

The United States Has Imposed Sanctions on 32 Entities and Individuals in Different Countries for Allegedly Supporting Iran's Peaceful Missile and Drone Programs

IRAN NEWS

Iran and Qatar Have Underlined the Need for Continued Consultations to Help Prevent Violations of the Palestinian People's Legitimate Rights, Particularly the Right to Self-Determination

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Tehran Rejects G7 Statement Supporting U.S. Sanctions on Iran's Nuclear Program



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran has firmly rejected the recent statement from the G7 endorsing the unlawful actions taken by the United States and the European Troika in reinstating UN sanctions over Iran's peaceful nuclear program.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei, speaking on Thursday, characterized the anti-Iran claims in the G7's final statement as "unfounded, irresponsible, and false."

Baghaei asserted that the US and E3's attempt to invoke the so-called snapback mechanism for re-imposing sanctions amounts to an endorsement of an international criminal act. He emphasized that such statements cannot legitimize these unlawful measures.

Criticizing the G7 for urging Iran to continue cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Baghaei pointed out their failure to address the joint actions of the US and Israel in attacking Iran's nuclear facilities.

He held Washington primarily responsible for the current state of Iran's nuclear program, citing the US's 2018 withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and subsequent military actions against Iran.

"Fundamentally, the United States is the main cause of the current situation due to its illegal and unilateral withdrawal from the JCPOA in 2018 and military attacks on Iran's peaceful nuclear facilities," he said.

Iran Calls for UN Action After U.S. President Acknowledges Role in Israeli Strikes



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - In a formal letter to the UN Security Council, Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi has condemned the United States for its role in supporting Israeli military aggression against Iran in June, following statements by President Donald Trump acknowledging US oversight of the attacks.

Araqchi's letter, addressed to the world body's secretary-general, cited a remark by Trump on November 6, in which the latter had said, "Israel attacked [Iran] first. That attack was very, very powerful. I was very much in charge of that."

The top diplomat then asserted that under the international law, this constituted clear evidence of US direction and control over the military strikes carried out by the Israeli regime.

The letter referenced prior communications sent by the Islamic Republic to the Security Council on June 13, 22, and 28, in which Tehran had likewise protested the "brazen acts of aggression" committed by Washington and Tel Aviv from June 13 to 24 against the Iranian soil.

According to Araqchi, the attacks targeted Iranian civilians, infrastructure, and facilities, including peaceful nuclear sites under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)'s safeguards, resulting in the martyrdom of more than 1,100 people and injuries to many others.

IRGC Aerospace Commander Promises Crushing Response to Future Acts of Aggression

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - A senior commander of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) has issued a stern warning to adversaries against any acts of aggression toward Iran.

Brigadier General Seyyed Majid Mousavi, chief commander of the IRGC Aerospace Force, made these remarks on Thursday on the sidelines of a ceremony in Tehran honoring the martyrs of the force.

Mousavi emphasized that potential aggressors should think twice before considering any hostile actions against the Iranian nation.

He pledged to uphold the legacy of the martyrs, which he called "the cornerstone of Iran's defense capabilities."

In his address, Mousavi paid tribute to the Martyr Hassan Tehrani Moghaddam, commending his strategic vision in identifying and countering threats.

Tehrani Moqaddam is known as the "father of Iran's missile program" and a visionary military strategist who was ahead of his time.

He played an instrumental role in developing Iran's indigenous missile capabilities during the 1980s imposed war and groomed many aerospace commanders who continued his mission.

General Mousavi now heads the IRGC aerospace division after the martyrdom of General Amirali Hajizadeh, his predecessor, in the Israeli military aggression against Iran in June. Hajizadeh was one of the finest protégés of Tehrani Moqaddam's school of thought and training, carrying forward his unfinished mission until his martyrdom earlier this year.

Mousavi on Thursday noted that Tehrani Moghaddam's enduring influence stemmed from his exceptional ability to recognize dangers and take decisive action.

"This martyr left a legacy for all Iranian people that is known as the axis of the country's defense power," Mousavi stated.

The ceremony not only commemorated martyred commanders but also reaffirmed Iran's commitment to enhancing its defense forces.

Furthermore, he emphasized that Iran's capabilities have been strengthened by the contributions of Martyr Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh, the commander of the IRGC's Aerospace Division, and Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, Major General Mohammad Bagheri.

"We will pursue the martyrs' legacy with determination and bring the enemy to its knees



who wanted to destroy Israel."

On June 13, Israel launched a blatant and 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.

In response, the Iranian Armed Forces targeted strategic sites across the occupied territories as well as the al-Udeid air base in Qatar, the largest American military base in West Asia.

A leading independent American news website, The Grayzone, recently revealed that during the 12-day June war, Iran targeted a tower in central Tel Aviv above a secret underground Israeli-US intelligence bunker known as Site 81, located under the Da Vinci apartment complex.

The strikes were highly precise, hitting multiple strategic military and intelligence sites, including universities linked to military, such as the Weizmann Institute, which suffered \$570 million in damages.

Heavy Israeli censorship prevented detailed reporting on these attacks, with media outlets suppressed and journalists forced away from impact sites. The attacks demonstrated the accuracy of Iranian missiles and caused significant damage to sensitive Israeli military infrastructure.

Iran's ability to launch such a strike, despite ongoing Israeli and US efforts to disrupt missile launch sites, signals a resilient and adaptive missile program. It demonstrates Tehran's operational readiness to conduct high-profile retaliatory strikes.

Iran's Missile Power Is Owed to the Sacrifice of Martyrs and Veterans

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - The Speaker of Iran's Parliament praised Martyr Hassan Tehrani-Moghaddam as a symbol of transformation in Iran's missile program, stating that the country's current deterrent capability stems from the sacrifices of thousands of unknown martyrs and Basij fighters of the Iran-Iraq War, who, for the first time, made the Zionists taste the reality of war and defeat.

Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf said Thursday night at the 14th annual commemoration ceremony for Martyr Hassan Tehrani-Moghaddam in Mashhad that while Tehrani-Moghaddam is remembered as a symbol of progress and strength in the missile field, "we must not forget the thousands of other unknown martyrs who played a role in this major movement."

He added that the oppressed Basij fighters who fought during the war without effective firepower or proper artillery laid the foundation for today's military power.

Referring to the actions of the Israeli regime in the region, the Speaker said that this "criminal regime," described as a "cancerous tumor," has existed for nearly 80 years based on an unjust decision, and had never experienced "the fire and force" it encountered during the recent 12-day conflict.

Qalibaf noted that the pressure exerted on the enemy in the final four or five days of the conflict to force a ceasefire was a direct result of the sacrifices of the fighters and the transformations achieved by figures such as Martyrs Tehrani-Moghaddam, Hajizadeh, Bagheri, Soleimani, Shoushtari, and others.

He stressed that the power in which the Iranian nation now takes pride is an inheritance from the devotion of all these individuals and must be preserved.

The Speaker of Parliament said the Iranian people owe their lives and security to the martyrs. He added that today, the enemy is waging a cognitive and psychological war to spread despair among the population, and that patience, resilience, and steadfastness in the face of the enemy serve as a counter-attack.

Qalibaf also emphasized the need to keep alive the culture of jihad and martyrdom as a fundamental strategy for solving the country's challenges, stating that martyrdom ceremonies serve as reminders not to become heedless amid life's complexities.



Quoting the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, he said the families of martyrs share in their spiritual reward, adding that while martyrs fought on the battlefield, their spouses fought on the battlefield of life, maintaining the culture of jihad and sacrifice.

He described martyrs as key drivers of transformation in areas such as missile development and scientific independence. Great national achievements, he asserted, originated from the sincerity and intellectual courage of the martyrs, who refused to be deterred by closed paths and instead created new ones with creativity and prudence.

He added that martyrs possessed not only intellectual courage but also moral courage, always remaining accountable for their actions, taking responsibility even for others' work, and never becoming discouraged or hopeless.

Outlining Imam Khomeini's school of thought—based on rationality, justice, and spirituality—Qalibaf said the martyrs embodied these principles. They were logical and calculated in their actions, committed to justice in intention and practice, and deeply infused with spirituality.

Highlighting the martyrs' achievements in defense and science, he said that more important than developing missiles or centrifuges was building national confidence and scientific independence. Martyrs proved that self-sufficiency is achievable even in the most complex fields, and today, scientific independence is firmly rooted in the country's universities.

Qalibaf said that turning away from the culture of jihad and martyrdom is the main reason for failures in confronting social harms, corruption, and injustice. He added that this culture is not limited to the military sphere; it must also be applied in economic, political, cultural, and social efforts. The key to moving toward a "Strong Iran," he said, is involving the people in all areas and acting based on this authentic culture.

According to IRNA, Hassan Tehrani-Moghaddam was born on October 28, 1959, in Tehran. He joined the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) shortly after its formation and became the first commander and founder of the IRGC's artillery unit during the Iran-Iraq War. He later became the principal architect of Iran's missile program, earning him the title "Father of Iran's Missile Program."

He was martyred on November 12, 2011, along with several colleagues, in an explosion at the Modarres military base in Malarad.

Iran's Strengthening Continues Unabated in All Sectors



TEHRAN (PressTV) - The deputy commander of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) says Iran's path toward greater strength remains ongoing in all sectors, including the IRGC Aerospace Force, emphasizing that "this process has no end."

Brigadier General Ali Fadavi made the remarks on Thursday, dismissing foreign claims about limitations on Iran's missile range as uninformed and unscientific.

Iran continues to advance its power and capabilities across all areas, he added, emphasizing that "In the IRGC Aerospace Force as well, the process of becoming stronger continues; this process has no end."

Regarding the enemies' claims about the possible restriction of Iran's ballistic missile range, Fadavi stressed that such comments "are not based on any expertise at all, and they have no knowledge in this field."

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei "specified a limit concerning missile range, and we obey his command. This has nothing to do with our scientific and industrial capabilities," added the IRGC deputy commander, stressing that "we comply with what the Leader have ordered."

He also noted that in recent years, the crimes of "the Great Satan" (the United States) have become evident to all.

Referring to the recent 12-day war, Fadavi said that "In this war, God fulfilled His promise and granted victory to a nation that stood firm for truth. The condition for realizing divine promises is the fulfillment of divine duties, and the devotees of the Islamic Revolution have carried out their divine obligations."

Iran, China Advancing Ties, Ready to Promote Strategic Cooperation



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran and China have voiced readiness to advance their ties and promote cooperation in line with the agreements reached between the two countries.

Iran's Ambassador to China Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli said on Thursday that Tehran is ready to strengthen comprehensive cooperation with Beijing in different sectors as part of the important consensus reached by the two countries' top authorities.

Rahmani Fazli made the remarks in a meeting with China's Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Miao Deyu as the two countries are drawing up plans to promote cooperation and celebrate the 55th anniversary of the establishment of diplomat ties.

He said the development of Tehran-Beijing cooperation is "very important" given the ongoing regional and international developments.

"Next year (2026) will mark the 55th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries and will be an opportunity to further enhance the development of relations between Iran and China," the ambassador noted.

Iran and China signed a landmark 25-year comprehensive strategic partnership agreement in March 2022 in defiance of unilateral sanctions imposed on the two nations by the United States.



Iran Congratulates Iraq on Successful Elections

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei has congratulated the people and government of Iraq on the successful holding of the Iraqi parliamentary elections.

Baqaei offered his congratulations to the people and government of Iraq on the successful holding of the parliamentary elections. He regarded the increased participation of the Iraqi people in choosing their representatives and the peaceful holding of the elections as valuable, expressing hope that this election would help further strengthen unity, security, and progress in the friendly and neighboring country.

Iran Will Neutralize Sanctions Through Diverse Routes, Partners, and Tools



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - The Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs for Economic Diplomacy stated that "sanctions are not the end of the road," emphasizing that Iran will neutralize them by diversifying its trade routes, partners, and instruments.

Speaking at the 29th National Conference on the Development of Non-Oil Exports, titled "Challenges and Requirements of Non-Oil Exports under Conditions of Uncertainty," held in Tabriz, Hamid Ghanbari outlined the government's strategies for strengthening non-oil exports. He described the provinces as the driving force behind the country's economic diplomacy, adding:

"Coming to Tabriz is not just a work trip for me; it is a return to a city that has for centuries been a leader in industry, commerce, and patriotism — a gateway for Iran's dialogue with the world."

Highlighting the importance of non-oil exports under sanctions, Ghanbari said: "In times of pressure, every Iranian truck crossing the border and every product displayed in regional markets is a clear message of the Iranian nation's determination. Exporters are the silent ambassadors of Iran's economy, and the path toward a non-oil economy begins in provinces like Tabriz."

He stressed that a non-oil economy is "not an abstract slogan" but rather a route toward rebuilding national power, decision-making independence, and resilience against external pressures.

Ghanbari elaborated that for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, economic diplomacy is "not just an administrative title, but a national mission." All Iranian embassies abroad, he said, are tasked with supporting exporters, addressing banking and customs challenges, and paving the way for Iran's entry into new markets.

Iran, Tajikistan Expand Aviation Cooperation With New Agreement



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The Deputy Minister of Roads and Urban Development and Head of Iran's Civil Aviation Organization (CAO) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Tajikistan's aviation authority to strengthen bilateral cooperation in the aviation sector.

According to the Civil Aviation Organization of Iran, the MoU aims to expand technical, training, and operational collaboration between the two countries. It will leverage existing capacities in aircraft maintenance, airport services, air navigation, specialized training, and the exchange of professional expertise.

Under the terms of the agreement, joint expert working groups will be established to follow up and implement specific areas of interest.

During his visit to Tajikistan, Hossein Pourfarzaneh, Deputy Minister of Roads and Urban Development and Head of the Civil Aviation Organization of Iran, also met with Alireza Haqiqian, Iran's ambassador to Tajikistan. In the meeting, Pourfarzaneh outlined Iran's programs and capabilities for cooperation and reaffirmed Iran's full readiness to enhance technical, training, and operational interactions with Tajikistan.

Ambassador Haqiqian emphasized the deep cultural and historical ties between the two nations and highlighted the important role of the aviation sector in promoting economic, commercial, and tourism relations between Iran and Tajikistan.

As part of the visit, Pourfarzaneh held a joint meeting with senior executives and CEOs of Tajikistan's major airlines, including Tajik Air (the national carrier), Shahin Air, and Somon Air.

President Sets Ambitious Goal for Iran to Rank Among Top 20 in Global E-Gov't Index

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The head of Iran's Information Technology Organization announced that while Iran's current global ranking in the UN E-Government Development Index (EGDI) was 101 at the start of the country's Seventh Development Plan, the official target is to reach 75. However, the President has set a far more ambitious goal — for Iran to achieve a ranking below 20.

According to the Information Technology Organization of Iran (ITO), the Ninth National Conference on Advances in Enterprise Architecture of Iran opened at Shahid Beheshti University on Thursday.

Mohsen Sadr, Deputy Minister of ICT and head of the ITO, spoke at the event about enterprise architecture and digital transformation, emphasizing the growing importance of data-driven governance.

"The President places special importance on data-based governance. Accordingly, the Ministry of ICT and the Information Technology Organization have been tasked with providing the tools needed to implement this approach," Sadr said.

He added that the first step toward this goal is overcoming institutional resistance and moving toward national cooperation and synergy.

Sadr noted that there is currently an "excessive appetite for developing new platforms" in Iran, explaining: "Every new national platform must comply with Article 107 of the Seventh Development Plan and receive authorization from the Ministry of ICT. Unfortunately, the uncontrolled creation of separate systems has trapped citizens in a jungle of fragmented platforms. Instead of simplifying people's lives, each agency has built its own system — wasting resources and confusing users."

Referring to a recent directive from the President on developing digital government ecosystems, Sadr said: "Based on eight months of research and analysis, the government plans to organize public services into 15 to 16 specialized ecosystems. This initiative aims to integrate services, reduce processing times, and improve Iran's ranking in the e-government index."

He highlighted the key role of universities in this plan, saying the ITO has partnered with six or seven major universities, including Shahid Beheshti University, to design standards, architectural models, and public service processes. The first phase of this collaboration will conclude within two weeks.



Sadr also emphasized the participation of the private sector, stating that under the new model, 51% of each digital ecosystem will be owned by private entities, with the remaining 49% held by government stakeholders. The ITO will act as the national supervisory body to prevent duplication and ensure coordination.

Sadr cautioned against excessive localization, saying: "In science and technology, we shouldn't try to reinvent the wheel. What matters is adapting successful global models to our cultural and administrative context."

Discussing Iran's global standing, Sadr said: "At the start of the Seventh Development Plan, Iran ranked 101st in the global e-government index. According to the plan, we should reach 75, but the President has set a much higher goal — to place among the top 20."

He explained that by improving the Online Service Availability Index (OSAI) and implementing the specialized digital ecosystems, Iran could move closer to this ambitious target.

Sadr also referred to the development of the Land Management System (Samaneh Zamin), designed to accelerate licensing processes in that sector:

"Processes that used to take 90 days are now completed in about 23 days, and we aim to reduce that to one week — that's what effective implementation means."

He further noted that Iran's Online Service Index (OSI) currently stands at below one, but if the government manages to raise it to eight, "that would mark a major achievement."

Sadr added that while many agencies initially resisted integration, after nine months of collaboration, even some ministers are now asking to prioritize their sector's ecosystem so implementation can begin sooner.

In conclusion, Sadr emphasized that the Seventh Development Plan contains progressive mandates, a significant portion of which involve the Ministry of ICT and the Information Technology Organization — a responsibility he described as "very demanding."

"We are reaching out for cooperation from all sectors — academic, executive, and private. The ITO supports theses, doctoral dissertations, and research projects related to digital government," he said.

He concluded by stressing that data-driven governance can only be achieved through collective effort and the training of a new generation of experts in this field.

40% of Iran's Population at Risk of Diabetes

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Minister of Health, Treatment and Medical Education has warned that nearly 40 percent of the country's population is either diabetic or at risk of developing the disease. He also revealed that the health sector's share of the national gross domestic product (GDP) is only 4 percent.

Speaking at the Third Conference on Patient-Centered Diabetes Management at Tehran University of Medical Sciences on Tuesday—held to mark World Diabetes Day—Minister Mohammadreza Zafarghandi said about 14 percent of Iranians are currently living with diabetes, while another 26 percent are in the pre-diabetic stage.

"Globally, around 600 million people suffer from diabetes. These statistics show that neither Iran nor the world has been able to overcome this disease," Zafarghandi said. "However, we must take action to reduce its impact."

He likened diabetes to "a volcano or an iceberg—its visible part is small, while the majority of the problem lies beneath the surface," describing it as one of the most complex conditions in both internal medicine and surgery.

Zafarghandi stressed the need for a multidimensional approach to diabetes management, noting that policymakers should consider "diabetes and the patient, diabetes and the family, diabetes and the workplace, diabetes and the economy, and diabetes and governance."

The minister added that one person dies every 10 seconds worldwide due to diabetes, calling it a "major global challenge." While acknowledging the difficulty of eradicating the disease, he emphasized that "Iran must act within its available capacity and resources to minimize harm."

He called for coordinated efforts among the Diabetes Association, other medical societies, the Health Ministry, and the Iranian Parliament, noting that diabetes is often linked with other health concerns such as obesity and high cholesterol, which affect over half the population.

Regarding health financing, Zafarghandi explained that the health sector's share of Iran's GDP is just over 4 percent, a figure he said was insufficient to meet growing medical demands.

"New drugs are being introduced every day worldwide, but we cannot afford to include all of them in the treatment plans for patients," he said, criticizing financial delays in the healthcare system. "The Social Security Organization has not made payments for medical services since last March, and the situation with the Health Insurance Organization is also problematic."

He warned that pharmacies have been dispensing medicines for eight months without receiving payment, placing severe strain on the supply chain. "Pharmacies owe money to manufacturers, and without payment, production and distribution will collapse," he said.



Zafarghandi underscored the importance of education and awareness, saying that if diabetes progresses to complications such as amputations or vision loss, "control becomes extremely difficult." He called for simple, accessible health education through families and mobile devices, suggesting legislative support from Parliament where needed.

"Improving public health literacy and self-care can cut costs by up to 75 percent," he said, emphasizing the need to address the 40 percent of Iranians who are either diabetic or pre-diabetic.

Alireza Raisi, Deputy Minister for Public Health, also addressed the conference, stressing that effective diabetes control is a key indicator of national development.

"At the top of every country's development indicators lies the ability to control diabetes," Raisi said, describing it as a complex, multifaceted issue requiring broad cooperation.

He cited a 2018 national study showing that diabetes-related costs were "catastrophic," pushing many families below the poverty line.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Raisi noted, mortality rates were highest among patients with non-communicable diseases such as diabetes. "These diseases have no vaccines; prevention and continuous care are the only solutions," he said.

Raisi outlined several national initiatives, including the creation of a National Committee on Non-Communicable Diseases and the integration of laboratories and health records into a unified electronic system. Currently, 60 percent of laboratories are connected, with full implementation underway to improve data for research and policymaking.

He identified three key pillars of Iran's health system—family physicians, the referral system, and electronic health records—as foundational to improving healthcare outcomes.

The National Diabetes Control Program, Raisi explained, includes four levels: Preventing diabetes through lifestyle changes, Controlling existing cases, Managing patients with complications, and Preventing complications in diagnosed patients.

He emphasized the vital role of general practitioners and internal medicine and pediatric specialists in prevention, adding that 34 medical universities have launched specialized diabetes training programs.

Raisi also called for greater public participation through self-care initiatives, noting that tools for such programs are ready and can be integrated into electronic health records.

"Every one dollar invested in prevention yields at least seven dollars in return," he said. "The best investment in healthcare is prevention. Opening more dialysis centers or treatment wards should not be a source of pride—our goal should be to make them unnecessary through effective prevention."

Iran on Track to Become Regional Food Supply Hub



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Iran is moving toward becoming the main food supply hub of the region, according to the Minister of Agriculture Jihad, Gholamreza Nouri, who emphasized the key role of the private sector in driving the national economy.

Speaking during a meeting with the Supreme Leader's representative in East Azerbaijan Province, Nouri highlighted the province's strong private-sector-based economy and its strategic geographic location, which provides a significant advantage for trade and cooperation with northwestern neighboring countries, the Caucasus, and even Europe.

He noted that water scarcity is a growing challenge not only in Iran but also among neighboring countries, adding that water management will be a decisive factor in the future of agricultural development.

"In East Azerbaijan, especially within the Lake Urmia basin, observing environmental considerations and optimizing water consumption are essential," Nouri stressed.

While acknowledging the province's agricultural importance, the minister admitted that limited water resources pose serious challenges. "We must simultaneously safeguard food security and preserve our natural resources and environment," he said.

Nouri announced the establishment of a joint office between the provincial Agriculture Jihad Organization and the University of Tabriz's Faculty of Agriculture, stating that the 14th government's strategy is to base all activities on science and university collaboration.

Iran's Wood and Paper Industry on the Verge of Bankruptcy



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - A former member of parliament and the managing director of Mazandaran Wood and Paper Industries has warned of a looming crisis in Iran's wood and paper sector, citing the impact of sanctions, restrictive regulations such as the "Forest Breathing Law," and the urgent need for policy reform to revive domestic production. He also detailed the industry's debts, production statistics, and plans for raw material supply.

In an interview with ILNA, Ghasem Mohammadi, former MP and current CEO of Mazandaran Wood and Paper Industries, described the wood and paper sector as "a deeply interlinked system" whose infrastructure is now severely deteriorated.

"The investments made in the 1970s are now facing serious depreciation and risks," he said. "For example, companies like Chooka in Gilan, Mazandaran, and Khuzestan are about 30 years old. At the start, consortiums provided strong scientific, educational, sales, and engineering support. But after sanctions, these supports were cut off, and many traders and suppliers of machinery parts left the country and the region, creating major operational difficulties."

Mohammadi added that much of the factory equipment has reached the end of its lifespan. "We need comprehensive overhauls and technical reconstruction to complete the value chain and re-enter domestic and regional markets," he stated.

He emphasized that Iran's wood and paper industry is strategically located in forested regions and was established based on proper feasibility studies.

"For instance, a one-million-dollar investment was made in Sari and Kiassar for an annual production of 175,000 to 190,000 tons. Initially, the results were impressive, but over time, performance declined sharply due to lack of technical and engineering support," Mohammadi explained.

U.S. Approves Potential \$330m Arms Sale to Taiwan

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The U.S. approved the sale to Taiwan of fighter jet parts for \$330 million, the Pentagon said late on Thursday, marking the first such transaction since President Donald Trump took office in January. "The proposed sale will improve the recipient's capability to meet current and future threats by maintaining the operational readiness of the recipient's fleet of F-16, C-130," and other aircraft, the Pentagon said in a statement. Make sense of the latest ESG trends affecting companies and governments with the Reuters Sustainable Switch newsletter. Sign up here.



Cuba Accuses U.S.-Funded Media Outlet of Economic Terrorism, Manipulating Exchange Rate



HAVANA (Dispatches) - Cuba on Thursday alleged that U.S.-funded media outlet El Toque was manipulating Cuba's informal exchange rate to foment unrest on the island at a time when a plummeting peso has sent prices soaring.

Cuba called the black market exchange, calculated and published in real time by El Toque on its website, a "farce." The benchmark rate has fluctuated wildly in the past several weeks but is again approaching a record high, wiping out the paltry spending power of most Cubans in a fast-dollarizing economy.

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Cuba's Communist-run government cited publicly available documents in the United States to show that El Toque and its editor-in-chief, Jose Jasan Nieves, had received U.S. funding and alleged they were "profiting by destabilizing Cuba."

Jasan Nieves told Reuters in a written response to the allegations that El Toque receives U.S. State Department grants "to promote access to information in Cuba and to support the U.S. embassy in Havana in implementing public diplomacy programs."

He denied, however, that the funding had any impact on El Toque's reporting, noting that the outlet also receives funding from private donors, companies, foundations and entities in Europe.

"None of those relationships influence our editorial line," Jasan said.

Brazil Rebutts UN Complaint About COP30 Security, But Boosts Presence



BELEM (Dispatches) - Brazil has pushed back against a complaint by the UN's climate chief over a security breach at the COP30 summit in Belem, saying responsibility for safeguarding the venue's interior lies with the world body itself.

Simon Stiell, executive secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, criticized the host nation's security personnel for "failing to act" on Tuesday night when dozens of Indigenous protesters forced their way inside, according to a letter reported by Bloomberg News.

His letter, addressed to Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva's chief of staff and to Andre Correa do Lago, the diplomat presiding over the summit, accused the hosts of a "serious breach of the established security framework."

"It flagged vulnerabilities -- from unsecured doors to the lack of assurances that authorities would respond to intrusions -- as well as health and safety concerns from malfunctioning air conditioning and rainwater from heavy Amazon downpours seeping into lighting fixtures."

U.S. Announces "Southern Spear" Mission as Forces Deploy to South America

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - United States Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth has formally announced the launch of a US military operation to target so-called "narco-terrorists" as Washington's large-scale build-up of troops, warships and fighter jets continues in Latin America.

"Today, I'm announcing Operation SOUTHERN SPEAR. Led by Joint Task Force Southern Spear and @SOUTHCOM, this mission defends our Homeland, removes narco-terrorists from our Hemisphere, and secures our Homeland from the drugs that are killing our people," Hegseth said in a post on X.

"The Western Hemisphere is America's neighborhood -- and we will protect it," he said. SOUTHCOM is the acronym for US Southern Command, whose area of responsibility covers 31 countries through South America, Central America and the Caribbean.

In a post on social media, SOUTHCOM said US Marines were conducting artillery training onboard the USS Iwo Jima -- an amphibious assault ship -- in the Caribbean in support of US President Donald Trump's "priorities to disrupt illicit drug trafficking and protect the homeland".

Hegseth's announcement late on Thursday followed a report that the US military had carried out its 20th attack on vessels in the Caribbean and Pacific, killing four people earlier this week.

US broadcaster CNN quoted an unnamed US Defense Department official who said there were "no survivors" from a strike on a suspect drug smuggling vessel, which took place on Monday.

The attack is the latest reported targeting of people travelling in boats in the Caribbean and Pacific. The US claims it is targeting drug smuggling, but has provided neither evidence nor legal justification for launching lethal attacks that have killed some 80 people so far.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio reacted on Wednesday to criticism of the US attacks by its G-7 allies, saying that



Europeans will not dictate how Washington chooses to defend US national security.

The naming of Operation Southern Spear comes as the USS Gerald R Ford, the most advanced US aircraft carrier, is expected to arrive off the coast of Venezuela within days, which has been described as an extraordinary show of US military power not seen in South America in generations.

The arrival of the aircraft carrier adds to the already significant build-up of US troops, naval forces and air power, purportedly as part of Trump's targeting of Latin American drug trafficking gangs but widely seen as directed at the removal of Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro.

Speaking on Venezuelan state television on Wednesday, President Maduro accused the US of creating false narratives to justify its attacks on vessels in regional waters and threatening his country.

"Since they cannot say that we have hidden biological or chemical weapons, they invent a bizarre narrative," said Maduro, who Washington has accused of drug trafficking.

The country's Ministry of Defence said earlier this week that almost 200,000 troops have been mobilised for a two-day exercise to improve Venezuela's readiness to respond to the "imperialist threat" posed by the growing US military presence in the region.

Venezuela Defence Minister Vladimir Padrino Lopez said late Tuesday that US military deployment in the Caribbean was a "vulgar attack against the sovereignty and peace" not only of Venezuela, but of the entire region.

Elizabeth Dickinson, the International Crisis Group's senior analyst for the Andes region, told The Associated Press news agency that "there's nothing that an aircraft carrier brings that is useful for combating the drug trade" in the region. "I think it's clearly a message that is much more geared towards pressuring Caracas," Dickinson said.

Explosions Rock Kyiv as Mayor Reports Massive Russian Strikes Across the Capital

KYIV (Dispatches) - Almost every district of Ukraine's capital Kyiv came under a "massive" attack on Friday, Mayor Vitaly Klitschko said. The attack killed at least one person and wounded at least 24 more, according to emergency services. Russia fired missiles and drones at energy, rail and other critical infrastructure, officials said, amid intensified strikes since its 2022 invasion.

Almost every district in Kyiv was under a "massive" attack Friday morning, the Ukrainian capital's mayor said, with AFP journalists reporting explosions in the city centre as Russia intensifies its attacks on infrastructure.

Moscow, which launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, has particularly targeted Ukrainian energy facilities and rail systems, as well as residential areas in recent months.

Missiles and drones were targeting critical infrastructure facilities in the capital on Friday, said Mykola Kalashnyk, the head of the Kyiv regional military administration.

Kyiv Mayor Vitaly Klitschko called it a "massive enemy attack", saying air defence forces were in operation.

One person was killed and at least 24 wounded in the attack, according to the Ukrainian emergency services. Five people were hospitalised, including one man in critical condition and a pregnant woman.

The Ukrainian emergency services added that "more than 40 people have been rescued" from fires and destruction across the city.

"Sections of heating networks were damaged," Klitschko said on Telegram, adding that some buildings in northeastern Desnyansky district had been temporarily left without heat.

Electricity and water supplies could also be disrupted, he added. AFP journalists saw tracer bullets used against drones and several anti-missile



systems deployed.

"Russians are hitting residential buildings. There are a lot of damaged high-rise buildings throughout Kyiv, almost in every district," Tymur Tkachenko, the head of the city's military administration, wrote on social media.

Klitschko reported fires or damage to buildings in eight of Kyiv's 10 districts, saying medical emergency teams were deployed to all of them.

A fire broke out on the roof of a five-storey residential building in Solomyansky district, a transport hub near Kyiv's international airport.

The attack comes as Kyiv's Western allies ratchet up pressure on Russia.

On Wednesday, Canada unveiled new sanctions targeting Russia's drone and energy production, as well as infrastructure used to launch cyberattacks.

G7 foreign ministers that day called for an immediate ceasefire in Ukraine, voicing "unwavering" support for the country's territorial integrity.

And the European Commission is considering using part of Russia's assets frozen after its invasion to provide Kyiv with a loan for budgetary and military support over the next two years.

But after almost four years of war, both sides are heavily entrenched with Moscow rejecting ceasefire calls and efforts by US President Donald Trump to revive a long-stalled peace deal.

Russian forces have been grinding across eastern Ukraine for months, trying to take control of the Donetsk and Lugansk regions.

Russia said Monday it had captured three more villages along the sprawling front line, where it is pressing its advantage in manpower and equipment.

Experts say Russia's latest strikes on energy infrastructure are putting Ukraine at risk of heating outages ahead of the winter months.

Ukraine has, in turn, stepped up attacks on Russian infrastructure and sought to strike further beyond the front.

Russian forces downed more than 200 Ukrainian drones overnight into Friday, Moscow's defence ministry said, including 66 over Krasnodar Krai and 45 over Saratov in the south.

A fire broke out at the Sheshkharis oil refinery, one of the largest in Russia, in the Black Sea port of Novorossiysk, before being brought under control, Krasnodar Krai authorities said.

A civilian vessel was also damaged, with three of the crew wounded and hospitalised, they added.

China's Economy Jolted by Weakest Factory Output

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China's factory output and retail sales grew at their weakest pace in over a year in October, piling pressure on policymakers to revamp the \$19 trillion export-driven economy as a trade war with the U.S. and weak domestic demand heighten risks to growth.

For decades, the officials charged with keeping the world's second-largest economy humming have had the option of spurring its vast industrial complex to boost exports should consumers tighten spending at home, or reaching into the public purse to fund GDP-boosting infrastructure projects.

But U.S. President Donald Trump's tariff war is providing a stark reminder of the manufacturing juggernaut's reliance on the world's largest consumer market, and even an economy of China's size can only squeeze so much growth from building more industrial parks, power substations and dams.

Friday's indicators gave little hope for a quick turnaround, and the worse the data gets every month, the more urgent the need for reform becomes.

"China's economy is facing pressures from all sides," said Fred Neumann, chief Asia economist at HSBC.

"The strong lift from exports that supported growth in recent quarters will be hard to sustain into next year, even if U.S. import tariffs now turned out lower than feared. That leaves domestic demand to pick up the slack, but without significant further stimulus, it will be hard to reverse recent slowing in both investment and consumption," he added.



Industrial output grew 4.9% year-on-year in October, National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) data showed, the weakest annual pace since August 2024, compared with a 6.5% rise in September. It missed a 5.5% increase forecast in a Reuters poll.

Retail sales, a gauge of consumption, expanded 2.9% last month, also their worst pace since August last year, and cooled from a 3.0% rise in September. They compared with a forecast gain of 2.8%.

The chart shows China's industrial production and retail sales for select months. Policymakers acknowledge the need for change to address historical supply-demand imbalances, lift household consumption and tackle towering local government debt that keeps provinces -- many with economies the size of nations -- from being self-reliant.

All the same, they also recognise structural reform will be painful, and is fraught with political risk at a time when Trump's trade war has ramped up pressure on the economy.

"The external environment remains fraught with instability and uncertainty, while domestic structural adjustments face considerable pressure," Fu Linghui, a spokesperson at the NBS told a press conference following the data release.

China's exports unexpectedly crumbled in October, data showed last week, as producers struggle to turn a profit in other markets after months of front-loading to beat Trump's tariff threats.



Alcaraz Knocks Sinner Off the Top

TURIN (Dispatches) - Carlos Alcaraz knocked rival Jannik Sinner off the top of the standings on Thursday after securing the year-end world number one spot by beating Lorenzo Musetti at the ATP Finals 6-4, 6-1 in Turin.

A double-Grand Slam winner this season, Alcaraz will be ahead of Sinner in the updated men's rankings on Monday thanks to his success over Musetti which also sealed first place for the Spaniard in the Jimmy Connors Group at the season-ending tournament.

Alcaraz, who has won 70 matches so far this season, could lose his semi-final on Saturday but will now still finish 2025 top of the pile, even if Sinner retains his Finals title on home turf.

But Alcaraz looks in no mood to do that as he seeks his first Finals triumph, and he appears to be on course for yet another final showdown against Italy's Sinner, who qualified in first place from the Bjorn Borg Group on Wednesday.

"It means the world to me to be honest, the year number one is always a goal," said Alcaraz.

"To be honest at the beginning of the year I saw the number one really far away, Jannik being there winning almost every tournament he plays.

"For me it means everything. The work that we put in every day during the whole season, up and downs, comebacks from the tennis side. So I'm really proud of my team and myself."

Alcaraz has won four of his five meetings with Sinner this season, all of which have been in finals of top-level tournaments—with two deciding Grand Slams.

The 22-year-old won one of the best matches in tennis history against Sinner to retain his French Open

title in June before losing the Wimbledon final to the Italian.

And on Thursday he confidently dealt with Sinner's countryman Musetti who has been eliminated and will not take part in the Davis Cup Final 8, which is being held in Bologna next week.

A passionate crowd cheered on Musetti but it was to no avail for the world number nine who only qualified for the Finals due to Novak Djokovic pulling out at the last minute and clearly flagged in the second set.

"I was tired, I knew it would be hard to recover from the battles of the last few months and above all the last few weeks... I needed a miracle today," said Musetti, who came to the Finals after losing the Athens final to Djokovic on Sunday.

Heading into the semis with Alcaraz is Alex de Minaur who did his part to qualify with a straight-sets win against Taylor Fritz, 7-6 (7/3), 6-3 earlier on Thursday.

Australia's De Minaur had to win in two sets in order to have any chance of making it out of the group, and he will now face Sinner in the semis.

Hard court specialist De Minaur won his 43rd match of the season on the surface, the most on the men's tour, and was too much for Fritz once he prevailed in the first set tie-break.

"Couple days ago was one of the toughest days I've had in my career. I was in a very, very dark spot. I could tell you that I hated the sport," De Minaur told reporters.

"Here we are two days later and I'm feeling great about myself. It's incredible."

France Qualify in Emotional Win, Ronaldo Sees Red

PARIS (Dispatches) - France reached the 2026 World Cup with a 4-0 win over Ukraine on Thursday as the country marked the 10th anniversary of the 2015 Paris attacks, while Portugal were made to wait after losing 2-0 in Dublin as Cristiano Ronaldo saw red.

Norway must also be patient after Italy struck late in Moldova to prevent them from stamping their ticket to next year's tournament in North America.

France's victory came in an emotionally-charged Parc des Princes, which observed a minute's silence to mark the 10th anniversary of the attacks in and around Paris on Friday, November 13, 2015.

Most of the 130 people killed in the attacks lost their lives at the Bataclan concert hall in the capital, where they were attending a concert.

But one person died near the Stade de France in the northern Paris suburb of Saint-Denis, where multiple explosions took place as suicide bombers attempted to enter the ground during a friendly between Les Bleus and Germany.

Didier Deschamps was the coach then and remains in charge now, with the approaching World Cup to be his final tournament before stepping down.

"Given the context tonight, we are pleased to have put some



smiles on faces by securing qualification," said Deschamps.

"We have fulfilled our objective. I understand that it is seen as normal that France qualify but we still had to go out and do it, so we are very proud."

Second-half goals by Kylian Mbappe and Michael Olise, as well as a first international strike for Hugo Ekitike, gave Deschamps' side an unassailable six-point lead over both Iceland, who beat Azerbaijan 2-0, and Ukraine at the top of Group D.

While France can now look forward to the draw for the finals, which takes place in Washington, DC, on December 5, Ukraine and Iceland meet each other on Sunday in a shoot-out to decide who continues on into the play-offs next March.

Portugal would have secured top spot in Group F with a win against the Republic of Ireland.

But a Ronaldo red card for violent conduct when trailing 2-0 to a Troy Parrott brace meant Portugal remain on 10 points, three ahead of the Irish and two ahead of Hungary, who won 1-0 against Armenia.

Portugal's final group match will be against Armenia in Porto on Sunday, while Hungary welcome Ireland in what will likely be a clash for second place.

Henderson Scores Three Touchdowns as Patriots Top Jets



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - The Patriots improved to 9-2 and matched their longest winning streak since quarterback great Tom Brady's final season with the team in 2019, when they opened 8-0.

Patriots quarterback Drake Maye completed 25 of 34 passes for 281 yards and a touchdown.

Henderson, who scored two touchdowns last week, continued to make the most of his opportunity with Rhamondre Stevenson sidelined.

He finished with 19 carries for 62 yards and five catches for 31 yards.

"The best couple of runs he had there late in the game, when it's tough sledding ... he's executed," Patriots coach Mike Vrabel said of Henderson. "Whether that's checkdowns or touchdowns. No home run tonight, but I thought he executed."

Jets quarterback Justin Fields capped his team's 14-play opening drive with a five-yard rushing touchdown for a quick 7-0 lead.

But New England answered with a 13-play scoring drive capped by Henderson's seven-yard TD early in the second quarter and Henderson added another seven-yard scoring run to make it 14-7 with 7:54 left in the first half.

Maye hit Henderson with a six-yard touchdown pass to make it 21-7 midway through the third quarter.

Fields connected with John Metchie on a 22-yard scoring pass late in the third, but Andy Borregales booted a pair of field goals in the fourth for New England.

That left the Jets trailing 27-14 with less than three minutes to play, when Fields's short-yardage fourth-down pass intended for Jeremy Ruckert was broken up by Patriots defensive back Dell Pettus.

Fields finished the night with 11 carries for 67 yards and a TD and connected on 15 of 26 passes for 116 yards and a score.

But the Jets saw their two-game winning streak end as they fell to 2-8, last place in the AFC East led by the Patriots.

Laporta Rules Out Messi Return to Barcelona



BARCELONA (Dispatches) - Barcelona all-time great Lionel Messi returning to the Catalan giants is "unrealistic", the club's president Joan Laporta said.

The 38-year-old Argentine superstar made a surprise appearance at Barca's Camp Nou stadium on Sunday night and said he hoped "one day I can return, and not just to say goodbye as a player, as I never got to do".

Eight-time Ballon d'Or winner Messi, Barca's record goalscorer and appearance maker, left for Paris Saint-Germain in 2021 after two decades there because their precarious financial position meant they could not afford to keep him.

"Out of the utmost respect for Messi, the professionals at the club, Barca, and the Barca club members, I believe that now, for me to make speculation that is unrealistic, nor do I think is fair, well, I believe that is not appropriate," Laporta told Catalunya Radio.

The president, who was in charge at the time of Messi's departure, said he did not regret what happened because "Barca is above everything".

Laporta confirmed he would love to hold a match in homage to Messi's career at the rebuilt Camp Nou, once it is fully open.

"Things didn't end the way we would have liked... if, in some way, this tribute can make up for what wasn't done, I think it would be a good thing," explained Laporta.

"It would be right that he has the best tribute (match) in the world, and it would be wonderful to have it here, in front of 105,000 fans," he continued.

Suns Win 5th Straight, Hand Pacers 6th Loss in a Row

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Devin Booker scored 16 of his 33 points in the third quarter, Dillon Brooks had 24 of his 32 in the first half and the host Phoenix Suns routed the struggling Indiana Pacers 133-98 on Thursday to extend their winning streak to five.

Oso Ighodaro had a career-high 17 points and added seven rebounds, and Grayson Allen had 12 points for the Suns, who have won seven of eight and are 6-1 at home.

Allen, who entered Thursday with an NBA-leading 50 made 3-pointers, suffered a right quad contusion when he collided with Pacers center Jay Huff on a drive with nine minutes left in the second quarter and did not return.

Andrew Nembhard had 21 points and eight assists, Pascal Siakam had 19 points and five rebounds and Tony Bradley added 10 points for the Pacers, who have lost six in a row and fell to 1-11.



The injury-plagued Pacers lost another starter when Aaron Nesmith left with left knee soreness after stepping on a teammate's foot with 9:14 left in the third quarter. He was helped off the floor and did not return. He had 10 points.

The Pacers were already playing without Tyrese Haliburton (Achilles), Bennedict Mathurin (toe) and Obi Toppin (foot).

The Pacers have lost their last three games by 31, 24 and 35 points, respectively.

Ighodaro, who saw extended minutes while starting center Mark Williams (right knee management) was out, also had three steals and three blocked shots.

The Suns led 70-52 at halftime and put the game away with a 38-8 run spanning the late third and early fourth quarters.