

Majlis Lawmakers Rejected an Urgent Two-Stage Proposal Requiring the Government to Refrain From Submitting Documents Related to the Ratification of the Convention on Combating the Financing of Terrorism (CFT)

Majlis Speaker Stated That All Preparations Have Been Completed for the Distribution of Food Coupons in the Form of Goods in Aban (November), Adding That The Related Provisions of the Law Will Be Implemented by the Government



Iran and Tajikistan Strengthen Ties Toward a Sustainable Future

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Trump Hails Tremendous Day for Middle East as Gaza Ceasefire Deal Signed

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President Says We Must Strive to Achieve Standard Indicators



TEHRAN - President Masoud Pezeshkian emphasized that the concept of standards should always be viewed as a forward-moving process, urging collective efforts toward achieving standard benchmarks in various fields, including the optimal use of energy.

According to the Presidential Office, speaking at a ceremony marking World Standards Day on Monday, October 13, President Pezeshkian highlighted that if people base their actions and behavior on divine teachings, they will face no conflicts or disputes.

"There is no greater injustice than rejecting the truth," he said. "The meaning of a standard is the correct, fair, and rightful way of doing things. Standards teach us to choose the best course of action in every aspect of life—they guide humanity toward the right path."

The president noted that countries invest heavily in improving standard indices and added, "If we advance based on raising our level of standards, we will not face corruption or mismanagement, because standards always show the right way. Therefore, we must apply standard models in all aspects of our lives."

Pezeshkian attributed existing imbalances in society to the absence of standard indicators and stated, "Whenever balance is disrupted in any field, we will face consequences. Everyone should strive to save at least 10 percent in every area to avoid challenges in industry, production, and exports. If we achieve even a 10 percent saving, no factory or production unit will face difficulties."

He went on to describe the adoption of a conservation framework as a key factor in boosting the economy, noting, "We do not expect consumption patterns to change overnight. But if we gradually move toward efficiency and higher quality, conditions will improve across all sectors."

Resistance Always Steadfast, Victorious



TEHRAN (PresSTV) - Iran's top security official says the Palestinian people's warm welcome for the released prisoners proves that resistance is always steadfast and victorious.

Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Larijani made the remark in a post on his X account on Monday after a total of 250 Palestinian prisoners serving life sentences in Israeli jails, along with 1,718 Palestinians detained since October 7, 2023, were released as part of the first phase of a ceasefire agreement.

"The enthusiastic and grand welcoming ceremony extended by the brave and oppressed people of Palestine for the freed prisoners showed which side is victorious!" he said.

Larijani emphasized that the Israeli regime is now witnessing that, after two years of brutal massacre, the status of Hamas and resistance has been elevated in the hearts of the people.

The ceasefire agreement was reached between the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas and the Israeli regime to end the two-year genocidal war on Gaza, whose main objectives, according to Israeli leaders, were the eradication of Hamas and securing the release of the captives.

Tehran Slams Trump's Shameful Anti-Iran Claims at Israeli Knesset

TEHRAN - Tehran has strongly denounced U.S. President Donald Trump's anti-Iran allegations during an address to the Israeli Knesset and his offer of friendship, calling them "shameful", coming just months after a U.S.-Israeli aggression against the country killed over a thousand people. "The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran strongly condemns the unfounded accusations and irresponsible, shameful claims made by the US president regarding Iran, which were delivered on Monday in the Knesset of the Zionist regime in the presence of genocidal criminals," the ministry said in a statement on Tuesday.

In remarks to the Israeli Knesset on Monday, Trump, who bombed Iranian nuclear facilities earlier in June amid a 12-day war between Israel and Iran, offered a "hand of friendship."

"We are ready when you are, and it will be the best decision that Iran has ever made, and it's going to happen," Trump claimed.

The statement said that the U.S. — "the world's largest producer of terrorism" and the supporter of the "terrorist and genocidal Zionist regime" — has no moral authority to level accusations against others.

According to the ministry, Trump's expressed desire for peace and dialogue is "in conflict with the hostile and criminal actions of the United States against the Iranian people."

On June 13, Israel launched an unprovoked aggression against Iran, triggering a 12-day war that killed at least 1,064 people in the country, including military commanders, nuclear scientists, and civilians.

The United States also entered the war by bombing three Iranian nuclear sites in a grave violation of international law.

On June 24, Iran, through its successful retaliatory operations against both the Israeli regime and the US, managed to impose a halt to the terrorist assault.

"How can one, in the midst of political negotiations, attack a country's residential areas and



peaceful nuclear facilities, martyr over one thousand innocent people, including women and children, and then claim to seek peace and friendship?" the statement asked.

The statement underscored that Iranians are people of reason, dialogue and engagement, but will "act with courage and decisiveness to defend Iran's independence, national dignity and vital interests."

In his speech, Trump further alleged that the US wants "to ensure that Iran never, and I mean never, acquires a nuclear weapon."

Iran's ministry warned that repeating false claims about Iran's peaceful nuclear program cannot in any way justify "the joint crimes" of the U.S. and Israel, including attacks on Iran's sacred soil and the assassination of Iran's brave sons.

The statement added that boasting of and admitting to such crimes "only increases the burden of responsibility on the U.S. for committing these crimes and reveals the depth of hostility American policymakers

hold toward the great people of Iran."

Paying "deep respect" to Iran's immortal hero, the martyr Hajj Qassem Soleimani — who had an unparalleled role in combating U.S.-made ISIS terrorism — the ministry vowed that Iranians will neither forgive nor forget the "brutal" U.S. assassination of martyr Soleimani and his companions.

The ministry also underlined that the U.S. "must be held accountable for its role in the Zionist regime's impunity, including preventing any effective action against Israel in the UN Security Council, as well as obstructing international judicial processes to try Israeli criminals."

According to the ministry, U.S. "interventionist policies, its support for occupation, the crimes of the Israeli regime, and its unrestricted arms transfers to the region" are the primary source of instability and insecurity throughout West Asia.

Venezuela Ready to Negotiate With the U.S. Only on the Basis of Mutual Respect

TEHRAN - In response to questions regarding recent Western media reports of intensive talks between Caracas and Washington, José Rafael Silva Aponte, Venezuela's ambassador to Iran, said, "Venezuela has been ready for dialogue since the beginning of the Bolivarian government. We are always prepared to negotiate, but we expect respect in return."

Speaking at a press conference on Tuesday, on U.S. imperialist policies and interventions in Latin America and the Caribbean, Silva Aponte emphasized threats against the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. The event was held at the Venezuelan embassy in Tehran.

He opened his remarks by quoting the Iranian poet Hafez: "The one whose heart is enlivened by love never dies; our endurance is recorded in the world's chronicle." He said the verse reflected Venezuela's enduring love for freedom and independence.

Silva Aponte cited Simón Bolívar, who once wrote that "it seems destiny has decreed that the United States, in the name of liberty, would dominate Latin America." He said that Bolívar's vision was not limited to Venezuela but applied globally. "We invited you to the embassy to share the reality in our country, which has been under imperialist threat since 1999, when our Commander Hugo Chávez took office," he said. He recalled the failed coup against the Venezuelan government in 2002 and the subsequent reforms in the Bolivarian armed forces to defend the nation.

The ambassador continued: "From 2002 to 2025, numerous events unfolded. Recently, tensions between Venezuela and the U.S. have been reported. These are not mere tensions—they are threats to our government and people." He highlighted the impact of U.S. policies on Venezuelan citizens and migrants in the U.S., accusing the Trump administration of spreading false claims of sabotage, detaining Venezuelans, and separating 78 children from their parents. He also criticized false accusations linking President Nicolás Maduro to drug cartels, suggesting these narratives aim to install puppet regimes in Venezuela.

Silva Aponte noted that Colombia is the major drug-producing country in the region, with 87% of narcotics passing through the Pacific Ocean and only 5% through Venezuela. He



emphasized that since 2005, Venezuela severed ties with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and strengthened domestic anti-drug efforts. According to U.S. National Drug Threat Assessments for 2024 and 2025, Venezuela is not listed as a producer, and no evidence supports claims of a "Soles" cartel. He accused the U.S. of using false narratives to justify military threats in the Caribbean, including deploying eight warships, 4,500 troops, 1,200 missiles, and a nuclear submarine.

The ambassador criticized the U.S. and Israel for disregarding human rights. He recounted incidents where five ships disappeared under U.S. orders, some with extrajudicial sentences, and even fishing boats were targeted. Venezuelan forces, by contrast, arrested

drug traffickers without bombing.

Silva Aponte said that under President Maduro's leadership, approximately 8 million Venezuelans enrolled in Bolivarian militia training to defend the homeland. Military exercises continue across cities, with even opposition members joining, reflecting a unified civil-military defense.

Addressing questions about reported negotiations with Washington, Silva Aponte reiterated, "Venezuela has always been ready for dialogue. We are a government of dialogue, and President Maduro has always sought peaceful solutions. We are prepared to negotiate with the U.S., but only if they demonstrate willingness and respect, which has not yet happened."

On U.S. pressure against oil exports, Silva Aponte said: "The U.S. exerts pressure not only on oil but in other sectors as well. Like Iran, we stand resolutely against these sanctions and learn every day how to resist them." Venezuela currently faces 1,402 sanctions, including 300 economic measures.

Asked about potential support in case of war, Silva Aponte stated: "We do not seek war, as its start and end are uncertain. China, Russia, Iran, and Belarus oppose war and support us, but we rely primarily on our own people. If war occurs, Venezuelans are ready to defend the country to the last breath." He stressed that while Venezuelans desire peace, they will join military efforts if necessary, including opposition members committed to defending the nation.

Gov't Policy Aims for Broader Regional Relations



TEHRAN - Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Seyed Abbas Salehi, highlighted that 2025 has been designated the "Iran-Turkey Cultural Year," expressing hope that the initiative will deepen ties between the two countries and support the 14th government's policy of expanding relations with neighboring states.

Speaking during his visit to Turkey to attend ceremonies honoring Persian poet Hafez Shirazi, Salehi said, "The year 2025 has been agreed upon by both countries as the Iran-Turkey Cultural Year."

He acknowledged that recent events in Iran and the region had caused slight delays in launching cultural programs, but added that to mark the Hafez commemoration, several activities are planned in Turkey, including symposiums on Hafez and performances by the Iranian National Orchestra's "Iranian Instruments" ensemble.

Salehi outlined additional aspects of his visit, including meetings with Turkish officials and cultural figures, visits to key cultural centers, and discussions with Iranian cultural organizations operating in Turkey. He also planned to meet Iranian studies scholars and Persian language experts in the country. He stressed, "We hope these activities will deepen and broaden our relations and contribute to the 14th government's serious policy of stronger engagement with our neighbors."

On Monday, Salehi visited Turkey's "Millet Library" within the Presidential Palace complex and held discussions with its officials. He noted that Iran's National Library has made significant strides in various fields and could establish mutually beneficial cooperation with Turkey's Millet Library.

Military Conflicts Pose Serious Threat to Global Food Security



TEHRAN - Military conflicts represent a major threat to global food security, according to Farrokh Tayro, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) representative in Iran. Speaking at the Ninth National Conference Commemorating World Rural Women and Nomads, held on Tuesday, October 14, 2025, at Iran's Agricultural Research, Education and Extension Organization, Tayro emphasized that, while climate change and drought continue to challenge food systems, armed conflicts are increasingly undermining efforts to ensure global food availability.

Reflecting on FAO's 80-year history, Tayro highlighted the organization's mission to bring together experts in food security and to work toward feeding the world's population. "Through scientific advancements and modernized agricultural practices, we have been able to significantly increase food production," he said. He noted that while the global population has reached eight billion, experts predict that the Earth has the capacity to feed between 10 and 12 billion people.

Despite these advances, Tayro stressed that hunger remains a pressing issue. About one billion people worldwide previously suffered from inadequate nutrition; international efforts have reduced this number to approximately 828 million. Nevertheless, he cautioned that certain regions continue to struggle with food insecurity, often exacerbated by climate change and recurring droughts. "However, the most serious threat to global food security today comes from military conflicts," he said.



34% of Iran’s University Faculty Are Women

TEHRAN (ILNA) - At a ceremony marking World Rural and Nomadic Women’s Day and World Food Day, held at the Agricultural Research, Education and Extension Organization (AREEO) on Tuesday, October 14, 2025, Hojjatoleslam Abdolhossein Khosropanah, Secretary of Iran’s Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, underscored the vital role of rural and nomadic women in ensuring the nation’s food security.

Khosropanah revealed that women now make up 34 percent of university faculty members in Iran, compared to less than 5 percent before the 1979 Islamic Revolution, describing this as a testament to women’s growing presence in academia and research.

Iran–Armenia Trade Volume on the Rise



TEHRAN - Vice President and Head of the Planning and Budget Organization, Seyyed Hamid Pournomhamadi, has announced that trade between Iran and Armenia is experiencing steady growth and is currently estimated at around one billion dollars. Speaking at a ceremony marking the 34th anniversary of Armenia’s independence, Pournomhamadi emphasized that the two nations share mutual interests in developing the Persian Gulf-Black Sea corridor, a key regional connectivity route.

Pournomhamadi, who also serves as Chairman of the Iran-Armenia Joint Commission, stated on Monday (October 13) that Iran and Armenia have always maintained friendly and trustworthy relations. “Iran has never been a threat to Armenia, nor has Armenia been a threat to Iran,” he said. “Our shared border has always been one of friendship and trust, and I am confident it will remain a frontier of friendship, confidence, and hope in the years ahead.”

The vice president noted that the Islamic Republic of Iran was among the first countries to recognize Armenia’s independence in 1991, and since then, has consistently supported Armenia’s sovereignty and independence under a policy of good neighborliness, mutual respect, and non-interference.

“Expanding relations with Armenia across all political, economic, cultural, and people-to-people dimensions has been a top priority of Iran’s neighborhood policy,” Pournomhamadi said.

He added that in recent years, bilateral relations have entered a dynamic and positive phase, reflecting the will of both governments to elevate ties to a strategic level.

Pournomhamadi highlighted strong cooperation between the two countries in transportation, energy, electricity and gas exchange, technical and engineering services, as well as cultural and tourism sectors. He also noted that Iranian companies are actively engaged in various infrastructure projects within Armenia, underscoring the growing depth of bilateral collaboration.

Iran Faces Major Domestic Challenges in Boosting Exports



TEHRAN - The head of Iran’s Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), Mohammad Ali Dehghan-Dehnavi, emphasized the need for stronger support of engineering and technical service exports, noting that the country faces “significant domestic challenges” in export development.

Speaking at a conference on exports and legislation held Monday to mark National Export Week—with members of parliament in attendance—Dehnavi said the event aimed to facilitate export growth and expand international trade. He proposed using tax credits as incentives to encourage exporters.

He also pointed to growing delays in customs clearance, saying traders and businesspeople are calling for streamlined export regulations. “We need laws that reduce the cost of trade,” Dehnavi said, adding that even small cuts in trade expenses could yield positive results.

Dehnavi stressed that there are many legislative opportunities to simplify trade and promote exports, urging lawmakers to review outdated commercial regulations.

Amir Roshanbakhsh, Deputy Director for International Business Development at the TPO, warned that exports are increasingly shifting toward raw materials due to economic pressures. He noted that high energy prices, currency issues, and export taxes have all reduced exports and, in some cases, caused the loss of foreign markets.

Roshanbakhsh added that the legal definition of “raw and semi-raw materials” has become a barrier to exports, and called on parliament to address the issue.

He also highlighted efforts to revise regulations supporting exporters of technical and engineering services, noting that coordination with the Central Bank is ongoing but requires parliamentary backing to be effective.

Iran and Tajikistan Strengthen Ties Toward a Sustainable Future

TEHRAN - Iran and Tajikistan are accelerating efforts to deepen economic and cultural cooperation, focusing on green investment and regional partnerships in energy, technology, transportation, and agriculture as key pillars for sustainable growth.

During the Dushanbe International Investment Forum on Tuesday, Iran’s Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance, Seyed Ali Madani-Zadeh, highlighted the growing momentum in bilateral relations. “It is an honor to participate in this gathering in the beautiful city of Dushanbe,” he said, thanking the Tajik government and President Emomali Rahmon for their warm hospitality.

Madani-Zadeh described the conference’s theme, “Green Investment: Today’s Opportunity for Tomorrow’s Sustainable Development,” as a bridge for exchanging ideas and building a more prosperous regional future. He noted that the recent meeting between Presidents Rahmon and Masoud Pezeshkian of Iran marked a turning point, with the signing of 23 cooperation agreements worth nearly \$500 million, signaling a strong commitment to deepening economic ties.

According to the minister, the two nations aim to boost annual trade beyond \$500 million, supported by agreements in transportation, customs, fisheries, mining, and agriculture. He said Tajikistan’s vast potential in renewable energy, mining, and water resources makes it a reliable destination for investors.

Despite economic sanctions, Madani-Zadeh emphasized that Iran continues to pursue diversification and innovation. “Iran is ready for regional cooperation, especially with Tajikistan, in clean energy, digital economy, transportation, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, and mining,” he said. He also pointed to Iran’s growing expertise in artificial intelligence and blockchain, offering to share knowledge with Tajikistan to support technological advancement and talent development.

The minister underscored that regional cooperation has deep roots in the Silk Road era, when trade and cultural exchange built prosperity. “Balanced development can only be achieved through strengthened bilateral and multilateral ties,” he said.

Madani-Zadeh called the recent presidential summit “a truly historic chapter” in the two nations’ relations. Agreements on joint transport corridors, the use of Iran’s southern ports, and shared ventures in fisheries, mining, and agriculture were described as “cornerstones of a new era.”

“These enhanced economic ties, built on deep cultural and historical connections, will bring not only mutual prosperity but also stability and progress for the entire



region,” he said.

He praised Tajikistan’s role as both a cultural hub and a growing economic center in Central Asia, noting its leadership in renewable energy and abundant natural resources. The forum, he added, comes at a time when regional cooperation platforms such as the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) are expanding and offering new frameworks for partnership.

Key Areas of Cooperation: 1. Renewable Energy – Iran, one of the world’s largest oil and gas holders, has made significant progress in renewable energy investment. Madani-Zadeh said green energy could become a vital pillar of regional cooperation and ensure a stable energy supply; 2. Digital Economy and AI – “The world is entering a digital transformation, and artificial intelligence is the future,” he said. With strong capabilities in AI, blockchain, and e-commerce, Iran is ready to help Tajikistan develop digital infrastructure and train new technology specialists; 3. Transportation and Logistics – Iran expressed readiness to expand trade corridors, particularly with Tajikistan and other landlocked nations, to strengthen economic connectivity across Central and South Asia; 4. Agriculture and Food Security – The minister stressed that agriculture remains vital for all regional economies. Joint investment projects, he said, could enhance food production and supply chain stability; 5. Pharmaceuticals and Medical Equipment – With decades of experience in medicine and biotechnology, Iran can be a reliable partner for regional countries in producing affordable, high-quality drugs and medical technologies; 6. Mining and Industrial Cooperation – Given shared geological potential, Madani-Zadeh said Iran is ready to attract investment and provide technical and engineering expertise to develop the region’s mining sector.

Madani-Zadeh invited international investors to participate in joint Iran–Tajikistan ventures across various fields, including climate stabilization projects, water resource management, oil, gas, and petrochemical development, infrastructure expansion, and tourism, particularly eco-tourism and health tourism.

“Iran and Tajikistan stand ready to build a sustainable and technologically advanced regional future,” he concluded. “Together, we can transform our shared history and cultural bonds into engines of prosperity and stability for generations to come.”

S. Korean Embassy Pledges \$500,000 to Support Development Project in Kurdistan Province



TEHRAN - The Embassy of South Korea in Tehran has announced a \$500,000 financial contribution to support the development of technical and vocational training infrastructure in Iran’s Kurdistan Province, in partnership with the Technical and Vocational Training Organization (TVTO).

According to a statement released by the Sanandaj Chamber of Commerce, the funding aims to enhance youth skill development in the province by equipping training centers, providing backup power systems, introducing modern automotive technologies, and expanding renewable energy training facilities across Kurdistan’s vocational institutes.

This initiative follows the recent visit of the South Korean Ambassador to Iran to Kurdistan Province, during which he toured several technical training centers and industrial units alongside the head of the Kurdistan Chamber of Commerce. The visit provided the ambassador with firsthand insight into the region’s industrial potential, educational capabilities, and the talents of local youth.

Ali Akbar Abdolmaleki, President of the Sanandaj Chamber of Commerce, highlighted the importance of specialized skills development in boosting employment and empowering the local workforce.

“This collaboration represents a valuable step toward strengthening international relations and attracting foreign support for advancing technical and vocational education in Kurdistan,” Abdolmaleki said. “With this funding, we aim to modernize and expand the educational infrastructure available to the province’s young people.”

He further noted that the Chamber of Commerce has plans to expand educational cooperation with East Asian countries, including South Korea, to further enhance regional skill-building initiatives.

“These partnerships can pave the way for sustainable development, productive employment, and human capital growth in Kurdistan,” Abdolmaleki added.

Iran, Azerbaijan, Russia Outline Roadmap to Achieve 15m Tons in Transit Capacity



TEHRAN - The Minister of Roads and Urban Development of Iran has announced that the key outcome of the recent trilateral summit between Iran, the Republic of Azerbaijan, and Russia was the development of a roadmap to achieve a transit capacity of 15 million tons of goods among the three countries. Highlighting the strategic importance of the Rasht–Astara railway connection, the minister confirmed that land acquisition for the remaining sections of the project will be completed by the end of this year.

According to a report from the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development, Farzaneh Sadegh, who traveled to Baku early Monday (October 13), addressed reporters following a series of trilateral and bilateral meetings with Azerbaijani and Russian officials. “This was a highly impactful meeting,” Sadegh said. “We had long sought to convene such a session, and the resolutions and commitments made will have lasting effects.”

Sadegh described the formulation of a roadmap toward the 15 million-ton transit target as the meeting’s most significant achievement, emphasizing that the goal is “certainly attainable.” She added, “With this roadmap in place, existing challenges will be addressed and resolved.”

The minister underscored the central role of the Rasht–Astara railway as the final missing link in the International North–South Transport Corridor (INSTC), a strategic route connecting India, Iran, and Russia through the Caspian region.

“The connection between Rasht and Astara is the last segment needed to complete the North–South Corridor,” she stated. “Land acquisition for the remaining sections will be finalized by year’s end, and we expect to see significant physical progress over the next three years.”

Sadegh noted that representatives from the customs authorities of all three countries also participated in the meeting. She said that streamlining customs processes and facilitating the movement of trucks across all shared borders were key agenda items, gaining strong endorsement both in trilateral discussions and separate bilateral talks.

During her bilateral meeting with Alexei Overchuk, Deputy Prime Minister of Russia, Sadegh highlighted the expanding cooperation between Iran and Russia in transportation and transit, pointing to joint projects such as the Rasht–Astara railway as tangible examples

of progress since the signing of the strategic cooperation agreement earlier this year.

Sadegh described the current status of bilateral relations as “positive and promising,” citing growing coordination across multiple sectors. She also referred to last month’s meeting between the Presidents of Iran and Russia on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit in China, noting that both leaders had supported holding the trilateral summit with Azerbaijan.

She further expressed Iran’s appreciation for Russia’s support at the United Nations, particularly regarding Moscow’s stance against the reimposition of illegal sanctions on Iran.

According to the minister, transport and transit cooperation between Iran and Russia has gained new prominence following the signing of their strategic partnership agreement. She reaffirmed both countries’ strong commitment to advancing joint infrastructure projects such as the Rasht–Astara rail line, describing it as a “symbol of strategic determination.”

Detailed reports on the progress of the railway project were also presented during the meeting, with both sides agreeing to finalize the executive contract and address existing challenges as a priority.

On the sidelines of the summit, Iran and Azerbaijan reached an agreement to organize and streamline freight transport across their shared border via both rail and road.

During her visit to Baku, Minister Sadegh — who also heads the Iran–Azerbaijan Joint Economic Cooperation Commission — held talks with Shahin Mustafayev, Deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan.

The two officials reviewed the progress of joint transport and transit projects, reaffirming their commitment to enhance cooperation in the sector. As part of the visit, the Iranian, Azerbaijani, and Russian delegations also toured joint infrastructure projects in Astara, including the border terminal, railway, and related engineering structures.

Both sides emphasized the need for continued coordination in cross-border logistics, with on-site evaluations of facilities to ensure efficient cargo movement.

Minister Sadegh concluded that the progress of joint infrastructure initiatives demonstrates the firm determination of Iran and Azerbaijan to advance shared strategic objectives, reinforcing regional connectivity and economic integration.

Committee Formed to Establish Joint Standards With Eurasia



TEHRAN - Minister of Industry, Mine, and Trade, Seyed Mohammad Atabak, has requested that President Masoud Pezeshkian, in his capacity as the head of the Supreme Council of Standards, form a committee comprised of key ministers — including those of Economy, Foreign Affairs, and Industry, as well as the National Standards Organization and the Customs Administration — to finalize Iran’s joint standards with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) within a short time frame.

Speaking at a ceremony marking World Standards Day on Monday, attended by President Pezeshkian at the Summit Hall in Tehran, Atabak said, “We have less than two months to compile and deliver all necessary materials to the Eurasian Union. This exchange can facilitate customs procedures, standardization, and logistics for all member countries.”

Atabak emphasized that with the coordination and support of the Supreme Council of Standards, Iran can take significant steps forward in its cooperation with the Eurasian Economic Union and enhance trade exchanges. “The Ministry of Industry, Mine, and Trade seeks the Council’s backing to help expand our partnership with the Eurasian Union,” he added.

He noted that Iran had seen a 24% drop in non-oil exports in the first few months of the year, but mid-October trade exchanges with the Eurasian Union helped restore non-oil export levels to match those of the previous year. “The main driver of this improvement was trade with the Eurasian Union,” Atabak said, stressing that the Supreme Export Council can play a vital role in further facilitating and expanding these exchanges.

Freed Cuban Dissident Ferrer Vows to Keep Fighting

MIAMI (Dispatches) - Cuban dissident Jose Daniel Ferrer vowed Monday to keep fighting for democracy after being freed from prison and exiled to the United States. After landing in Miami from the communist-run island, Washington urged Cuba to release over 700 political prisoners still behind bars.

Ferrer vowed Monday to keep fighting for democracy in his country after he was freed from prison and began his exile in the United States.

After he landed in Miami on a flight from the communist-run island nation, Washington demanded that Cuba release more than 700 other political prisoners.



Russian Attack on Ukraine's Kharkiv Cuts Power to 30,000



MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russian forces attacked Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, with guided bombs on Monday, knocking out power to 30,000 customers in three districts, local officials said.

Regional Governor Oleh Syniehubov, writing on the Telegram messaging app, said Russian forces used guided bombs to attack Nemyshlianskyi and Slobidskyi districts in the southeast and Shevchenkivskyi district in the north of the city.

Mayor Ihor Terekhov, interviewed on local television, said the three bombs damaged a hospital and hit power transmission lines. Nearly 30,000 customers had been hit by power cuts.

He said four people had been injured, most by flying glass, with some patients being transferred to different wards.

"Unfortunately, the hospital was quite badly damaged and there were patients inside. Four people were injured to various degrees and about 200 windows were smashed," Terekhov said.

"Attacks are generally on energy targets - generation transmission, the power network. The aim is to have the power transmission network stop working."

In recent weeks, Russian forces have concentrated their attacks on targets associated with Ukraine's electricity grid and gas industry as winter approaches in the more than 3-1/2-year-old war.

A mass attack on Kyiv and other centres last week left more than a million households and businesses temporarily without power across the country. Water supplies were also disrupted.

In the city of Kostiantynivka in eastern Donetsk region, one of the prime targets of Russia's slow advance through the area, a Russian drone attack on Monday killed two people in their car, the head of the city's military administration said.

Pakistani Troops on High Alert on Afghan Border



PESHAWAR (Dispatches) - Pakistani troops were on high alert on the border with Afghanistan after fierce fighting between the two sides at the weekend left dozens dead and drew the attention of U.S. President Donald Trump, who said he could help end the conflict.

Border trade between the neighbours came to a halt as Pakistan closed crossings along the 2,600-km (1,600-mile) frontier, stranding scores of loaded goods vehicles on either side, a Pakistani industry representative said.

Dozens of fighters were killed in border clashes that began on Saturday night in the most deadly conflict between the neighbours since the Taliban returned to power in Kabul in 2021.

Fighting between the two sides, who were once allies, erupted after Islamabad demanded the Taliban take action against militants who have stepped up attacks in Pakistan, saying they operate from havens in Afghanistan.

The Taliban denies that Pakistani militants are present in Afghanistan.

The Pakistan military said that 23 of its soldiers were killed in the weekend clashes. The Taliban said nine of its fighters were killed. Both sides said they had killed more on the other side, but the claims could not be verified.

"All entry points are closed since Saturday following unprovoked attacks by the Afghan Taliban forces," a senior Pakistani security official told Reuters.



SHARM EL SHEIKH (Dispatches) - U.S. President Donald Trump hailed a "tremendous day for the Middle East" as he and regional leaders signed a declaration meant to cement a ceasefire in Gaza, hours after Israel and Hamas exchanged hostages and prisoners.

Trump made a lightning visit to Israel, where he lauded Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in an address to parliament, before flying to Egypt for a Gaza summit where he and the leaders of Egypt, Qatar and Turkey signed the declaration on Monday as guarantors to the Gaza deal.

"This is a tremendous day for the world, it's a tremendous day for the Middle East," Trump said as more than two dozen world leaders sat down to talk in the resort of Sharm el-Sheikh.

He later declared that the assembled leaders had "achieved what everybody said was impossible".

"At long last, we have peace in the Middle East," Trump said in a speech.

According to the document, the signatories pledged to "pursue a comprehensive vision of peace, security and shared prosperity in the region", and also welcomed "the progress achieved in establishing comprehensive and durable peace arrangements in the Gaza Strip".

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi said the Gaza deal "closes a painful chapter in human history" and sets the stage for a two-state solution.

As part of Trump's plan to end the Gaza war, Hamas on Monday freed the last 20 surviving hostages it held after two years of captivity in Gaza.

In exchange, Israel released 1,968 mostly Palestinian prisoners held in its jails, its prison service said.

"For so many families across this land, it has been years since you've known a single day of true peace," Trump said earlier in the day during his address to Israel's parliament, where he received a lengthy standing ovation.

"Not only for Israelis, but also for Palestinians and for many others, the long and painful nightmare is finally over."

In Tel Aviv, a huge crowd that had gathered to support hostage families erupted in joy, tears and song as news broke of the first releases, though the pain at the loss of those who had not survived was palpable.

In the occupied West Bank city of Ramallah, huge crowds gathered to welcome home the first prisoners, with some chanting "Allahu akbar", or God is the greatest, in celebration.

And in the southern Gaza city of Khan Yunis, residents climbed the sides of the slow-moving Red Cross buses carrying the prisoners to greet their loved ones with a hug or kiss.

"Welcome home," Israel's foreign ministry said on X, hailing the return of the hostages.

None of the captives spoke directly to AFP immediately after their return, but videos filmed and released by the Israeli military captured some of the raw emotion of the reunions.

"My life, you are my life... you are a hero," cried Einav Zangauker as she embraced her smiling son Matan, in one video.

Under the ceasefire agreement, Hamas is also due to return the bodies of 27 hostages who died or were killed in captivity, as well as the remains of a soldier killed in 2014 during a previous Gaza conflict.

Of the prisoners Israel freed in return, around 250 were security detainees, including many convicted of killing Israelis, while about 1,700 were taken into custody by the army in Gaza during the war.

On October 7, 2023, Hamas-led militants seized 251 hostages during their unprecedented attack on Israel, which led to the deaths of 1,219 people, most of them civilians.

All but 47 of those hostages were freed in earlier truces, with the families of those who have remained in captivity leading lives of constant pain and worry for their loved ones.

In Gaza, too, the ceasefire has brought relief, but with the territory racked by a humanitarian crisis and much of it flattened by war, the road to recovery remains long.

Israel's campaign in Gaza has killed at least 67,869 people, according to figures from the health ministry in the Hamas-run territory that the United Nations considers credible.

"The greatest joy is seeing my whole family gathered to welcome me," Yusef Afana, a 25-year-old released prisoner from north Gaza, told AFP in Khan Yunis.

"I spent 10 months in prison — some of the hardest days I've ever lived."

In Ramallah, Palestinian prisoners released by Israel were met by a cheering crowd so dense that they struggled to get off the bus that delivered them from jail.

"It's an indescribable feeling, a new birth," newly released Mahdi Ramadan told AFP, flanked by his parents.

The UN Palestinian relief agency, UNRWA, called for the return of aid to battered Gaza.

"Time to let in humanitarian aid at scale including through UNRWA," said its chief, Philippe Lazzarini, on X.

Trump's visit to the Middle East aims to celebrate his role in brokering last week's ceasefire and hostage release deal — but much remains to be negotiated.

Among the potential sticking points are Hamas's refusal to disarm and Israel's failure to pledge full withdrawal from the devastated territory.

The U.S. leader, however, repeatedly signalled he was confident the ceasefire will hold, saying at a joint appearance with Sisi in Sharm el-Sheikh that talks on the next steps of the plan had already "started, as far as we're concerned".

Trump announced in late September a 20-point plan for Gaza, which helped bring about the ceasefire.

He briefly met Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas at the summit, which representatives of Israel and Hamas did not attend, and departed in the evening.

Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem on Monday urged Trump and the mediators of the Gaza deal to "continue monitoring Israel's conduct and to ensure it does not resume its aggression against our people".

Madagascar's Embattled Leader Defies Resignation Calls in Facebook Video

PARIS (Dispatches) - Madagascar's President Andry Rajoelina said he was in a "safe place" after an assassination attempt, dismissing calls to quit amid worsening unrest that has driven him into hiding. The twice-delayed speech was his first since a mutinous army unit backed anti-government protests and reports he had fled abroad.

The twice-delayed speech marked his first public address since a mutinous army unit backed anti-government protests, and followed reports that the 51-year-old leader had fled the country.

"Since September 25, there have been attempts on my life and coup attempts. A group of military personnel and politicians planned to assassinate me," he said in a live address on Facebook.

"I was forced to find a safe place to protect my life," he said, without revealing his location.

The protests, led by mostly young demonstrators, erupted over chronic power and water cuts in the impoverished Indian Ocean country, but developed into a broader anti-government movement calling for Rajoelina to resign.

Rajoelina, a former mayor of the capital, Antananarivo, called for the constitution to be respected, ignoring calls to step down.

"I am on a mission to find solutions," he said.

Rajoelina first came to power in 2009 following a coup sparked by an uprising that ousted former president Marc Ravalomanana.



Radio France Internationale said Rajoelina left Madagascar on a French military plane at the weekend, but French officials did not immediately respond to AFP's request for confirmation.

French President Emmanuel Macron, who expressed "great concern" over the island's crisis, also refused to confirm this.

Rajoelina has not appeared in public since Wednesday and his address, set for state television and radio, was twice delayed Monday as armed forces attempted

to seize the state broadcaster.

Earlier in the day, mutinous soldiers and security forces who pledged support to the demonstrators at the weekend joined jubilant crowds in front of Antananarivo city hall, in a rally that had an air of celebration amid expectations Rajoelina would step down.

Among the crowds in the morning rally were soldiers from the army CAPSAT unit, which played a major role in the 2009 coup.

On Saturday, the unit declared it would "refuse orders to shoot" on demonstrations, some of which have been met with harsh security force action.

Also present were officers from the gendarmerie paramilitary police force, accused of using heavy-handed tactics during the protests. They admitted in a video statement to "faults and excesses" in their response.

The United Nations has said at least 22 people were killed in the first days of the protests, some by security forces and others in violence sparked by criminal gangs and looters.

Rajoelina has disputed the toll, saying last week there were "12 confirmed deaths and all of these individuals were looters and vandals".

As pressure mounted on Rajoelina, he pardoned eight individuals in a decree issued Monday, including French-Malagasy dual national Paul Maillot Rafanoharana, who was sentenced in 2021 to 20 years in prison for an attempted coup in Madagascar.

Venezuela Announces Closure of Norway, Australia Embassies

CARACAS (Dispatches) - Venezuela's government said it will close its embassies in Norway and Australia and open new ones in Burkina Faso and Zimbabwe in a restructuring of its foreign service, after weeks of growing tensions with the U.S.

The closures are part of the "strategic re-assignment of resources," President Nicolas Maduro's government said in a statement, adding that consular services to Venezuelans in Norway and Australia would be provided by diplomatic missions, with details to be shared in coming days.

Norway's foreign ministry said it had received notice of the embassy closure but no reason for the decision. Norway does not have an embassy in Caracas, and handles local affairs through its embassy in the capital of neighboring Colombia.

"This is regrettable. Despite the fact that we have different views on several issues, Norway wishes to keep the dialogue with Venezuela open and will work towards that," a foreign ministry spokesperson told Reuters.

The announcement occurred just days after the Nobel Committee in Oslo announced that Venezuelan opposition leader Maria Corina Machado had won the 2025 Nobel Peace Prize for fighting for democracy in the South American country.



Machado dedicated the prize to U.S. President Donald Trump.

"The Nobel Prize is independent of the Norwegian government and when it comes to questions about the prize, we refer to the Nobel Committee," the Norwegian foreign ministry spokesperson said.

Kristian Berg Harpviken, secretary of the award body, told Reuters the Venezuelan embassy's closure was not an issue for the committee.

"For the committee, the task at hand is to select the right Nobel Peace Prize laureate," he said. "And Maria Corina Machado is certainly a worthy winner!"

The Venezuelan embassy in Oslo did not immediately reply to an email request for comment. Phone calls to the two numbers listed on the Venezuelan embassy's website, made outside of normal business hours, did not ring and were not answered.

Caracas said it was instead setting up new embassies in "two sister nations, strategic allies in the anti-colonial fight and in the resistance against hegemonic pressures."

It added that these new embassies would serve to launch joint projects involving agriculture, energy, education, mining and other common interests.



PARIS (Dispatches) - Injury-hit France were held to a 2-2 draw by Iceland in 2026 World Cup qualifying on Monday, while Germany won in Northern Ireland with a Nick Woltemade goal and Belgium beat Wales to stand on the brink of a place at next year's finals.

France, World Cup winners in 2018 and runners-up in 2022, were without a host of players in Reykjavik including captain Kylian Mbappe and Ballon d'Or winner Ousmane Dembele, both out injured.

They fell behind to a Victor Palsson goal late in the first half, but Christopher Nkunku equalised just after the hour mark.

Crystal Palace striker Jean-Philippe Mateta then gave Les Bleus the lead midway through the second half, getting his first senior international goal on his first start.

However, Iceland were back level almost from the restart as Kristian Hlynsson of FC Twente ran through unchallenged to make it 2-2.

France could have clinched qualification for next year's tournament in North America with a win in Reykjavik combined with Ukraine failing to beat Azerbaijan at the same time.

But while they were dropping points, Ukraine were beating Azerbaijan 2-1 in the Polish city of Krakow — Oleksiy Hutsuliak and Ruslan Malinovskyi scored for Ukraine either side of a Vitaliy Mykolenko own goal.

France are nevertheless three points clear at the top of Group D with two games remaining next month, and a win at home to second-placed Ukraine in Paris will wrap up top spot.

"We totally controlled the game. Iceland had two shots on target and scored two goals," France coach Didier Deschamps told TFI.

"But we have another point on the board and next month will be decisive."

Germany have now recorded three consecutive victories in Group A after beginning their campaign with a defeat in Slovakia last month.

Newcastle United forward Woltemade headed in the only goal of the game as Germany beat Northern Ireland 1-0 in Belfast, and Julian Nagelsmann's team are top of the group with nine points.

"It was a very important three points for us," Woltemade told Germany's RTL, adding that "in this atmosphere and in a bit of an ugly game, you have to win and we did well".

Slovakia sit second only on goal difference as they defeated Luxembourg 2-0 at home, Adam Obert and Ivan Schranz scoring the goals in the second half.

The 12 group winners in European qualifying will go to the World Cup, with runners-up continuing on to play-offs set for next March — the meeting between Germany and Slovakia in Leipzig next month will therefore be decisive.

Belgium have almost qualified from Group J after Kevin De Bruyne converted two penalties in a 4-2 win over Wales in Cardiff.

Joe Rodon had given Wales an early lead but De Bruyne's spot-kick double came either side of a Thomas Meunier goal.

Nathan Broadhead pulled it back to 3-2, only for Leandro Trossard of Arsenal to seal Belgium's victory at the death.

Rudi Garcia's Red Devils — who beat Wales 4-3 at home in June — now know one win from their two games next month away to Kazakhstan and at home to Liechtenstein will clinch top spot.

Meanwhile, Wales must try to catch second-placed North Macedonia, who were held 1-1 at home by Kazakhstan on Monday with Enis Bardhi replying for the hosts after Dinmukhamed Karaman's opener. Switzerland could have qualified from Group B with the right combination of results, but will have to wait until next month after a 0-0 draw in Slovenia.

The Swiss are now only three points clear of Kosovo, who beat Sweden 1-0 in Gothenburg thanks to a solitary strike by Fisnik Asllani of Hoffenheim.

Sweden's campaign has proven to be a disaster as they sit bottom of the section with just one point despite having Viktor Gyokeres and Alexander Isak starting together up front — they have failed to even score in their last three matches.

Falcons Beat Bills While Bears Edge Commanders in NFL



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Michael Penix threw for 250 yards and a touchdown while Bijan Robinson ran 19 times for 170 yards and a touchdown to spark the Falcons attack.

Robinson, who also caught six passes for 68 yards, said: "This was a big game for us.

"We had to come out and be physical. We do what we do and come out with a win."

Allen threw for 180 yards and two touchdowns but also two costly interceptions as the Bills slid to 4-2 and level for the AFC East division lead with New England, which upset Buffalo 23-20 last week.

The Falcons improved to 3-2 and moved into second in the NFC South.

Atlanta's Tyler Allgeier scored on a two-yard run only 2:45 into the game but Buffalo equalized just 4:14 later on Allen's 19-yard touchdown pass to Dawson Knox.

Drake London caught a six-yard touchdown pass from Penix late in the first quarter to put the Falcons back in front and they stretched the lead to 21-7 on Robinson's 81-yard TD run early in the second quarter.

Allen fired a 16-yard touchdown pass to Ray Davis on the opening drive of the third quarter to pull Buffalo within 21-14, but Atlanta's Parker Romo kicked a clinching 33-yard field goal with 1:43 remaining. An interception foiled Buffalo's last hope.

Bucks Signing Third Antetokounmpo Brother, Alex



EW YORK (Dispatches) - The Milwaukee Bucks are signing forward Alex Antetokounmpo to a two-way contract, ESPN reported on Monday.

With Alex joining older brothers Giannis and Thanasis, it will mark the first time in NBA history that three siblings were on the same active roster, per ESPN.

Alex Antetokounmpo, 24, had stints in the NBA G League from 2021-24 but has never appeared in a regular-season NBA game. He had been playing overseas, most recently with Aris in his native Greece.

Giannis Antetokounmpo, 30, is a nine-time All-Star forward and two-time league MVP who is entering his 13th season with the Bucks. He led Milwaukee to an NBA championship in 2020-21.

Thanasis Antetokounmpo, 33, has been playing for the Bucks since the 2019-20 season and was also part of the title-winning squad.

A fourth sibling, Kostas Antetokounmpo, 27, played parts of three NBA seasons with the Dallas Mavericks (2018-19) and Los Angeles Lakers (2019-21).

Meanwhile Golden State Warriors guard Moses Moody is dealing with a calf issue and will undergo a MRI on Saturday, per ESPN.

Warriors head coach Steve Kerr believes the injury is minor, but the team wants to be cautious.

Moody was selected by the Warriors with the 14th overall pick in the 2021 NBA Draft. Last season, he appeared in 74 games, making 34 starts. He averaged 9.8 points and 2.6 rebounds, while shooting 37.4% from three-point range.

Moody is expected to miss the team's preseason game on Sunday against the Los Angeles Lakers. Stephen Curry, Jimmy Butler, and Al Horford will also be inactive.

Meanwhile Erik Spoelstra is expected to be named as the new head coach of the United States men's national team, ESPN reported.

The Miami Heat coach will succeed Steve Kerr for the 2027 World Cup and the 2028 Summer Olympics.

Spoelstra, 54, joined Mark Few and Tyronn Lue as assistants on the Americans' gold-medal winning squad at the 2024 Paris Olympics.

Rahul Hits Half-Century as India Beat West Indies to Sweep Series

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - Opener KL Rahul hit an unbeaten 58 as India beat the West Indies by seven wickets in the second Test to sweep the series 2-0 on Tuesday.

Chasing 121 for victory, India resumed on 63-1 and reached their target in the first session after losing two wickets on day five at Delhi's Arun Jaitley Stadium.

West Indies skipper Roston Chase struck twice with his off-spin to send back overnight batter Sai Sudharsan for 39 and skipper Shubman Gill for 13.

Rahul hit the winning four and India celebrated victory over the visitors, who had launched a spirited fightback while following on.

India's left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav returned a match haul of eight wickets including 5-82 in the first West Indies innings.

Kuldeep claimed 12 wickets in the series followed by pace bowler Mohammed Siraj, who took 10 to be India's leading wicket-taker this year with 37 wickets in eight matches.

India remain a team in transition under 26-year-old Gill, after the retirements of stalwarts Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli.



Gill's India won the opening Test by an innings and 140 runs, having secured a thrilling 2-2 draw in their five-Test series in England in June-August.

With the West Indies missing pace bowlers Alzarri Joseph and Shamar Joseph, both injured, India's batsmen flourished.

Yashasvi Jaiswal top-scored with 175 in India's mammoth first-innings 518-5 declared. Gill made an unbeaten 129.

The West Indies have endured years of decline after the team ruled world cricket.

This was a second successive Test whitewash, after they went down to Australia 3-0 at home.

There were a few promising signs at least in the second Test.

Left-handed opener John Campbell and Shai Hope made 115 and 103 as they put on 177 runs for the third wicket to thwart India's attack on a slow pitch that had little for the bowlers.

India had enforced the follow-on after they bowled out the West Indies for 248, a deficit of 270 from the hosts' first innings.

The visitors sprung into life in their second innings through Campbell and Hope, and then Justin Greaves and number 10 Jayden Seales.

Greaves with an unbeaten 50 and Seales (32) put on 79 runs for the final wicket to frustrate India after the West Indies slipped to 311-9 in the second session on day four.

That show of defiance forced the Test into the final day and gave the West Indies a glimpse of brighter days ahead.

Cape Verde Make History With First-Ever World Cup Qualification

JOHANNESBURG (Dispatches) - Cape Verde beat Eswatini 3-0 to secure a spot at the 2026 World Cup, booking their place in football's global showpiece for the very first time.

The team from an archipelago off the coast of Senegal with about 550,000 inhabitants becomes the second-least populous nation to reach the World Cup, after Iceland, with just over 350,000, at Russia 2018.

Cape Verde won Group D with 23 points, four more than Cameroon, who hold the African record for World Cup appearances with eight. Cameroon were held 0-0 by Angola in Yaounde.

"Giving this happiness to these people is enormous... it's a victory for all the Cape Verdean people and, above all, a



victory for those who fought for our independence," coach Pedro Brito told reporters.

"It's a special moment in this celebration of the 50th anniversary of our independence."

An emotional Vozinha, the 39-year-old goalkeeper, admitted: "I have been dreaming of this moment since I was a child. It's time to celebrate.

"We knew we could do better (in the second half), and that's it... it's time to celebrate."

After dominating the first half of the final round qualifier, but seldom threatening to score, the Blue Sharks struck twice through Dailon Livramento and Willy Semedo in the first nine minutes after half-time before a 15,000 flag-waving crowd in Praia.