

Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Says the National Day of the Fight Against Global Arrogance, Also Known as the National Student Day, Represents the Nation's Strategic Choice Between Resistance and Submission

IRAN NEWS

President Masoud Pezeshkian Says Iran Never Seeks War But Has Strengthened Its Defense Capabilities and Will Deliver a Prompt and Crushing Response to Any Mistake by Its Adversaries

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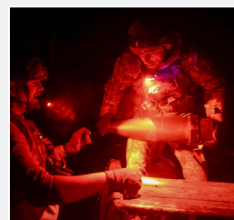
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Conflict Between Iran and U.S. is Intrinsic



TEHRAN (PressTV) – Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei says the conflict between Tehran and Washington is “intrinsic” and rooted in a fundamental clash of interests, warning that cooperation with the US would only be possible if it ended support for Israel, withdrew military bases from the region, and ceased interference in Iranian affairs.

Speaking on the eve of November 4, the “Student Day and National Day of Fight Against Global Arrogance,” Ayatollah Khamenei addressed thousands of students and families of war martyrs in Tehran to mark the anniversary of the 1979 seizure of the US Embassy in Tehran, describing it as a historically and identity-defining event.

“The conflict between the Islamic Republic and the United States is intrinsic, and a confrontation of interests between the two sides. Only if the United States completely ends its support for the cursed Zionist regime, withdraws its military bases, and refrains from interference, could American requests for cooperation with Iran be considered—not in the near future, but later,” he said.

He described the 1979 embassy seizure as both a “day of pride and victory” and a revelation of the US government’s true identity.

“The seizure of the US Embassy revealed the true identity of the United States government and the genuine nature of the Islamic Revolution,” he said.

The Leader traced the roots of US-Iranian tensions back to the 1953 coup that overthrew Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh. He said the United States conspired with Britain to topple Mossadegh despite publicly appearing supportive.

Iran to Reach 36,000 km Orbit Within Two Years



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - A senior Iranian space official announced that Iran aims to reach geostationary orbit (GEO), located 36,000 kilometers above Earth, within the next two years — a milestone that would place the country among the world’s top five space powers.

Vahid Yazdani, Member of the Supreme Space Council and President of the Iranian Space Research Institute, told ILNA that one of the institute’s main objectives is achieving GEO orbit capability. “Our goal is to reach the geostationary orbit with a 36,000-kilometer range, and we expect to achieve this capability in less than two years,” he said.

Yazdani emphasized that reaching GEO orbit is explicitly included in Iran’s 10-year national space program and is considered one of the country’s top strategic priorities.

“Satellites in GEO orbit serve two main functions: communications and broadcasting, including television and media transmission,” he explained. “This is particularly vital for national broadcasting applications, making the achievement of GEO orbit an essential goal for Iran’s long-term space strategy.”

Iranians Mark U.S. Embassy Takeover Anniversary With Rallies in Over 900 Cities

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Hundreds of thousands of Iranians gathered across Tehran and more than 900 cities nationwide to mark the anniversary of the 1979 US Embassy takeover, an event observed as the National Day of Fighting Global Arrogance.

Students, youth, clerics, and families took part in Tuesday rallies denouncing US and Israeli actions, including their 12-day aggression against Iran in June.

The annual event, known as 13 Aban, featured participants carrying Iranian flags and posters of those martyred in Israeli and US attacks while chanting slogans including “Death to America” and “Death to Israel.”

Officials from government and military institutions, families of martyrs, and veterans of the Iraqi war of the 1980s on Iran also attended the national event, which has, over the years, grown into a globally observed occasion.

In Tehran, the march began at Palestine Square and proceeded toward the former US Embassy, featuring speeches, religious chants, and the reading of resolutions condemning the United States and Israel. Cultural exhibitions highlighting decades of Western and Israeli “crimes” were also on display.

As part of the demonstration, symbolic displays of Iranian missiles and centrifuges were presented along the route. Participants also burned representations of US and Israeli flags to express anger over decades of aggression.

In addition, a symbolic trial of former US President Donald Trump and Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu was held, with demonstrators reviewing their offenses.

From the early hours of Tuesday, students, youth, and families gathered in routes leading to Palestine Square, waving Iran’s three-colored national flag.

Along Taleghani Street to the former US Embassy, school choirs, marching bands, and cultural booths contributed to a vibrant atmosphere. Revolutionary songs and chants of “Death to America” echoed through the streets.

13 Aban is observed as both Student Day and the National Day of Anti-Arrogance, marking three key historical events in Iran: the 1964 exile of Imam Khomeini to Turkey, the 1978 killing of protesting students, and the 1979 US Embassy takeover.

In Tehran, Majlis Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf declared that the country’s independence and sovereignty “will never be traded for any concessions,” emphasizing that



Masoud Shahrestani

resistance to global arrogance remains the foundation of Iran’s foreign policy.

Speaking at a ceremony marking National Day of the Fight Against Global Arrogance and the anniversary of the takeover of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, Qalibaf said November 4 (13 Aban on the Iranian calendar) symbolizes the Iranian nation’s rejection of domination and its determination to remain independent.

“November 4 is the day our nation shouted with one voice that it would never accept subjugation,” he said. “A nation without independence has no dignity, no credibility, and no sustainable progress.”

The Speaker recalled the three major historical events tied to the day — the 1964 exile of Imam Khomeini for opposing the “Capitulation Law,” the killing of protesting students in 1978, and the 1979 embassy takeover by students loyal to Imam Khomeini. Each, he said, reflected Iran’s “core principle of resisting arrogance.”

He stressed that Iran’s youth played a decisive role not only during the Islamic Revolution but also in defending the nation during the Iran–Iraq war, calling students and young people “the guardians of Iran’s independence.”

He warned that the “mentality of the Carter administration” persists in modern forms of hostility, noting recent assassinations of Iranian scientists and efforts to undermine the country’s progress. “They want a weak and dependent Iran,” he said. “The recent 12-day war showed that their faces may change, but their brutality and hatred toward independent nations remain the same.”

He accused Western powers of using media manipulation and psychological warfare to sow despair among Iranian youth. “Their most dangerous weapon today is spreading hopelessness,” he said. “But Iran’s achievements in nuclear, nano, biotechnology, defense, and medicine have exposed the falsehood that progress is impossible without the West.”

Addressing the meaning of the slogan “Death to America,” Qalibaf explained, “This is not a slogan born in think tanks; it comes from the collective memory and experience of the Iranian people. It means death to the logic of domination, not death to nations.”

He concluded, “No independent nation should be punished for its sovereignty. Our path is one of strength and wisdom — a path that began with faith, continues with knowledge, and will end with justice.”

Russia to Begin Paying €1.6b Loan to Iran in 2026

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The head of the International Affairs Center at Iran’s Ministry of Roads and Urban Development announced that the construction of the Rasht–Astara railway will officially begin in early 2026, following the finalization of financing and land acquisition.

Amin Taraf, head of the ministry’s International Affairs Center, told ILNA that Russia’s €1.6 billion export loan to Iran will begin to be disbursed from 2026, with all project lands handed over to the Russian contractor by that time. The executive contract, he said, will be finalized by the end of 2025, marking the beginning of actual construction after more than two decades of delay.

Taraf highlighted that during the recent Iran–Russia–Azerbaijan trilateral meeting, discussions focused on transport, customs, and energy cooperation. He described the summit as “one of the most productive multilateral meetings in recent years.”

He added that the three countries agreed to raise freight capacity along the western branch of the International North–South Transport Corridor (INSTC) to 15 million tons annually by rail. They also reached consensus on improving road bottlenecks, which would allow another 15 million tons of freight to move by road—bringing the total transport capacity of the corridor’s western route to 30 million tons per year through combined transport modes.

Taraf noted that the three countries also agreed to complete the Kalaleh Bridge in the Aras Corridor and to finish construction of the Astara terminal by the end of this year.



He explained that 85 kilometers of land for the Rasht–Astara railway have already been acquired, and the remainder will be secured by year’s end. “So far, 35 kilometers of the route have been handed over to the Russian side for preliminary studies,” he said.

The framework agreement between the Russian contractor Caspian Service and Iran’s Construction and Development of Transportation Infrastructure Company was signed last year, following the loan memorandum approved during the late President Ebrahim Raisi’s administration.

Taraf stated that the executive contract—currently under review by both sides—will be signed by the end of 2025, with annexes specifying project volumes, costs, and schedules still under negotiation.

According to Taraf, the total cost of the project is estimated at €1.6 billion, financed through Russia’s export loan, which will be disbursed in installments based on annual funding needs. The loan carries a 3 percent interest rate and a 10-year repayment term.

He stressed that the Rasht–Astara railway has been under discussion since 2000, when the North–South Transport Corridor agreement was first signed. However, the most significant progress—particularly land acquisition—has taken place under the current administration.

“With all lands transferred and financing secured, the Rasht–Astara railway will finally enter its construction phase in early 2026,” Taraf concluded.

The Seventh Development Plan: A Two-Sided Orphan

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

It is not at all surprising that no powerful organization or institution has taken responsibility for pursuing and overseeing the precise implementation of the Seventh Development Plan. In fact, many laws in the Islamic Republic are written merely to exist as laws, not to be implemented. There is a fundamental lack of coordination among the various institutions involved—such as the executive and employment sectors—and responsibilities remain ambiguous.

Even the excuse that the government lacks sufficient funds to carry out major projects under this plan cannot justify inaction. To achieve the plan’s objectives, tens of billions of dollars in foreign investment are required annually, while under the best of circumstances, Iran attracts only a fraction of that amount. Statistics indicate that investment in the country has not only failed to grow but has sharply declined—by as much as 60 percent.

The plan’s target of 8 percent economic growth is being set at a time when Iran’s economic growth in recent years has largely been around or below zero. The government believes that reducing inflation from above 50 percent to below 10 percent within five years appears highly optimistic given current conditions. Its critique is that the goal of creating one million jobs per year—a goal that was not met even in previous plans—is inconsistent with the current structure of Iran’s economy.

The tax system and extensive exemptions prevent the government’s projected revenues from materializing. Any reform in the subsidy system, pension funds, or monopolies faces strong resistance from vested interest groups.

According to parliamentary reports, only 18 to 25 percent of the targets set in the Third through Sixth Development Plans were actually achieved. This record reveals a structural flaw in the very nature of planning that leads to chronic non-implementation.

The Pezeshkian administration itself has submitted a report to Parliament identifying 147 provisions of the current plan—including key goals related to growth and employment—as “infeasible.”

Given these circumstances, one can say that the Seventh Development Plan is a two-sided orphan—with neither an executor determined to implement it nor a capable overseer to demand accountability from the government or propose solutions to bridge the gap between the plan’s goals and the government’s capacities.



Israel Is Too Small to Confront Iran



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari, Deputy Coordinator of the Iranian Army, declared that the Zionist regime is not powerful enough to challenge Iran, adding that after Israel’s defeat, the United States itself entered the battlefield—only to fail once again.

Speaking to crowds in Zanjan during the November 4 (13 Aban) anti-imperialism rallies, Sayyari said global arrogance has three defining characteristics: keeping nations underdeveloped, world domination, and selfish exploitation. “Arrogant powers seek to control the world, and Iran—with its vast God-given resources—has always been one of their main targets,” he said.

He added that before the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Iran served as the guardian of U.S. interests in the region, but the revolution “broke America’s false hegemony.” According to Sayyari, this blow to global arrogance was one of the greatest achievements of the Islamic Revolution.

IRAN NEWS



Iran and Afghanistan Discuss Strategies to Expand Railway Cooperation

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Senior officials from Iran and Afghanistan have discussed strategic plans to enhance bilateral railway cooperation and advance regional connectivity projects, including the development of the Iran–Afghanistan–China rail corridor. Alireza Bigdeli, Acting Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Kabul, met with Jabbarali Zakari, Deputy Minister of Roads and Urban Development and Managing Director of Iran Railways. During the meeting, the two sides conducted a comprehensive review of ongoing and future rail cooperation programs between Iran and Afghanistan.

Iran Continues Gas Exports to Iraq



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The Managing Director of the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) announced that Iran's gas exports to Iraq are continuing without interruption, while domestic gas distribution to industries, power plants, and households remains stable and unrestricted.

Speaking on the sidelines of the Digital Transformation in the Gas Industry conference, Saeed Tavakoli said there are currently no limitations on gas supply to industrial or power sectors as the country approaches the winter season. "Gas supply contracts for industries have been structured based on consumption needs, covering periods of four to eight months," he noted.

Tavakoli reported a significant improvement in gas distribution compared to last year. "The volume of gas injected into the national grid has increased remarkably, and all major maintenance operations have been completed on schedule," he said.

He added that gas storage facilities are also in good condition, showing a 16% increase in stored reserves compared to the previous year.

Highlighting strong cooperation between government agencies, the NIGC chief said, "Under the unified management of the Ministry of Petroleum and in close coordination with the Ministry of Interior, a joint task force has been established to ensure stable gas supply during the cold season. The level of collaboration among executive bodies is very positive."

Tavakoli added that gas deliveries to power plants have exceeded commitments, reaching more than 300 million cubic meters per day, and the country's gas network is operating under "stable and safe conditions."

Regarding Iran's gas exports, Tavakoli confirmed that talks with Russia and Turkey are ongoing, while exports to Iraq continue as usual, with no interruptions reported.

Iran Increases Airfare Rates by 24% Due to Currency Adjustment



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The Secretary of the Association of Iranian Airlines announced a 24% increase in domestic airline ticket prices, attributing the rise to changes in the official foreign exchange rate used for airline calculations — from 68,800 toman per dollar to the "Second Exchange Hall" rate of around 105,000 toman.

Speaking to IRNA, Maqsood As'adi Samani explained that airline ticket prices are set at \$48 per seat-hour, a rate that had long been calculated using the previous exchange rate. "Since late September, the foreign exchange settlement rate was shifted to the Second Exchange Hall, which naturally raised ticket prices," he said.

As'adi Samani cited multiple cost factors behind the fare increase. "About 60% of airline expenses are foreign currency-based," he said, adding that the price of aviation fuel has risen from 600 toman to 14,500 toman per liter, while customs tariffs for clearing spare parts and aircraft engines increased from 28,500 toman to 70,000 toman.

He noted that roughly 12% of the price increase stems from value-added tax and various fees, bringing the average ticket price rise to 24% overall.

Despite the adjustment, As'adi Samani stressed that airlines have not yet reached their price ceilings. "In October, average ticket prices were about 1.5 million toman below the maximum approved rates. The current market still lacks strong demand, so it's likely that fares will remain below their upper limit," he said.

He also clarified that the fare hike is entirely due to the currency conversion rate, not an independent decision by airlines. "If the Central Bank and the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade agree to revert the currency exchange rate from the Second Exchange Hall to the previous level, ticket prices will also return to earlier levels," he stated.

Focusing on Livelihoods Can Lessen Sanctions' Impact

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Majidreza Hariri, President of the Iran-China Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture, says political infighting and mismanagement are greater obstacles to Iran's economy than international sanctions. He emphasized that if policymakers focus on improving citizens' livelihoods, the impact of sanctions will be significantly reduced.

Over the past decade, Iran's economy has faced severe challenges from U.S. unilateral sanctions and maximum-pressure policies. More recently, Europe's attempt to trigger the "snapback mechanism" despite opposition from China and Russia, and the expiration of UN Resolution 2231, have raised new questions about Iran's economic future. However, the ratification of Iran's membership in the Palermo and CFT conventions — related to the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) — has revived hopes among business leaders for improved international trade relations.

Speaking to IRNA, Hariri noted that Iran's trade problems are primarily due to U.S. banking sanctions, not FATF restrictions. "We are under U.S. financial sanctions, which means we are shut out of the global banking system entirely. Banks that deal with Iran face heavy fines, so FATF compliance makes no difference while sanctions remain in place," he said.

He explained that even during the 2015 nuclear deal (JCPOA), Iran struggled to use international banking channels. "Our problem is not FATF — it's the sanctions. We are like a bird trapped in a cage. Even if we grow new wings, we still can't fly out," Hariri remarked.

Nevertheless, he said joining international conventions has two advantages: first, if sanctions are ever lifted, Iran can quickly reconnect with global banks; and second, it eliminates the excuse that FATF non-membership is to blame for the country's economic challenges.

Despite restrictions, Hariri noted that Iran managed around \$140–150 billion in trade in 2024, proving that "it's possible to conduct significant business even under sanctions."

Addressing concerns about the so-called "snapback mechanism," Hariri said it has "nothing to do with normal trade." The mechanism concerns reinstating UN sanctions related to Iran's nuclear and missile programs, not regular commercial activity. "These political issues are often exaggerated. They have political implications but no major economic consequences," he added.

Russia's Foreign Ministry, he said, has already declared the mechanism ineffective and called for related UN sanctions to be removed from the organization's website. "Those who amplify these fears, knowingly or not, fall into the trap set by sanctioning powers — spreading fear to magnify the impact of sanctions," Hariri warned.

Hariri argued that Iran has learned to live under sanctions. "In 2010, when the



harsh sanctions were imposed, our oil exports and non-oil trade actually hit record highs. Since 2017, when sanctions intensified again, we've learned to adapt. Last year we traded about \$140 billion with the world," he said.

He also noted that Iran is no longer alone in facing sanctions: "There's now a global 'club of sanctioned nations' — countries with major natural resources that still manage to assert economic power."

The real problem, he insisted, is domestic: "Mismanagement and factional disputes worsen the effects of sanctions. If our leaders prioritize people's welfare and economic stability, sanctions' impact will be much less severe."

Hariri urged Iranian authorities to reduce dependence on the U.S.-led financial system and diversify trade partners beyond the current limited group — mainly China, the UAE, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Turkey. "The global banking system is dominated by the U.S. We should have freed ourselves from that influence long ago," he said.

He also called for using China's yuan in bilateral trade instead of the euro to cut transaction costs. "About 30% of Iran's direct trade and another 15% indirect trade is with China, but much of it is still settled in euros. If we used the yuan, we could cut transaction costs by two to three percent — saving hundreds of millions of dollars annually," Hariri said.

He blamed "sanctions profiteers" for resisting such changes: "Some benefit from currency conversions and deliberately maintain these costly arrangements."

Hariri highlighted the difference between Iran's relations with Russia and China. "Russia is our competitor in oil, gas, and metals — but China is our economic complement. Whether sanctions exist or not, Iran and China's economies naturally fit together," he stated.

China and Russia's opposition to Europe's attempt to reimpose UN sanctions, he said, shows continued political and economic alignment with Iran.

In conclusion, Hariri urged Iranian leaders to focus on fairness and economic justice. "After recent conflicts, we're in a special economic situation. People will support the government when they feel their livelihoods are protected. Today, inequality and corruption are greater threats than sanctions," he warned.

He criticized the rise of a "new rich class" flaunting wealth through luxury cars and extravagant lifestyles while ordinary citizens struggle. "If corruption and inequality are not addressed seriously, we will face much deeper crises," Hariri cautioned.

"Sanctions hurt, but mismanagement and neglect of people's livelihoods hurt even more," he concluded.

Isfahan and Armenia: Longtime Partners with New Opportunities

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - In a meeting between the Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia in Tehran and the President of the Isfahan Chamber of Commerce, the two sides explored new avenues for economic, cultural, and tourism cooperation, emphasizing the deep historical and cultural ties between their peoples as a foundation for expanding joint investment and trade.

According to the Isfahan Chamber of Commerce's Public Relations Office, both parties highlighted the importance of utilizing shared historical and cultural values to promote bilateral economic collaboration.

Amir Keshani, President of the Isfahan Chamber, noted that Isfahan has long been a symbol of peaceful coexistence among different faiths. "For centuries, Muslims, Armenians, Jews, and Zoroastrians have lived together in Isfahan without recorded religious conflict," he said. "The friendly relationship between the people of Isfahan and the Armenian community — as well as the Republic of Armenia — can serve as a strong foundation for expanding cultural and economic partnerships."

Keshani added that Armenian tourists have increasingly visited Isfahan in recent months, contributing to the city's cultural vitality and local economy. "The commercial opportunities between Iran and Armenia are exceptional," he said. "Iranian companies can expand part of their operations in Armenia, benefiting both sides."

Grigor Hovhannisyian Hakobyan, Armenia's Ambassador to Iran, expressed his country's keen interest in strengthening ties



with Isfahan, particularly in the fields of energy, infrastructure, and trade. "These understandings will soon be implemented and will lay the groundwork for expanded economic relations between our two nations," he stated.

The ambassador also pointed to the construction of a second border bridge between Iran and Armenia as a major opportunity. "This project will play an important role in facilitating transportation and increasing trade volume," Hakobyan said.

He noted that Armenia's membership in the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) provides a favorable platform for Iranian investors seeking to access new regional markets.

Fereshteh Amini, Chair of the Export Development and Import Management Commission of the Isfahan Chamber and a member of its Board of Representatives, highlighted Armenia's transparent trade environment. "Easy access to accurate market data in Armenia enables Iranian businesses to conduct reliable market research," she explained.

She added that Armenia's geographic proximity offers a logistical advantage. "Iranian goods can reach Armenian markets within a few days, reducing warehousing costs and working capital requirements," Amini said.

Amini also emphasized that Iranian exports to Armenia are exempt from customs duties, encouraging greater trade flow. "With better public awareness and use of existing capacities, achieving substantial bilateral trade between the two countries is entirely within reach," she concluded.

17th Bitumen, Asphalt, and Machinery Exhibition Opens in Tehran



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The 17th Bitumen, Asphalt, and Machinery Exhibition opened for a three-day run with the participation of 54 domestic companies.

The exhibition is being held from today (Tuesday) until November 5 at the Road, Housing, and Urban Development Research Center.

Majid Kianpour, Managing Director of the Soil and Rock Mechanics Laboratory Company, stated during the opening ceremony that there are ten major challenges facing the country's bitumen and asphalt sectors.

He emphasized that the Road, Housing, and Urban Development Research Center should act as a consulting body, as it has the capacity to collect opinions and insights from experts, specialists, and university professors across the field.

Kianpour explained that, according to the annual budget law, 30 percent of the country's bitumen production is distributed among executive agencies. Of this amount, 49 percent is allocated to the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development for project implementation, 17 percent to the Organization of Municipalities, and a portion to the Housing Foundation for rural development projects.

He added that bitumen is supplied to projects at 50 percent of the stock market price, representing a substantial subsidy aimed at reducing road maintenance challenges.

Kianpour also noted that one major problem is the shorter-than-expected lifespan of asphalt projects, which are often designed for 10 to 20 years but deteriorate sooner. Other issues include low-quality or non-standard bitumen, limited use of recycled asphalt, high paving and maintenance costs, lack of proper supervision and qualified personnel, poor industry-academia collaboration, and the need to move toward quality assurance systems.

Gas Extraction from South Pars Increases by 25 Million Cubic Meters



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The Managing Director of the Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC) announced that daily gas extraction from the South Pars joint gas field has reached 718 million cubic meters, marking a 25-million-cubic-meter increase in production capacity over the past year.

Touraj Dehghani made the announcement during a meeting of public relations directors from subsidiaries of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), hosted by POGC. He described the achievement as a new record in daily gas production from South Pars, crediting it to the dedication and expertise of employees across operational and administrative sectors.

Dehghani highlighted Iran's position as the second-largest holder of gas reserves in the world and the third-largest producer after the United States and Russia. "This increase in gas production capacity represents one of the most significant economic and operational achievements of the country," he said. "However, Iran also ranks as the fourth-largest gas consumer globally."

The POGC chief noted that the commissioning of three new wells in border areas of the South Pars field in recent days has added over 5 million cubic meters to the nation's daily gas production — a result of months of effort by the company's technical experts.

He also pointed to the increase in the number of active drilling rigs in the Persian Gulf gas fields, stating that six new rigs have been added over the past year, bringing the total number of operational rigs to ten.

Dehghani emphasized that, thanks to the company's activities over the past year, 25 million cubic meters of new production capacity have been realized at South Pars. "With the completion of six additional wells by the end of this year, total daily capacity is expected to reach around 30 million cubic meters," he added.

Merz Invites Syrian President to Germany to Discuss Deportations

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Chancellor Friedrich Merz has invited Syrian President Ahmed al-Sharaa to Germany to discuss deporting Syrian citizens with criminal records in Germany, the German leader said on Monday. "We will, of course, continue to deport criminals to Syria. That is the plan. We will now implement this in a very concrete manner," Merz told reporters.

Germany also wants to help stabilise the country, he said, adding that he intends to discuss with Sharaa "how we can solve this together".

Merz's conservative predecessor Angela Merkel oversaw a historic open-doors policy towards refugees 10 years ago, welcoming some 1 million migrants to Germany, many of them Syrians fleeing civil war.



Jamaica Rallies to Aid Survivors After Hurricane Melissa's Devastation



KINGSTON (Dispatches) - Nearly one week after Hurricane Melissa made landfall in Jamaica as one of the most powerful storms ever recorded on the island, the Caribbean nation is organising to help people devastated by the disaster, which has claimed dozens of lives as of Monday.

The death toll from the storm is up to 32 people in Jamaica, Information Minister Dana Morris Dixon told a press briefing Monday, though the number was expected to rise. The overall death toll throughout the Caribbean exceeds 60 victims.

"We need every help we can get. So we need food, water, toiletries," said Tackeisha Frazer, a resident of Westmoreland, one of the areas hit hardest by Melissa last week.

"We have a lot of persons who are displaced and not able to either sleep or have anything," she told AFP while waiting in line at a makeshift aid distribution center for essential goods.

Lines of volunteers unloaded trucks filled with packs of water bottles, boxes of food and rolls of toilet paper to distribute at the center.

One of the volunteers, Millicent McCurdy, addressed the international community for aid: "Anyone overseas who can help these people, because these people are homeless, they don't have clothing, they don't have food, they don't have water, they need help."

UN Mandate for Gaza Force Still in the Works



ISTANBUL (Dispatches) - Countries are still working on a U.N. Security Council mandate for an international stabilisation force in Gaza, and will decide on any troop deployments once a framework is complete, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said.

Fidan spoke after he and ministers from several Muslim-majority countries met in Istanbul to discuss the fragile U.S.-brokered ceasefire in Gaza, as Hamas and Israel trade accusations of violations.

Some of the countries that met - which also included Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Pakistan, Indonesia and Turkey - could contribute to the force envisioned to monitor the truce.

The leaders of the seven countries had met U.S. President Donald Trump in New York in September, shortly before Israel and Hamas agreed on his ceasefire plan. The Istanbul talks also focused on the humanitarian situation in the enclave.

Fidan told a press conference there were some issues in fully implementing the agreement because Israel was regularly violating it, adding Israel must fulfil its duty to allow in sufficient aid.

Israel has said it is committed to Trump's plan and that Palestinian militant group Hamas has not upheld its agreement to return the remaining bodies of hostages.



Russian Forces Advance in Ruins of Pokrovsk

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia said on Monday its troops had advanced in the eastern Ukrainian city of Pokrovsk, a transport and logistics hub that they have been trying to capture for over a year, but Ukraine said its forces were holding on.

The Russian Defense Ministry said its soldiers were destroying what it described as surrounded Ukrainian formations near Pokrovsk's railway station and industrial zone, and had entered the city's Prigorodny area and dug in there.

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Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy told reporters Russia was massing troops by the nearby town of Dobropillia, where Kyiv's forces advanced earlier this year in a successful counteroffensive.

Zelenskyy described the situation in Dobropillia as complicated. Russian forces, he said, had lost the initiative in the area, but were bringing in more troops.

He said Pokrovsk remained under severe pressure, though Russian troops had made no gains in the past day. He said up to 300 Russian servicemen were still in the embattled city.

Ukrainian army chief Oleksandr Syrskyi said his forces had stepped up pressure on Dobropillia with the aim of forcing Russia to divert its focus away from Pokrovsk.

Reuters could not independently verify the battlefield reports.

The Ukrainian military said Russian troops were not in full control of any district of the city.

"The invaders continue to attack in small groups of up to five soldiers, without using armoured vehicles," the operation task force responsible for Ukraine's eastern front line said on Facebook.

Reuters could not independently verify the battlefield reports from either side.

Ukraine's 7th Rapid Response Corps said Ukrainian forces had thwarted an attempt to cut off a supply route from Rodynske,

to the north.

Pokrovsk had a pre-war population of some 60,000, but most civilians fled its ruins long ago. Capturing it could give Moscow a platform to drive towards Kramatorsk and Sloviansk, the two biggest remaining Ukrainian-controlled cities in the Donetsk region which Russia wants to capture in its entirety.

If it falls, Pokrovsk will be the most important Russian territorial gain inside Ukraine since Moscow took the ruined city of Avdiivka in early 2024 after one of the bloodiest battles of the war.

Since then, Russia has made steady but slow gains in intense fighting along the 1,000-km (600-mile) front line of a war that has dragged on for more than three years and eight months since Moscow's full-scale invasion.

No face-to-face peace talks have taken place since July, despite attempts by U.S. President Donald Trump to push for an end to the conflict.

Kyiv says the costly fighting is largely stalemated and its territorial losses marginal; Moscow says it is still making important gains.

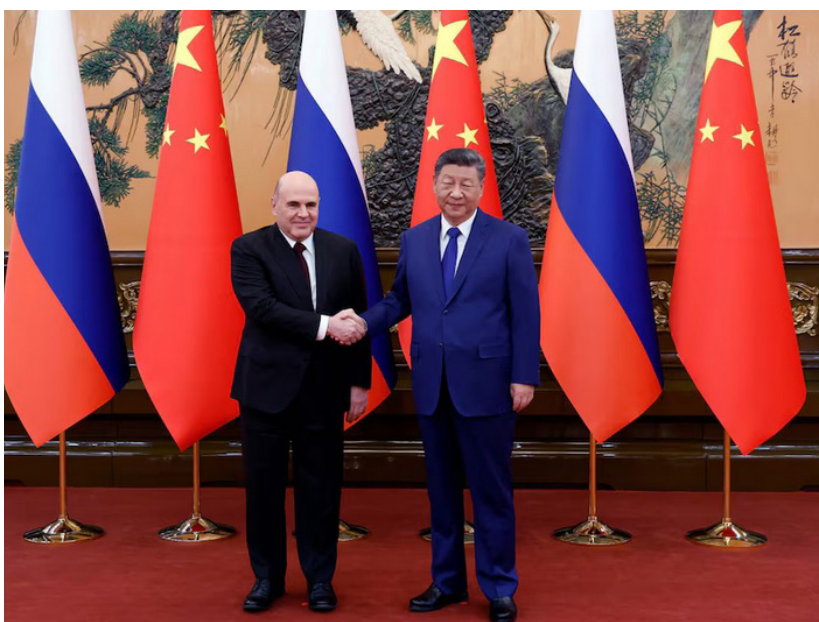
Elsewhere, the Russian Defence Ministry said its forces had carried out heavy overnight strikes on a Ukrainian military airfield, a military equipment repair base and military-industrial facilities, as well as gas infrastructure facilities that supported them.

Moscow said its troops had also attacked Ukrainian forces near another eastern city, Kupiansk, and dislodged them from four fortified positions in the industrial zone on the left bank of the Oskol River.

Zelenskyy said that up to 60 Russian soldiers remained in Kupiansk and Ukrainian forces were trying to clear them.

Ukrainian military spokesman Viktor Trehubov said on Sunday that Russian attempts to get to the centre of Kupiansk had failed so far, and recent Ukrainian attacks had slowed Russian advances.

Xi Seeks to Boost Investment, Expand Economic Ties With Russia



BEIJING (Dispatches) - China's President Xi Jinping sought to expand mutual investment with Russia and affirmed Beijing's commitment to advance ties despite "turbulent" external conditions, Chinese state media reported.

Xi met Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin in Beijing at the Great Hall of the People, a day after Chinese Premier Li Qiang held a meeting with Mishustin in Hangzhou, where Li said China wanted to strengthen cooperation with Russia and defend shared security interests.

The Kremlin has highlighted the significance of Mishustin's visit at a time when Russia is under major Western sanctions over its war in Ukraine and looking to stem a recent slowdown in trade with China.

"China-Russia relations have stayed the course toward higher-level and higher-quality development, advancing steadily despite a turbulent external environment," Xi told Mishustin, according to state broadcaster CCTV.

"Safeguarding, consolidating and developing China-Russia relations is a strategic choice for both sides," Xi said.

He highlighted industries such as energy, agriculture, aerospace, digital economy and green development where the two countries could advance cooperation and foster new engines of growth.

Mishustin said it was important for both sides to continue

creating favourable conditions for attracting mutual investment and supporting joint projects, according to Russia's TASS news agency.

Xi and Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a "no-limits" partnership in February 2022 days before Putin sent tens of thousands of troops into Ukraine.

Since then, Russia has turned to China to blunt the impact of sanctions, highlighting record trade, increased settlements in yuan and deepening energy cooperation.

Bilateral commerce has, however, declined in recent months as China faces mounting U.S. pressure over trade and technology.

Chinese state oil majors suspended purchases of seaborne Russian oil following U.S. sanctions on Rosneft and Lukoil, Moscow's two biggest oil companies, Reuters reported last month.

In a joint communique published on the Russian government website on Tuesday, both countries agreed to "strengthen cooperation in all spheres and respond appropriately to external challenges."

Russia also reaffirmed its adherence to the "one-China" principle and opposition to "Taiwan independence".

China regards democratically-ruled Taiwan as part of its territory. Taiwan's government rejects Beijing's claim and says only the island's people can decide their future.

Trump Backs Cuomo, Threatens to Cut If Mamdani Wins New York Mayoral Race

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - U.S. President Donald Trump endorsed former New York Governor Andrew Cuomo for mayor of New York City on Monday and threatened to hold back federal funds to the city if Democratic candidate Zohran Mamdani wins the mayoral election.

Trump, a Republican who has offered frequent commentary on the New York mayoral election, injected himself further into the race by crossing party lines to support Cuomo over Mamdani and the Republican candidate, Curtis Sliwa, who trails badly in public opinion polls in the heavily Democratic city.

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Cuomo, a longtime stalwart in the Democratic Party, is running as an independent after losing to Mamdani in the Democratic primary.

The New York City election has been closely watched nationally as one that could help shape the image of the Democratic Party as it seeks its identity in opposition to Trump. Mamdani, 34, a self-described democratic socialist who



is leading Cuomo in the polls, has energized younger and more progressive voters, but he has also alarmed more moderate Democrats who fear a shift too far to the left may backfire.

Republicans have attacked Mamdani's candidacy throughout the campaign, with Trump casting him as a communist.

"Whether you personally like Andrew Cuomo or not, you really have no choice. You must vote for him, and hope he does a fantastic job. He is capable of it, Mamdani is not!" Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform.

Trump said a vote for Sliwa would only help Mamdani.

"If Communist Candidate Zohran Mamdani wins the Election for Mayor of New York City, it is highly unlikely that I will be contributing Federal Funds, other than the very minimum as required, to my beloved first home," said Trump, a native New Yorker.

The U.S. federal government is providing \$7.4 billion to New York City in fiscal year 2026, or about 6.4% of the city's total spending, according to a report from the New York State Comptroller.



Antetokounmpo Buzzer-Beater Lifts Bucks Over Pacers

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Giannis Antetokounmpo capped his game-high 33-point performance on Monday with a buzzer-beating, turnaround fadeaway to lift the Milwaukee Bucks past the Indiana Pacers, 117-115, in Indianapolis.

Backing down Aaron Nesmith in the closing seconds, Antetokounmpo pivoted at the left elbow just as a double-team from Isaiah Jackson came from the corner. Jackson leapt to block Antetokounmpo's shot attempt, but the high-arching jumper was just out of his reach as it floated to the rim and in, extending Indiana's early-season woes.

The home-court loss dropped the reigning Eastern Conference champion Pacers to 1-6 on the season, and Indiana's fourth loss of six points or fewer.

The Pacers trailed most of the night, but stayed within striking distance thanks both to forcing 18 Milwaukee turnovers and the Bucks' dreadful 13-of-22 shooting at the free-throw line.

A missed foul shot gave the Pacers a chance to force overtime, as AJ Green missed the front end of two attempts with Milwaukee trying to protect a one-point lead.

He made the second, but Indiana knotted the score at 115-115 on the ensuing possession when Nesmith winded his way through the Bucks defense for a layup with 15 seconds remaining.

Nesmith finished with 17 points as one of four Indiana starters to score in double figures. Pascal Siakam finished with 32 points to lead the Pacers, Jackson posted a double-double with 21 points and 10 rebounds, and Jarace Walker added 18 points, eight rebounds and five assists.

Milwaukee countered with Antetokounmpo's big night, which included 13 rebounds for his fifth double-

double in six games. His 33 points also marked his fifth performance of at least 30 points this season.

Complementing him were Kyle Kuzma with 15 points off the bench, Cole Anthony with another 11 points in reserve duty, Gary Trent Jr. with 11 points and Green with 13.

Former longtime Pacer Myles Turner had a muted scoring performance, but came up clutch against his former team with a putback to break a 109-109 tie late and an assist to Trent for a 3-pointer on the next possession.

Turner also blocked a Ben Sheppard 3-point attempt in the final two minutes to cap a nine-point, seven-rebound and five-block night.

Meanwhile Donte DiVincenzo scored 25 points as the Minnesota Timberwolves pulled away in the fourth quarter for a 125-109 victory over the winless Brooklyn Nets on Monday night in New York.

DiVincenzo hit two 3-pointers in the fourth when the Timberwolves outscored the Nets 34-21. The guard shot 8 of 17 overall and made six 3s after hitting five in Saturday's win over Charlotte.

Julius Randle totaled 19 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists for his 15th career triple-double and first since Jan. 20, 2024, for the New York Knicks. He got the triple-double by getting an assist on Naz Reid's 3 that gave the Wolves a 20-point lead with 3:18 remaining.

Jaden McDaniels added 22 on 9-of-11 shooting as the Wolves improved to 2-2 since losing Anthony Edwards to a strained right hamstring. Edwards was cleared for contact earlier Monday.

Reid added 21 points off the bench as the Wolves shot 56.4% from the field and 40% on 3-pointers.

Brissett Tosses 2 TDs as Cardinals Top Cowboys to End Skid

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Jacoby Brissett completed 21 of 31 passes for 261 yards and two touchdowns as the Arizona Cardinals snapped a five-game losing streak by beating the Dallas Cowboys 27-17 on Monday in Arlington, Texas.

Arizona's Marvin Harrison Jr. had a career-high seven receptions for 96 yards and a touchdown.

Dallas' offense, which was averaging 30.8 points per game coming in, managed just 10 points. The Cowboys lost two fumbles and had two failed fourth-down attempts deep in Arizona territory.

Dallas' other touchdown came on a blocked-punt recovery in the end zone in the second quarter.

Cowboys quarterback Dak Prescott completed 24 of 39 passes for 250 yards and a touchdown with one interception. CeeDee Lamb finished with seven catches for 85 yards, and George Pickens had six grabs for 79 yards.

The Cowboys took the opening kickoff and made it look as if it would be a long night for the Cardinals.



Dallas easily drove from its 34 to inside the Arizona 10 in six plays. Prescott hit Pickens for 16 yards and Lamb for 15 yards on back-to-back plays.

Javonte Williams (15 carries, 83 yards) followed with an 11-yard run to give Dallas first-and-goal at the Arizona 7.

The Cardinals, however, shut the Cowboys down after that, forcing a fourth-and-goal from the 4. Josh Sweat burst through on the pass attempt and sacked Prescott for a 7-yard loss.

Brissett, starting his third game for the injured Kyler Murray, then led a 15-play, 60-yard drive over the next 6:54, leading to a Chad Ryland 48-yard field goal and 3-0 Arizona lead.

The Cardinals forced a three-and-out, and Brissett started connecting with Harrison. The two hooked up for pass plays of 20, 7 and 4 yards on the 47-yard drive.

The last toss to Harrison was in the end zone, giving Arizona a 10-0 lead 12:17 left in the half.

Muller Rallies in Third Set to Prevail in Athens



LONDON (Dispatches) - Fifth-seeded Frenchman Alexandre Muller shook off a loss of serve while trying to win the match and a match point against in the deciding set's 12th game and rallied to edge Germany's Jan-Lennard Struff 6-3, 2-6, 7-6 (6) in the opening round of the Hellenic Championships in Athens.

Muller, the lone seeded player in action, broke Struff at love in the third set's third game, but the German returned the favor in the set's 10th game. After dropping a match point opportunity, Struff bolted out to a 4-0 lead in the tiebreaker, but Muller captured the next five points and the match on his second match point chance.

Wild card and three-time Grand Slam winner Stan Wawrinka of Switzerland rallied for a 2-6, 7-6 (5), 7-5 victory over the Netherlands' Botić van de Zandschulp. Wawrinka will face second-seeded Italian Lorenzo Musetti in the second round. Bosnian Damir Dzumhur, Serbian Miomir Kecmanovic, Czechian Vit Kopřiva and Eliot Spizzirri also earned first-round victories on the hard courts in the ATP 250 event.

Meanwhile seventh-seeded Cameron Norrie of Great Britain shook off a poor second-set tie-breaker and knocked off France's Valentin Royer 6-3, 6-7 (2), 6-3 in Metz, France.

Norrie, the only seeded player to compete on Monday, never lost serve in the match, but Royer was resilient, saving 4 of 6 break points. But he could not recover after losing serve in the second game of the deciding set. Both players struck 10 aces and only one double fault.

On the comeback trail from injury, former World No. 6 Italian Matteo Berrettini ousted France's Quentin Halys 6-2, 6-4. Other winners in the first round were Italian Lorenzo Sonego, Frenchman Clement Tabur, Ukrainian Vitaliy Sachko and American Learner Tien. The 19-year old Tien, ranked No. 38 in the world, upended France's Ugo Blanchet 6-3, 6-3 in 66 minutes.

PSG and England Dominate FIFPRO World 11 Selections



LONDON (Dispatches) - Paris St Germain have five members of their Champions League winning side included in the Men's World 11 while Euro 2025 champions England also had five players named in the Women's side when FIFPRO announced their teams of the year on Monday.

More than 26,000 players voted in the global players' association awards, and Barcelona's 18-year-old winger Lamine Yamal is the youngest player ever selected for the men's team, while England defender Lucy Bronze makes a record eighth appearance in the women's team.

Italian goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma, who joined Manchester City after lifting the Champions League, is among the PSG players included along with Achraf Hakimi, Nuno Mendes, Vitorinha and Ballon d'Or winner Ousmane Dembele.

England successfully defended their Euro title, beating Spain in the final on penalties, and keeper Hannah Hampton is in the women's team alongside Bronze, Leah Williamson, Chloe Kelly and Alessia Russo.

Kelly, Russo and Williamson also won the Champions League with Arsenal, while Millie Bright, who retired from international football before the Euros, was also selected.

Africa have two players on the women's team for the first time, with Barbra Banda of Zambia making her second appearance and Morocco's Ghizlane Chebbak earning her debut.

MEN'S WORLD 11

Goalkeeper: Gianluigi Donnarumma (PSG/Manchester City, Italy)

Djokovic Will Play at ATP Finals

LONDON (Dispatches) - Novak Djokovic has confirmed his participation at the ATP Finals in Turin, Italy's tennis federation chief Angelo Binaghi said, easing concerns that the 24-time Grand Slam champion may pull out of the season finale.

World number five Djokovic, who withdrew from the season ender last year due to injury, skipped the Paris Masters and has not played since losing to qualifier Valentin Vacherot in the Shanghai Masters semi-finals last month.

"We have confirmation that Djokovic will be in Turin," Binaghi told Italian radio channel Rai Gr Parlamento on Monday.

The November 9-16 ATP finals feature the world's top eight players, with Djokovic having won the tournament a record



seven times and last lifting the trophy in 2023.

The 38-year-old Serb's participation leaves just one qualifying slot open, with ninth-ranked Italian Lorenzo Musetti and eighth-ranked Canadian Felix Auger-Aliassime in contention.

Auger-Aliassime, who reached the Paris Masters final last week, withdrew from the Moselle Open in Metz on Monday, meaning Musetti could seal the last spot if he wins this week's ATP 250 tournament in Athens.

Meanwhile Elena Rybakina qualified for the WTA Finals' last four, beating an error-prone Iga Swiatek 3-6 6-1 6-0, while Amanda Anisimova beat fellow American Madison Keys 4-6 6-3 6-2 in Riyadh.