

Iran's Intelligence Minister Says During the U.S.-Israeli Aggression, the Enemies Sought to Destabilize the Country by Inciting Daesh Terrorists and Other Takfiri Groups in Syria and Sending Them Toward Iran to Carry Out Assassinations, Sabotage, and Other Acts of Terror

IRAN NEWS

Figures by the Iranian Government's Statistics Agency, the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI), Show That the Unemployment Rate in the Country Fell Slightly in the Quarter to September 22 Compared to the Same Quarter in 2024

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2 DOMESTIC

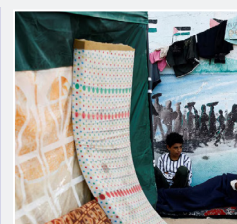


Iran-Kazakhstan Trade Expected to Reach \$3b

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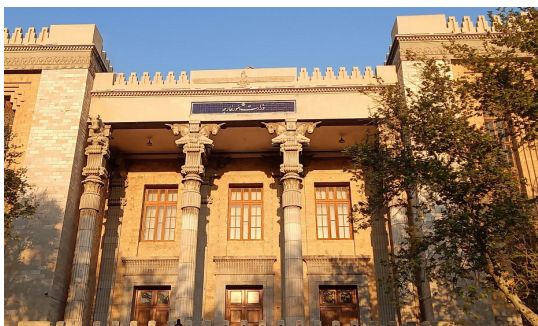
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Israeli Cabinet Ratifies Gaza Ceasefire and Hostage Deal With Hamas



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Iran Warns of Israeli Deception, Breach of Commitments



TEHRAN (PressTV) - The Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has warned the international community to remain vigilant against the "deception and breach of commitments" by the Israeli regime, following the announcement of a ceasefire agreement in Gaza.

In a statement released on Thursday, the ministry reaffirmed Iran's support for any initiative aimed at ending the genocidal war in Gaza, ensuring the withdrawal of occupying forces, facilitating the entry of humanitarian aid, freeing Palestinian prisoners, and restoring the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people.

The ministry highlighted Iran's diplomatic efforts over the past two years through regional channels, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and the United Nations to pressure Israel and its supporters to stop the genocide and withdraw occupying forces from Gaza.

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, honoring the memory of the great martyrs of the resistance, emphasizes the responsibility of the international community to prevent the occupying regime from breaking its commitments and calls on all parties to remain vigilant and cautious against the deceit and bad faith of the Zionist regime."

The statement added that "ending the crimes and genocide in Gaza does not absolve states and competent international bodies of their shared legal, humanitarian, and ethical responsibility to pursue justice by identifying and prosecuting the commanders and perpetrators of war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity in the Gaza Strip, with the aim of ending decades of impunity for the Zionist regime".

Iran, Russia Discuss Advancing Nuclear Cooperation



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - The head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) and a senior official from Russia's Rosatom State Atomic Energy Corporation have met in Tehran, discussing advancement of cooperation between the allies in the field of peaceful nuclear energy.

Mohammad Eslami met with Nikolai Spassky, Rosatom's visiting deputy director general for international affairs, in Tehran.

Spassky had travelled to the Iranian capital at the head of a delegation following a visit by Eslami to Moscow on September 24, during which the two sides signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on cooperation in construction of small nuclear power plants, aka small modular reactors (SMRs), in Iran.

The meeting saw the officials discuss expanding bilateral nuclear cooperation, including via projects focusing on construction of the SMRs.

It also addressed another MoU signed during Eslami's visit that has covered collaboration on the Iran-Hormoz Nuclear Power Plant Project, which includes construction of four 1,250-megawatt power reactors.

Two days following Eslami's trip, Iranian and Russian officials signed a \$25-billion deal for the construction of the four-strong reactors.

The deal was inked as part of the nations' Treaty on Comprehensive Strategic Partnership that was signed in January and features a 20-year roadmap for their bilateral relations.

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK



Cleric Reaffirms Sovereignty Over Three Persian Gulf Islands, Criticizes European "Interference"

TEHRAN - Tehran's interim Friday Prayer Leader, Hojjatolislam Mohammad Javad Haj Ali Akbari, strongly condemned what he called an "interventionist" statement issued by the recent joint meeting of (Persian) Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and European Union (EU) foreign ministers. Speaking at Tehran University, he reaffirmed Iran's "historical and eternal sovereignty" over the three Persian Gulf islands of Abu Musa, Greater Tunb, and Lesser Tunb, asserting that they "were, are, and will remain Iranian."

"Europeans should mind their own misfortunes instead of meddling in our region," Haj Ali Akbari said, referring to the GCC-EU statement. "Iran's missile program has nothing to do with you," he added, calling the Western positions "baseless, insolent, and interventionist."

The cleric went on to reject any external involvement in Iran's defense or domestic affairs, stating, "The Islamic Republic does not wait for anyone's approval regarding its capabilities."

Addressing neighboring Persian Gulf states, Haj Ali Akbari urged them to strengthen ties with Iran rather than Western powers. "Learn from experience — those foreign powers are unfaithful and only exploit you. Iran is your true neighbor and the greatest supporter in the region," he said.

The cleric also praised President Ebrahim Raisi and the First Vice President for their efforts to improve the economy, urging stronger coordination across ministries to resolve economic "imbalances," particularly in energy and housing. He called for a return to "Islamic moderation" in energy consumption, noting that "excessive use of water, electricity, and gas must be curbed."

He expressed hope for faster progress in Iran's National Housing Movement and the rollout of an electronic coupon system to stabilize prices and ensure basic goods reach all citizens. He also demanded strict legal action against hoarders and price gougers.

Turning to international affairs, Haj Ali Akbari marked the second anniversary of the "Operation Al-Aqsa Storm," launched on October 7, 2023, by Palestinian resistance groups. He described Israel as "defeated, bankrupt, and hated worldwide."

"Look at the despair and disgrace on the faces of the Zionist regime," he said. "They wanted to eradicate Hamas but were forced to negotiate with them instead. The people of Gaza feel victorious

while the Zionist regime has been humiliated."

He added that Israel's so-called "Abraham Accords" and other regional plans had "collapsed," asserting that "Zionists are now the most detested group in global public opinion."

Mocking former U.S. President Donald Trump, Haj Ali Akbari said, "Trump, who is complicit in the genocide in Gaza, now claims he deserves a Nobel Peace Prize."

In his first sermon, Haj Ali Akbari focused on what he called "chaste living" (zist-e afrifaneh) — a concept he described as both a divine duty and a human right. He said a modest and virtuous lifestyle is "God's gift to humanity" and the foundation of a pure and dignified society.

He emphasized that all members of society — men and women alike — as well as families, educators, media professionals, and cultural institutions share responsibility for promoting chastity and modesty.

"When a believing woman enters society with hijab and dignity, she performs a great social and civil duty," he said, adding that women's modesty safeguards their dignity and strengthens the moral fabric of society.

The cleric argued that in the "corrupt Western culture," women's rights to live modestly have been violated. "In modern ignorance, they call it freedom, but in reality, it is the worst kind of enslavement and humiliation," he said. "Women have been turned into cheap commodities for exploitation."

He warned that spreading "immorality and immodesty" harms women first, leading to the breakdown of families and social decay. "If chastity is lost, the first victim is the family unit," he noted.

Concluding his remarks, Haj Ali Akbari praised Iranian women as "among the most chaste in the world" and called on cultural, educational, media, and legislative institutions to "protect this divine and national virtue" and remain vigilant against what he described as "the enemy's corrupt designs."

Conference in Tehran to Address U.S., Israeli Assassinations of Scientists

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iran has launched the "Rising of the Wise against Sophicide" conference to condemn a campaign of targeted assassinations of scientists by the U.S. and Israel.

Mohammad-Javad Larjani, head of Iran's Institute for Research in Fundamental Sciences and chairman of the "Rising of the wise against sophicide" conference, said Thursday the event aims to raise global awareness about the threats faced by scientists in Iran and other countries.

"This conference was organized quickly to address the ongoing situation related to science and knowledge," Larjani said in his opening remarks. "We are confronted with a new phenomenon called scientific terrorism."

Larjani referenced a recent 12-day war between Iran, Israel, and the United States, during which he said several Iranian nuclear scientists and military personnel were assassinated.

He said the Israeli and U.S. governments are openly carrying out these killings, marking a shift from previous covert operations.

"The regimes based in Washington and Tel Aviv have revealed a new approach — that if they dislike a scientist, they can assassinate them by any means," Larjani said.

Larjani stated that during the war, prominent scientists were killed even while with their families, under the false pretext of developing atomic weapons. He emphasized that, according to a fatwa issued by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the production of nuclear weapons is strictly forbidden in Iran.

Western countries, he said, are trying to monopolize scientific knowledge to maintain global dominance, suggesting that the rise of Iran and other nations threatens this hegemony.

"They seek to monopolize science and believe that scientific knowledge is not suitable for certain nations," Larjani said. "The emergence of the Islamic Republic has significant implications for this."

Larjani called for greater protection of scientists worldwide and stressed the importance of continuing such conferences to raise awareness about the risks faced by the scientific community. "We must expand our own scientific ethics. Scientists should not be deprived or threatened. Conferences like this must continue to be held. Scientists from around the world will certainly



benefit from this awareness-raising."

Larjani has issued a powerful global appeal against "sophicide", a dangerous new reality where states claim it is legitimate to assassinate scientists and suppress other nations' progress.

Expanding on the reasons behind holding the conference, Larjani explained that perpetrators use advanced weaponry and weaponize access to private data, transforming everyday devices into instruments of assassination.

This, he said in a statement published on the website of the conference, exposes the hypocrisy of

powers that have long claimed to uphold freedom of information and technological progress while secretly undermining them.

Larjani pointed to the assassination of the president of West Asia's premier university and ten colleagues in a distant aerial strike on their home, calling it a campaign of intellectual extermination.

He described the current global order as moribund and lethal and urged principled academics to forge a new intellectual alliance. He stressed that strategic philosophical discourse and the active engagement of the academic community are crucial to mobilizing global consensus against this tyrannical system.

He further criticized the exploitation of telecommunications and encrypted networks by hegemonic powers to harvest confidential data and carry out targeted killings, exposing the illegitimacy of the current order.

Larjani highlighted the stranglehold on advanced technologies such as AI, microelectronics, and quantum computing, which are leveraged for global coercion and sanctions.

He called on scholars to lead the construction of a secure, sovereign technological ecosystem, ending monopoly and exploitation by superpowers.

This movement could reinvigorate universities, shift political and technological discourse back to the academy, and represent a demand for a just and peaceful path of development, Larjani said.

Its success depends on sustained international collaboration, impactful symposia with global scholars, and traction in political and media arenas, he added.

Iran's Navy Inks Strategic Cooperation Document With Caspian Littoral States



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - The naval commanders of Iran, Russia, Kazakhstan, and Azerbaijan have signed a strategic cooperation pact aimed at bolstering security in the shared waters.

The agreement was signed during a meeting of the four Caspian littoral states in the Russian city of St. Petersburg.

Rear Admiral Shahram Irani, Commander of the Iranian Navy, represented Tehran at the summit and signed the document on behalf of the country.

The agreement aims to strengthen comprehensive cooperation among the Caspian littoral states, particularly in ensuring sustainable security in the shared waters.

According to the provisions of this document, no foreign country or extra-regional power will be allowed to interfere in the internal affairs of the Caspian Sea.



Corn, Oil, and Rice Top Iran’s Import List in First Half of Year

TEHRAN (ILNA) - According to the latest customs data, Iran imported over 13.5 million tons of essential goods during the first six months of the current year, marking a 12.5% increase compared to the same period last year. Despite the growth in volume, the total value of these imports—\$9.07 billion—showed a 1.5% decline.

The report reveals that corn, edible oils, and rice were the top imported items. Iran brought in 5.19 million tons of corn, 1.07 million tons of various edible oils (including semi-solid, liquid, and crude forms), and 965,000 tons of rice during the period.

Imports of wheat and barley also rose sharply, increasing by 141% and 50%, respectively, compared with the same time last year.

Iran Calls Canada’s Pistachio Import Ban “Suspicious”



TEHRAN - A senior member of Iran’s National Pistachio Association has criticized Canada’s recent ban on pistachio imports from Iran, calling the decision “suspicious” and politically motivated.

Behrouz Agah, a member of the National Pistachio Association, told ILNA that aflatoxin — a natural toxin sometimes found in pistachios — exists not only in Iranian pistachios but also in American varieties. “It’s possible that, in some cases, aflatoxin levels in Iranian pistachios are higher than those in U.S. pistachios,” Agah said. “But aflatoxin and salmonella have always been present in pistachios. The fact that Canada suddenly triggered this ban raises suspicions.”

Agah reported that Iran’s pistachio production this year is expected to reach 240,000 tons, up significantly from previous years.

He explained that the increase is due to a broader geographical spread of cultivation: pistachios are now grown in 27 provinces across the country, compared with only 7 or 8 provinces in previous years. “For example, provinces like West and East Azerbaijan and Ardabil have now begun planting pistachios,” he said.

According to Agah, Iran’s pistachio output in previous years was: 2024 (1403): 217,000 tons; 2023 (1402): 168,000 tons; 2022 (1401): 92,000 tons; and 2021 (1400): 135,000 tons.

He also noted that pistachio is one of the least water-intensive crops in the country, with harvesting continuing until the end of October.

Agah estimated that Iran’s pistachio exports this year would total around 202,000 tons of in-shell dried pistachios, with China, India, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and Middle Eastern countries being the main markets.

Exports to the European Union remain limited, he said, because “the EU demands the highest quality pistachios at the lowest prices.”

Iran Exports Agricultural Products to 80 Countries



TEHRAN - Iran’s Deputy Minister of Agriculture announced that the country now exports agricultural products to 80 nations worldwide, with foreign exchange revenues from the horticultural sector rising from \$2.9 billion to \$4.3 billion.

Mohammad-Mehdi Boroumandi, Deputy Minister for Horticulture at the Ministry of Agriculture Jihad, emphasized that the agricultural sector serves as the frontline of Iran’s food security. He stated that while the nation must provide food for its 90 million citizens, it must also safeguard its water and soil resources for future generations.

Boroumandi noted that Iran is a vast country whose food demands cannot be met through limited imports. He stressed that relying on indigenous knowledge and domestic capacities is the only sustainable path to ensuring national food security.

Referring to the challenges faced by the 14th administration, Boroumandi said that despite severe drought, power shortages, and budget constraints, the agricultural trade balance recorded a positive \$3 billion last year.

He attributed the significant growth in horticultural export earnings—from \$2.9 billion to \$4.3 billion—to the cooperation and resilience of Iranian farmers and the public amid difficult economic conditions.

Boroumandi also announced that Iran now exports agricultural products to 80 countries, adding that product traceability will soon become mandatory for both domestic and international markets.

Highlighting the importance of pistachios in Iran’s export economy, he said the crop generates around \$1.7 billion annually in foreign exchange. With 650,000 hectares of pistachio orchards, Iran remains one of the world’s leading producers.

Iran–Kazakhstan Trade Expected to Reach \$3b

TEHRAN - The head of the Khorramabad Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, Mohammad Khaki, met with Ontalap Onalbaiyev, the Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan to Iran, and called for a significant expansion of trade between the two countries — from the current \$340 million to \$3 billion.

During the meeting in Tehran, Khaki emphasized that Iran and Kazakhstan enjoy dynamic and growing trade relations and that, with new strategic planning, the volume of exchanges could reach the new target despite international challenges.

“Kazakhstan is one of the key countries in Central Asia and holds a special position in Iran’s regional economic interactions,” Khaki said.

He added that trade between the two nations stood at \$340 million last year but expressed optimism that coordinated efforts could help achieve the \$3 billion goal.

Khaki noted that relations between Iran and Kazakhstan have remained positive, stable, and expanding since Kazakhstan’s independence in 1991.

Highlighting the economic potential of Lorestan Province, Khaki said five of Iran’s main export products to Kazakhstan are produced locally in the province. A Kazakh delegation, he added, will visit agricultural, dairy, and construction material production units in Lorestan to explore investment and cooperation opportunities.

Lorestan, home to around 1.8 million people and covering 28,000 square kilometers, lies on a major north–south transit route and possesses significant resources in water, industry, mining, and agriculture.

“With 13 billion cubic meters of water resources — about 11% of Iran’s surface water — Lorestan is well positioned for investment in water-intensive industries,” Khaki said.

The province hosts over 1,300 industrial units, including major petrochemical, pharmaceutical, agricultural, and non-metallic mineral industries. It also ranks among Iran’s top five provinces in decorative stone production, with 200 active stone-cutting facilities.

Khaki pointed out that Lorestan leads the country in black fig production and cold-water fish farming, producing 38,000 tons annually. A National Fisheries Festival is scheduled to take place in November.

He also highlighted the province’s agricultural strengths, with 800,000 hectares of fertile farmland and 100 hectares of advanced greenhouses producing healthy, export-oriented products.

Lorestan benefits from an active airport, customs facilities, north–south transit routes, and a railway line expected to connect to the provincial capital soon. The



Khorramabad–Tehran freeway, nearing completion, will cut travel time to the capital to under four hours.

Khaki said the Khorramabad Chamber of Commerce plans to collaborate with the Iran–Kazakhstan Joint Chamber of Commerce to promote exports in petrochemicals, agriculture, and construction materials.

He also announced plans for trade delegations, joint exhibitions, and cooperation agreements, adding that preferential tariffs could further expand bilateral exports.

Khaki underlined Lorestan’s rich cultural heritage — with over 63,000 years of history and several UNESCO-listed prehistoric sites. The Falak-ol-Aflak Castle, currently undergoing UNESCO registration, is among the attractions the Kazakh delegation will visit.

He added that long-term tax exemptions, National Development Fund loans, and private industrial zones offer strong incentives for foreign investment.

Ambassador Ontalap Onalbaiyev, on a two-day visit to Lorestan, met with local officials and business leaders and toured several production sites and historical landmarks.

He stated that Tehran and Astana’s relations are rooted in shared historical, cultural, and civilizational ties and that both nations are determined to strengthen their cooperation in economic and cultural spheres.

“Iran and Kazakhstan have no political differences and have consistently supported each other on regional and international issues,” Onalbaiyev said.

According to the ambassador, bilateral trade reached \$245 million in the first half of the current year — including \$144 million in Kazakh exports and \$101 million in Iranian exports. He expressed hope that trade would rise further through the activation of transit routes and joint projects.

Onalbaiyev also revealed that Kazakhstan is considering establishing a logistics hub in Bandar Abbas to expand its trade network with Iran, the Persian Gulf, and Iraq via the North–South Corridor.

He noted that Kazakhstan welcomes Iranian investment and offers incentives such as tax exemptions, investment guarantees, and long-term residence permits for foreign investors. Priority sectors include mining, agriculture, and processing industries, with several joint projects already underway.

“Cultural and academic cooperation should also be a foundation for deeper understanding between our nations,” he added. “As an Iranologist, I believe culture is the cornerstone of nations’ closeness.”

Onalbaiyev praised Lorestan’s hospitality and rich natural and cultural potential, expressing hope that cooperation between the private sectors of both countries will lead to sustainable economic partnerships.

Zangezur Corridor Will Not Exclude Iran from Regional Equations



TEHRAN - At the third meeting of the Transport Commission of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, the geopolitical implications of the Zangezur Corridor in the South Caucasus and its potential impact on Iran were analyzed. The session, attended by the head of the International Affairs Development Center at the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development and several transport-sector experts, examined the formation process of the Zangezur route, the positions of regional countries toward it, and the stance Iran should adopt.

Amir Taraf, Advisor to the Minister and Head of the International Affairs Development Center at the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development, stressed that “Iran has not been excluded from regional dynamics by the creation of this corridor.”

He urged Iran to take advantage of new transit opportunities and regional peace initiatives, engage actively in the Caucasus economic landscape, and avoid emotional or passive approaches.

Opening the session, Peyman Sanandaji, head of the Chamber’s Transport Commission, highlighted recent transport-related developments and announced that a national transportation conference would be held on December 16 in cooperation with the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development.

He also mentioned ongoing discussions on mandatory vehicle standards and efforts to convey the private sector’s views to relevant authorities, including the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade.

Iran Expands Free and Preferential Trade Agreements with Regional Partners



TEHRAN - Iran is broadening its international trade reach through a series of free and preferential trade agreements aimed at strengthening economic ties and improving export competitiveness, according to Farzad Piltan, Assistant to the Head of the Trade Promotion Organization (TPO).

Speaking to ILNA News Agency, Piltan announced that Iran has finalized a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) — comprising Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Armenia. The agreement, he said, will significantly expand Iran’s access to regional markets and help boost bilateral trade volumes.

In addition, Iran maintains preferential trade agreements with the member states of the D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation, which include Pakistan, Turkey, Nigeria, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Bangladesh. These accords, Piltan noted, serve as key instruments for reducing tariffs and creating a more competitive environment for Iranian exporters.

He also highlighted Iran’s participation in the ECOTa Agreement, a multilateral trade framework involving Afghanistan, Pakistan, Turkey, and Tajikistan. The agreement, which functions as a partial free trade pact, is currently being revised to expand its scope and modernize its provisions.

Explaining the benefits of such agreements, Piltan said that while preferential trade agreements apply to selected goods with reduced tariffs, free trade agreements can eliminate tariffs entirely, allowing trade volumes to potentially double or even triple between member states.

Targeted Cooperation With Oman Requires Open Vision and Commercial Planning

TEHRAN - A meeting on investment and re-export opportunities in Oman’s industrial zones was held at the Bandar Abbas Chamber of Commerce, focusing on expanding economic cooperation between Iran and Oman in light of current economic conditions.

According to the Public Relations Office of the Bandar Abbas Chamber of Commerce, Hassan Rouhani, Vice President of the Chamber, emphasized two key points during the session.

“Given the present state of the national economy, Iranian businesspeople should pay more attention to factory-free production,” Rouhani said. “This model can create new opportunities for export growth and cost reduction.”

He further noted that Oman primarily serves as a production hub for re-export rather than a consumer market. “Oman’s two main target markets are the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region and East Africa — areas Iranian exporters should focus on,” he explained.

Rouhani highlighted the importance of a well-informed approach when cooperating with Omani partners. “If we are to work effectively with Omani investors, we must enter the market with open eyes and a thorough understanding of its economic and legal frameworks. Entrepreneurs should know that after purchasing land and completing the legal process, property titles can be fully registered in their name,” he said.

He also mentioned the upcoming Oman Food Exhibition scheduled for December in Muscat. “Invitations have been sent to Iranian food producers, and a dedicated pavilion has been allocated to showcase Iranian export goods. I recommend that a



trade delegation be organized alongside the exhibition to maximize the two-day event’s potential,” Rouhani suggested.

He concluded by thanking the organizers and participants, calling for continued cooperation to strengthen trade relations between Hormozgan Province and Oman.

Hammoud Abdullah Murad Al Balushi, Deputy Minister of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion of Oman, also spoke at the meeting, announcing new platforms for Iranian investors to participate in Omani industrial zones.

Referring to the strategic Free Zone Industrial Park located near the Yemeni border, Al Balushi stated that it was designed to boost exports of Iranian products and strengthen bilateral trade.

“These industrial parks operate independently, outside the country’s main industrial complex network,” he explained. “In addition to the Free Zone, another industrial city near Muscat covers a population of about 200,000 people.”

Al Balushi highlighted that the 1,200-hectare park offers full access to container trade and export facilities. “The Omani government provides special incentives for Iranian investors — including two years of full rent exemption and a 50% rent discount for the following three years to establish production and commercial units,” he said.

He added that water and electricity costs in Oman’s industrial parks are also lower for Iranian investors.

Emphasizing Oman’s strategic location as a gateway to regional and African markets, Al Balushi invited Iranian traders and manufacturers to take advantage of these opportunities for re-export and greater international presence.

Powerful 7.4-Magnitude Quake Strikes Southern Philippines

MANILA (Dispatches) - A powerful magnitude-7.4 earthquake struck off the southern Philippines on Friday, triggering warnings of a “destructive tsunami” on the country’s Pacific coast within hours.

The quake struck about 20 kilometres (12 miles away) from Manay in the Mindanao region at 9:43 am (0143 GMT), the United States Geological Survey (USGS) said.

“Destructive tsunami is expected with life-threatening wave heights” on the archipelago nation’s east coast, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology reported.

Coastal residents in these areas “are strongly advised to immediately evacuate to higher grounds or move farther inland,” it added. There were no immediate reports of damage or casualties.



North Korea’s Kim Hails Cooperative Ties With China



SEOUL (Dispatches) - North Korea’s leader Kim Jong Un hailed “friendly and cooperative” ties with China as he hosted Premier Li Qiang and other foreign dignitaries for celebrations marking 80 years under the ruling Workers’ Party, state media reported Friday.

China is North Korea’s most important ally, although relations have at times been strained by Pyongyang’s nuclear programme.

North Korea is expected to stage a massive military parade on Friday, showcasing its latest advanced weaponry, including intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs).

South Korea’s military said the North appeared to have been conducting “rehearsals mobilising equipment and missiles” and that there was a “high chance” that the parade will be held Friday night.

“North Korea is expected to get about 1mm of rain per hour starting late afternoon, so the parade should still be possible -- though the weather may affect any planned air power displays,” a defence ministry official told reporters.

The celebrations come as Kim has been emboldened by the war in Ukraine, securing critical support from Russia after sending thousands of North Korean troops to fight alongside Moscow’s forces. Russia’s former president Dmitry Medvedev, deputy head of its Security Council, is attending this week’s anniversary celebrations.

Kim praised Li’s visit as “showing the invariable support and special friendly feeling towards the WPK and the government and people of the DPRK”, using acronyms for North Korea’s ruling party and official name.

Peru’s Congress Votes to Impeach Dina Boluarte



LIMA (Dispatches) - Lawmakers in Peru voted on Friday to impeach the country’s unpopular president Dina Boluarte and replace her with Congress chief Jose Jeri. Boluarte, who refused to attend the overnight hearing, has been criticised for failing to stem mounting crime in the South American country.

Peru’s Congress voted to remove deeply unpopular President Dina Boluarte from office as a crime wave grips the South American nation.

Lawmakers voted to debate her removal from office on grounds of “moral incapacity” earlier in the night and summoned her to defend herself before Congress an hour later. She never appeared, and lawmakers had sufficient votes to proceed with a rapid impeachment process.

An overwhelming majority of 118 out of 122 lawmakers voted for her impeachment, removing her from the presidency, Congress leader Jose Jeri announced.

Jeri, a 38-year-old lawyer, was later sworn in as the interim president to serve out Boluarte’s term. Elections are scheduled for next April and Boluarte’s term was to end July 28, 2026.

Jeri said he would defend Peru’s sovereignty and hand over power to the winner of the April election.

Israeli Cabinet Ratifies Gaza Ceasefire and Hostage Deal With Hamas

CAIRO (Dispatches) - Israel’s government ratified a ceasefire with the Palestinian militant group Hamas on Friday, clearing the way to suspend hostilities in Gaza within 24 hours and free Israeli hostages held there within 72 hours after that.

The Israeli cabinet approved the deal early Friday morning, roughly 24 hours after mediators announced the agreement, which calls for the release of Israeli hostages in exchange for Palestinian prisoners and the start of a phased withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza under U.S. President Donald Trump’s initiative to end the two-year war in Gaza.

“The government has just now approved the framework for the release of all of the hostages – the living and the deceased,” Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s English-language X account said.

The war has deepened Israel’s international isolation and upended the Middle East, having evolved into a regional conflict that has drawn in Iran, Yemen and Lebanon. It also tested the U.S.-Israeli relationship, with Trump seeming to lose patience with Netanyahu and pressuring him to reach a deal.

Israelis and Palestinians alike rejoiced after the deal was announced, the biggest step yet to end two years of war in which over 67,000 Palestinians have been killed, and return the last hostages seized by Hamas in the deadly attacks that started the assault.

Hamas’ exiled Gaza chief Khalil Al-Hayya said he had received guarantees from the United States and other mediators that the war was over.

An Israeli government spokesperson said the ceasefire would go into force within 24 hours of government approval of the deal. After that 24-hour period, the hostages held in Gaza would be freed within 72 hours.

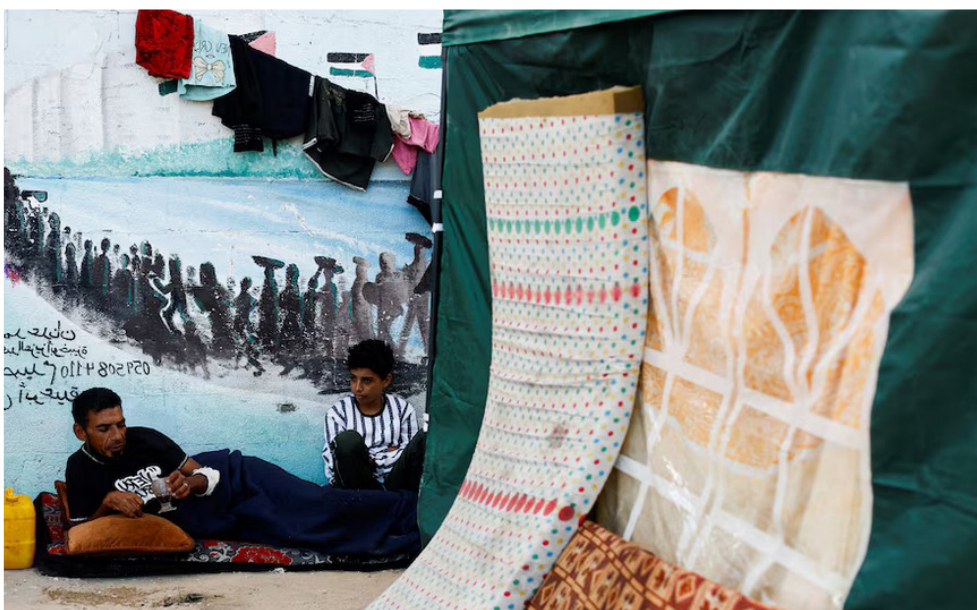
Twenty Israeli hostages are still believed to be alive in Gaza, while 26 are presumed dead, and the fate of two is unknown. Hamas has indicated that recovering the bodies of the dead may take longer than releasing those who are alive.

Once the agreement is operating, trucks carrying food and medical aid will surge into Gaza to help civilians, hundreds of thousands of whom have been sheltering in tents after Israeli forces destroyed their homes and razed entire cities to dust.

The accord, if fully implemented, would bring the two sides closer than any previous effort to halt the war.

Much could still go wrong. Even after the deal was signed, a Palestinian source said the list of hundreds of Palestinians to be released was not finalised. The group is seeking freedom for some of the most prominent Palestinian convicts held in Israeli jails, as well as hundreds of people detained during Israel’s assault.

Further steps in Trump’s 20-point plan have yet to be discussed. Those include how the shattered Gaza Strip is to be ruled



Local health authorities reported seven dead in two separate Israeli strikes on Thursday.

Trump said he would head to the region on Sunday to possibly attend a signing ceremony in Egypt, and Israeli Knesset Speaker Amir Ohana invited him to address the legislative body, which would be the first such speech by a U.S. president since 2008.

The deal received support from Arab and Western countries and was widely portrayed as a major diplomatic achievement for Trump.

Successful completion of the deal would mark a significant accomplishment for the Republican president, who has struggled to quickly deliver on his promises to bring peace to the Gaza conflict and Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

Western and Arab countries met in Paris to discuss an international peacekeeping force and reconstruction assistance for Gaza once the fighting stops.

The United States will deploy 200 troops as part of a joint task force for Gaza stability, with no Americans on the ground in the Palestinian enclave, two senior U.S. officials said on Thursday.

The officials, speaking to reporters on condition of anonymity, said the 200 would be a core part of a task force that would include representatives from Egypt’s military, Qatar, Turkey and probably from the United Arab Emirates.

Massive Russian Strikes Plunge Kyiv Into Darkness, Cut Off Water and Power

KYIV (Dispatches) - The Ukrainian capital was plunged into darkness early Friday by what the air force called a “massive attack”, as Russia pummeled Kyiv’s infrastructure, cutting off water and energy supplies.

The Kremlin has escalated aerial attacks on Ukrainian energy facilities and rail systems over recent weeks, mirroring similar campaigns launched over the previous three winters that left people without heating in frigid temperatures.

AFP journalists in Kyiv heard several powerful explosions today and experienced blackouts at their homes across different districts of the city.

“The capital of the country is under an enemy ballistic missile attack and a massive attack by the enemy strike drones,” the Ukrainian air force said, urging people in Kyiv to remain in shelters.

Mayor Vitali Klitschko said Russian forces had targeted “critical infrastructure” and wounded at least nine people, five of whom were taken to hospital.

“The left bank of the capital is without electricity. There are also problems with water supply,” Klitschko posted on Telegram.

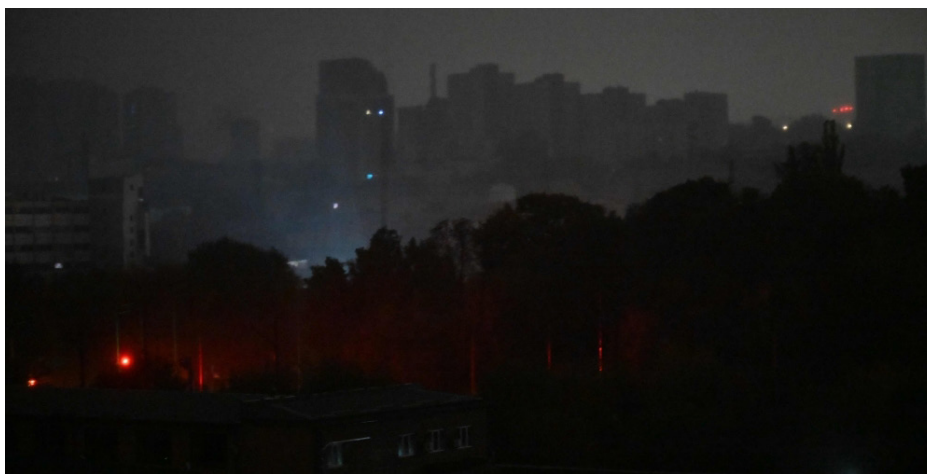
Ukrainian Energy Minister Svitlana Grynychuk said Russian forces were “inflicting a massive strike” on the grid.

“Energy workers are taking all necessary measures to minimise the negative consequences,” Grynychuk wrote on Facebook.

“As soon as security conditions allow, energy workers will begin clarifying the consequences of the attack and restoration work,” she said.

Fearing an incoming hypersonic Kinzhal missile—which are harder to detect and intercept—Ukraine put the entire country on alert on Friday.

Russia also hit the southeastern region of Zaporizhzhia with at least seven overnight drone strikes, killing a seven-year-old and wounding at least three



people, according to Ivan Fedorov, the head of the regional military administration.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said yesterday that Moscow was seeking to “create chaos and apply psychological pressure” through crippling energy facilities and railways.

According to Zelensky, Russian attacks this year have already strained Ukrainian gas infrastructure, and more strikes could force his country to ramp up imports.

Ukraine has also stepped up its drone and missile strikes on Russian territory, a tactic that Zelensky said was showing “results” and pushing up fuel prices in Russia.

A Ukrainian hit on a power station in the Russian border region of Belgorod also caused power outages.

Russia accused Ukraine on Thursday of rupturing a now-defunct pipeline near the frontline used to transport ammonia into Ukraine for export, releasing toxic gas.

It posted a video showing what appeared to be clouds of a chemical compound spewing from a source in the ground.

Authorities in Ukraine’s eastern Donetsk region said the incident did not present a “menace to the lives of people” living nearby.

Citing a recent uptick in Russian drone attacks, Ukrainian authorities ordered the evacuation of children and their guardians from Kramatorsk, the largest civilian hub in the Donetsk region still under Kyiv’s control.

In Sloviansk, another Donbas city under Ukrainian control, the mayor recently advised children and elderly people to leave, citing incessant attacks on the energy system.

Ukrainian authorities said Russia is increasingly deploying small, cheap first-person-view drones that have dramatically changed the character of fighting across the sprawling front line over recent months.

A Ukrainian delegation led by Prime Minister Yulia Svyrydenko is expected to visit the United States early next week to discuss, among other topics, energy and air defense under intensifying Russian strikes.

US President Donald Trump said Thursday that Washington and NATO allies were “stepping up the pressure” to end the war in Ukraine, though his attempts to negotiate with Russia’s Vladimir Putin have so far failed to achieve a ceasefire.

Trump hosted Putin in Alaska in August, after which Russia’s attacks on Ukraine escalated.

Russia said this week that momentum towards a peace deal had largely vanished.

Trump Threatens Cuts to Pressure Democrats in Shutdown Fight

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The U.S. government shutdown looked set to extend into a third week as senators again rejected a Republican funding bill yesterday despite President Donald Trump’s attempts to turn the thumbscrews on opposition Democrats.

Federal agencies have been out of money since October 1 and public services have been crippled amid stalled talks between the two sides that have led to a series of near-daily failed votes to turn the lights back on.

With no sign of a breakthrough, the Senate adjourned until next Tuesday—meaning no votes will be held during that time.

Trump repeated his threats to slash government programs popular with Democrats as he berated the party over the shutdown at a cabinet meeting.

“The Democrat shutdown is causing pain and suffering for hardworking Americans, including our military, our air traffic controllers and impoverished mothers, people with young children, people that have to live not the greatest of lives,” he said.

But his attempts to pressure Democrats to back the Republican bill—which would open the government through late November as negotiations continue—have so far fallen on deaf ears.



Democrats are privately preparing for a shutdown lasting several more weeks, CNN reported, if Republicans do not agree to their demands to extend health care subsidies due to expire on December 31.

With some 750,000 federal workers “furloughed”—placed on enforced leave without pay—both sides have voiced concerns about the likelihood of military personnel missing their paychecks next Wednesday.

A bipartisan House bill that would guarantee the pay of 1.3 million active-duty servicemembers through the shutdown has around 150 co-sponsors.

But Republican leaders oppose bringing it to the floor for a vote—insisting that the armed forces will be paid if Democrats simply provide the votes to end the shutdown.

“The President has made it clear: we must pay our troops,” the bill’s author, Republican congresswoman Jen Kiggans, posted on X.

Democrats—emboldened by polling showing voters mostly blaming the shutdown on Republicans—are banking on increasing public support in a prolonged standoff.

“Every day gets better for us,” Democratic Minority Leader Chuck Schumer told Punchbowl News.



England Thump Woeful Wales in Friendly

LONDON (Dispatches) - England racked up an eighth successive victory against Wales with a 3-0 cruise in an international friendly at Wembley to fully justify head coach Thomas Tuchel's decision to omit some leading lights from his squad.

Goals by Morgan Rogers, Ollie Watkins and Bukayo Saka effectively ended the match as contest with only 20 minutes on the clock as a feeble Wales were left reeling.

Rogers side-footed England's first after three minutes and Watkins, starting in place of injured skipper Harry Kane, tapped home the second before Saka, back from injury that kept him out last month, curled in a stunning third.

Wales avoided further damage and did improve slightly after the break but will already have had one eye on next Monday's vital World Cup qualifier against Belgium in Cardiff.

England face Latvia away next Tuesday when they could clinch top spot in their group and automatic qualification for next year's finals in North America.

Tuchel raised eyebrows by leaving Phil Foden and Jack Grealish and most notably Jude Bellingham out of his squad and rewarding those who played in wins against Andorra and Serbia last month, the latter 5-0 win being the best of the German's reign.

England were also without record goalscorer Kane because of an ankle injury picked up playing for Bayern Munich at the weekend and one pre-match question was how Tuchel's side would manage without a player who has scored 74 goals in 109 appearances.

The answer was emphatic as they capitalised on a woeful Wales start to blow their opponents away.

Wales manager Craig Bellamy said in the build-up there was no such thing as a friendly, even if Monday's clash with Belgium would have been his main focus.

But his defenders did not appear to have taken that message on board as England ran riot from the first

whistle.

In England's thrashing of Serbia, Noni Madueke, Ezri Konsa and Marc Guehi all scored their first senior England goals.

Rogers continued that trend at Wembley as Guehi was far more switched on than any Welsh player to keep a deep corner alive beyond the back post before pulling back a pass for the unmarked Rogers to sweep a shot past Karl Darlow.

"Right at the top. It's a proud moment to do it at home too in a home nation derby. A dream come true," Rogers said.

That meant England have scored in 17 successive matches for the first time since 1991 and there was more to come.

If the first goal made Bellamy wince, the second would have had him pulling his hair out as somehow nine Welsh players could not stop Guehi's prodded pass reaching Watkins who could hardly believe his luck, tapping in from a yard out.

It soon got even worse for Wales as Saka received the ball on the right and was given far too much time to cut in, pick his spot, and curl an unstoppable left-footer into the top corner.

Rogers struck the crossbar early in the second half before a raft of substitutions by both managers disrupted the flow of the game and England's fans began to drift home.

Wales's sizeable following did at least create some atmosphere and were rewarded with an improved display as England keeper Jordan Pickford made good saves from David Brooks and Chris Mepham.

Pickford has now kept eight clean sheets in his last eight appearances for his country, surpassing the record he shared with England great Gordon Banks.

Unbeaten Scotland Down Greece 3-1 in World Cup Qualifier



GLASGOW (Dispatches) - Scotland stunned Greece with a 3-1 home win in their Group C qualifier on Thursday to take a big step towards a first World Cup since 1998 on a night that saw manager Steve Clarke equal the national record for most games in charge.

Goals from Ryan Christie, Lewis Ferguson and Tsyndon Dykes turned the game around for the hosts after Kostas Tsimikas had given Greece a deserved lead just past the hour mark.

The Tartan Army had nothing to celebrate in the first half at Hampden Park when Scotland failed to muster a shot on target, with the visitors dominating possession but squandering opportunities.

Tsimikas made the breakthrough in the 62nd but Scotland hit back with Christie's surprise equaliser two minutes later after a VAR review.

Ferguson then grabbed a scruffy but sweet first international goal in the 80th and Dykes made it 3-1 three minutes into stoppage time after a goalkeeping howler by Konstantinos Tzolakis.

As the crowd went crazy, after boos at half-time, the BBC Scotland commentator summed up the outcome as "one of the most spectacular acts of pickpocketry you could see".

Clarke said his side deserved it in the end.

"Football is a 90-minute game and you have to make sure you come out of it with a positive result. 3-1 maybe flatters us, but we did enough to win the game," he said.

Vangelos Pavlidis could have scored for Greece in the eighth minute but, unmarked at the back post, failed to get a final touch to a pass across goal from captain Anastasios Bakasetas. Georgios Masouras also fired over in the 54th.

The match was Clarke's 71st at the helm and he will beat Craig Brown's record when his still-unbeaten side host pointless Belarus on Sunday in a game that could secure at least a playoff spot for next year's finals.

Scotland are level on seven points, but behind on goal difference, with group leaders Denmark after three games.

Greece, the 2004 European champions, have three points and are teetering on the brink of an early exit with a crucial game away to the Danes on Sunday.

Djokovic Battles into Shanghai Semis

SHANGHAI (Dispatches) - Fourth seed Novak Djokovic battled past a spirited Zizou Bergs 6-3 7-5 to reach the Shanghai Masters semi-finals for a 10th time, setting up a clash with surprise package and world number 204 Valentin Vacherot.

In challenging conditions, Djokovic was made to work harder than the scoreline suggests by his Belgian opponent, who actually registered more winners than the four-times champion but was undone by unforced errors.

"First encounter with Bergs, a great guy. Obviously a lot of firepower in his game. He played a good game," Djokovic said.

"Again, I was a little bit too passive. Just very challenging conditions these days for all the players. Just trying to stay alive on the court and glad to overcome this hurdle."

In the opening set, Bergs showed remarkable resilience by saving five set points to frustrate Djokovic, before the Serbian finally closed it out with an unreturned serve.

The second set proved even more gruelling, with both players serving well but treating the crowd to breathtaking rallies that left Djokovic hunched over his racket on several occasions.

The highlight came during one extraordinary rally where Djokovic gave Bergs five golden opportunities to seal the point



with overhead shots and volleys at the net, only to somehow emerge victorious and bring the crowd to its feet.

Djokovic eventually sealed victory on his third match point, advancing to face Vacherot in what promises to be an intriguing semi-final clash.

"Amazing story for him. This tournament has taken out top players of the world... it's really impressive what he's doing,"

Djokovic said.

Vacherot pulled off a huge upset, stunning 10th seed Holger Rune 2-6 7-6(4) 6-4 to become the second-lowest ranked player ever to reach an ATP Masters semi-final.

The Monegasque qualifier's remarkable run will see him crack the top 100 next week after spending half of last year sidelined with injury, but even playing in Shanghai was a question mark when he arrived.

"I didn't even come as a qualifier, I came as an alternate. I wasn't sure to even play the qualifier," Vacherot said.

"Coming back from six months out is always not easy. You cannot just come back and win tournaments right and left. You've just got to fight your way through a little bit."

Vacherot's stunning journey in Shanghai, which now includes wins over four seeds, looked doomed early on as Rune raced through a physically demanding opening set while the underdog felt his "lungs were screaming".

But the tide turned dramatically in the second-set tiebreak when Vacherot produced a stunning backhand crosscourt winner to take a 5-4 lead.

Rune crashed his next shot into the net and could only watch as Vacherot fired a forehand winner down the line on set point to level the match.

Sabalenka Extends Wuhan Streak, Books Semifinal With Pegula

WUHAN (Dispatches) - Aryna Sabalenka extended her unbeaten run at the Wuhan Open to 20 matches with a 6-3 6-3 victory over Elena Rybakina on Friday, keeping alive her quest for a fourth straight title and setting up a semi-final clash with Jessica Pegula.

In the 13th chapter of a rivalry that has played out on the biggest stages, including the 2023 Australian Open final, it was Sabalenka who struck first against Rybakina by breaking in the eighth game with a scorching forehand winner.

Sabalenka, who won the Wuhan title in 2018-19 and again last year after the tournament returned following the COVID pandemic, clinched the opening set with a hold and broke Rybakina's serve in the first game of the next set to tighten her grip.

The world number one went on to close out the victory



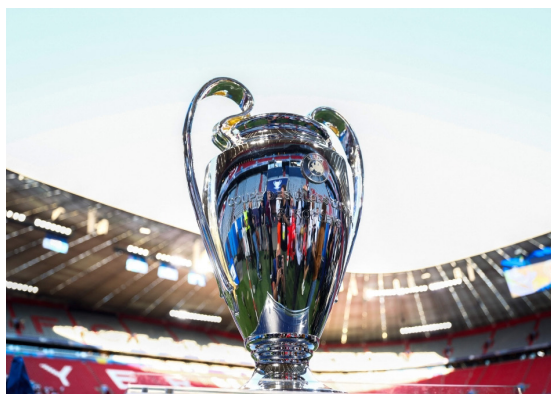
despite a few service wobbles late on, improving her win-loss record against Rybakina to 8-5 and earning a measure of revenge for a defeat by the player from Kazakhstan in their last encounter this year in Cincinnati.

Up next for the big-hitting Belarusian is American Pegula, who came from behind to beat Czech Katerina Siniakova 2-6 6-0 6-3 for her 50th match win of the season and boost her chances of qualifying for next month's season-ending WTA Finals.

Sabalenka has won eight of her 10 meetings with Pegula, including in the U.S. Open final last year.

German Laura Siegemund meets American third seed Coco Gauff in another quarter-final later on Friday, before second seed Iga Swiatek of Poland meets Italian seventh seed Jasmine Paolini in a rematch of their 2024 French Open final.

UEFA Says No Plans to Change Champions League Format



PARIS (Dispatches) - UEFA denied ongoing talks with Super League promoter A22 Sports Management but it admitted it had met the body, after the promoter told AFP it was "negotiating" with UEFA to create a new Champions League format.

"What A22 and the Super League clubs have done is to propose an agreement to UEFA that essentially consists of providing a free broadcasting platform and making very slight changes to the current competition format," said an A22 spokesperson.

In this version, a far cry from the initial semi-closed competition project that nearly tore apart European football in 2021, the 36 teams currently qualified for the Champions League would be divided into two groups of 18 clubs, with the highest-ranked teams then competing in the round of 32.

UEFA acknowledged several "public meetings" between its general secretary Theodore Theodoridis and A22 co-founder Anas Laghrari but said they "produced no official results".

"There are no plans to change the UEFA Champions League format," UEFA said, having introduced a new format which came into effect from the 2024-25 season.

The developments came after Barcelona president Joan Laporta, who has long been at the forefront of the Super League project, expressed his desire for "an agreement with UEFA" to "pacify" European football.

Paris Saint-Germain president Nasser al-Khelaifi, the chair of the rebranded European Football Clubs (EFC, formerly European Club Association) welcomed Laporta's shift at the EFC meeting in Rome.