

Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi Asserts That Iran Is Answerable Only to “the Rule of Law, Not Coercion,” Commenting on the Scheduled Legal Expiration of All Nuclear Restrictions on the Islamic Republic

IRAN NEWS

The Group of Friends in Defense of the UN Charter Issued a Strong Rebuke of the European Troika, Also Known as the E3 Countries, Stating That Their Recent Attempt to Reinstate UN Sanctions on Iran Is “Legally and Procedurally Flawed”

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Iran Launches Six Satellites Annually



ISFAHAN (IRNA) - Director of the Iranian Space Research Center Vahid Yazdani has announced that Iran successfully launches six satellites into space each year, alongside remarkable advancements in satellite launch technology.

Speaking before Friday prayers in Isfahan, he emphasized the rapid progress in the development and launch of entirely Iranian-made satellites, highlighting a bright outlook for the future.

Yazdani noted that previous efforts in the 1990s to launch domestically produced satellites did not yield results, but the determination of Iranian scientists in the 2000s led to the successful launch of the first satellite. He explained that these satellites play a crucial role in enhancing communication capabilities, directly impacting the quality of life for citizens.

Furthermore, he emphasized that the space industry contributes to national security and economic ecosystems. The strategy to leverage advancements in this sector aims to improve the livelihoods of the population and continues to be a priority, he added.

Despite facing significant challenges due to sanctions, Yazdani said that Iran has overcome these obstacles and achieved self-sufficiency in space technology.

In recent years, the country has made numerous achievements in the space domain, consistently enhancing its global standing.

No Legal Basis to Uphold Sanctions as Resolution 2231 Expires



TEHRAN - Iran's embassy in Denmark says the continuation of sanctions or restrictions imposed on Tehran's peaceful nuclear program will be illegal with the expiration of the UN Security Council Resolution 2231 that endorsed the 2015 Iran nuclear deal.

The embassy issued a statement on Friday, a day before the official expiration of the resolution.

"Since Resolution 2231 (2015) will reach its agreed expiration date on October 18, 2025, it is essential that the issue of Iran's peaceful nuclear program be properly removed from the agenda of the UN Security Council," it said.

It added that this process has been hindered following the "unilateral and illegitimate" actions of the European trio. Britain, France, and Germany triggered the so-called snapback mechanism on August 28, setting in motion a 30-day process to restore all UN sanctions on Iran.

Despite last-minute efforts by Russia and China to preserve diplomacy, the Security Council failed to reach a consensus on September 26.

Two days later, the E3 and the United States declared the sanctions reinstated and urged UN member states to enforce them. Iran has rejected the measure as illegitimate.

Elsewhere in its statement, the Iranian embassy outlined six fundamental reasons for the "invalid and void" move by the E3.

UNSC Resolution 2231 Officially Expired, Nuclear File Should Exit Security Council Agenda

TEHRAN - The Foreign Ministry has issued a statement, underlining expiration of UN Security Council Resolution 2231 and its relevant provisions and restrictions as well as the removal of Iran's peaceful nuclear energy program from the council's agenda.

The statement emphasized that with the conclusion of the 10-year period set by the resolution on Saturday, the Islamic Republic's nuclear program must now be treated like that of any other non-nuclear-weapon state under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

From this point onward, the country is bound solely by its rights and obligations under the NPT, with no additional limitations either imposed or recognized, it noted.

The statement highlighted that the original rationale for placing Iran's nuclear issue on the Security Council's agenda, namely verifying the peaceful nature of its related program, has been fully achieved.

This assertion, the ministry added, was supported by the fact that no report by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has indicated any diversion of the country's nuclear activities toward military purposes, despite political pressure from the United States and its European allies.

The statement also stressed that Iran had consistently adhered to its nuclear commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the 2015 nuclear agreement that was endorsed by Resolution 2231, despite facing harsh sanctions, whereas the Western states repeatedly violated their obligations.

"Iran pursued transparency and compliance, but the US's irresponsible withdrawal in 2018 and the European trio (the UK, France, and Germany)'s failure to uphold their commitments dealt a major blow to multilateral diplomacy," the ministry said.

Aside from illegally and unilaterally leaving the deal, the US returned its sanctions against the Islamic Republic and went on to subject the country to even more coercive economic measures.

The European trio too stopped their trade with Iran, besides refusing to uphold their promise of returning Washington to the accord.

Additionally, the statement condemned the troika's taking one step further to activate the JCPOA's so-called "snapback" mechanism that mandated re-imposition of the Western allies' and the Security Council's nuclear-related sanctions against the country.



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It reminded that the trio had, on the back of their non-commitment, lost all legal and moral right to take the measure.

The ministry called on the UN secretary-general to immediately correct misinformation published on the UN website regarding alleged reinstatement of expired Security Council resolutions involving the Islamic Republic.

The statement further described any attempt to re-establish the council's sanctions committees or expert panels as illegal and urged all UN member states to reject claims by the US and Europe regarding revival of defunct resolutions.

Elsewhere in the statement, the ministry strongly condemned the Israeli regime's and the US's unlawful and unprovoked war on Iran in June that claimed the lives of more than 1,000 people, including small children, besides

afflicting damage on the country's peaceful nuclear facilities.

It described the aggression as "a betrayal of diplomacy and a blatant violation of international law and the NPT framework," noting that the assaults had led to destruction of nuclear and other infrastructure as well as significant disruption of Iran's cooperation with the IAEA.

The ministry, meanwhile, expressed gratitude for the responsible positions of China and Russia as well as Algeria and Pakistan in opposing the European abuse of the JCPOA's "dispute mechanism."

Last month, the countries voted against a draft resolution aimed at delaying the "snapback" mechanism, while the US and its allies vetoed it.

The statement also acknowledged South Korea's and Guyana's abstention in the face of the draft resolution.

It further thanked the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)'s members and the Friends of the UN Charter group for supporting termination of Resolution 2231, respectively on Thursday and late last month.

The ministry concluded the statement by reaffirming Iran's commitment to diplomacy, while firmly defending the legitimate rights and interests of the Iranian nation, including the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Iran Plans to Launch Space Vocational School and Academy to Attract Top Talent

TEHRAN - The Iranian Space Research Institute has unveiled an ambitious plan to establish a Space Vocational School and Academy, modeled on Russia's educational system, with the goal of nurturing the country's next generation of space scientists and engineers. The program is designed to identify, train, and retain talented youth from both within Iran and abroad, forming a strong foundation for the nation's growing space sector.

According to Mohammad Maleki, Senior Advisor to the President of the Iranian Space Research Institute, the initiative is part of a broader effort to strengthen Iran's position in the global space industry. "This academy will help build a sustainable infrastructure that ensures the active participation of top students and researchers in all aspects of space science and technology," Maleki explained.

In an interview with IRNA, Maleki emphasized that the institute is committed to supporting advanced academic research in the space field. "We provide financial assistance of 100 million tomans for master's theses and 200 million tomans for doctoral dissertations related to space sciences," he said. These grants are available for individual research projects as well as collaborative initiatives with universities.

He noted that faculty members and graduate students are actively involved in building essential infrastructure and even developing satellites. "We have a structured cooperation program with universities, and the necessary budget allocations have already been secured," Maleki said. "Despite challenges in other sectors, both the Minister of Communications and the head of the Space Research Institute have fully supported these initiatives."

Maleki further highlighted that Iran has become a regional leader in attracting top students in aerospace engineering, computer science, telecommunications, and artificial intelligence, both domestically and internationally.

The institute has significantly increased its support for academic research in recent years. "Last year, we funded approximately 150 theses, and this year we plan to support nearly 400," Maleki stated. The institute maintains regional branches, with main centers located in Tabriz, Shiraz, and Isfahan, where officials meet with university leaders to sign cooperation agreements and expand collaborative programs.

"There are no financial limits for approved projects," he emphasized. "As long as universities propose research topics aligned with our strategic goals, we provide full support. Every project ultimately contributes to the country's space program."

Maleki also noted that new contracts for both fundamental and applied research are being finalized for the year 1404 (2025-2026). "Universities are increasingly adopting a collaborative approach, which is encouraging for the advancement of our programs," he added.

Maleki stressed the institute's role as the nation's central hub for satellite development, responsible for completing the satellite production chain under the Ministry of Communications. "We not only have a regulatory responsibility but also a strong interest in encouraging young



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scientists and academics to participate in the space industry," he said.

Acknowledging the high costs associated with space projects globally, he referred to remarks by the head of Russia's Space Agency. Despite these expenses, Iran's support programs have motivated students to pursue careers in space research. "Among all national research institutes, ours offers the highest financial support for academic theses and projects," Maleki said.

At the master's level, research is typically theoretical, while doctoral studies often involve practical design and production, which can be costly. "We cover those expenses as well," Maleki explained. "If a project contributes to our satellite production goals, we provide additional funding for production. We have no restrictions—in fact, we actively encourage such initiatives."

The institute is also pursuing international collaborations to optimize costs and share resources. "We have held multiple discussions aimed at developing joint projects," Maleki said. "Partnerships with countries like Russia are already in progress, offering mutual benefits, reduced expenses, and shared access to project outcomes."

He echoed the Supreme Leader's call to place greater emphasis on fundamental sciences, adding: "Engineers with strong knowledge in these fields will excel in their specialties. Globally, in countries like the United States and Russia, experts in basic sciences are central to space research and often serve as advisors."

To address future workforce needs, Maleki said the institute is working to introduce new interdisciplinary programs closely aligned with space sciences. Inspired by Russia's approach following the launch of its first satellite, Iran plans to establish its own Space Vocational School and Academy.

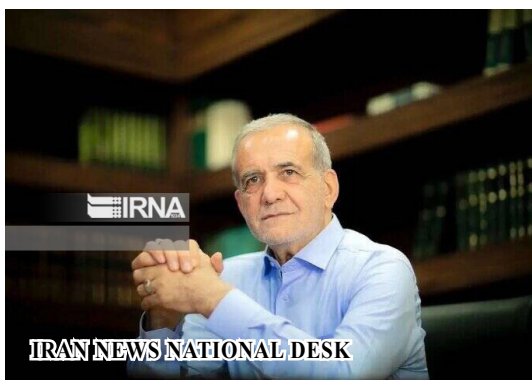
"Our aim is to familiarize students with the space sector from an early age," Maleki explained. "Students will have the opportunity to study aerospace and aviation subjects in high school through specialized institutions." Negotiations are underway with the Ministry of Education, and officials hope to implement the project soon.

Maleki emphasized that a strong foundation in basic sciences is crucial for success in space disciplines. "Even in PhD interviews abroad, candidates are first tested on mathematics and physics," he said. "These subjects shape analytical thinking and problem-solving abilities essential for innovation."

Maleki also praised Iranian students' success in international astronomy competitions, stressing the need to nurture this talent. "If gifted students are not guided into engineering and the basic sciences, their potential will fade," he warned. "We must create programs to attract both domestic and international talent to strengthen Iran's space sector."

Concluding his remarks, Maleki expressed optimism about the future: "We have already achieved significant success in recruiting top graduates and experts, and we will continue expanding our efforts to make Iran a key player in the global space industry."

Iran, the Land of Bravery and Art, Embraces a Great Destiny



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - President Masoud Pezeshkian hailed the inscription of three Iranian villages — Shafiabad, Sohaili, and Kandolus — on the UN World Tourism Organization's (UNWTO) list of Best Tourism Villages, saying the achievement once again illuminated Iran's name on the global tourism map.

"From the heart of the desert to the slopes of the Alborz Mountains and the turquoise coast of the Persian Gulf, the villages of Shafiabad in Kerman, Kandolus in Mazandaran, and Sohaili in Qeshm have once again made Iran shine on the world tourism map," Pezeshkian wrote on his social media account on Friday. "Iran, the land of bravery and art, embraces a great destiny — for Iran, a global Iran, and a great Iran."

According to IRNA, the UNWTO's Evaluation Committee for Best Tourism Villages announced on Friday during its fifth selection meeting in Huzhou, Zhejiang Province, China, that Kandolus Village in Mazandaran has been officially recognized among the world's top tourism destinations for 2025.

Kandolus gained international recognition over the past three decades for its unique ethnographic museum, well-preserved traditional architecture, pristine nature, and rich cultural heritage. These qualities led Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts to nominate the village for inclusion in the UNWTO list.

In recent years, the Mazandaran provincial tourism office has worked to strengthen Kandolus's candidacy through projects such as establishing a literary tourism route inspired by the local tale "Mina and the Leopard", creating a themed doll based on the story, organizing tourism training workshops, and developing cultural programs to promote sustainable tourism.

No Threat Can Undermine Iran's Security, Independence



TEHRAN (PressTV) - A senior commander of the Iranian Army has asserted that no threat can undermine the security and independence of the Islamic Republic, reaffirming the unwavering preparedness of the Armed Forces.

Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari, deputy chief of the Iranian Army for Coordination, made the remarks on Friday while addressing cadets and faculty members at Imam Ali Officers' University in Tehran — the country's premier military academy responsible for training future Army officers and developing leadership skills based on modern defense and strategic doctrines.

Sayyari said that enduring peace and stability are attainable only through strength, readiness, and deterrence. "A war occurs where there is no readiness. Therefore, as long as the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran are at a proper level of readiness in terms of training, equipment, and morale, the enemy will never have the ability to threaten or attack," he said.

He added that Iran's well-prepared and devoted armed forces would ultimately prevail in any confrontation, emphasizing their commitment to defending the nation's sovereignty and values.



Nine Regional Countries Move Toward Unifying Energy Exchanges

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The CEO of Iran Energy Exchange announced that nine energy-rich countries in the region have expressed determination to form closer cooperation among their energy exchanges and establish independent pricing benchmarks outside Western systems.

Speaking at the 8th Russian Energy Week International Forum, Mohammad Nazifi said Iran and Russia, as two of the world's largest energy producers, hold a dominant share of global energy markets. "If regional markets join these two countries, their collective influence on global energy markets will be substantial," he stated.

Iran-Iraq Tourism Exchanges Expected to Reach 5m Visitors Next Year



TEHRAN - Iran's Ambassador to Iraq, Mohammad Kazem Al Sadegh, has expressed optimism that the number of annual tourist exchanges between Iran and Iraq will reach five million travelers by next year, highlighting that private sector engagement and tourism events are key to achieving this goal.

Al Sadegh underscored the importance of organizing joint tourism events between the two countries to foster growth and development in the tourism sector. "At present," he said, "the private sector in Iraq has shown strong interest in hosting the first Iranian tourism roadshow in the country. We hope that through these initiatives, the goal of five million annual tourists between Iran and Iraq will be achieved."

According to Iranian tourism experts, Iraq accounts for more than 50 percent of Iran's total tourism exchanges, yet until recently, there had been no organized efforts to strengthen and expand tourism cooperation between the two neighboring nations.

The launch of the first Iranian Tourism Roadshow in Iraq, they say, is a significant milestone — not only in enhancing bilateral relations between Tehran and Baghdad but also in broadening the scope of tourism beyond traditional pilgrimage travel.

Ambassador Al Sadegh noted that Iran-Iraq relations have grown steadily across multiple areas in recent years. "Today, we are witnessing the firm will of both governments to elevate bilateral cooperation to the highest levels," he said. "Among the key foundations of these relations are cultural, religious, and scientific ties, which play an essential role in strengthening people-to-people connections."

He emphasized that historical, religious, and academic bonds between the two countries represent "an invaluable asset for the development of the tourism industry." With over 1,600 kilometers of shared borders and the potential to host 11.4 million cross-border travelers annually, Iran and Iraq possess "a unique capacity for expanding tourism collaboration and achieving deeper mutual understanding."

While most of the current travel between the two nations centers around pilgrimage tourism — particularly for religious events such as Arbacia — Al Sadegh believes that organized tourism events can help present a broader image of Iran's rich attractions.

"Tourism events allow us to showcase the vast range of Iran's cultural, natural, and historical sites," he said. "They also create an opportunity for Iraqis to experience Iran beyond its religious destinations — from its ancient heritage and vibrant cities to its landscapes and modern tourism infrastructure."

Iran Expresses Concern Over Unfair Impact of Greenhouse Gas Emission Policies on Developing Countries



TEHRAN - During an extraordinary session of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC/ES.2) in London, the Islamic Republic of Iran expressed its support for global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while voicing concern over the disproportionate and unfair impacts such measures may have on developing nations.

The extraordinary session of the International Maritime Organization's Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC/ES.2) began on Tuesday, October 14, 2025, at IMO headquarters in London. The session was convened to review and finalize new amendments to Annex VI of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL Annex VI) and to decide on the adoption of the IMO Net-Zero Framework.

This session follows the 83rd meeting of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 83), held earlier this year in May, where a draft amendment was approved to impose mandatory regulations for collecting carbon emission taxes on ship fuel as part of the IMO's net-zero strategy. Based on that decision, an extraordinary session was scheduled for late October to formally adopt the regulations and outline their implementation procedures.

Three Villages Added to UN Tourism List

TEHRAN - Iran's Deputy Minister of Tourism has declared that the international recognition of three Iranian villages by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UN Tourism) sends a clear message to the global community: despite political and economic challenges, Iran remains one of the world's safest, richest, and most culturally vibrant tourist destinations.



Following the official inscription of the villages of Soheili (Qeshm Island), Kandolus (Mazandaran Province), and Shafiabad (Kerman Province) on the UN Tourism list, Deputy Minister Anoushirvan Mohseni Bandpey issued a statement celebrating this milestone, describing it as "a source of national pride and an affirmation of Iran's exceptional standing in sustainable tourism, cultural diversity, and indigenous heritage."

According to Bandpey, the recognition of these three villages — each unique in geography, history, and culture — is the result of "years of perseverance, unity, and dedication by communities who have preserved the authentic values of Iranian life and introduced a new face of Iran to the world through local development initiatives."

He emphasized that in today's world, where global tourism increasingly prioritizes sustainability, environmental protection, and cultural authenticity, this recognition carries meaning far beyond a formal title.

The village of Soheili, located on Qeshm Island in the Persian Gulf, represents "a stunning example of harmony between people and nature." Surrounded by the Hara mangrove forests and the azure waters of the Persian Gulf, its residents have successfully blended traditional fishing with eco-tourism, transforming local limitations into opportunities.

Further north, Kandolus in Mazandaran Province showcases the charm of northern Iran with its lush mountain landscapes, traditional architecture, rich agricultural heritage, and handicrafts. Bandpey described it as "a model of balanced coexistence between culture, land, and people — where sustainable living defines everyday life."

In Iran's southeast, Shafiabad village in Kerman Province has emerged as a symbol of resilience and creativity. Nestled near the legendary Kalouts of the Lut Desert and sustained by ancient qanat irrigation systems, the village demonstrates how life can flourish amid silence, soil, and sand. The prominent role of women in tourism and handicrafts, as well as the revival of traditional architecture adapted to desert conditions, make Shafiabad "an inspiring example of endurance, innovation, and hope."

"These three villages, each in their own way, narrate a part of Iran's grand story — a country of extraordinary climatic, cultural, and human diversity," Bandpey stated. "From the southern shores to the northern mountains and eastern deserts, life, beauty, and authenticity are deeply intertwined."

The inscription of these villages, he continued, is not only a testament to Iran's capacity for rural tourism but also "a powerful message to the global community that Iran, despite external challenges, continues to be one of the world's most secure, hospitable, and culturally profound destinations."

From a policy perspective, Bandpey emphasized that this achievement supports Iran's broader goals for sustainable tourism development, rural empowerment, and the revitalization of local economies. "When villages gain global recognition, they become magnets for domestic and international visitors — stimulating local economies, generating youth employment, preserving cultural heritage, and strengthening national identity," he said.

He added that the Tourism Ministry views such accomplishments as vital to reversing urban migration trends and promoting investment in local infrastructure. "The continuity of these achievements requires comprehensive support, scientific planning, long-term vision, and active participation of local communities — because without people, no development can truly be sustainable."

Bandpey praised the spirit of solidarity that made this recognition possible. "The global registration of these three villages — achieved under the administration of national unity and in line with the policies of the 14th government — marks another golden page in the proud history of the Islamic Republic of Iran."

He extended heartfelt congratulations to Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Dr. Salehi Amiri, acknowledging his "tireless leadership and unwavering support," as well as to the people of the three villages, local officials in Hormozgan, Mazandaran, and Kerman provinces, tourism activists, local councils, NGOs, and all cultural heritage and tourism professionals across the country.

"This success," he wrote, "proves that the global community views Iran with respect — as a nation defined by its culture, history, and the authenticity of its people."

Official Reveals Details of Iran's Oil and Gas Exploration Projects in Ardabil, Persian Gulf Border Zone

TEHRAN - The Director of Exploration at the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) has announced new developments in the country's oil and gas exploration efforts, including the discovery of oil springs in Ardabil Province and the launch of seismic operations in the Persian Gulf's border region shared with Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain.

In an interview with ILNA, Seyed Mohiuddin Jafari, Director of Exploration at NIOC, provided an overview of the ongoing exploration projects across Iran. He stated that exploration operations are currently underway in 26 provinces, including the Zagros region, North and South Dezful, Lorestan, Fars, Ardabil, North Khorasan, South Khorasan, Razavi Khorasan, Kermanshah, Ilam, and Bushehr.



According to Jafari, two-dimensional (2D) and three-dimensional (3D) seismic surveys are in progress in Ardabil Province. The presence of natural oil springs in the region, along with active oil production across the border in the Republic of Azerbaijan, has raised hopes of discovering new hydrocarbon fields in Iran's northern frontier.

He added that a tender has been launched for 2D and 3D seismic operations in the Pars Apadana area of the Persian Gulf, located along Iran's maritime border with Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the UAE, and Bahrain. This project will initially cover about 10 percent of the designated offshore zone, marking one of the most significant exploration efforts in the Persian Gulf region in recent years.

Jafari reported that seismic data acquisition — both 2D and 3D — is ongoing at four key locations across the country. For another four sites, contractors will be finalized before the end of the year. He described the progress of these projects as "very satisfactory."

"At present," he said, "four wells are being drilled, and one well is undergoing testing. We expect to have more positive exploration results by the end of the year."

The director elaborated that two wells have reached completion, one is in the testing phase, and another is being relocated. Meanwhile, two new wells — in the Rag Sefid and Jahrom regions — have recently begun drilling operations. Testing is ongoing at the Takhteh well, and work at Ramhormoz is nearing completion. Once these operations conclude, drilling rigs will be reassigned to new exploration sites.

Currently, six drilling rigs are active in exploration fields across the country — three dedicated to gas fields and three to oil fields.

Addressing questions about international exploration projects,

Jafari clarified that Iran does not currently operate exploration programs abroad. However, the NIOC has been active in training and technical cooperation with neighboring countries.

"Given our experience and expertise in exploration," he noted, "we have provided training to geologists and engineers from Tajikistan last year. Additionally, during the recent meeting between the energy ministers of Iran and Afghanistan, the Afghan side requested training and technical support in exploration. We are planning negotiations this month to offer educational programs in that field."

Jafari also commented on potential conflicts of interest in border explorations, saying, "There may be overlapping areas of interest, but there are no complexities. We are conducting joint operations with several neighboring countries in western border fields and plan to expand offshore exploration with five coastal nations. However, so far, there have been no conflicts."

Highlighting a crucial challenge, Jafari stressed the need to expand Iran's drilling fleet. "Rigs are essential tools for production, development, and exploration," he said. "We require additional rigs not only for new discoveries but also for overhauling existing wells. The National Iranian Oil Company is investing in this area, and private investors are cooperating to import and deploy new rigs to meet the country's needs."

He confirmed that the NIOC plans to invest in five new onshore drilling rigs and one offshore rig through a bidding process aimed at enhancing the nation's exploration capacity.

Addressing concerns about the impact of international sanctions, Jafari stated that Iran's exploration projects have not been significantly affected. "Exploration is an intellectual and scientific endeavor rather than a hardware-dependent one," he explained. "We have sufficient rigs and equipment domestically, and necessary materials are available. Most of the work depends on human expertise and engineering studies rather than imported machinery."

The Director concluded by expressing optimism about Iran's exploration outlook: "With the ongoing seismic operations in Ardabil and the Persian Gulf, along with advanced drilling across the country, we expect to announce new discoveries by the end of this year."

Production Index Rose by 10% in September



TEHRAN - The Deputy Minister of Industry, Mine, and Trade announced a 10 percent increase in the national production index for September, emphasizing the need to harness Sistan and Baluchestan Province's rich mineral resources—particularly copper and gold—to improve local livelihoods.

Vajihollah Jafari made the remarks on Thursday during a ceremony honoring 38 top economic achievers from Sistan and Baluchestan. He praised the province's business leaders for their outstanding performance in the mining, industrial, commercial, and trade sectors over the past year, despite regional and structural challenges, describing them as "exemplary economic officers and soldiers" who have driven notable growth.

Citing a report by the Parliament Research Center, Jafari noted significant progress in production and sales indicators in recent months. He stated that the production index increased by 10.8 percent compared to the previous month and by 10 percent compared to the same period last year. The sales index, he added, rose by 16.1 percent compared to August.

In the mining sector, Jafari reported a 9.2 percent growth in the first half of the current year compared to the same period last year, attributing part of this success to the expansion of mining activities in Sistan and Baluchestan.

He underscored the province's vast mineral potential as a key driver of economic development, highlighting ongoing progress in major mining projects such as the Janja copper mine. Jafari also urged greater investment in exploring the region's gold reserves as a means to enhance local prosperity and quality of life.

Outlining the targets set in Iran's Seventh Development Plan, Jafari said the ministry aims for 8.5 percent annual growth in industry, 13 percent in mining, and 23 percent in commerce. He noted that Sistan and Baluchestan, with its substantial natural and mineral capacities, could claim a larger share of national growth.

Gov't's Policy Focuses on Facilitating Investment and Strengthening National Power



TEHRAN - First Vice President, Mohammad Reza Aref, said the Fourteenth Government is firmly committed to supporting industrialists and entrepreneurs, emphasizing that enhancing national power is a central strategy of the administration. He added that the government trusts the private sector and is delegating part of its responsibilities to it.

Speaking in a meeting with industrialists and entrepreneurs in Yazd Province, Aref noted that numerous sessions have been held at the presidential and vice-presidential levels to address challenges facing producers and business owners. "These meetings demonstrate the government's determination to solve the problems of industrialists and entrepreneurs to boost domestic production," he said.

Aref reiterated that the government's approach is to transfer certain executive functions to the private sector, trusting its competence. However, he clarified that legal action against a small number of violators should not be mistaken for hostility toward private businesses.

He also highlighted the government's plan to delegate authority to provincial administrations, particularly border provinces, to manage essential goods imports. "Each border province has been designated as the support province for an inland one, to ensure supply security during special circumstances," Aref said, adding that the government is following the Supreme Leader's directive to diversify essential imports.

Dozens Still Missing Days After Mexico's Mass Flood

MEXICO CITY (Dispatches) - Days after historic floods that killed at least 66 people and affected 100,000 homes, Mexico is still scrambling to get help to the worst-hit communities and locate 75 missing people amid criticism of the government's handling of the crisis.

After a year of meteoric approval ratings, the disaster is a test for Mexico's President Claudia Sheinbaum, who has encountered rare hostile crowds and heckling on visits to affected areas.

The disaster began when torrential rains in the central and eastern parts of the country set off landslides, caused rivers to overflow and bridges to collapse. Whole streets were washed away.



China and U.S. Agree to Fresh Trade Talks



BEIJING (Dispatches) - China and the United States agreed Saturday to conduct another round of trade negotiations in the coming week, as the world's two biggest economies seek to avoid another damaging tit-for-tat tariff battle.

Beijing last week announced sweeping controls on the critical rare earths industry, prompting US President Donald Trump to threaten 100 percent tariffs on imports from China in retaliation.

Trump had also threatened to cancel his expected meeting with Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping in South Korea later this month on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit.

In the latest indication of efforts to resolve their dispute, Chinese state media reported that Vice Premier He Lifeng and US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent had "candid, in-depth and constructive exchanges" during a Saturday morning call, and that both sides agreed to hold a new round of trade talks "as soon as possible".

On social media, Bessent described the call as "frank and detailed", and said they would meet "in-person next week to continue our discussions".

Bessent had previously accused China of seeking to harm the rest of the world by tightening restrictions rare earths, which are critical to everything from smartphones to guided missiles.

US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer also participated in the call, according to the report by Chinese state news agency Xinhua.

Hours before the call, Fox News released excerpts of an interview with Trump in which he said he would meet Xi at the APEC summit after all.

Madagascar Coup Leader Randrianirina Sworn In as President



ANTANANARIVO (Dispatches) - Madagascar's coup leader Colonel Michael Randrianirina was sworn in as president on Friday to cheers, blaring trumpets and raised swords, days after taking control of the island nation in the wake of youth-led protests that forced out his predecessor.

Ex-leader Andry Rajoelina, whom lawmakers impeached after he fled abroad at the weekend, has condemned the takeover and refused to step down while in exile, despite widespread defections in the security forces and the High Constitutional Court ratifying the army takeover within hours of it happening.

The African Union and the United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres have condemned the coup, which came after weeks of "Gen Z" protests initially triggered by severe, chronic power and water shortages.

"I will fully, completely, and justly fulfil the high responsibilities of my position as President of the Republic of Madagascar," Randrianirina said in a ceremony at the High Constitutional Court, a colonial-era red-brick building of French windows, segmental arches and stone balustrades.

"I swear that I will exercise the power entrusted to me and dedicate all my strength to defending and strengthening national unity and human rights," he added, before military officers raised swords and blew trumpets to mark the handover.

Trump Downplays Hopes He Will Supply Ukraine With Tomahawks

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - U.S. President Donald Trump said Friday it was likely too soon to send Tomahawk missiles to Ukraine, suggesting the war with Russia could end without them, as he met President Volodymyr Zelensky at the White House a day after agreeing to a new summit with Vladimir Putin.

Trump suggested Friday it would be premature to give Tomahawk missiles to Ukraine, saying as he hosted Volodymyr Zelensky that the war with Russia could probably be ended without them.

Zelensky, who came to the White House to push for the long-range US-made weapons, said however that he would be ready to swap "thousands" of Ukrainian drones in exchange for Tomahawks.

The US president's reluctant stance came a day after he and Russian President Vladimir Putin agreed in a call to hold a new summit in the Hungarian capital Budapest.

"Hopefully we'll be able to get the war over with without thinking about Tomahawks," Trump told journalists including an AFP reporter as the two leaders met at the White House.

Supplying Ukraine with the powerful missiles despite Putin's warnings against doing so "could mean big escalation. It could mean a lot of bad things can happen."

Trump added that he believed Putin, whom he met in Alaska in August in a summit that failed to produce a breakthrough, "wants to end the war".

Zelensky congratulated Trump on his recent Middle East peace deal in Gaza and said he hoped he would do the same for Ukraine. "I hope that President Trump can manage it," he said.

Ukraine has been lobbying Washington for Tomahawks for weeks, arguing that the missiles could help put pressure on Russia to end its brutal three-and-a-half year invasion.

Zelensky, meeting Trump in Washington for the third time since the US president's return to power, suggested that "the United States has Tomahawks and other missiles, very strong missiles, but they can have our 1,000s of drones."

Kyiv has made extensive use of drones since Russia invaded in February 2022.



with the Russian president.

Putin ordered a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, describing it as a "special military operation" to demilitarise the country and prevent the expansion of NATO.

Kyiv and its European allies say the war is an illegal land grab that has resulted in tens of thousands of civilian and military casualties and widespread destruction.

Hamas Hands Over Another Body of Israeli Hostage, Vows to Return Rest

GAZA CITY (Dispatches) - Hamas handed over to Israel the remains of one more hostage on Friday night, after insisting it was committed to returning all the dead captives still unaccounted for under Gaza's ruins.

Turkey, responding to a Hamas call for help in finding the remaining hostage bodies, has dispatched a team of specialists to help retrieve remains buried under the rubble, but the group was still waiting Friday for Israeli permission to enter the territory.

The 81-member team from Turkey's Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD) is equipped with specialised search-and-rescue tools, including life-detection devices and trained search dogs.

"It remains unclear when Israel will allow the Turkish team to enter Gaza," a Turkish official told AFP, noting the team's mission included locating both Palestinian and hostage remains.

A Hamas source told AFP the Turkish delegation was expected to enter by Sunday.

Under a ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas spearheaded by US President Donald Trump, Hamas returned 20 surviving hostages and the remains of nine of 28 known deceased ones - along with another body which Israel has said was not that of a former hostage.

In exchange, Israel freed nearly 2,000 Palestinian prisoners from its jails and halted the military campaign it launched in Gaza after Hamas's October 7, 2023 attack.

Hamas said Friday that as part of the deal, its armed wing "will hand over the body of one of the Israeli captives, which was recovered today in the Gaza Strip, at 11pm Gaza time (2000 GMT)".

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reaffirmed Thursday his determination to "secure the return of all hostages", and his defence minister has warned that the military will restart the war if Hamas fails to do so.

Senior Hamas official Ghazi Hamad on Friday called those threats "unacceptable pressure tactics".

"The issue of the bodies is complex and requires time, especially after the occupation changed the landscape of Gaza," Hamad said in a statement.

"We will return the bodies and adhere to the agreement as we promised."



The ceasefire deal has so far seen the war grind to a halt after two years of agony for the hostages' families, and constant bombardment and hunger for Gazans.

The UN's World Food Programme said on Friday it had been able to move close to 3,000 tonnes of food supplies into Gaza since the ceasefire took hold.

But it cautioned it would take time to reverse the famine in the Strip, saying all crossings needed to be opened to "flood Gaza with food".

Trump's 20-point plan for Gaza calls for renewed aid provision, with international organisations eagerly awaiting the reopening of southern Gaza's strategic Rafah crossing.

UN humanitarian chief Tom Fletcher entered Gaza on Friday, where he watched a convoy of aid head to Rafah from Israel's Kerem Shalom crossing and later visited a bakery making pita bread.

"We've begged for this access for months and finally we're seeing goods moving at scale: food, medicine, tents, fuel, a lot of fuel got in today," he said, in a video message posted to social media.

The next phases of the truce should also include the disarmament of Hamas, the offer of amnesty to Hamas leaders who decommission their weapons and establishing the governance of post-war Gaza.

The families of the surviving hostages have been able to rejoice in their return after two long years. Others have had to endure the agony of burying the returned remains of their loved ones.

"We've been waiting for this for so long, two years that we've been fighting for him every single day," said 30-year-old Gal Gilboa Dalal, the older brother of Guy Gilboa Dalal, who was released after two years in Hamas captivity.

Gal told AFP that Hamas had intentionally starved his brother and another prisoner for three-and-a-half months to use him as a prop in a propaganda video about hunger.

"Their bones hurt, their muscles hurt. Their recovery will be very long."

At the Nasser Hospital in Gaza, meanwhile, families gathered in front of a screen, hoping to find their loved ones among the bodies of Palestinians returned by Israel.

One, Akram Khalid al-Manasra, told AFP he identified his son "thanks to the birthmark on his nose and his teeth".

Others were clearing the rubble from their destroyed homes, undercutting their relief that the bombing had stopped.

"I'm right under the threat of death. It could collapse at any moment," said Ahmad Saleh Sbeih, a Gaza City resident. "But there is no choice."

The war has killed at least 67,967 people in Gaza, according to the health ministry in the Hamas-run territory - figures the United Nations considers credible.

The data does not distinguish between civilians and combatants but indicates that more than half of the dead are women and children.

Kabul Blames Pakistan for Renewed Air Strikes That Kill at Least 10

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - Pakistan launched air strikes in Afghanistan late Friday, killing at least 10 people and shattering a fragile 48-hour ceasefire that had briefly paused days of deadly border clashes. Afghanistan would retaliate after the Pakistani strikes in Paktika province, said a senior Taliban official.

Pakistan launched strikes on Afghan soil late Friday, killing at least 10 people and breaking a ceasefire that had brought two days of calm to the border, officials told AFP.

The 48-hour truce had paused nearly a week of bloody border clashes that killed dozens of troops and civilians on both sides.

"Pakistan has broken the ceasefire and bombed three locations in Paktika" province, a senior Taliban official told AFP, speaking on condition of anonymity. "Afghanistan will retaliate."

Ten civilians were killed and 12 others wounded in the Pakistani strikes, a provincial hospital official told AFP on condition of anonymity, adding that two children were among the dead.

The Afghanistan Cricket Board told AFP that eight players who were in the region for a tournament were killed.



The cross-border violence had escalated dramatically from Saturday, days after explosions rocked the Afghan capital Kabul, just as the Taliban's foreign minister began an unprecedented visit to India, Pakistan's longtime rival.

The Taliban then launched an offensive along parts of its southern border with Pakistan, prompting Islamabad to vow a strong response of its own.

When the truce began at 1300 GMT on Wednesday, Islamabad said that it was to last 48 hours, but Kabul said the ceasefire would remain in effect until Pakistan violated it. Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif accused Kabul of acting as "a proxy of India" and "plotting" against Pakistan.

"From now on, demarches will no longer be framed as appeals for peace, and delegations will not be sent to Kabul," Asif wrote in a post on X, before news of the fresh strikes emerged.

"Wherever the source of terrorism is, it will have to pay a heavy price."

Taliban government spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said its forces had been ordered not to attack unless Pakistani forces fired first.

Rune Rallies to Advance to Semis in Stockholm



STOCKHOLM (Dispatches) - Top-seeded Holger Rune overcame an error-filled start to defeat Tomas Martin Etcheverry 6-7 (4), 6-3, 6-4 and advance to the semifinals of the Nordic Open in Stockholm.

Rune, of Denmark, is seeking his second Stockholm championship to follow his 2022 title. He hit 83% of his first serves (40 of 48) and rode 12 aces to the win over the Argentine. Rune survived a third-set medical timeout to have his left thigh wrapped.

In the next round, Rune will meet France's Ugo Humbert, the fourth seed, who came from behind to beat Italy's Lorenzo Sonego 6-7 (3), 6-0, 6-3. Also victorious was second-seeded Casper Ruud, who topped Sebastian Korda 6-7 (5), 6-4, 6-4. The Norwegian will play the winner of the match between Denis Shapovalov of Canada, the third seed, and Elias Ymer of Sweden.

Daniil Medvedev continued his late-season run, advancing to his third consecutive semifinal with a 7-5, 6-2 win over Fabian Marozsan of Hungary in Kazakhstan.

Medvedev, the second seed, fired his longtime coach after the U.S. Open, and the Russian is finding his game again. He made the semis in Beijing and Shanghai, and now has set a semifinal date with Australian qualifier James Duckworth, who knocked out third-seeded Flavio Cobolli of Italy 6-3, 6-2. It will be Duckworth's second semifinal in Almaty, having qualified in 2021.

The other semifinal will feature the sixth seed, Alex Michelsen, and France's Corentin Moutet. Michelsen defeated Japan's Shintaro Mochizuki 6-3, 3-6, 6-2, and Moutet topped Germany's Jan-

Lennard Struff 6-4, 7-5.

Canada's Felix Auger-Aliassime moved to the semifinal round in Brussels with a 6-2, 7-6 (6) victory against unseeded American Eliot Spizzini.

Auger-Aliassime fired 11 aces and won points on 82% (40 of 49) of his first serves. In the semifinals, he will face Raphael Collignon of Belgium, who downed Spain's Alejandro Davidovich Fokina 7-6 (5), 6-1.

France's Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard captured a spot in the other semifinal with his 6-4, 7-6 (8) victory against top-seeded Lorenzo Musetti of Italy. Waiting for him is Jiri Lehecka of Czechia, who was leading 4-1 in the third set when France's Benjamin Bonzi retired in their quarterfinal match because of a leg injury.

Meanwhile Italian second seed Jasmine Paolini kept her hopes of qualifying for the WTA Finals alive with a gritty comeback win over Belinda Bencic, beating Switzerland's Tokyo Olympic gold medalist 5-7 7-5 6-3 in the Ningbo Open quarter-finals.

Paolini will face third-seed Elena Rybakina in the semis, after the Russian-born Kazakh took less than an hour to beat Ajla Tomljanovic 6-2 6-0 later in the day.

Twice Grand Slam finalist Paolini needs a win over Rybakina in the last four to qualify for next month's WTA Finals in Riyadh.

Verstappen Edges McLarens in Sizzling Austin Showdown

AUSTIN (Dispatches) - Four-time champion Max Verstappen maintained the pressure on McLaren's nerve-racked title duellists on Friday when he beat them both to claim pole position for the sprint race at the United States Grand Prix.

The 28-year-old Dutchman left his best lap to the last seconds of a closely contested session when he outpaced Lando Norris by 0.071 seconds, consigning the Briton to second on the grid alongside him.

Series leader Oscar Piastri was third in the second McLaren, three-tenths adrift of the pole lap, as he continued to struggle to recreate the form that has carried him 22 points clear of Norris and 63 beyond Verstappen in the championship.

"Yes, that was a nice qualifying" a satisfied Verstappen said with a grin. "It was tight through all the segments and I just tried to put it all together, which is not easy but it came together in the end.

"I expect it will be a tough battle in the sprint race, but that's what we all want to see isn't it?"

It was Verstappen's third consecutive sprint qualifying success in Austin and brought him his 10th sprint pole in 22 attempts since 2022.



Having reduced Piastri's championship lead by 41 points already, he has rekindled his bid for a fifth title and has the belief and experience to produce a record feat in overturning such a big deficit in the final six races.

Red Bull team boss Laurent Mekies acclaimed Verstappen's virtuoso ability to out-perform his car, but added that he believed Red Bull were now equipped to fight to win all of the remaining

events.

After a day of sizzling Texan 'barbecue' heat with temperatures of 91.4F (33C) in air and 113F (45C) on the track, the session began with French rookie Isack Hadjar leading the way in his Racing Bulls to clock 1:34.758.

Everyone was on medium compound tyres.

Both Leclerc and Sainz, having suffered gearbox problems in opening practice, were back in action in the 'heat hazard' conditions, which permitted the use of cooling vests, but it was

Hamilton and then Verstappen who soon set the pace.

The Dutchman went top in 1:34.140 to beat Hamilton by 0.086 with Piastri third in the final seconds of SQ1 as Leclerc struggled to survive the cut. A late lap lifted Norris to the top in 1:33.224.

Leclerc squeezed through, but Yuki Tsunoda in the second Red Bull did not and he joined Oliver Bearman of Haas, Franco Colapinto of Alpine, Esteban Ocon in the second Haas and Sauber's Gabriel Bortoletto in making an early exit.

Verstappen, seeking to close a 63-point gap behind Piastri in the title race, set the pace again early in SQ3 in 1:33.163 with Piastri taking second until Norris clocked 1:33.033 to take over on top.

Embiid to Make Long-Awaited Return After Surgery



LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Former NBA Most Valuable Player Joel Embiid has been cleared to play in the Philadelphia 76ers' final exhibition game, a home contest against the Minnesota Timberwolves.

The 31-year-old center last played Feb. 22 and appeared in only 19 games last season and 39 in 2023-24, primarily due to knee injuries.

He had arthroscopic surgery on his left knee in April.

The No. 3 overall selection in the 2014 NBA Draft, Embiid missed his first two seasons due to injury. Since then, he has been an All-Star seven times and was named first-team All-NBA and MVP in 2022-23, when he led the league with an average of 33.1 points and added 10.2 rebounds and 4.2 assists in 66 games.

Embiid has career averages of 27.7 points, 11.0 rebounds, 3.7 assists and 1.6 blocks per game.

The Sixers still are awaiting the return of Paul George (knee) and Jared McCain (knee, thumb), who will not be ready to play in the team's season opener Wednesday at the Boston Celtics.

Short-handed seemingly every game, the 76ers finished last season with a 24-58 record, down from a 47-35 mark in 2023-24 and back-to-back 50-win campaigns in the two preceding seasons. They missed the playoffs for the first time in eight years.

Meanwhile even before the first bogus "back spasms" show up on an injury report, it's already the Year of Barely-Walking Wounded in the NBA.

Tyrese Haliburton, Damian Lillard and Fred VanVleet are missing more than the season-opener next week. They're done for the year.

Blow for Chelsea as Palmer to Miss Six More Weeks With Groin Injury



LONDON (Dispatches) - Chelsea midfielder Cole Palmer will be out of action for six more weeks due to a groin injury, manager Enzo Maresca said on the eve of Saturday's Premier League clash at Nottingham Forest.

Palmer sustained the injury in August, but returned to action with back-to-back goals against Brentford and Bayern Munich.

However, the 23-year-old England international aggravated the injury during Chelsea's 2-1 defeat at Manchester United on September 20.

"I was wrong (about Palmer). Unfortunately, he needs to be out for six more weeks," Maresca told reporters on Friday.

"We try to protect Cole as much as we can. The most important thing is when he comes back, he is fully fit.

"The medical staff are not magicians. We hope six weeks are enough. We need to see it step-by-step. For sure, he's going to be okay.

"He looks relaxed. He has tried to recover from the injury and is doing all the therapy."

Palmer, who has scored two goals in four matches across all competitions this season, is set to miss the Forest fixture, a Champions League tie against Ajax Amsterdam and another Premier League match versus Sunderland.

Chelsea sit seventh with 11 points from seven matches, trailing leaders Arsenal by five points.

"First of all, to replace Cole, it's difficult. Cole is a very important player for us, one of the best in the league ...," Maresca said.

"It depends on the game plan we have.

"We don't have another player like Cole. Cole is unique." Chelsea face additional challenges in defence, with French centre back Benoit Badiashile ruled out until December due to a muscle problem.

Centre back Levi Colwill is already sidelined with an anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injury .

"We are going to wait for him (Badiashile)," Maresca added.

"Moi (Moises Caicedo), Enzo (Fernandez) and Pedro (Neto) did not take part in the session yesterday. We will see if they can train today. Reece (James) is okay, he is fully fit."

Injury-Hit PSG Battle Back to Snatch Draw With Strasbourg

PARIS (Dispatches) - Paris Saint-Germain produced a second-half fightback to draw 3-3 with an impressive Strasbourg as Luis Enrique's injury-hit side held on to top spot in Ligue 1.

Bradley Barcola gave reigning French and European champions PSG an early advantage at the Parc des Princes, but Strasbourg came roaring back to lead 3-1 thanks to a Joaquin Panichelli double and a Diego Moreira goal.

However, Goncalo Ramos converted a penalty and then Senny Mayulu equalised for PSG, who avoided what would have been a second defeat already in eight domestic outings this season.

"Strasbourg are without any doubt one of the best teams in Ligue 1, so we knew how difficult it was going to be," said Luis Enrique, who nevertheless insisted that he had no choice but to rest several key players who had just returned from international duty.

Achraf Hakimi and Vitinha were unused substitutes, while



Khvicha Kvaratskhelia was among those only brought on in the second half.

PSG stayed top of the table, a point clear of Strasbourg after denying the Alsace team what would have been a first ever win for them in 35 top flight attempts away to the Parisians.

The result nevertheless means Marseille and Lyon can now each climb above PSG and Strasbourg with wins -- OM are at home to Le Havre while Lyon travel to Nice.

"Our objective is to be in a position to win every competition but that will be very difficult," the Spanish coach added.

"We still need to get three or four important players back but I think it was a good performance from those who played."

PSG were still without Ballon d'Or winner Ousmane Dembele as he continues his recovery from a hamstring injury picked up playing for France last month.