he described as "symbols of national power and growth."

He said the young achievers had shown that Iran's hopeful youth "have the strength to stand on the peaks and draw the world's attention to the bright horizon of Iran."

Ayatollah Khamenei also condemned the bullying and baseless rhetoric of the US president, saying his recent behavior aimed to "raise the spirit of the Zionists and make himself look powerful through lies about Iran, the region, and its people."

He hastened to add, "If he is truly powerful, let him calm the millions of people in all US states who are chanting against him."

Expressing joy at meeting the country's accomplished youth, the Leader said their victories carry extra value today because they come at a time when "the enemy, through psychological warfare, seeks to make the nation hopeless and forgetful of its own abilities."

He dismissed claims about despair among Iranian youth as unfounded, stressing that "our dear Iran and its youth are symbols of hope" and that with determination and effort, young Iranians "can and will reach the highest peaks."

The Leader said that during the 1980s' Iraqi-imposed war, Iran achieved victory against a highly-equipped enemy, which was supported by all sides, through military ingenuity displayed by the nation's youth.

He also noted that in June's illegal aggression against the Islamic Republic, Iran delivered an "unbelievable" slap in the face of the Zionists and drove them to despair.

"The Zionists did not expect that Iranian missiles, with their flames and fire, could penetrate deep into their sensitive and vital centers, destroy them, and turn them into ashes," Ayatollah Khamenei added.

He further emphasized that Iran did not buy or rent its missiles from anywhere, but manufactured them by its youth.

"These missiles were prepared and used by our armed forces and military industries, and they still have them. If necessary, they will use them again at another time," he said.

Meanwhile, the Leader referred to Trump's acknowledgment of the United States' role in Israel's genocide in the Gaza Strip, saying Washington is the main partner in the Zionist regime's crimes, as the weapons dropped on the defenseless people of Gaza during the war were supplied by America.

Additionally, Ayatollah Khamenei rejected as a lie Trump's claim about the US's fight against terrorism.

"More than 20,000 children and infants were martyred in the Gaza war. Were they terrorists? The real terrorist is the US, which created Daesh, unleashed it on the region, and even today holds some of its members in a certain area for its own use."

He also denounced the killing of around 70,000 Palestinians in the Gaza genocide and over 1,000 Iranians during the 12-day Israeli-US aggression as clear evidence of the terrorist nature of the United States and the occupying regime.

Trump described himself as a dealmaker, but if dealmaking is accompanied by coercion, it is called imposition and bullying, something that the Iranian nation will not submit to, Ayatollah Khamenei stated.

He further stressed that West Asia belongs to its own people and that war and death in the region are the result of the US presence.

"The US is a warmonger that fuels terrorism and ignites wars. Otherwise, what is the purpose of all these US military bases in the region? What are you doing here? What connection does this region have to you?"

Europe's "Trigger Mechanism" Move Shows Diplomatic Collapse and Blind Obedience to Washington

TEHRAN - Iran's Majlis Vice-Speaker, Hamid Reza Haji Babai, strongly condemned the recent decision by the European Troika (Britain, France, and Germany) to activate the so-called "trigger mechanism" against Iran, calling it an illegal act without legal or moral basis and a clear sign of Europe's diplomatic decline and blind submission to U.S. policy.

Speaking at the recent 151st Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in Geneva, Haji Babai said that the dual policies of the United States and Europe are among the main causes of the erosion of humanitarian norms and the spread of distrust in the international system.

Referring to the recent 12-day Israeli attack on Iran, he warned that the world is now facing a multifaceted crisis—including war, occupation, genocide, terrorism, unilateral sanctions, economic injustice, and environmental degradation—all of which threaten the foundations of human solidarity. "Speaking of humanitarian principles is not merely a moral necessity," he said, "it is a collective responsibility before the conscience of humanity."

Haji Babai described the situation in Gaza and the occupied Palestinian territories as an example of organized genocide carried out with the support of Western powers and the silence of international institutions. He reminded the audience that Iran itself was recently targeted by direct Israeli aggression, and declared that remaining silent in the face of such crimes would amount to complicity.

Condemning what he called the "opportunistic and arrogant behavior of U.S. leaders", he stated that the recent ceasefire in Gaza represented "a bitter admission of defeat for the occupying regime" and a triumph of Palestinian resistance. He reaffirmed that Iran supports any initiative that leads to a full ceasefire, an end to occupation, and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

Jerusalem as its capital.

Haji Babai accused the United States and Israel of weaponizing diplomacy and criticized the European Troika for siding with them. "When the U.S. unilaterally left the 2015 nuclear deal, these three European countries stood silent," he said. "Now, the same silent observers have turned into self-appointed judges and executioners, displaying hypocrisy and legal double standards."

He further added that Europe has moved from being a "faint partner" to a "total subordinate" of Washington, a stance that, in his view, contradicts Europe's historical claim of independence and rational politics. "If Europe wants to remain relevant," he warned, "it must abandon its political games against the independent nation of Iran."

Haji Babai emphasized that Iran's independence has only been strengthened by decades of sanctions, threats, and even direct aggression. "Each act of hostility has turned into a lesson in national unity and resilience," he said, asserting that Iran neither initiates war nor yields to pressure.

While reaffirming Iran's commitment to peace, dialogue, and diplomacy based on mutual respect, he declared that negotiations cannot be genuine with those who "attack, threaten, and sanction while pretending to talk." He urged international institutions to free themselves from the grip of powerful states and to once again become "true sanctuaries for nations, not instruments of pressure."

Concluding his address, Haji Babai stressed that lasting peace and security can only be achieved when double standards end, and that the global community must rebuild trust, multilateralism, and justice. "The world is watching," he said. "Silence today will be failure tomorrow."

The Iranian parliamentary delegation, led by Haji Babai and joined by several MPs, is attending the 151st IPU Assembly in Geneva, held under the theme "Safeguarding Humanitarian Norms and Promoting Inclusive Democracy for a Sustainable World."

Iran's Top Security Body Will Review Any IAEA Request for Talks



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Larijani says the body will review any request by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for negotiations, as a recent European bid to reinstate sanctions unraveled Tehran's cooperation agreement with the UN nuclear watchdog.

He made the remarks after a meeting with Iraq's National Security Advisor Qasim al-Araji in the Iranian capital of Tehran, less than a month after the conclusion of the so-called snapback process initiated by the UK, Germany, and France aimed at restoring all UN Security Council sanctions against Iran previously lifted under the 2015 nuclear deal.

Iran had earlier warned that the European trio's move would render null and void the agreement signed with the IAEA in Egypt's Cairo on September 9 on practical modalities to resume cooperation.

Asked by reporters whether Iran-IAEA talks will take place, Larijani said Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi "announced after the Cairo summit that if the snapback mechanism is invoked, negotiations will be considered null and void."

"If the agency submits a request on this matter, it must be reviewed by the Secretariat of the Supreme National Security Council," he added.

Iran suspended all cooperation with the IAEA following June's Israeli-US aggression against the country, citing the agency's politically motivated resolutions and its failure to condemn the terrorist assault.

Regarding IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi's position on Iran, Larijani said, "Grossi has done his part, and his reports will no longer have any impact."

SCO, BRICS, NAM Opposed to Return of Int'l Sanctions Against Iran



TEHRAN (PressTV) - A senior Iranian diplomat says the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the BRICS group of emerging economies, along with the Non-Aligned Movement, are against the reinstatement of the UN Security Council sanctions targeting Iran.

Kazem Gharibabadi, Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs, made the remarks in an address to the first meeting of the coordination headquarters for the SCO and BRICS in Tehran on Monday.

He said a number of countries have admitted that the Europeans misused the so-called snapback mechanism and the Security Council's capacity to re-impose sanctions against Iran.

"Today we are facing unilateralism, and Iran is dealing with sanctions and the issue of snapback."

The Iranian diplomat said, "What helps us assert that the world is not under the US dominance is the utilization of the capacities of BRICS and Shanghai."

He emphasized the importance of utilizing such capacities to serve common interests, the interests of independent and developing countries, and the NAM states.

Iran, on October 18, declared an end to all UN restrictions on its nuclear program following the expiration of Security Council Resolution 2231, which had endorsed the 2015 nuclear deal.

The Iranian diplomat said the SCO and BRICS constitute a significant portion of the world's population both qualitatively and quantitatively, stressing the need to have good planning.

"We need to plan for more measures and expand our relations in different fields," Gharibabadi said.



Energy Minister Attends OIC Water Ministers’ Conference in Saudi Arabia

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Minister of Energy traveled to Saudi Arabia to attend the 5th Conference of Ministers Responsible for Water of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), held from October 20–22, 2025 (28–30 Mehr 1404). According to the Ministry of Energy, Ali Akbar Aliabadi is leading the Iranian delegation at the event, hosted by Saudi Arabia’s Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture in Jeddah.

Strengthening Regional Cooperation Essential for a Better Future



TEHRAN - The Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Khusrav Noziri, emphasized that expanding regional cooperation and fostering unity among member states are vital steps toward building a better and more prosperous future.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the three-day ECO Summit in Zanjan, Noziri highlighted the importance of reinforcing regional partnerships, noting that Zanjan’s rich history and culture make it “a bridge connecting Iran to Europe, Africa, and other parts of the world.”

He described Zanjan as “the birthplace of the Sufi philosopher Suhrawardi and a former seat of ancient capitals,” underscoring its enduring role as a symbol of cultural and historical interconnection across the region.

The ECO chief underlined the region’s vast natural resources and human capital, saying, “These capacities can serve as key drivers of sustainable growth and development.” He added that ECO places strong emphasis on regional economic cooperation through shared mechanisms, particularly in partnership with member states such as Iran.

Noziri also pointed to the strategic importance of energy, agriculture, and shared opportunities in bolstering economic and international ties. He specifically mentioned regional projects like the North-South transport corridor, which can strengthen connectivity and trade across member countries.

Emphasizing the need for greater participation in trade and closer political and economic collaboration, Noziri expressed appreciation for the efforts of member governments—especially Iran—in promoting such partnerships. “We value the initiatives taken by our member countries to deepen cooperation and mutual understanding,” he said.

He voiced optimism about the future of the region, stating: “We hope Zanjan and its surrounding areas will soon achieve greater development and that their people will continue to benefit from increasing prosperity.”

The ECO chief concluded by thanking the attendees and reaffirming that regional solidarity and cooperation are essential foundations for a better shared future.

The three-day ECO meeting, hosted in Zanjan with the participation of ambassadors and representatives from member states, provides a major platform to highlight the province’s capabilities in industry, mining, agriculture, and services.

On the sidelines of the event, B2B meetings between Zanjan’s entrepreneurs and ECO delegates are being held to facilitate direct and effective trade connections. These sessions allow business leaders to present their products and services, explore investment opportunities, and lay the groundwork for bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

Delegates from nine ECO member countries are attending the summit, with Afghanistan, Turkey, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan identified as key partner nations.

Sharp Rise in Home Appliances Market Recession



TEHRAN - Nasrin Ojaghi, Secretary of the Iranian Home Appliances Manufacturers Association, has revealed that nearly 30 percent of household appliances in the market are smuggled, primarily through “te-lenji” traders and sailors. She warned that a recent law allowing border residents to import up to 10 percent of the country’s total imports duty-free or with minimal tariffs poses a serious threat to domestic producers — not only in the home appliance industry but also in the textile sector.

Ojaghi made these remarks during a press conference held on the eve of the 25th Annual Home Appliances Exhibition, attended by members of the media and newly appointed board member Mehrdad Mohammadi.

Ojaghi stated that Iran’s home appliance production has increased from 6 million units in 2017 to 20 million units in 2024, driven largely by private investment despite limited government support. Domestic manufacturers now meet the nation’s demand without relying on imported final products, although consumer preference for foreign brands still exists.

However, she noted a sharp downturn in 2025, with production dropping 38 percent in some sectors and 12 percent overall, while sales have fallen by 40–60 percent, marking one of the toughest years since the Iran-Iraq War.

Ojaghi expressed hope that this year’s exhibition would help revitalize the sluggish market and showcase domestic capabilities.

The exhibition covers 10 halls across 20,000 square meters of indoor space and 800 square meters of outdoor area, featuring 240 Iranian companies and 12 foreign firms from China, Brazil, Turkey, Japan, and South Korea. In addition, five trade delegations from Russia, Armenia, Pakistan, Iraq, and Afghanistan are expected to attend.

She added that the exhibition coincides with the Glassware and Crystal Fair, designed to present a complete export-oriented product portfolio to both domestic and international buyers.

Ojaghi criticized the recent decision to remove the Association from organizing the event — despite 24 successful previous exhibitions — and said that although the management was handed over via public tender, the Association continues to assist the new organizers to ensure a productive outcome.

When asked why some leading brands were absent from the exhibition, Ojaghi explained that the 12-day war in the region disrupted scheduling, forcing multiple exhibitions to be held simultaneously. Many companies, facing poor sales, have also cut marketing and participation costs to survive.

Ojaghi reported that smuggling now accounts for around 30 percent of the market.

The new “border residents” regulation, she warned, effectively allows large-scale imports under the guise of local trade — undermining domestic manufacturing.

She urged authorities to regulate and guarantee imported goods, noting that many smuggled or “te-lenji” products lack warranty coverage.

On the issue of damages from the Shahid Rajace Port incident, Ojaghi said there are no precise data on total losses and that insurance complexities continue to delay compensation.

She also cited electricity shortages as a major production barrier: “Power cuts halted manufacturing last summer, and although the issue has been partially resolved, imbalance in energy supply remains a key obstacle.”

Ojaghi emphasized that Iranian home appliances are increasingly competitive in quality, with positive consumer ratings across online platforms. However, she acknowledged that limited R&D investment, restricted access to advanced machinery, and import barriers have hampered further improvement.

Sales have particularly declined for refrigerators, washing machines, and dishwashers, as consumers are postponing large purchases or opting for repairs instead.

Board member Mehrdad Mohammadi criticized state-controlled pricing, calling it “completely destructive” to the industry.

He noted that foreign exchange allocation delays — sometimes exceeding 160 days — have forced manufacturers to rely on export or free-market currency, driving up production costs. Continued restrictions, he warned, could trigger another price surge within two to three months.

Mohammadi estimated that sanctions have increased import costs by up to 30 percent, mainly due to non-transparent payment channels and the lack of SWIFT or letters of credit (L/C).

“China remains Iran’s largest trading partner,” he said, “but circumventing sanctions raises overall costs and risks.”

Mohammadi added that due to economic instability, consumers increasingly prefer to invest in gold and foreign currency rather than purchasing durable goods.

He also warned that strict regulations on repatriating export earnings have made exports less profitable, further constraining the industry.

Mohammadi concluded that Iran has the potential to reach Turkey’s industrial scale, given access to markets such as Iraq and Afghanistan.

“If legal and export barriers are removed,” he said, “Iranian manufacturers can easily expand to regional and global levels.”

Caspian Nations Hold Private-Sector Trade Talks in Tehran

TEHRAN - Private-sector representatives from five Caspian littoral states convened in Tehran this week to strengthen regional trade and investment ties, as part of the 22nd Meeting of the International Council for Cooperation between Chambers of Commerce of Caspian Countries.

The two-day summit, hosted by the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) at the Espinas Persian Gulf Hotel, brought together business leaders and officials from Iran, Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Azerbaijan, alongside ambassadors, provincial authorities, and members of Iran’s parliament.

Participants emphasized the need to leverage the Caspian Sea’s strategic potential to expand economic cooperation, establish joint programs and specialized secretariats, design regional projects, and create shared digital platforms to connect investors and entrepreneurs across the region.

Opening the session, Hadi Tizhosh-Taban, head of the Iran-Russia Joint Chamber of Commerce, described the Caspian Sea as a vital strategic corridor linking Asia and Europe. He noted that the Council—founded more than three decades ago—has been instrumental in promoting both regional and interregional trade relations.

“This meeting offers a golden opportunity to share business experiences and foster collaboration in investment, technology exchange, and creating a transparent environment for secure investments,” he said.

Mahmoud Najafi-Arab, president of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, said the presence of Caspian countries’ delegations demonstrates “a shared determination to deepen economic cooperation and belief in a brighter future built on dialogue and mutual benefit.”

Najafi-Arab highlighted the Caspian basin as a historic crossroads of civilizations and trade, now regaining strategic significance amid shifting global energy and transit routes. He pointed to projects such as the International North–South Transport Corridor, joint energy and petrochemical ventures, and expanding cooperation in transportation, agriculture, technology, and tourism as “unprecedented opportunities for regional growth.”

He also underlined persistent challenges — including banking and currency restrictions, poor transport infrastructure, inconsistent customs regulations, and fragmented trade policies — that have hindered regional integration. “We must move from dialogue to implementation,” he urged, calling for pragmatic and forward-looking approaches.

Najafi-Arab proposed forming sectoral working groups on logistics, energy, agriculture, innovation, and tourism, alongside developing digital investment platforms to promote transparency



and attract cross-border capital. He said the Council should evolve from a symbolic forum into a results-driven, institutional mechanism capable of facilitating trade and joint ventures.

Dmitry Kurochkin, vice president of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Russian Federation, stressed that Caspian nations play a unique role in regional transport and logistics, citing the North–South Corridor as a route that could “fuel economic growth for the region and beyond.”

He said the Russian Chamber encourages companies to engage more actively with

Iran, particularly following Iran’s accession to BRICS, which he described as a catalyst for deepening bilateral economic ties.

Leonid Lozhenko, head of the Russia–Iran Business Council, echoed this view, announcing strategies to enhance cooperation in medical industries, cybersecurity, and high-tech sectors, as well as to expand trade in grains, timber, chemicals, and metals. He added that 80 percent of transactions are now conducted in rials and rubles, facilitated by Mir Business Bank, though financial transfers remain a major challenge.

Hadi Hejazi, governor of Gilan province, highlighted the underutilized logistical potential of the Caspian Sea, noting that only 25 percent of the total port capacity across the five nations is currently in use. He said that Iran and Russia alone could handle up to one billion tons of trade annually, rising to 1.5 billion tons when all littoral states are included.

Hejazi emphasized the urgency of completing the Rasht–Astara railway, a key link in the North–South Corridor, which is now more than one-third cleared and expected to be fully operational by year’s end.

Stanislav Sinchenko, head of the Astrakhan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, reported that trade between Astrakhan and Iran rose 50 percent in 2024, mainly involving grain exports and imports of ceramics and construction materials. More than 70 Iranian companies are now registered in the Astrakhan region, he said.

Begench Arazov, board member of the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of Turkmenistan, said his country is moving rapidly toward a liberalized economy with a greater private-sector role. He invited Caspian and neighboring investors, particularly from Iran, to participate in Turkmenistan’s evolving markets.

Finally, Abdollah Mohajer Darabi of Iran’s national chamber called for a review of past Council outcomes and progress reports from its secretariat, stressing that the combined trade volume of the five member nations represents “an exceptional opportunity” for private-sector partnerships.

The meeting concluded with a series of bilateral and multilateral business talks, paving the way for deeper commercial collaboration across the Caspian region.

Over 4m Tourists Visit Iran



TEHRAN - Minister of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism announced that 101 tourism investment projects are currently underway in Tehran Province, with a total investment value of 355 billion tomans and the creation of over 20,000 jobs.

Speaking at a meeting with tourism and cultural heritage investors on Monday evening, Minister Seyed Reza Salehi-Amiri emphasized the need for direct engagement rather than bureaucratic decision-making. “Sitting behind desks and making administrative decisions will not solve problems,” he said. “We must listen to investors and stakeholders firsthand and make decisions in the field. From day one, we adopted an on-the-ground approach and will continue it until we achieve results.”

Salehi-Amiri highlighted the ministry’s new policy of decentralization, noting that 90% of tourism-related permits and authorities have been delegated to provincial administrations. “Only in exceptional cases will decisions be made at the national level,” he added, explaining that this step is expected to simplify the investment process and accelerate project execution.

He also noted a significant financial shift: provincial control over tourism funds has grown from 80 billion tomans in previous years to 1,000 billion tomans today. “This reflects the government’s trust in local capacities and the private sector,” he said.

Providing the latest tourism statistics, Salehi-Amiri reported that 4.38 million foreign tourists visited Iran during the first half of the current year—a 15% decrease compared to the same period last year. However, he noted that “since September, the trend has started to recover,” expressing optimism that tourism numbers would return to normal levels by the end of the year.

The minister emphasized the importance of regular meetings, expert discussions, and practical decision-making to achieve Iran’s tourism development goals. He called for greater coordination among governors, government departments, and investors to remove barriers and complete unfinished projects.

\$128m in Engineering Services Exported to Iraq in Six Months



TEHRAN - The head of the Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture announced that Iran exported \$128 million worth of technical and engineering services to Iraq during the first half of this year, noting that the figure is not satisfactory given the existing potential.

Speaking at the signing ceremony of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Iranian Petroleum Equipment Manufacturers Association (IPEMA), Yahya Al-e Es’haq said that Iran’s annual export of engineering services to Iraq currently stands between \$300 million and \$400 million, a level that must be increased significantly.

He warned that if Iran fails to make full use of Iraq’s vast opportunities in the technical and engineering sectors, other competitors will dominate the market.

Al-e Es’haq noted that Iran’s total exports to Iraq reached \$12 billion last year, while unofficial figures place the real number closer to \$15 billion. He recalled that Iran once exported as much as \$4 billion in engineering services annually, a figure that has since declined sharply.

Emphasizing Iraq’s importance as Iran’s second-largest export destination after China, he said that Iraq is currently implementing around 88 major engineering projects, valued at about \$100 billion, financed through both domestic funds and foreign investments.

Direct Passenger Shipping Line Between Chabahar and Muscat Launched



TEHRAN - Iran has inaugurated a direct passenger and tourism shipping line between Chabahar and Muscat, a move expected to boost regional tourism, trade, and connectivity between Iran and Oman. The announcement was made by Reza Masrour, Secretary of Iran’s Supreme Council of Free Trade and Special Economic Zones.

According to Masrour, the launch fulfills a major directive emphasized by President Ebrahim Raisi during his official visit to Chabahar last year. “One of the key points raised by the President in that visit was the establishment of a direct passenger shipping route between Chabahar and Muscat,” Masrour said. “With continuous efforts from the Secretariat of the Supreme Council of Free and Special Economic Zones and the cooperation of the Chabahar Free Zone Organization, the project has now been implemented with investment from the Omani side. Passenger voyages between Chabahar and Muscat are currently He highlighted the economic advantage of the new route, noting that sea travel between the two ports will be considerably cheaper than air travel from Chabahar to Oman or other regional destinations. The route, Masrour added, is expected to attract strong demand from both Iranian and foreign tourists.

Colombia Recalls Ambassador to U.S.

BOGOTA (Dispatches) - Colombia said on Monday it has recalled its ambassador from Washington after U.S. President Donald Trump said he would raise tariffs on the South American nation and stop all payments to it, intensifying a feud stemming from U.S. military strikes on vessels allegedly transporting drugs.

Trump also called Colombia's leftist President Gustavo Petro an "illegal drug leader" on Sunday, which Petro's government described as offensive, marking a new low in relations between Bogota and Washington.

"Daniel Garcia-Pena, Ambassador of Colombia in the United States of America, has been recalled for consultations by President Gustavo Petro and is now in Bogota," Colombia's foreign ministry said. "In the coming hours the national government will inform of the decisions taken."



Bolivia's New Leader Vows to Renew U.S. Ties After Two Decades



LA PAZ (Dispatches) - Bolivia's new pro-business president-elect vowed Monday to renew diplomatic ties with Washington as the South American country veered right after nearly two decades under socialist rule blamed by many for its myriad economic woes.

Rodrigo Paz, a 58-year-old economist-turned senator, emerged victorious in a run-off election Sunday, beating a fellow right-wing rival after a first voting round in August saw the socialist MAS party founded by ex-leader Evo Morales ousted from the race.

In his victory speech Sunday night, Paz proclaimed Bolivia was "reclaiming its place on the international stage."

And on Monday, he told reporters Bolivia's relationship with the United States "will be resumed" nearly 20 years after Morales kicked out Washington's ambassador.

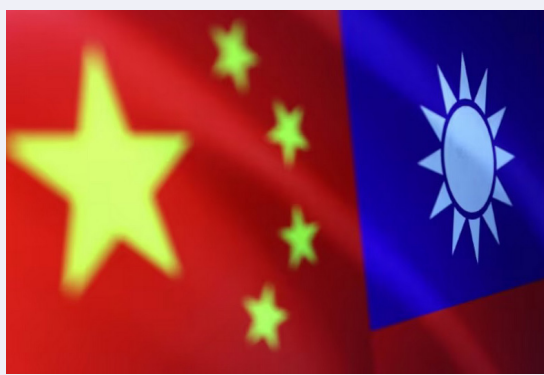
"We have been talking with the US government in particular. I believe this is very important," he said.

Paz is set to take office on November 8 facing an uphill task.

Bolivia's economy is in recession, according to the World Bank, and long queues for fuel have become a way of life. Dollars are in short supply and annual inflation is over 20 percent.

Under Morales, in office from 2006 to 2019, Bolivia took a sharp turn to the left -- nationalizing energy resources, breaking ties with Washington and making alliances with China, Russia and fellow leftists in Cuba, Venezuela and elsewhere in Latin America.

Trump Downplays Taiwan Risk in China Talks



WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - U.S. President Donald Trump said he expects to reach a fair trade deal with Chinese President Xi Jinping and downplayed risks of a clash over the issue of Taiwan, even as his top trade negotiator accused Beijing of engaging in "economic coercion."

Trump suggested to reporters that China had no designs on invading Taiwan but acknowledged he expected the issue to be on the agenda at a planned meeting with Xi on the sidelines of an economic conference in South Korea next week.

Trade tensions between the U.S. and China, the world's two biggest economies, have lingered. Disputes over tariffs, technology and market access remain unresolved days before the meeting. Trump spoke at the start of a meeting with Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese where the two signed a critical minerals agreement aimed at countering China.

Trump's comments on Taiwan reflect one of the most sensitive issues in U.S.-China relations. Beijing has repeatedly pressed Washington to alter the language it uses when discussing its position on Taiwanese independence.

Trump pledged to accelerate deliveries of nuclear submarines to Australia and was asked if U.S. actions in the waters of the Indo-Pacific were a sufficient deterrent to keep Xi from invading Taiwan. "China doesn't want to do that," Trump said, before boasting about the size and strength of the U.S. military.



WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - U.S. President Donald Trump and Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese signed a critical minerals agreement aimed at countering China at a meeting marked by Trump's jab at Australia's envoy to the United States over past criticism.

China loomed large at the first White House summit between Trump and Albanese, with the U.S. president also backing a strategic nuclear-powered submarine deal with Australia to bolster security in the Indo-Pacific.

While Trump and Albanese greeted each other warmly, the U.S. president expressed ire about past criticism of him by Australia's U.S. ambassador Kevin Rudd, a former prime minister. Rudd in 2020 called Trump "the most destructive president in history," later deleting the comment from social media.

Trump said he was not aware of the critical comments and asked where the envoy was now. Upon seeing him across the table, Trump said, "I don't like you either, and I probably never will."

The visit otherwise appeared to go smoothly, with Albanese and Trump signing a minerals deal that Trump said had been negotiated in recent months. Albanese described it as an \$8.5 billion pipeline "that we have ready to go."

A copy of the agreement released by both governments said the two countries will each invest \$1 billion over the next six months into mining and processing projects as well as set a minimum price floor for critical minerals, a move that Western miners have long sought.

A White House statement on the agreement added that the investments would target deposits of critical minerals worth \$53 billion, although it did not provide details on which types or locations.

"In about a year from now, we'll have so much critical mineral and rare earths that you won't know what to do with them," Trump told reporters.

The U.S. Export-Import Bank, which acts as the U.S. government's export credit agency, later announced seven letters of interest totaling more than \$2.2 billion to advance critical minerals projects in Australia. It said the letters went to Arafura Rare Earths, Northern Minerals, Graphinex, Latrobe Magnesium, VHM, RZ Resources, and Sunrise Energy Metals.

EXIM said the projects span a range of critical minerals essential to advanced defense systems, aerospace components, communications equipment, and next-generation industrial technologies.

The investments would help support the re-industrialization of America's high-tech manufacturing base, while helping to "counter China's export dominance and ensure Western supply-chain resilience," it said.

Additionally, the Pentagon plans to build a gallium refinery in Western Australia. China blocked gallium exports to the United States last December.

The United States has been looking to boost its access to critical minerals around the world as China takes steps to strengthen control over global supply. Trade tensions between the United States and China have escalated ahead of Trump's meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping in South Korea next week.

The term critical minerals applies to a range of minerals, including rare earths, lithium and nickel.

China has the world's largest rare earths reserves, according to U.S. Geological Survey data, but Australia also has significant reserves. The minerals are used for products ranging from electric vehicles to aircraft engines and military radars.

Albanese got welcome support from Trump for the \$368 billion (\$239.46 billion) AUKUS agreement, reached in 2023 under then-President Joe Biden. Under the deal, Australia is to buy U.S. nuclear-powered submarines in 2032 before building a new submarine class with Britain.

While Trump has been eager to roll back Biden-era policies, he signaled his intent to back the AUKUS submarine agreement, months after his team launched a review of the deal over concerns about the ability of the United States to meet its own submarine needs.

Navy Secretary John Phelan told the meeting the United States and Australia were working closely to improve the original AUKUS framework for all three parties "and clarify some of the ambiguity that was in the prior agreement."

Trump said these were "just minor details," adding that "there shouldn't be any more clarifications, because we're just - we're just going now full steam ahead, building."

Ahead of Monday's meeting, Australian officials emphasized that their country is paying its way under AUKUS, contributing \$2 billion this year to boost production rates at U.S. submarine shipyards, and preparing to maintain U.S. Virginia-class submarines at its Indian Ocean naval base from 2027.

The delay of 10 months in an official meeting since Trump took office had caused some anxiety in Australia as the Pentagon urged the Australian government to increase defense spending. The two leaders met briefly on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in New York last month.

The rare earths agreement came a week after U.S. officials condemned China's expansion of rare earth export controls as a threat to global supply chains.

U.S. Steps Up Diplomacy After Gaza Truce Shaken

CAIRO (Dispatches) - U.S. envoys met Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday aiming to corral Israel and Hamas to get the Gaza ceasefire plan back on track after an explosion of violence over the weekend that threatened to derail the week-old truce.

Israel and Hamas have both recommitted to the ceasefire plan brokered by U.S. President Donald Trump since Sunday's flare-up in which a Palestinian attack that killed two soldiers prompted an Israeli bombardment killing at least 28 people in Gaza.

However, with even the first stages of the truce shaken by repeated flashes of violence, including on Monday, it was far from clear whether the U.S. will be able to keep pressure on the two sides and maintain momentum to end the conflict.

The latest events reflected the stumbling blocks to keeping the long-sought ceasefire from unraveling and securing a lasting peace after two years of war in Gaza. Key questions of Hamas disarming, further Israeli troop pullbacks and future governance of the Palestinian enclave remain unresolved.

Trump, keeping pressure on both Hamas and Israel as he seeks to salvage the signature foreign policy achievement of the first year of his second term, said on Monday the U.S. was taking many steps to maintain the ceasefire.

He told reporters the "Hamas situation" would be handled quickly but that he had not told Israel to "go in and take care of it." He said that while Hamas was



in violation of the agreement, he did not believe its leadership was responsible but that it was facing "some rebellion" in its ranks.

If Hamas leaders do not straighten it out, "we're going to eradicate them if we have to," Trump said at the White House. But he insisted that such actions would not involve U.S. troops on the ground.

During their visit that began on Monday, the U.S. envoys, Steve Witkoff and Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner, were expected to try to shore up the truce

then start talks on the next, more difficult, phase of the 20-step plan. U.S. Vice President JD Vance was also due to visit Israel on Tuesday, with Netanyahu saying the pair would discuss regional challenges and opportunities.

High-level U.S. diplomacy in the region, with talks also due later on Monday with Hamas in Egypt, underscored the priority Trump has placed on cementing the ceasefire after proclaiming last week the deal heralded "the historic dawn of a new Middle East."

On Monday, Palestinian medics said three more people had been killed by Israeli tank fire near the "yellow line" inside Gaza demarcating Israel's initial military pullback from the main populated areas.

The Israeli military said forces had fired at militants who crossed that line, which it was started marking with concrete barriers and yellow poles about every 200 meters (219 yards).

Gaza City residents reported confusion over the line's location due to the lack of a visible boundary.

"The whole area is in ruins. We saw the maps, but we can't tell where those lines are," said Samir, 50, who lives in Tuffah.

Witkoff and Kushner's visit to Israel, aimed at discussions on the next phase of Trump's complex ceasefire plan, was scheduled before Sunday's flare-up in violence, according to U.S. and Israeli sources.

Israel is unlikely to publicize any progress in the talks until the remains of more hostages are returned.

The Red Cross received the body of another hostage from Hamas on Monday and transferred it to the Israeli military, Netanyahu's office said.

Ukraine Drone Attack on Russian Gas Plant Hits Kazakh Output

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - A Ukrainian drone attack on Russia's Orenburg gas plant has forced neighboring Kazakhstan to reduce production at its Karachaganak oil and gas condensate field by 25% to 30%, two industry sources told Reuters.

One of the world's largest gas processing plants, Orenburg was forced to suspend its intake of gas from Kazakhstan after the attack, Kazakhstan's energy ministry said on Sunday.

Ukraine confirmed it hit a gas plant in the Orenburg region, some 1,700 kilometres (1,060 miles) east of the Russian border with Ukraine, and an oil refinery in the Samara region.

Kyiv has stepped up its attacks on Russian refineries and other energy facilities since August to try to disrupt fuel supplies and deprive Moscow of funding.

Output at Karachaganak on Monday was down to between 25,000 metric tons (196,500 barrels per day) and 28,000 metric tons from the usual level of 35,000-35,500, according to two sources who spoke on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the situation.

They said Orenburg, which is controlled by gas producer Gazprom might resume some gas intake from Karachaganak on Monday. However, they declined to say when normal



levels of supply would be restored.

Oil and gas output at Karachaganak are closely linked, meaning the field is not able to produce much oil if its gas production is down.

Apart from processing at Orenburg, Karachaganak gas is used for re-injection to maintain reservoir pressure as well as for power generation at local facilities.

Karachaganak produced around 263,000 bpd of oil in 2024. It is exported by the Caspian Pipeline Consortium via a Russian Black Sea terminal, as well as through Russia's Druzhba pipeline to Germany.

The field is operated by a consortium which includes U.S. major Chevron (18%) and European energy firms Shell (29.25%) and Eni (29.25%).

Russia's Lukoil (13.5%) and local firm KazMunayGaz (10%) also hold stakes.

The consortium, Gazprom, and Kazakhstan's energy ministry did not reply to requests for comment.

Kazakh authorities agreed with Karachaganak shareholders in 2024 to build a new gas processing plant at the field with annual capacity of up to 4 billion cubic metres, expected to start operations in 2028.



Thunder Chase Repeat, Doncic Leads Lakers' Charge

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - The Oklahoma City Thunder will begin its pursuit of rare back-to-back championships when the 2025–26 NBA campaign tips off, but those hoping to catch LeBron James in action for a record 23rd season will have to wait for a few more weeks.

James will miss the Los Angeles Lakers' opening night for the first time in his career as he is sidelined by sciatica, leaving teammate Luka Doncic to lead his team's charge.

The Thunder headline a loaded Western Conference with the Minnesota Timberwolves, Golden State Warriors and Los Angeles Clippers among the chief contenders, ESPN analyst Tim Legler told reporters during a call.

"The Thunder deserve to be the gold standard going into the season," Legler said.

Oklahoma City won 68 games last season behind MVP Shai Gilgeous-Alexander and young core of Chet Holmgren, 23, and Jalen Williams, 24. The Thunder's balanced offense and size give them a path to be the first team to repeat as champions since the Warriors in 2017 and 2018.

Minnesota - a conference finalist the past two seasons -remains firmly in the championship conversation thanks to Anthony Edwards' year-over-year growth.

The Warriors, who added veteran big man Al Horford to their seasoned roster of Stephen Curry, Jimmy Butler and Draymond Green, are deep and dangerous, Legler said.

"If they're healthy, this Warriors team has a chance to be one of the top teams in the West," he said.

James, the league's all-time leading scorer, will add another record when he takes the floor for his 23rd season - but the Lakers said he will be out of action until mid-November as he is suffering from right-side sciatica.

Despite the injury setback, the 40-year-old said he is not thinking about retirement.

"I'm excited about the opportunity to be able to play the game that I love for another season,"

James said during the Lakers' media day.

"However, the journey lays out this year, I'm super-invested because I don't know when the end is. I know it's a lot sooner than later."

James' absence has shifted the early burden to Doncic in his first full season in Los Angeles.

The 26-year-old Slovenian arrived in a stunning midseason trade from Dallas and reported to camp leaner after a first-round exit to Minnesota.

Doncic opens among the MVP favorites with Denver's Nikola Jokic and Gilgeous-Alexander.

Teams continue to chase size to counter the towering Jokic, ESPN analyst Richard Jefferson said.

The Lakers added the talented but often-injured seven-footer Deandre Ayton, Golden State brought in Horford, and Dallas landed No. 1 pick Cooper Flagg.

No young center looms larger than the San Antonio Spurs' Victor Wembanyama, who may still be growing.

The 21-year-old Frenchman, listed at 7-foot-5 (2.26m) after a 7-foot-3 (2.21m) rookie year, could now be even taller, possibly an unfathomable 7-foot-7 (2.31m), ESPN's Brian Windhorst reported.

If healthy, Wembanyama is a leading Defensive Player of the Year candidate, with a growing offensive game that extends to playmaking and perimeter shooting.

In the East, injuries to Boston's Jayson Tatum and Indiana's Tyrese Halliburton could open the door for the gritty New York Knicks and the up-and-coming Cleveland Cavaliers, Legler said.

He expects the Celtics, under coach Joe Mazzulla, to stick with a high-volume three-point approach.

The 80th NBA regular season tips off on Tuesday and runs through April 12.

Sinner Opts Out of Davis Cup

LONDON (Dispatches) - Jannik Sinner has decided not to take part in this year's Davis Cup Finals with reigning champions Italy confirming his absence in Monday's team announcement, while world number one Carlos Alcaraz will represent Spain at next month's competition.

Sinner, ranked number two in the world, led Italy to a successful defence of their title last year in Spain, but will not be on home soil when the Final 8 takes place in Bologna from November 18-23.

"Jannik Sinner has not given his availability for 2025," Italian captain Filippo Volandri said.

"The Davis Cup is, and will remain, always his home and I am sure that Jannik will soon be part of the team again. In the meantime, I can count on a group ready to fight and give everything for the blue jersey."



Volandri's team is made up of Matteo Berrettini, Simone Bolelli, Flavio Cobolli, Lorenzo Musetti and Andrea Vavassori.

Sinner, who won the Australian Open and Wimbledon this year and reached the final of all four Grand Slams, will be in Turin a week before the Davis Cup to defend his ATP Finals title, where Alcaraz has also secured his place in the season-ending event.

Alcaraz will be bidding to earn Spain their first Davis Cup success since 2019, with Jaume Munar, Pedro Martinez, and Marcel Granollers also selected by the Spaniards.

World number three Alexander Zverev is set to make his first appearance at the Davis Cup Finals, with the 28-year-old named on the Germany team.

Broncos Top Giants Behind Historic Comeback

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Wil Lutz made a 39-yard field goal as time expired to lift the Denver Broncos -- who entered the fourth quarter trailing 19-0 -- to a stunning 33-32 comeback win over the visiting New York Giants.

Bo Nix passed for 279 yards and two touchdowns and rushed for 48 yards and two more scores for Denver (5-2), which also trailed 26-8 with just over five minutes remaining. The 33 fourth-quarter points are the most in NFL history by a team that had been shut out in the first three quarters.

Jaxson Dart completed 15 of 33 passes for 283 yards and three touchdowns, but threw a costly interception in the fourth quarter for New York (2-5). Cam Skattebo rushed 16



times for 60 yards for the Giants, who allowed the most points in a quarter in franchise history.

After Dart gave the Giants a 32-30 lead with a 1-yard run with 37 seconds left to play, Jude McAtamney missed the extra-point attempt. Denver then went 56 yards on four plays, with Nix's 22-yard strike to Courtland Sutton getting the ball to the New York 22 to set Lutz up for the winner.

Jalen Hurts tossed three touchdowns, A.J. Brown and DeVonta Smith both had big games, and Philadelphia Eagles held off Minnesota Vikings for the 28-22 victory in Minneapolis.

No Major Concerns, Says Piastri After Seeing F1 Lead Slashed



AUSTIN (Dispatches) - Oscar Piastri said he still had full confidence in his ability to win the Formula One championship, and no major concerns, despite a tough weekend in Texas that saw rivals slash his overall lead.

The Australian retired from the Saturday sprint after a first corner collision with McLaren teammate Lando Norris and finished fifth in Sunday's main race at Austin's Circuit of the Americas.

Norris is now only 14 points behind, after starting the weekend 22 adrift, while Red Bull's Max Verstappen won both races and is 40 behind Piastri after lagging him by 104 at the end of August.

There are five rounds remaining, with two more sprint races and a maximum 141 points to be won.

"You know, I've been in fights that were as close or at this point even closer than what they are now," Piastri told reporters, referring to previous experience in junior championships.

"I've got the evidence for myself that things can still turn out well and I still fully believe that I can win the championship.

"This weekend has obviously been tough and the gap has come down a little bit in the last few weekends. But, you know, again, performance is what's going to win you a championship, not just looking at points and seeing if you can increase it or decrease it.

"The faster you go, the more points you're going to score and that's what I'll focus on."

Piastri played down the threat from Verstappen, who has won three of the last four races and is chasing a fifth successive title, with the dream back on after looking impossible not so long ago.

Brentford Cruise to Victory at Hapless West Ham



LONDON (Dispatches) - Igor Thiago and Mathias Jensen scored as Brentford secured a 2-0 Premier League victory over West Ham United, inflicting a club record fourth successive home league loss at the start of the season on their hosts.

Brentford moved up to 13th in the table with 10 points from eight games, while West Ham, booed off by their fans, are 19th with four points.

New West Ham manager Nuno Espirito Santo will have seen the size of the job at hand as his side were second to everything and only the woodwork and wasteful Brentford finishing prevented a rout.

"It's very nice to get the three points and get away from the relegation zone," Brentford midfielder Mikkell Damsgaard said.

"We missed a lot of chances, on set-pieces we could have had more (goals), but we are happy with the three points. We are finding a rhythm as a team and connecting a bit more."

There were empty seats at kickoff as what seemed like several thousand West Ham fans staged a stay-away in protest against chairman David Sullivan and vice-chair Karren Brady.

"It was 2-0 but probably could have been more to them," West Ham captain Jarrod Bowen said. "We started well and had some corners and set-piece, but the goals were poor (to concede) on our part.

"We will only get better by watching back the things we have not done well. We are not doing anything well this season."

Brentford came into the game having lost all three of their away league matches this season but had 22 attempts on goal, the most they have managed away from home in the Premier League.

The goal that had been coming for Brentford arrived on 43 minutes as a long ball was collected by Kevin Schade on the edge of the box and he held off three defenders before feeding Thiago.

The striker's shot was half-blocked by West Ham goalkeeper Alphonse Areola, but the ball dribbled into the corner of the net.