

Saeed Khatibzadeh, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister, Expressed the Islamic Republic's Support for the Proposed Eurasian Security Charter During His Remarks at the International Conference on Eurasian Security in Minsk

IRAN NEWS

Russian Ambassador to Tehran Alexey Dedov Reaffirmed Moscow's Unwavering Support for Iran's Peaceful Nuclear Program, Emphasizing His Country's Support for Long-Term Diplomatic Solutions for the Islamic Republic's Nuclear Program

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2 DOMESTIC

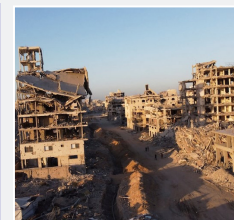


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Iran Demands End to Immoral' Sanctions on Cuba, Decries U.S. Unilateralism



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has demanded that the US sanctions on Cuba must be lifted "immediately and unconditionally," condemning the "unlawful measures rooted in arrogance" for inflicting severe harm on ordinary citizens.

Amir Sacid Irvani, Iran's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN, was speaking at the UN General Assembly meeting on the lifting of the United States sanctions against Cuba on Tuesday.

"Unilateral sanctions—as unlawful measures rooted in arrogance and unilateralism—endanger multilateralism, destabilize the global order, and undermine the very spirit of the Charter of the United Nations," he warned.

"The embargo against Cuba must be lifted immediately and unconditionally."

The Iranian envoy further said that the sanctions, imposed under the "pretext of promoting democracy" for over six decades, "primarily target ordinary people—including women, children, and the elderly—inflicting severe harm on their health, safety, and well-being."

Since 1958, the US has imposed an embargo on Cuba, preventing US businesses from conducting trade or commerce with the island.

In the waning days of his term in January, former US President Joe Biden removed Cuba from the US's list of "state sponsors of terrorism."

But upon taking office for his second time on January 20, US President Donald Trump reversed course, putting Cuba back on the list that very same day.

Iran, Pakistan Strengthen Ties, Pledge Cooperation on Regional Stability

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran and Pakistan reaffirmed their commitment to deepening bilateral relations and enhancing cooperation on regional security during a high-level meeting in Tehran on Tuesday.

President Masoud Pezeshkian met with Pakistan's Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi on the sidelines of the Fourth Meeting of the Interior Ministers of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), emphasizing the importance of mutual trust, unity, and collaboration between the two neighboring nations.

Pezeshkian described Iran-Pakistan relations as "deep-rooted, friendly, and built on brotherhood," noting that the two countries share strong historical, cultural, and religious ties.

"The relationship between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan is founded on mutual trust and brotherhood," Pezeshkian said. "Our cooperation can serve as a model for others, and by strengthening our scientific, cultural, economic, political, and security ties, we can ensure lasting partnership and stability."

He expressed satisfaction with the current level of engagement between Tehran and Islamabad and voiced hope that Naqvi's visit would accelerate the implementation of previous agreements and deliver tangible benefits to both nations.

Highlighting Iran's readiness to support peace efforts in the region, Pezeshkian said: "The Islamic Republic of Iran is prepared to assist in reducing tensions and resolving differences between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Muslim countries must stand together in unity and avoid conflict, in line with the teachings of Islam."

Pakistan's Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi commended Iran for successfully hosting the ECO ministerial meeting and thanked the Iranian government and people for their warm hospitality.

"This is my fourth visit to Iran within a year, which reflects the depth and importance of our relationship," Naqvi said. He lauded the strong cooperation between the two interior ministries and expressed optimism that recent agreements will soon lead to practical outcomes.

Naqvi also noted significant progress in border management and joint counterterrorism efforts, emphasizing that the two sides have achieved "meaningful results" in addressing shared security challenges.

"The issues of terrorism and illegal immigration are common concerns for both our countries," he added. "Fortunately, our joint efforts have produced positive outcomes."



He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to maintaining constructive dialogue with Afghanistan and stressed the need to resolve differences peacefully. "We should not allow tensions in our region to escalate," Naqvi stated.

In closing, the Pakistani minister praised Iran's "principled and stabilizing role" and said Islamabad welcomes Tehran's active involvement in promoting regional peace and improving relations between Islamabad and Kabul.

Earlier Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), Ali Larijani, in meeting with Naqvi, said relations between Tehran and Islamabad have the potential to move beyond current cooperation and be elevated to the level of a lasting strategic partnership.

Larijani underlined the geopolitical importance of both countries in regional equations.

He pointed to the recent strategic agreement between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, describing it as "a wise and positive step in the face of common threats."

Larijani said today's regional environment is marked by shared challenges and adversaries, requiring "tangible, coordinated, and comprehensive action among Muslim nations."

Larijani, who also serves as an advisor to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, emphasized the need to deepen cooperation in security, defense, political, and especially economic fields.

He also thanked the Pakistani government for its stance during the 12-day US-Israeli aggression of June against Iran, calling it evidence of a shared understanding of the region's strategic realities.

For his part, Naqvi highlighted the deep historical, cultural, and security ties between the two nations.

He described Iran as a "friend, brother, and partner" for Pakistan, adding that Islamabad seeks a strong, stable, and progressive Iran.

At the conclusion of the talks, both sides reviewed the latest regional developments and underscored the importance of enhancing strategic coordination and relying on political and diplomatic solutions to address regional and security issues.

Expanding trade exchanges and strengthening economic cooperation were also among the key topics discussed.

Iran Begins Test Flights of Home-Made Cargo Plane



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - The Iranian-made plane Simorgh has officially started its test flights as the aircraft prepares to join the country's cargo fleet.

Simorgh's test flights began in an airfield in the city of Shahin Shahr in central Iran on Tuesday after a ceremony attended by deputy heads of Iran's ministries of defense and transportation.

The plane has to carry out 100 hours of test flights in various circumstances to get a final permit to join Iran's aviation fleet, according to a statement from Iran's Civil Aviation Organization (CAA).

CAA chief Hossein Pourfarzaneh said on Tuesday that Simorgh, whose indigenization process has taken more than 15 years, ranks Iran among fewer than 20 countries in the world that have the capability to design and manufacture aircraft.

Simorgh, named after a mythical bird in Persian mythology and literature, is equipped with two 2,500-horsepower engines that can carry 6 metric tons (mt) of cargo over a distance of 3,900 kilometers, while its maximum takeoff weight is 21.5 mt.

The plane carried out a fast-taxi test in May 2022, a year before it conducted its maiden flight.

Since then, the Iranian defense ministry, which is in charge of manufacturing Simorgh, has been trying to receive a test certificate for the plane from the CAA, a process that has involved obtaining a type certificate, a document that signifies the plane's airworthiness.

Experts say Simorgh is a modified version of IrAn-140, an Iranian-Ukrainian joint project which is itself based Antonov An-140. However, former CAA officials have disputed that view, saying it is quite a different plane as it enjoys a modified engine and fuselage.

Simorgh has been described as an agile, light, and quick plane with a high cargo carriage capacity that is compatible with Iran's weather conditions, making it a perfect choice for critical services like medical flights.

Food Inflation in Iran Surges from 47% to 64% in Four Months



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - New data released by Iran's Statistical Center shows that point-to-point (year-on-year) inflation in October 2025 reached 48.6 percent, while monthly inflation jumped by 5 percent, marking the highest level in 40 months.

A review of long-term inflation trends reveals that a 5 percent monthly rise is exceptionally rare. The last time such a sharp increase occurred was in June 2022 (Khordad 1401), when the government removed the preferential exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar and adjusted the official rate for essential goods to 28,500 tomans. That policy change triggered a 10 percent monthly inflation spike, the steepest in years.

Economists note that comparing these two periods highlights the impact of that decision. Despite recent claims questioning the effectiveness of the preferential exchange rate, the inflationary surge following its removal suggests that the policy had, in fact, helped shield consumers from the direct effects of currency depreciation.

In June 2022, the 13th administration responded to the inflation shock by tripling cash subsidies for households to offset price increases. However, under the 14th government, while inflation has continued to climb, cash subsidy amounts have remained unchanged, leading to a sharp erosion of purchasing power in recent months.

Iran, Saudi Arabia Enjoy Warm Relations

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref said that Tehran currently enjoys "very warm and friendly relations" with Saudi Arabia across all areas and reaffirmed that strengthening ties with neighboring countries—particularly Riyadh—is among Iran's top foreign policy priorities.

Speaking at a ceremony marking the handover between outgoing and incoming heads of Iran's Headquarters for Combating the Smuggling of Goods and Foreign Exchange, Aref stressed the importance of adopting a cultural rather than security-oriented approach to managing Iran's borders.

"Our priority is to deepen cooperation with our neighbors, especially Saudi Arabia," Aref said. "Today, we have a very cordial and friendly relationship with Saudi Arabia in all fields."

He noted that under the current administration, the headquarters had achieved positive results through close collaboration with intelligence, law enforcement, and government agencies. Aref emphasized that Iran's approach to fighting smuggling now focuses on addressing the root causes rather than merely the consequences of the problem.

The first vice president warned that the cultural and social harms of smuggling are no less damaging than its economic impact. He called for revising laws and regulations to adapt to the country's current circumstances, citing the successful implementation of reforms related to small-scale border trade ("te-lenji") and "kulbari") that have helped stabilize local economies and prevent vulnerable youth from turning to smuggling.

"This headquarters is a cultural stronghold," Aref said, adding that labeling or punishing struggling individuals without offering economic alternatives could worsen the problem.

Aref highlighted the role of the Iranian people in defending the nation during the recent 12-day conflict imposed on Iran, saying the people's unity and resilience were unparalleled.

"The people are the true owners of the revolution and the country," he said. "Even during war and crisis, they have shown a level of solidarity and discipline rarely seen elsewhere."



He added that the government remains committed to serving the people and ensuring their security and welfare, while maintaining readiness to defend the country if necessary.

Emphasizing economic reform and transparency, Aref said that combating smuggling is central to cleaning up the economy, but the focus should shift toward long-term structural solutions.

"We believe borders must be managed with a cultural perspective, not a purely security one," he stated. "Although in the past, due to enemy hostilities, we had to treat borders from a security standpoint, that approach should be temporary. Border residents are the best guardians of our borders, and it's our duty to ensure their livelihoods."

Aref explained that the government is delegating more authority to provincial administrations—

particularly in border regions—to strengthen local economies through barter trade and cross-border cooperation without waiting for central approval. This, he said, would create jobs and prevent young people from resorting to smuggling or leaving their communities.

The vice president also pointed to Iran's efforts to expand cooperation with neighboring countries and regional blocs such as the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU).

"Relations with our neighbors and the Eurasian Union have developed significantly," he said. "We share a spirit of friendship and common interest. Our neighbors are our brothers, and we seek unity among Muslim countries. If differences arise, they can be resolved amicably."

He added that Iran is continuing work on transportation and trade corridors, including road and rail projects aimed at enhancing regional connectivity and strengthening ties with its neighbors.

In closing, Aref reiterated Iran's commitment to constructive regional diplomacy, particularly with Saudi Arabia:

"Our priority is strengthening cooperation with neighboring countries—especially Saudi Arabia. We now enjoy a very close and friendly relationship with the Kingdom in all sectors."

Indian Operator at Chabahar Port Reportedly Yielding to U.S. Pressure



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - A senior Iranian transport official has accused the Indian operator of Chabahar's Shahid Beheshti Port of bowing to U.S. pressure, leaving most of the port's capacity underused. Despite a decade of promised Indian investment, the port is operating at only a fraction of its potential.

Masoud Daneshmand, a member of the Board of Iran's Association of Transport Companies, told ILNA that Chabahar's nominal capacity of 10 million tons has not been realized due to a combination of international political influence and inadequate domestic infrastructure.

"It seems the United States has warned the Indians to pull back from Chabahar Port," Daneshmand said. "India clearly listens to Washington because its largest trade is with the U.S. and the European Union. To protect those major markets, India has had to overlook smaller trade opportunities like Chabahar."

Daneshmand explained that India has been involved in Chabahar's development for nearly ten years but has yet to deliver meaningful progress. Originally, the project was seen as a strategic trade corridor connecting Iran to Afghanistan, Central Asia, and Russia, reducing dependency on Pakistan's Karachi Port. However, India's participation has remained mostly symbolic.

"Although India was expected to develop Chabahar into a regional gateway, little has been done on the ground," he said.

IRAN NEWS



Iran Condemns Attacks on Civilians in Sudan's Darfur Region

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The Foreign Ministry has expressed deep concern over the ongoing violence in Sudan's North Darfur region, condemning the killing of civilians and destruction of infrastructure in the city of Al-Fashir.

In a statement late on Tuesday, Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei voiced alarm over the armed clashes, denouncing "the destruction of infrastructure and the massacre of innocent people" in the conflict-hit city.

He also warned against "dangerous movements aimed at re-dividing Sudan," stressing the need to respect the country's national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Electricity Consumption Is Not a Threat, But an Opportunity



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Minister of Energy, Abbas Aliabadi, stated that electricity consumption should not be viewed as a threat but rather as an opportunity. He emphasized the need to prepare for the inevitable rise of electric vehicles and the broader use of electricity in transportation to reduce environmental challenges.

Speaking at the 29th International Conference on Electrical Distribution Networks, Aliabadi said, "Whether we like it or not, electricity consumption will continue to grow. The world is moving toward digitalization, and that process depends on electricity — but it must be used efficiently."

He stressed the importance of encouraging the public to adopt electricity as their primary energy source, adding, "The solution is not to rely on primary energy sources such as oil, coal, or wood. These should be reserved for producing high-value goods. People should be encouraged to use electricity instead."

Reiterating his key message, the minister said, "Electricity consumption is not a threat, it is an opportunity. Electric vehicles will undoubtedly become widespread, and we must prepare our transportation systems to use electricity, thereby reducing environmental challenges."

Aliabadi noted that this year has been exceptionally difficult for Iran's water and electricity sectors but said the government managed to overcome the challenges of the summer through effective management.

He explained that during five consecutive years of drought, the country's water resources declined sharply, directly affecting electricity generation in both hydroelectric and thermal power plants, forcing some units offline.

Regarding plans to diversify Iran's energy portfolio, Aliabadi said, "Although we are still some distance from utilizing geothermal energy, a comprehensive plan to diversify power generation is underway. We are simultaneously pursuing the development of nuclear, coal-fired, thermal, and renewable power plants to reduce dependency on a single fuel source."

Iran's Future Development Depends on the Sea



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts emphasized that Iran's future development will rely on the sea, noting that the government has made the transformation of coastal provinces one of the main pillars of the national development plan.

Seyed Reza Salehi-Amiri made the remarks on Monday, October 27, 2025, during a joint coordination meeting on implementing maritime development policies, attended by the President's representative and governors of Iran's coastal provinces. Salehi-Amiri underlined the strategic importance of the country's coastlines for Iran's economic future, stating:

"National development in the second phase of the Revolution is impossible without attention to the sea. Today, all components of the government agree that Iran's future depends on the transformation of its northern and southern coasts."

He said the 14th Government's program is based on balanced development, leveraging local capacities, and creating sustainable employment in coastal provinces.

"For Iran, the sea is not only an opportunity but also a civilizational advantage that must be utilized through careful planning and a national perspective," he added.

Salehi-Amiri highlighted the low share of marine tourism in Iran's economy:

"While in many developed countries about 30 percent of tourism revenue comes from the sea, Iran's share is still less than 2 percent. This figure must rise. We have prepared a comprehensive plan covering both coastal regions and islands."

All Oil Revenues Allocated to Essential Goods and Medicine

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Vice President and Head of the Plan and Budget Organization, Seyed Hamid Pourmohammadi, announced that all of the government's oil revenues are being used to import essential goods and medicine, as part of an effort to safeguard household welfare amid declining oil prices. He also confirmed that a new version of the electronic voucher (Kalabarg) program will be launched experimentally in November to improve the government's system of direct economic support.

Speaking before the Majlis on Tuesday, Pourmohammadi presented a comprehensive report on government initiatives to stabilize the economy and assist low-income families. He said that the administration faced two major challenges this year — a 12-day imposed war, which he described as "one of the most significant confrontations in Iran's modern history," and a sharp fall in global oil prices.

"Last year, oil sold for around \$71 per barrel, but this year it dropped to \$51, severely limiting our foreign exchange revenues," he said. "These two events — war and the oil price drop — have had a direct impact on Iran's economy."

Despite these setbacks, Pourmohammadi emphasized that the government had maintained financial stability, ensuring that payments to public sector employees, pensioners, and development projects were made without interruption. "Even under these pressures, spending on infrastructure projects has increased compared with the same period last year," he noted.

Pourmohammadi said that long-standing financial issues affecting retirees and farmers had been resolved. "The pension equalization problem that caused concern last year has now been fully addressed. We are regularly paying 180 trillion toman each month to retirees," he said.

He added that arrears owed to retired teachers from 2021 have been completely cleared and that payments to wheat farmers were made earlier than in previous years. "Even cash subsidies have been disbursed on time — not a single hour late," he said proudly.

Pourmohammadi stressed that 100 percent of the government's oil income is being allocated to the import of essential goods and medicine, using the official exchange rate of 28,500 toman per dollar. "Although this amount is not sufficient, the government borrows an additional \$2.5 billion annually to reinforce this allocation," he explained.

He acknowledged the strain this policy puts on the state budget but said it was necessary to protect people's livelihoods. "The government is under immense pressure to maintain stability, but despite our efforts, challenges remain in practice," he added.

The Vice President pointed to inefficiencies in the distribution and pricing systems, noting that subsidized goods often reach consumers at inflated prices. "For example, rice imported at 28,500 toman per dollar should be sold for 60,000 to 70,000 toman per kilogram, but consumers are paying 100,000 to 200,000 toman. The system is flawed — we're holding ice to hand to the people, but it melts before it gets there," he said.

He also highlighted inefficiencies in food production, noting that Iran requires 1.9 kilograms of animal feed to produce 1 kilogram of meat, whereas global standards are 1.4 kilograms.

Pourmohammadi argued that current welfare mechanisms are ineffective and



outdated, saying: "We spend heavily to support households, but people remain dissatisfied because the benefits don't reach them properly. Clearly, the mechanism must be reformed."

He added that subsidies provided at the official exchange rate often end up being sold at free-market prices, indicating deep flaws in trade networks, intermediaries, and bureaucratic procedures.

Pourmohammadi described poverty in Iran as increasingly multidimensional, saying that even though infrastructure in water, electricity, and transport has improved, many citizens still face food insecurity, poor health, limited education, and lack of housing.

He reported that the government currently allocates 940 trillion toman annually to poverty alleviation and welfare programs — including 600 trillion toman in direct subsidies — spread across multiple organizations. However, he criticized the fragmented approach, arguing that "a single prescription for all social problems no longer works."

He urged policymakers to focus next year's budget on targeted support for the most vulnerable groups, addressing not only income but also education, healthcare, housing, and employment. "The poorest citizens often cannot make their voices heard. We must design programs that truly identify and respond to their specific needs," he said.

Since the start of the Persian New Year, the government has implemented four rounds of electronic voucher (Kalabarg) payments, Pourmohammadi said.

For income deciles 1-3, each person received 500,000 toman, equivalent to 2 million toman for a family of four.

For deciles 3-7, each person received 350,000 toman, or 1.4 million toman per family of four.

He emphasized that both large retail chains and small neighborhood stores have been included in the e-voucher system to ensure local shopkeepers are not left out. Pourmohammadi announced that a new and improved version of the electronic voucher program will be introduced on a trial basis in November.

The new system will feature: Comprehensive coverage — reaching all citizens, from remote rural areas to nomadic communities; Uniform pricing — between five and seven essential goods will be made available at fixed prices nationwide for six months to a year, with any adjustments managed centrally; and Integrated supply chain — stronger coordination between producers and distributors to prevent losses in agriculture and livestock sectors. The government will bear exchange rate and inflation risks by establishing fixed-price contracts with suppliers.

He said the plan is being finalized jointly by government agencies and other branches of power. "This program must be implemented carefully so that essential goods, producers, and distributors are not harmed," he explained.

Pourmohammadi acknowledged that the first month of the pilot phase may present some challenges but said these would be reviewed and resolved. "Once we are confident in its performance, we will expand the program nationwide. The goal is to eliminate inefficiency and bureaucracy, and with the parliament's cooperation, create a modern welfare system that truly improves living standards," he said.

He concluded by reaffirming the government's full commitment to the plan: "The leadership and the President personally emphasize the importance of the Kalabarg initiative in every cabinet meeting. This program is not just an economic reform — it is a social promise to ensure stability and fairness for all Iranians."

Chabahar-Zahedan Railway to Be Completed by Yearend

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The Governor of Sistan and Baluchestan, Mansour Bijar, announced that the Chabahar-Zahedan railway project is nearing completion and will be operational by the end of the year, marking a major step toward strengthening trade and transit infrastructure in southeastern Iran.

Speaking on the sidelines of the ECO Interior Ministers' Meeting in Tehran, Bijar highlighted the province's strategic role in Iran's regional trade network. "Sistan and Baluchestan is the largest province in the country and shares the longest border with Pakistan, as well as a border with Afghanistan. The Afghan border is the closest route to Chabahar Port, providing a vital outlet for Afghan traders," he said.

Bijar explained that improving infrastructure was a prerequisite for expanding economic exchanges with neighboring countries. "We are developing both the coastal corridor and the North-South corridor, which will not only facilitate domestic transportation but also strengthen regional connectivity," he said.

The governor noted that the province currently has three official border crossings with Pakistan and one official crossing at Milak with Afghanistan. "Some cross-border exchanges also occur at the local level to ensure that border communities benefit economically from these activities," he added.

Bijar emphasized that the goal of these local trade initiatives is to improve livelihoods and promote regional economic development. "Trade should not only serve national interests but also help the people living in border regions," he said.

He pointed out that four border markets currently operate between Iran and Afghanistan and that the province hosts two free trade zones — the Chabahar Free Zone and the Sistan Free Zone.

"The Chabahar Free Zone had some administrative challenges, which we have now addressed through management changes," Bijar said. "The Sistan Free Zone, which had been inactive, has also been revived, and several companies have begun operations there."

Bijar also discussed the province's growing ties with Oman, noting that the two sides had recently explored economic opportunities during an official visit. "About 35 percent of Oman's indigenous population are Baluch people with ancestral



roots in Iran, which gives us a strong cultural and historical link," he said.

He added that maritime transport between Chabahar and Muscat now operates twice a week, and negotiations are underway to establish a direct flight between Zahedan and Karachi to enhance air connectivity with Pakistan.

The governor underlined Pakistan's importance in supplying essential commodities to Iran. "Pakistan has significant capacity to help supply basic

goods," he said. "During the recent 12-day conflict involving the Zionist regime, when we faced shortages of red meat and rice, we turned to Pakistan's resources."

Bijar explained that rice imports from Pakistan were authorized both during and after the conflict, with shipments arriving under both preferential and free-market exchange rates. "In the red meat sector as well, we have developed strong cooperation with Pakistan, ensuring the steady supply of essential food products," he noted.

Highlighting the province's pivotal role in regional trade, Bijar said that Central Asian countries could use the Chabahar Port as their most direct access route to international waters. "Chabahar offers landlocked nations in Central Asia a secure and efficient corridor to global markets," he explained.

He added that the completion of the Chabahar-Zahedan railway line will significantly enhance the port's logistical capabilities, connecting it to Iran's national rail network and, eventually, to Central Asia. "Once operational, this line will be a game-changer for regional trade, facilitating cargo movement from the Indian Ocean to Central Asia through Iranian territory," Bijar said.

The governor also pointed to the shared cultural and linguistic heritage between Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan as a foundation for deeper regional cooperation. "We have strong cultural ties with both neighboring countries, and we intend to use these bonds to foster economic and social development in the province," he said.

Bijar concluded that with the progress of infrastructure projects like the Chabahar-Zahedan railway, the expansion of border markets, and the establishment of new transport links, Sistan and Baluchestan is poised to become a gateway for regional trade and integration.

27th Iranian Steel Industry Conference Opens in Kish



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The 27th Iranian Steel Industry Conference officially began on Tuesday on Kish Island, bringing together leading producers, researchers, experts, and industrialists from across the country to discuss the future of Iran's steel sector.

Organized by the Iranian Iron and Steel Association, the three-day event — held at the Kish International Convention Center — aims to foster collaboration between the country's steel industry professionals, academic researchers, and postgraduate students. Participants will exchange insights, share research findings, and address technical and operational challenges in the industry.

The conference is supported by major steel companies and academic institutions and seeks to strengthen ties between industry and academia to drive innovation, problem-solving, and sustainable development within Iran's steel sector.

Mahshid Kharazieh Esfahani, the conference's Scientific Secretary, announced that organizers had received 360 research papers and technical reports, of which 92 were selected as research papers, 10 as industry reports, and 104 for poster presentations.

She said that 30 outstanding papers would be presented in specialized sessions and expert panels over the three days.

"At the conclusion of the conference," Kharazieh Esfahani noted, "awards will be presented to the 'Steel Person of the Year', leading innovators, and top steel companies for their best green steel projects of the past year."

This year's event is centered on the theme "The Role of Industrial Revolutions 4.0 and 5.0 and Artificial Intelligence in Green Steel Production." Discussions will address national policy frameworks, new manufacturing technologies, process modernization, and strategies to overcome production barriers.

U.S. Will Not Allow Iran to Leave FATF Blacklist



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - A member of Iran's Parliamentary Budget and Planning Commission has said that the United States and Israel's influence within the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) prevents Iran from being removed from the organization's blacklist, regardless of Tehran's compliance with its requirements.

MP Jafar Qaderi said that Iran's continued presence on the FATF blacklist, even after joining the Combating the Financing of Terrorism (CFT) convention, was entirely predictable. "I had already said that even if Iran accepted the CFT and Palermo conventions without any conditions, the FATF would still not remove us from its blacklist," he stated.

Qaderi explained that decisions within the FATF are made by consensus and that both the United States and Israel participate in the body. "We insisted on joining the CFT and Palermo agreements so that domestic factions with simplistic analyses would have no excuse to claim that Iran's economic isolation was self-inflicted," he said.

Drawing a historical parallel, Qaderi compared Iran's experience with FATF membership to the 12-day war. "Before that war, some inside the country claimed that if we had negotiated with the U.S., conflict could have been avoided. However, the Supreme Leader's foresight revealed the true intentions of the U.S. and Israel — war broke out even during negotiations, proving their duplicity and creating national unity," he said.

Hassan Expected to Retain Tanzania's Presidency

DAR ES SALAM (Dispatches) - Tanzanians went to the polls on Wednesday in an election that President Samia Suluhu Hassan is expected to win after candidates from the two leading opposition parties were barred from standing. In addition to the presidential election, voters will choose members of the country's 400-seat parliament and a president and lawmakers in the semi-autonomous Zanzibar archipelago. Tanzania's presidential vote is being held without the leading opposition party, CHADEMA, whose leader Tundu Lissu is on trial for treason, charges he denies. The electoral commission disqualified CHADEMA in April after it refused to sign an electoral code of conduct.



Dutch Voters Head to Polls in High-Stakes Election Testing Populism's Grip



THE HAGUE (Dispatches) - The Netherlands voted Wednesday in a pivotal national election that will determine whether the country doubles down on the anti-immigration populism of Geert Wilders or shifts back toward centrist politics. The result is seen as a bellwether for the strength of Europe's far right, as nationalist movements surge across Britain, France and Germany.

With nationalist parties topping polls in Britain, France and Germany, the Dutch vote is a test of whether populism can expand its reach or whether it has peaked in parts of Europe.

Only two years ago, Wilders led his party to a stunning first-place finish in the 2023 election and formed an all-conservative coalition – although his partners refused to endorse him as prime minister. He brought it down in June over its refusal to adopt hardline, anti-refugee measures.

Opinion polls show Wilders' Freedom Party (PVV) winning, but only by a narrow margin, with the four centrist parties spanning the mainstream right and left all finishing within a few seats of the bleached-blond admirer of US President Donald Trump.

All four, including the centre-right VVD and Christian Democrats, have said they would not enter into a coalition with Wilders and his PVV party, meaning he would likely be blocked from power unless he wins by an unexpectedly wide margin.

Cameroon Opposition Rejects Biya's Win, Alleges Fraud Amid Violent Protests



DOUALA (Dispatches) - Cameroon's opposition leaders rejected presidential election results that extended President Paul Biya's rule for another seven years, saying the outcome did not reflect the will of the people in a country already battling a separatist conflict.

The central African nation's constitutional council on Monday declared Biya, 92, as the winner of the disputed vote with over 53% of the ballots, triggering violent protests in several cities in the oil- and cocoa-producing nation.

The court's ruling, which is final and cannot be appealed, signals a potentially prolonged post-election standoff.

Issa Tchiroma Bakary, Biya's main challenger, had earlier declared victory and warned he would not accept any other outcome. His supporters have angrily taken to the streets, clashing with riot police and blocking roads in the commercial capital Douala with burning tires and debris.

The protests killed at least four people over the weekend and two others on Monday, according to the opposition.

There were scattered celebrations in Biya's strongholds and government ministers held a party. The usually bustling streets of Douala remained quiet on Tuesday as rain and riot police kept protesters away.

The European Union expressed "deep concern" about the recent violent repression of protests and called on authorities to tackle the excessive use of force. It also urged leaders to engage in dialogue to preserve national stability.

Trump Says Gaza Ceasefire Holds



ABOARD AIR FORCE ONE (Dispatches) - U.S. President Donald Trump said on Wednesday that a U.S.-backed ceasefire in Gaza was not at risk after Israel launched airstrikes in the enclave, which killed 26 people in response to the killing of an Israeli soldier.

Israeli planes struck in Gaza on Tuesday after Israel accused the militant group Hamas of violating the ceasefire, the latest violence in the three-week-old deal brokered by Trump.

Gazan health authorities said the strikes killed at least 26 people, including five in a house hit in the Bureij refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip, four in a building in Gaza City's Sabra neighborhood, and five in a car in Khan Younis.

"As I understand it, they took out an Israeli soldier," Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One. "So the Israelis hit back and they should hit back. When that happens, they should hit back," he added.

The Israeli military confirmed the soldier's death on Wednesday.

"Nothing is going to jeopardize" the ceasefire, Trump said. "You have to understand Hamas is a very small part of peace in the Middle East, and they have to behave."

The Israeli military did not immediately comment on the strikes, which followed a statement by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office saying he had ordered immediate "powerful attacks."

An Israeli military official said Hamas had violated the ceasefire by carrying out an attack against Israeli forces who were stationed within the so-called "yellow line", the deployment line agreed upon in the ceasefire.

The U.S.-backed ceasefire agreement went into effect on October 10, halting two years of war triggered by deadly Hamas-led attacks on Israel on October 7, 2023.

Both sides have accused each other of ceasefire violations.

"If they (Hamas) are good, they are going to be happy and if they are not good, they are going to be terminated, their lives will be terminated," Trump said.

"Nobody knows what happened to the Israeli soldier but they say it was sniper fire. And it was retribution for that, and I think they have a right to do that."

Hamas denied responsibility for the attack on Israeli forces in Rafah, in southern Gaza and said in a statement that it remained

committed to the ceasefire deal.

Meanwhile Israeli planes launched strikes in Gaza City on Tuesday after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu accused the militant group Hamas of violating a ceasefire in the Palestinian territory and ordered the military to carry out "powerful attacks".

At least eleven people were killed and four wounded in a strike on a residential building in the city's Sabra neighbourhood, and an area close to Shifa hospital, the largest operational hospital in northern Gaza, was also hit, according to Gaza officials, witnesses and Hamas media.

The Israeli military did not immediately comment on the strikes, which were the latest violence in a fragile three-week-old ceasefire and which followed a statement by Netanyahu's office saying he had ordered immediate attacks.

The statement did not give a specific reason for the attacks but an Israeli military official said Hamas had violated the ceasefire by carrying out an attack against Israeli forces in an area of the enclave that is under Israeli control.

"This is yet another blatant violation of the ceasefire," the official said.

US Vice President JD Vance said Tuesday the ceasefire in Gaza is still holding despite "skirmishes", after Israel launched air strikes and accused Hamas of attacking its troops.

"The ceasefire is holding. That doesn't mean that there aren't going to be little skirmishes," Vance said in comments broadcast on Fox News and posted on social media by the White House.

The US-backed ceasefire agreement went into effect on October 10, halting two years of war that was triggered by deadly Hamas-led attacks on Israel on October 7, 2023 and that has devastated the narrow coastal strip.

Both sides have accused each other of ceasefire violations.

Earlier on Tuesday, Israeli media reported an exchange of fire between Israeli forces and Hamas fighters in the southern Gaza city of Rafah. The Israeli military did not respond to a request for comment on the reports. Hamas denied responsibility for an attack on Israeli forces in Rafah. The group also said in a statement that it remained committed to the ceasefire deal in Gaza.

Tuesday's strikes on Gaza City followed what Israel called a "targeted strike" on Saturday on a person in central Gaza who it said was planning to attack Israeli troops.

North Korea Fires Cruise Missiles Ahead of Trump's South Korea Visit

PYONGYANG (Dispatches) - North Korea launched a series of sea-to-surface cruise missiles into its western waters, state media said, in a show of force coinciding with US President Donald Trump's trip to South Korea for a regional summit. The tests come as Pyongyang deepens military ties with Russia and continues to reject nuclear talks with Washington.

North Korea said Wednesday it fired sea-to-surface cruise missiles into its western waters, in another display of its growing military capabilities as US President Donald Trump travels to South Korea for a regional summit.

North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency described Tuesday's tests as a success, saying the missiles flew for more than two hours before accurately striking targets. The agency claimed that the weapons would contribute to expanding the operational sphere of the country's nuclear-armed military.

South Korea's military didn't immediately confirm whether it had detected the tests.

The North Korean report came hours before an expected summit between Trump and South Korean President Lee Jae Myung in the city of Gyeongju, where South Korea is hosting this year's Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation meetings.

KCNA said the tests were attended by senior military



official Pak Jong Chon, who also inspected training for sailors aboard North Korea's newly developed destroyers Choe Hyon and Kang Kon, which leader Kim Jong Un has described as key assets in his efforts to strengthen the navy.

North Korea's latest launches followed short-range ballistic missile tests last week that it said involved a new hypersonic system designed to strengthen its nuclear war deterrent.

Trump has expressed interest in meeting with Kim during his stay in South Korea, where he is also scheduled to hold a summit with Chinese President Xi Jinping. However, South Korean officials have said a Trump-Kim meeting is unlikely.

North Korea has shunned any form of talks with Washington and Seoul since Kim's high-stakes nuclear diplomacy with Trump fell apart in 2019 during the American president's first term.

Kim's top foreign policy priority is now Russia. In recent months, he has sent thousands of troops and large quantities of military equipment to help fuel President Vladimir Putin's war in Ukraine, while embracing the idea of a "new Cold War" and positioning his country as part of a united front against the US-led West.

Last month, Kim reiterated he wouldn't return to talks with the United States unless Washington drops its demand for North Korea's denuclearisation, after Trump repeatedly expressed his hopes for new diplomacy.

Truce Talks Between Afghanistan and Pakistan Collapse in Istanbul

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - Peace talks between Afghanistan and Pakistan ended in Istanbul without a deal, Pakistan's information minister said on Wednesday, blaming Kabul's delegation for obstructing progress. The failure of the negotiations casts doubt on efforts to stabilise relations between the uneasy South Asian neighbours.

Talks aimed at securing a long-term truce between Afghanistan and Pakistan concluded in Istanbul without a "workable solution", Pakistan's information minister said on Wednesday, in a blow for peace in the region after deadly clashes this month.

The talks were aimed at reaching lasting peace between the South Asian neighbours after dozens were killed along their border in the worst such violence since the Taliban took power in Kabul in 2021.

"The Afghan side kept deviating from the core issue, evading the key point upon which the dialogue process was initiated," Pakistan's Information Minister Attaullah Tarar said in a



statement early on Wednesday.

"Instead of accepting any responsibility, the Afghan Taliban resorted to blame game, deflection and ruses. The dialogue thus failed to bring about any workable solution," Tarar said.

Afghanistan's foreign and defence ministries did not immediately respond to requests from Reuters for comment on Tarar's statement.

Both nations agreed to a ceasefire brokered in Doha on October 19, but could not find common ground in a second round of talks mediated by Turkey and Qatar in Istanbul, Afghan and Pakistani sources briefed on the issue told Reuters on Tuesday, with each blaming the other for the failure.

A Pakistani security source said the Taliban had been unwilling to commit to reining in the Pakistani Taliban, a separate militant group hostile to Pakistan that Islamabad says operates with impunity inside Afghanistan.

An Afghan source familiar with the talks said they had ended after "tense exchanges" over the issue, adding that the Afghan side said it had no control over the Pakistani Taliban, which has launched attacks against Pakistani troops in recent weeks.



Thunder, 76ers Remain Unbeaten With NBA Comeback Wins

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - The reigning NBA champion Oklahoma City Thunder, fueled by 31 points from Shai Gilgeous-Alexander rallied to beat the Sacramento Kings 107-101 on Tuesday to improve to 5-0 in the young season.

The Philadelphia 76ers also remained unbeaten, erasing a double-digit deficit to improve to 4-0 with a thrilling 139-134 overtime victory over the Wizards in Washington.

Gilgeous-Alexander, who was last season's Most Valuable Player, NBA Finals MVP and league scoring leader, shook off a slow third quarter to score nine in the fourth as the Thunder rallied despite the absence of Chet Holmgren with a sore lower back.

Aaron Wiggins and Ajay Mitchell scored 18 points apiece and Lu Dort added 13 for Oklahoma City, who trailed by three going into the fourth quarter but finally took the lead for good, 99-97, on a Dort three-pointer with 2:33 to play.

"We did what it took to win," Gilgeous-Alexander said.

The 76ers had an even bigger mountain to climb in Washington and they did it with guard Tyrese Maxey leading the way.

Maxey -- whose two 40-point performances in the opening week of action were among the record-setting 16 in the first seven days of the season -- scored 39 points and handed out 10 assists and big man Joel Embiid added 25 points before sitting out overtime.

Trailing by as many as 19 in the third quarter, the Sixers tied it at 126-126 on Quentin Grimes's three-pointer with 38.7 seconds left in regulation.

After Kris Middleton missed at the buzzer they went to overtime, the 76ers taking a 132-131 lead on Adem Bona's put-back dunk then building their cushion with three free throws from Maxey.

The Wizards closed within one point with 7.6 seconds left but a pair of free throws by Maxey and

a steal and two free throws from Grimes sealed the victory.

"It was really amazing to be able to pull away with this one," Bona said. "We came together and put it together," he said.

Grimes finished with 23 points off the bench and Bona blocked four shots in the fourth quarter and another in overtime in a definitive defensive performance.

"It feels amazing to be able to contribute to the team in any way possible," Bona told NBC Sports Philadelphia. "It doesn't have to be points ... I've just got to do it the best way I do it, rebounding, blocking shots, running the floor -- it feels amazing."

Bona, who was part of Turkey's run to the silver medal at EuroBasket earlier this year, said that experience had him razor-sharp coming into the NBA campaign.

"I think that helped a lot, playing in such a high stakes game back in Europe and also like I kind of started my season a little bit earlier, so I'm kind of like mid-season shape right now," he said.

Eight Wizards players scored in double figures, led by center Alex Sarr's 31 points with 11 rebounds five assists, two steals and two blocked shots.

In Milwaukee, Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 37 points with eight rebounds and seven assists as the Bucks erased a 12-point halftime deficit to beat the New York Knicks 121-111.

Jalen Brunson led the Knicks with 36 points but was slowed in the fourth quarter after appearing to tweak a leg.

He stayed in the game, but the Bucks had all the momentum, knotting it at 103-103 on an Antetokounmpo dunk midway through the fourth, taking the lead on an Antetokounmpo layup and relentlessly pulling away.

Alcaraz Stunned in Paris Masters Opener by Britain's Norrie

PARIS (Dispatches) - World number one Carlos Alcaraz was stunned in his opening match at the Paris Masters on Tuesday as he went down to 31st-ranked Briton Cameron Norrie 4-6, 6-3, 6-4.

The six-time Grand Slam champion has never won the Paris Masters in five attempts and now faces losing his place atop the rankings should rival Jannik Sinner win the tournament in the French capital.

Returning from three weeks out of official competition due to an ankle issue, Alcaraz claimed the opening set as he displayed his usual combination of fire and flair.

However, much like his ultimately successful run at the French Open this spring, the Spaniard's level dropped off a cliff mid-match.



This time he was made to pay.

"I'm really disappointed about my level today," Alcaraz told reporters after the loss.

"I had all the ideas clear, all the goals clear but today even in the first set which I won I felt I could do a lot more than I actually did.

"I have to give credit to Cam... He played really well today, a solid match, and I think that was the key."

The mercurial Norrie, who drew his fair share of admiring gasps from the 17,500-capacity centre court at the La Defense Arena, capitalised on his opponent's errors by breaking him twice at crucial times in the second and third sets.

The 30-year-old said the win was "maybe the number one" of his career.

Reckless England Set New Zealand 176 to Win Second ODI



HAMILTON (Dispatches) - England's style of full-throttle cricket failed to find second gear as they set New Zealand 176 to win in the second ODI in Hamilton on Wednesday.

With a win the Black Caps would secure a series victory with one game to play.

After New Zealand won the toss and fielded, England flirted between reasoned and reckless throughout their innings as positive, attacking batting often led to needless dismissals against the run of play.

England were bowled out for 175 in just 36 overs, with Blair Tuckner taking 4-34 for the hosts.

No England partnership lasted more than six overs or 38 runs, and no batter seemed content to consolidate after losing a string of wickets.

New Zealand's bowling was steady, but it couldn't be credited with being unplayable, or creating countless chances.

Jamie Smith, Jacob Bethell, and Brydon Carse holed out in unnecessary fashion, Bethell in particular showing a lack of awareness in picking out the deep-square fielder with the first ball after drinks.

Even Harry Brook, who was brilliant in the first match scoring 135 at Mount Maunganui, slashed a cut in the air to point off Mitchell Santner which was brilliantly taken by a diving Will Young.

He was the major difference between the first match and the second -- England again found themselves at 143-7 midway through the innings, but without Brook at the crease they couldn't accelerate to a decent total.

Napoli Three Points Clear at Serie A Summit



MILAN (Dispatches) - Napoli maintained their lead at the top of Serie A after the champions won a hard-fought contest at lowly Lecce 1-0 and moved three points ahead of AC Milan, who drew 1-1 at Atalanta, and Roma.

Andre-Frank Anguissa headed home the only goal in the 69th minute to ensure Napoli followed up on their tempestuous win over Scudetto rivals Inter Milan at the weekend.

Napoli are on 21 points from nine league fixtures, three ahead of Milan and Roma, who host Parma on Wednesday evening and have an inferior goal difference.

AC Milan are a further point back in third ahead of Tuesday's late fixture at Atalanta.

"These matches are never easy, especially after a big game against Inter in which we expended a huge amount of physical and mental energy," said coach Antonio Conte.

Anguissa's fourth goal of the season, which came after a brilliant individual effort against Inter, gave Napoli a second win in a matter of days and further steadied the ship after a rocky recent run of results.

If it had not been for giant goalkeeper Vanja Milinkovic-Savic, Napoli might not have claimed all three points, as the Serbian penalty specialist threw himself to his right to keep out Francesco Camarda's spot kick 11 minutes after the break.

Conte had to do without a clutch of key players in his 250th Serie A match as coach. The absentees included Kevin De Bruyne who, according to team manager Gabriele Oriali, will be out of action for at least three months with a hamstring injury.

De Bruyne injured himself scoring Napoli's opening goal from the penalty spot against Inter and will be a big loss. Conte will also be without Cameroon midfielder Anguissa during the Africa Cup of Nations.

Fulham Survive Wycombe Scare to Reach League Cup Quarters

LONDON (Dispatches) - Fulham had to survive a penalty shoot-out against third tier Wycombe to reach the League Cup quarter-finals after a 1-1 draw at Adams Park.

Marco Silva's side trailed to Cauley Woodrow's fourth-minute rocket against his former club.

The Cottagers, who have never won the League Cup, equalised when Josh King scored his first goal in senior football in the 48th minute.

Wycombe held out as Fulham put them under heavy pressure, with Anders Hagelskjaer clearing Kevin's strike off the line in the final seconds.

In the shoot-out, Fulham twice missed the chance to win



it as Ryan Sessegnon and Jonah Kusi-Asare were denied by Wycombe keeper Will Norris.

But the hosts could not take advantage and, after Donnell McNeilly's kick was saved, Issa Diop thumped in the winner.

Fulham's win ended a run of four successive defeats that had sent them crashing down to 17th place in the Premier League.

Brentford joined their west London neighbours in the last eight with a 5-0 demolition of Grimsby that ended the giant-killers' memorable run in the competition.