

Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi and His Turkish Counterpart, Hakan Fidan, Have Discussed Bilateral Relations, as Well as Regional and International Developments

IRAN NEWS

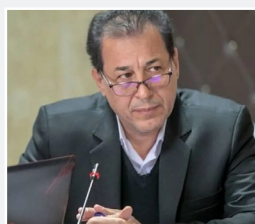
Tehran's Friday Prayer Leader Called on Iran's Diplomatic Apparatus to File an International Complaint Against U.S. President Donald Trump, Following Trump's Claim That He Played a Leading Role in Israel's Recent Attack on Iran

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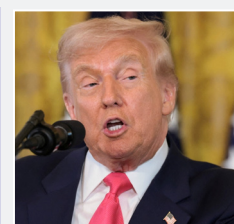


Sanctions Undermine Iran's Anti-Narcotics Efforts, Push Users Toward More Dangerous Drugs

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Draft Resolution at IAEA Board Will Not Affect Iran's Current Safeguards Implementation



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's Permanent Representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has criticized a new draft resolution proposed by the United States and three European countries at the Agency's Board of Governors, stressing that the move will not alter the current status of safeguards implementation in Iran. He warned that the initiative—rooted in what he called expired UN Security Council resolutions—would only deepen complexities and further damage diplomacy.

According to IRNA, Reza Najafi, Iran's ambassador to the IAEA, responded to questions about the Western-sponsored draft resolution by accusing the U.S., Britain, France, and Germany of continuing to misuse international mechanisms to impose "irrational and bullying" demands on the Iranian nation. He stated that the four countries are now attempting to achieve in Vienna what they failed to secure in New York.

Najafi emphasized that forcing the IAEA Director General to report based on "expired and invalid Security Council resolutions" is both illegal and unjustified. "Such pressure will only add to existing complications and deliver yet another blow to diplomacy," he said. He added that despite this new effort, the current implementation of safeguards in Iran—shaped by what he described as U.S. and Israeli "aggression" and the European trio's "complicity"—will remain unchanged.

Tehran Urges Swift Global Action as Sudan Crisis Deepens



TEHRAN (PressTV) - A senior Iranian diplomat has condemned the "crimes and humanitarian crisis" unfolding in the Sudanese city of El Fasher, calling for urgent international action to address the worsening situation in North Darfur.

Iran's Ambassador to the UN in Geneva, Ali Bahraini, delivered the remarks on Friday during the 38th special session on the human rights situation in and around El Fasher amid the ongoing conflict in Sudan.

He voiced alarm over the escalating humanitarian emergency, warning of famine, mass displacement and the impact of foreign interference on the conflict.

"Severe famine, widespread displacement, and the sufferings of civilians have created one of the most severe humanitarian crises in the world, which requires immediate attention from the international community," the ambassador said.

Bahraini criticized the international community for "keeping silent" in the face of the crisis and highlighted concerns about foreign involvement.

"Our special concern is the continued transfer of weapons that contribute to these crimes. Foreign interventions, including the supply of arms and recruitment of mercenaries, fuel the continuation of conflicts and escalation of the humanitarian crisis," he added.

Iran Slams Systemic Double Standards in Nuclear Arena

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's permanent ambassador to the UN has delivered a vociferous rebuke of politicization of nuclear oversight and the international community's failure to address the unprecedented attacks of June on the Islamic Republic's safeguarded nuclear facilities.

Amir Saeid Iravani made the comments on Friday, addressing the 80th Session of the United Nations General Assembly dedicated to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)'s latest report on the country.

The envoy opened his remarks by asserting that the IAEA had to remain "professional, factual, and free from political influence," warning that its credibility depended on strict impartiality.

Nuclear energy, he added, was indispensable to national development, and access to peaceful nuclear technology under Article IV of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) was an "inalienable right" that must not be curtailed under any pretext.

The official noted that safeguards were meant to enable peaceful nuclear activities, not obstruct them, and condemned entrenched double standards that restricted developing nations, while granting political, military, and nuclear cover to the Israeli regime, a non-NPT entity possessing an undeclared arsenal of weapons of mass destruction.

"These practices do not protect non-proliferation," he said. "They erode it, and they fundamentally undermine the agency's technical cooperation mandate."

The ambassador then turned to the unprovoked and illegal Israeli-American strikes on Iran's safeguarded nuclear facilities between June 13 and 25, which amounted to "an unprecedented act of aggression."

According to Iravani, "the Israeli regime, only hours after a politically-motivated resolution in the IAEA Board of Governors, launched massive military strikes" on fully monitored facilities, killing and injuring thousands of Iranians.

On June 22, the United States joined the assault, directly targeting IAEA-supervised sites in clear violation of the United Nations Charter, international law, the IAEA Statute, and UN Security Council Resolution 487, he added.

"This was not merely an attack on Iran," he said. "It was an assault on the authority of the United Nations and on the integrity of the safeguards system itself."

Iravani criticized both the agency's officials and the Security Council for failing to condemn the attacks, despite decades of General Conference resolutions affirming that



nuclear facilities must never be targeted under any circumstances.

Reaffirming the Islamic Republic's long-standing commitment to the NPT, he rejected Western allegations regarding Iran's compliance. He said the United States and the European trio of the UK, France, and Germany (E3) had repeatedly echoed "Israeli regime fabrications" concerning the Islamic Republic's peaceful nuclear energy program, while ignoring Tel Aviv's own nuclear arsenal and refusal to submit to international oversight.

He stressed that, in addition to fully complying with the NPT and its safeguards obligations, Iran has never violated the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), a 2015 nuclear agreement between the Islamic Republic and world powers, including the United States and the E3.

Citing the IAEA's own reports, he said Tehran's temporary suspension of cooperation with the agency had stemmed solely from the military strikes. He called for a new international framework to protect nuclear facilities and personnel from armed attacks, warning that the credibility of the entire global safeguards system depended on such protections.

Iravani, meanwhile, reminded that the Islamic Republic and the IAEA had achieved progress through a September 9 memorandum of understanding signed in Cairo, which established procedures to resume cooperation under post-attack conditions. But, he said, this progress was jeopardized by renewed hostility from the US and Europe, including the E3's attempt to trigger so-called "snapback" sanctions against the country. Tehran considers the recourse to "snapback" to be legally void after legal expiration on October 18 of Resolution 2231 that had endorsed the JCPOA.

The envoy's remarks came as the IAEA prepares to present a new report that seeks to estimate Iran's enriched-uranium stockpile using pre-attack data, while avoiding any judgment on the Israeli-US strikes or assassinations of Iranian nuclear scientists during the June aggression.

The report also fails to address the agency's own role in enabling the Israeli-American assault through its earlier Board of Governors' resolution, and makes no mention of the E3's unlawful attempt to invoke the "snapback" mechanism.

Iravani closed his address by rebuffing continued attempts at threats and coercion against the Islamic Republic, underscoring, "We respond only to respect, legality, and equality."

IAEA's New Report Focuses on Iran's Uranium Stockpile

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi has released a new report on Iran's nuclear program ahead of the Board of Governors meeting in Vienna, focusing on uranium stockpile estimates while avoiding comment on recent illegal attacks against Iranian nuclear facilities.

Press TV has obtained the unpublished report, dated November 12, which will be presented at the quarterly Board of Governors meeting beginning next week in Vienna.

It will be the first such session since the formal phase-out of the JCPOA, meaning Iran's nuclear file will now be addressed solely under the NPT Safeguards Agreement rather than the defunct 2015 accord.

The report covers the period since the director general's last assessment in early September and revisits the fallout from the June aggression on Iranian nuclear facilities by Israel and the United States.

The aggression led Tehran halt all cooperation with the agency, citing "politically motivated" resolutions and the IAEA's refusal to condemn terrorist attacks on its nuclear infrastructure and personnel.

Grossi has maintained his earlier stance; on September 8 he declined to denounce the assassinations of Iranian nuclear scientists during the June attacks, stating, "I believe this is not something that, as director general of the IAEA, falls within my purview."

The new report similarly avoids comment on the June 13 Israeli aggression or the subsequent US bombing of Iranian nuclear sites—actions Tehran maintains violated the UN Charter, international law, and the NPT.

The director general instead focuses on verification issues that have arisen since Iran lawfully suspended cooperation in late June due to internal legislation and security concerns.

The report includes the agency's estimate of Iran's enriched-uranium stockpile as of June 13, shortly before cooperation was suspended. The IAEA assesses the total to be 9874.9 kg, of which 9040.5 kg is in the form of UF₆.

This includes "2391.1 kg of uranium enriched up to 2% U-235; 6024.4 kg of uranium enriched up to 5% U-235; 184.1 kg of uranium enriched up to 20% U-235; and 440.9 kg of uranium enriched up to 60% U-235."

The report notes that the figure represents an estimate based on "information previously provided by Iran, previous Agency verification activities and estimates based on the past operating records of the relevant declared facilities."

Iran says its nuclear materials remain under rubble from recent attacks. "What relates to our



nuclear materials is all under the debris caused by attacks on the bombed facilities," Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said on September 11.

"Whether these materials are accessible or not, and the status of some of them, is currently being evaluated by the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran," he added.

Despite the disruptions caused by the June attacks, the new IAEA report stresses that safeguard obligations remain unchanged.

It states: "The Director General has made clear to Iran that it is indispensable and urgent to implement safeguards activities in Iran in accordance with the NPT Safeguards Agreement, which remains in force, and that its implementation cannot be suspended under any circumstances."

At the same time, the agency acknowledges that "the military attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities have created a situation which requires Iran and the Agency to cooperate constructively to implement safeguards."

According to the report, "the Cairo agreement provides a common understanding of the procedures for Agency inspections, notifications and safeguards implementation in Iran under the prevailing circumstances. While taking into consideration Iran's concerns, these procedures remain in line with the relevant provisions of the NPT Safeguards Agreement."

The report notes that Iran "has begun to facilitate" accounting reports and Design Information Questionnaire (DIQ) updates for facilities unaffected by the US-Israeli attacks. It also urges reports on affected sites.

Grossi claimed his readiness "to work with Iran without delay in order to achieve non-mutually exclusive objectives: full compliance with the NPT Safeguards Agreement and with the recently adopted Iranian domestic legislation."

On June 25—the day after Iran's retaliatory operations halted the 12-day aggression — the country's parliament unanimously passed legislation suspending all cooperation.

The move was rooted in concerns that IAEA resolutions, particularly the June 12 resolution by the Board of Governors, paved the way for the Israeli aggression.

Talks with the IAEA resumed in September, but Iran warned that the decision by Britain, France, and Germany to trigger the UN "snapback" mechanism after the Cairo agreement would create "new conditions" rendering that framework void.

The agency has issued no criticism of the E3 decision, even as it continues to insist that Iran uphold its safeguards obligations under all circumstances.

Iran Rejects Canada's Baseless Claims of Foiling Lethal Plots by Tehran



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has strongly dismissed allegations of sabotage operations raised by the head of Canada's domestic Security Agency against the Islamic Republic, calling the claims baseless and fabricated.

On Thursday, Dan Rogers, director of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, claimed that the agency this year foiled potentially lethal threats by Iran directed against people whom Tehran sees as enemies.

He claimed that the agency countered actions by Iranian intelligence services and what he called their proxies, who allegedly targeted individuals they perceived as threats to Iran.

Rogers also alleged that his agents had blocked attempts by Russia to illegally acquire Canadian goods and technologies. He also levelled some accusations against China and India for espionage and transnational repression efforts against Canada.

Zahra Ershadi, Iran's deputy permanent representative to the United Nations, said in a statement on Friday that the allegations were aimed at shifting attention away from Israel's ongoing actions in West Asia and Canada's role in supporting them.

"The ridiculous accusations of the Canadian Security Organization against Iran have no purpose other than to divert attention from the ongoing violations and crimes committed by the Zionist regime in the West Asia region and Canada's support for it," she said.

Ershadi also criticized the obstruction of consular services for Iranians living in Canada, urging the Canadian government to reverse "irresponsible and unjustified" policies toward Tehran.

Signals Progress on Lifting Internet Filtering



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Deputy Chief of Staff to the President, Mohammad-Jafar Qaempanah, says the administration of President Masoud Pezeshkian is committed to dialogue and cooperation but will not sacrifice public interests for political consensus. He also signaled that "good news" on lifting internet filtering is forthcoming, while stressing that the government will not retreat from the demands of the majority of Iranians.

The remarks were published Saturday, August 24, in an interview with the state-run Iran newspaper, where Qaempanah outlined the government's approach to governance, energy reform, economic restructuring, and digital policy.

Qaempanah said the Pezeshkian administration's vision of national consensus should not be confused with political inaction.

"Consensus, in the view of the 14th government, is not 'silence in the face of public demands,'" he said. "Rather, it is a way to ensure that major decisions — from lifting platform filters to restructuring the budget — are implemented with minimal friction and maximum durability."



Pezeshkian Congratulates Iraqi PM on Successful Elections

TEHRAN (IRNA) - President Masoud Pezeshkian has hailed Iraq’s recent parliamentary elections, describing the peaceful and dignified process as a valuable achievement that strengthens the dignity and greatness of the Iraqi nation. Pezeshkian made the remarks during a phone conversation with Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani on Friday. Pezeshkian expressed hope that in the coming period, bilateral relations and cooperation between Tehran and Baghdad would expand and deepen further.

Iran Says Russian Confidence Secured for Rasht–Astara Railway Project



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Minister of Roads and Urban Development says progress on the long-delayed Rasht–Astara railway has accelerated, with land acquisition advancing rapidly and Russia expressing renewed confidence in the project. The two sides are expected to finalize and sign the executive contract within the next two weeks.

Farzaneh Sadegh, Minister of Roads and Urban Development, told Tasnim News Agency that one of the most critical components of the project—land acquisition—has begun in earnest and is moving forward “at a good pace.”

“Our full effort is to complete the land acquisition by the end of the Iranian year 1404,” she said, noting that this progress has helped ease long-standing concerns on the Russian side.

“Russia had repeatedly stated over the years that it would only enter the project once Iran had completed the land acquisition. Their position was that without this step, the financing could not be finalized,” Sadegh explained. “Fortunately, this trust has now been established, and as you saw, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexei Overchuk acknowledged this point during his recent visit to Iran.”

The minister also highlighted another key aspect of the project: implementing tax and customs exemptions mandated by law. She said that while the physical work and land procurement continue, legal and regulatory requirements are being processed in coordination with the ministry’s legal department. These steps, she added, must be resolved before the agreements and exemptions outlined in the project accord can be fully implemented.

Sadegh noted that the executive contract for the Rasht–Astara railway is now in its final stages. The project, valued at €1.6 billion, requires Iran to provide 15 percent of the funding. “We have repeatedly emphasized that Iran cannot provide more than this, and Russia has accepted it,” she said. “The operational framework and technical volumes of the work must now be finalized.”

Global Recognition of the Cyrus Cylinder Marked as a Foundational Document of Human Coexistence, Unity



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The Secretary-General of Iran’s National Commission for UNESCO has described the newly approved global recognition of the Cyrus Cylinder as a fundamental document in the history of human rights, respect for cultural diversity, interfaith harmony, and peaceful coexistence among nations. He emphasized that this ancient text can also serve as “a voice of unity” within Iran.

Speaking to IRNA, Hassan Fartousi said that the significance of the Cyrus Cylinder’s inscription lies not only in its antiquity but also in the value of the principles it embodies—principles that remain relevant in today’s world. “Reviving the teachings of the Cyrus Cylinder is vital precisely because of the ideas and elements contained within it,” he noted. “Concepts such as justice, equality, human dignity, respect for various faiths, cultural diversity, and peace-seeking are timeless human aspirations. By reintroducing the Cyrus Cylinder, we can offer these foundational principles to the modern world.”

Fartousi highlighted that throughout history, Iranians have continuously sought peace and upheld human rights. “The pursuit of justice and the expansion of respect for human dignity have always been part of Iran’s cultural and civilizational heritage,” he said. He added that even during the acceptance of Islam, Iranians recognized in Islamic teachings the same values of respect and equality they cherished.

Sanctions Undermine Iran’s Anti-Narcotics Efforts, Push Users Toward More Dangerous Drugs

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iranian officials warn that international sanctions have severely weakened the country’s decades-long fight against narcotics trafficking, creating operational obstacles, raising costs, and unintentionally driving drug users toward cheaper and far more dangerous substances.

Mohammad Nerimani, Director-General of International Relations at Iran’s Drug Control Headquarters, said in an interview with ILNA that sanctions have had “broad, direct and indirect impacts” on every aspect of Iran’s anti-narcotics operations. These impacts, he noted, are particularly visible in two major areas: supply reduction and harm reduction.

According to Nerimani, sanctions have hindered Iran’s ability to access essential equipment and modern technology used in border control, the detection of drug laboratories, cargo inspection, and secure communications. “Our counter-narcotics forces, border guards, and police face serious limitations,” he said, noting that Iran is a frontline country confronting trafficking routes that ultimately supply European markets. He added that around 100 tons of heroin are trafficked annually toward Western countries via the so-called Balkan route.

Despite Iran’s strategic role, Nerimani emphasized that the country has paid a heavy price in this fight: approximately 4,000 personnel killed and 12,000 injured over the years. “Instead of receiving support, recognition, and modern equipment, Western countries have used sanctions as an excuse to evade their responsibilities in addressing this global problem,” he said.

Sanctions have also sharply increased operational costs. Even when Iran is able to procure equipment through indirect channels, financial restrictions cause significant delays and price hikes. Nerimani noted that customs equipment, in particular, suffers from maintenance issues due to restrictions on importing spare parts, reducing the operational capacity of border and customs forces.



Beyond security concerns, the sanctions’ economic fallout has directly affected vulnerable populations. Nerimani warned that financial hardship and declining purchasing power are pushing drug users toward cheaper but far more lethal substances. “This is a destructive cycle that increases fatalities among users and poses broader public health and social security threats,” he said. The situation, he stressed, illustrates how unilateral sanctions can disproportionately harm the most vulnerable sectors of society.

Nerimani also highlighted the damaging effect of sanctions on international cooperation. Iran and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) have collaborated under a country partnership program since 1999, focusing on border management, supply reduction, and demand-reduction initiatives. While UNODC has historically played a key role in mobilizing technical and equipment support for Iran, he said Western countries have drastically reduced their financial contributions in recent years. Assistance that once amounted to tens of millions of dollars has now dwindled to minimal levels, particularly in border-management programs.

This decline in support comes despite UNODC reports showing Iran accounts for 76% of global opium seizures, 67% of morphine seizures, and about 20% of total heroin seizures worldwide.

Nerimani also addressed cooperation with Afghanistan following the Taliban’s return to power, noting the shared history, cultural ties, and the significant Afghan population living in Iran. He emphasized that changes in opium cultivation and production in Afghanistan directly affect trafficking into and through Iran. Given Iran’s extensive experience in both interdiction and harm reduction, he said the country is prepared to share its expertise to support Afghanistan—an approach also encouraged by UNODC and other UN agencies.

Iran Reports 32% Growth in Agricultural Exports

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Minister of Agriculture, Gholamreza Nouri, says the country has recorded a 32 percent rise in agricultural exports over the past year, even as foreign currency allocations for the sector were reduced by two-thirds. The minister credits strategic planning, timely provision of essential inputs, and a renewed emphasis on justice-oriented policymaking for stabilizing production and boosting export performance.

During a visit to the cities of Ahar and Heris, Nouri met with local officials and representatives of agricultural cooperatives, where he praised the region’s cultural heritage and the historical significance of Arasbaran. Referring to notable figures such as Sattar Khan, Sheikh Shahab al-Din Ahari, Ayatollah Borq’a’i, and Ayatollah Najafi Ahari, he described the area as one of Iran’s cultural and civilizational hubs. “Many educators, judges, and judicial staff in northwestern Iran come from this region and have left valuable contributions,” he said.

Nouri emphasized that during his visits to local production units and development projects, he observed strong engagement from committed investors actively involved in various links of the agricultural value chain. “Each of these investors plays an essential role in strengthening the sector,” he noted.

Outlining the current priorities of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nouri said its main mission is to devise sound policies that guide the agricultural sector based on the country’s available capacities and production resources. “Producers must remain financially viable for production to occur—production that is both economically feasible and profitable, not an activity that wastes the producer’s time and capital,” he said.

According to Nouri, all agricultural policies under Iran’s 14th administration follow a justice-driven approach aligned with the guidelines of the Supreme Leader and the President. These policies apply to all levels of production, from small rural units to large integrated chains.

Discussing the supply of animal feed, Nouri reported that feed distribution efficiency increased by 22 percent last year, while total feed consumption rose by 20 percent. He added that more than four million tons of animal feed are currently positioned at the country’s entry points—an achievement he said was made possible by precise planning and timely procurement by the ministry.

Despite having only one-third of last year’s foreign currency budget, Nouri said the ministry has ensured the uninterrupted supply and rapid distribution of feed to livestock and poultry farms. “This timely provision has prevented disruptions and maintained production stability,” he stated.



Turning to market regulation policies, Nouri said pricing decisions were made with the primary goal of protecting producers. For the first time, he noted, the Ministry of Agriculture’s proposed prices were approved by the National Market Regulation Headquarters without modification. “Producers cannot shoulder the burden of government subsidies. Their activity must be economically sustainable,” he said. Among the ministry’s achievements, he cited defending cost-based pricing for poultry and eggs, ensuring fair wheat pricing, and expediting

payments to farmers.

Nouri also highlighted significant gains in agricultural trade. Over the past year, Iranian agricultural exports grew by 32 percent, improving the sector’s trade balance from minus 11 billion to minus 8 billion dollars. He pointed to the recent reception of Iranian apples in the Philippines—celebrated with a public street event—as an example of strengthened international market presence. “These advances reflect active diplomacy and precise policies aimed at improving quality and expanding export opportunities for farmers and orchardists,” he said.

Addressing concerns about product safety, Nouri emphasized that Iran ranks among the world’s healthiest producers in terms of fertilizer and pesticide use. He said Iranian agricultural products have successfully passed some of the strictest technical standards in Europe and Russia. Only one pistachio shipment recently encountered technical issues, which were resolved swiftly through coordination with the European Union.

He added that 23 pesticide varieties have been removed from domestic use, and the government is planning to import higher-quality pesticides from advanced countries to enhance crop health and safety.

Regarding technical oversight, Nouri stressed that the goal of deploying inspectors is to boost knowledge and technical performance at production facilities—not to impose additional costs. “Their presence must generate technical value-added,” he said. He further noted that no decisions are made by the ministry without the participation of agricultural sector associations and that all policies aim to ensure profitability, preserve food independence, and strengthen agriculture as a strategic sector.

In closing, Nouri announced that the government has recently launched and expanded “Rural Markets,” a new distribution initiative. “In recent months, 350 rural market units have opened, and we plan to increase this number to 3,000,” he said. The network will be managed by producer cooperatives to ensure that the highest share of profits returns to farmers.

Iran Reaches Final Agreement With Iraq to Establish Joint Economic Zone



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iran says it has reached a final agreement with Iraq to establish a joint economic zone along their shared border, marking a significant step toward deepening bilateral trade and industrial cooperation. The announcement comes as Tehran intensifies efforts to expand economic ties with neighboring countries and advance major transportation and investment projects.

Masoumeh Aghapour, the President’s Advisor for Economic Cooperation, told ILNA that the new joint zone will be created with shared investment from both countries and will serve as a hub for cross-border production and commercial activity. “The agreement has been finalized, and the joint economic zone on the Iran–Iraq border will be established soon,” she said. “The plan is to carry out joint economic projects and collaborative production with Iraq inside this zone.”

The initiative aligns with Iran’s broader policy of strengthening regional economic partnerships, particularly with countries sharing land borders. Iraq is one of Iran’s largest trading partners, with annual bilateral trade often exceeding \$10 billion depending on market conditions. Establishing a joint economic zone is expected to streamline trade procedures, encourage investment, and facilitate the creation of joint industrial ventures—goals that Tehran has been pursuing for years through various free-trade and special economic zone proposals.

Aghapour also provided updates on another major strategic project: completing the International North–South Transport Corridor (INSTC), a multimodal route linking Russia and Northern Europe to the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean via Iran. One of the last missing links in this corridor is the Rasht–Astara railway, a 162-kilometer stretch in northern Iran that would enable uninterrupted rail transport from the Caspian Sea to the Persian Gulf.

Transferring Persian Gulf Water to Tehran Is Not Economically Viable



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Minister of Energy has reiterated that transferring desalinated water from the Persian Gulf to the capital city of Tehran would be extremely costly and economically unjustifiable, though he emphasized that all options must be considered when human life and public safety are at stake.

In an interview with IRNA, Minister Abbas Ali-Abadi underscored the severity of Tehran’s water situation, noting that the capital’s water supply challenges require examining every possible method—provided it meets basic cost-effectiveness standards. “The water issue in Tehran is so critical that we must keep all viable options on the table,” he said. “But sometimes we use water for producing certain agricultural goods that are completely uneconomical. It would be better not to grow or export those products at all, because the income generated is far lower than the cost of water used.”

Ali-Abadi was responding to recent public debate triggered by differing government statements. The Ministry of Energy had previously announced that transporting desalinated Persian Gulf water to Tehran was economically infeasible. However, a presidential representative involved in coordinating maritime development policies recently argued that such a project may be the only reliable long-term water source for the capital.

Addressing the apparent contradiction, Ali-Abadi clarified that producing large-scale desalinated water in southern Iran remains a major strategic objective. Massive desalination plants are currently under construction in Chabahar, Bandar Abbas, and Khuzestan Province. These projects, he said, aim to raise economic efficiency to a level that attracts private-sector investment.

Nine Killed, 29 Injured in Blast at Police Station in India's Kashmir

SRINAGAR (Dispatches) - At least nine people were killed and 29 injured when a pile of confiscated explosives blew up at a police station in the Indian portion of Kashmir late on Friday, police sources said, days after a car blast in New Delhi killed eight people.

Most of the dead were policemen, including forensic officials who were examining the explosives, said the sources, who did not wish to be named. Some of the injured are in critical condition, they said.

"The identification of the bodies is underway, as some have been completely burnt," one of the sources said. "The intensity of the blast was such that some body parts were recovered from nearby houses, around 100-200 metres away from the police station."



Russia Hammers Kyiv Overnight With Deadly Missile and Drone Barrage



MOSCOW (Dispatches) - A massive barrage of Russian drones and missiles killed at least six people in Kyiv, Ukrainian officials said Friday, with Mayor Vitaly Klitschko saying that almost every district of the capital had been hit. Dozens of people were wounded in the attacks, including a child and a pregnant woman, according to Ukrainian authorities.

Almost every district in Kyiv was hit by 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.

At least six people were killed and dozens more wounded in overnight strikes across the country, Ukrainian officials said.

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

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.

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

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

Bus Crashes Into Stockholm Stop, Multiple Dead and Injured



STOCKHOLM (Dispatches) - Several people were killed and injured when a bus hit a bus stop in central Stockholm yesterday, Swedish police said, adding that they had no information pointing to it being an attack.

There were six casualties in the incident, a spokesperson for Stockholm's rescue services said, without giving the numbers of those killed or those injured. The spokesperson said there were no passengers on the bus at the time. "It is being investigated as involuntary manslaughter. The bus driver has been arrested but that is routine in such an incident," a police spokesperson said, adding they had no information pointing to it being an attack.

Police said they would not comment on the number, gender or ages of those killed or injured.

Police, rescue services and ambulances were working at the scene, police said.

A picture on daily Aftonbladet's website showed emergency services at the site, surrounding a blue double-decker bus, with debris scattered around the vehicle.

Trump Says U.S. Will Resume Nuclear Weapons Testing Like Other Countries

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The United States will test nuclear weapons like other countries do, President Donald Trump said, but declined to say if the plans included exploding a nuclear warhead.

"I don't want to tell you about that, but we will do nuclear testing like other countries," Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One as he travelled to Florida for the weekend.

Trump last month ordered the US military to immediately restart the process for testing nuclear weapons after 33 years, making the surprise announcement on Truth Social while aboard his Marine One helicopter flying to meet Chinese President Xi Jinping for a trade-negotiating session in Busan, South Korea.

Trump also said he thought Thailand and Cambodia were "going to be fine" after holding phone calls with the leaders of the two nations to help mediate the most recent flare-up in the conflict between them.

Thailand this week suspended a US-brokered ceasefire deal and demanded an apology over allegations that Cambodia had laid fresh landmines, which Cambodia denies.

Long-running tensions over a disputed border between the two South-east Asian nations erupted into five days of fighting in July, when at least 48 people were killed and an estimated 300,000 temporarily displaced, before Trump and Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim brokered the ceasefire.

"I spoke to the prime ministers of both countries and they're doing great. I think they're going to be fine," Trump told reporters on Friday evening.

In an interview with British network GB News yesterday, he referred to world conflicts and said: "I think I settled one today", without providing further details.

Trump also engaged with Malaysia on Friday, a White House official said.

Meanwhile Trump said he would likely sue the BBC next week for as much as US\$5 billion after the British broadcaster admitted it wrongly edited a video of a speech he gave but insisted there was no legal basis for his claim.

The British Broadcasting Corporation has been plunged into its biggest crisis in decades after two senior leaders resigned following accusations of bias, including over the editing of Trump's speech on January 6, 2021, when his supporters stormed the Capitol.

Trump's lawyers had initially set a deadline yesterday for the BBC to retract its documentary or face a lawsuit for "no less" than US\$1 billion. They also demanded an apology and compensation for what they called "overwhelming reputational and



In an interview with British right-leaning TV channel GB News, Trump said the edit was "impossible to believe" and compared it to election interference.

"I made a beautiful statement, and they made it into a not beautiful statement," he said. "Fake news was a great term, except it's not strong enough. This is beyond fake, this is corrupt."

Trump said the BBC's apology was not enough.

"When you say it's unintentional, I guess if it's unintentional, you don't apologise," he said. "They clipped together two parts of the speech that were nearly an hour apart. It's incredible to depict the idea that I had given this aggressive speech which led to riots. One was making me into a bad guy, and the other was a very calming statement."

BBC Chair Samir Shah sent a personal apology on Thursday to the White House and told lawmakers the edit was "an error of judgment." The following day, British culture minister Lisa Nandy said the apology was "right and necessary."

The broadcaster said it had no plans to rebroadcast the documentary and was investigating fresh allegations about editing practices that included the speech on another programme, Newsnight.

Ukrainian Attack Halts Oil Exports From Russia's Novo



MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia's Black Sea port of Novorossiysk temporarily suspended oil exports - equivalent to 2.2 million barrels per day, or 2% of global supply - on Friday, according to industry sources, after a Ukrainian missile and drone attack.

The attack was one of the biggest on Russian oil-exporting infrastructure in recent months. It follows a ramping-up of Ukrainian strikes on Russian oil refineries since August, part of an attempt by Kyiv to degrade Moscow's ability to finance its war.

Global oil prices rallied by more than 2% on supply fears after the attack.

Long-range Ukrainian air and sea drone strikes have repeatedly disrupted Russian oil infrastructure this year, targeting Baltic and Black Sea ports, a trunk pipeline system, and a number of oil refineries.

Ukraine's General Staff said its forces had fired Neptune cruise missiles and used various types of strike drones in the attack on Novorossiysk "as part of efforts to reduce the military and economic potential of the Russian aggressor".

Ukraine said it separately struck an oil refinery in Russia's Saratov region and a fuel storage facility in nearby Engels overnight.

Russian pipeline oil monopoly Transneft has also been forced to suspend supplies to the port of Novorossiysk, the sources told Reuters. The company declined to comment.

The Caspian Pipeline Consortium, which exports oil from Kazakhstan through the neighbouring Yuzhnaya Ozerovka terminal, suspended oil loadings for a few hours and then resumed them when the air alert was lifted, sources said.

It plans to export 1.45 million barrels per day this month from the Yuzhnaya Ozerovka terminal, around 15 kilometres (9 miles) southwest of Novorossiysk. Debris from the drones fell on the terrain of Russian grain terminal NKHP,

which was working normally, Interfax news agency reported, citing director general Yuri Medvedev.

Russian officials said Friday's attack had also damaged a docked ship, apartment buildings and an oil depot in Novorossiysk, injuring three of the vessel's crew members.

Delo, a transport and logistics group, said drone debris had fallen onto a container terminal in Novorossiysk, but that its operations continued as usual.

British maritime security company Ambrey said a crane sustained damage, and so did several containers. It said a non-sanctioned container ship alongside the terminal suffered some collateral damage, while no crew members were injured as they sheltered in a safe muster point within the vessel.

Russian crude oil shipments via Novorossiysk's Sheskhari terminal totalled 3.22 million tonnes, or 761,000 barrels a day, in October, according to industry sources. For the first 10 months of the year, the figure was 24.716 million tonnes.

The sources told Reuters that a total of 1.794 million tonnes of oil products had been exported through Novorossiysk in October and oil product exports for January-October totalled 16.783 million tonnes.

According to three industry sources, the Ukrainian attack hit two oil berths at Sheskhari. The damage was inflicted on berth 1 and berth 1A, which handle 40,000-deadweight-ton and 140,000-deadweight-ton tankers respectively.

Two of the sources said the Sierra Leone-flagged Arlan oil tanker was also hit during the attack.

"Novorossiysk suffered the most," Veniamin Kondratyev, the governor of the Krasnodar region, where Novorossiysk is located, said on social media.

"Overnight, more than 170 people and 50 pieces of equipment dealt with the aftermath of the attack, quickly extinguishing fires and assisting residents," he said.

Three injured crew members of the damaged boat were being treated in hospital, Kondratyev said.

Local officials later said that a fire at an oil depot at the Sheskhari terminal, which handles crude oil and oil product exports, had been extinguished.

Coastal structures had also been damaged, they said, without providing details.

The Ukrainian statement said damage was also inflicted on a Russian S-400 air defence system and missile storage facility, causing a detonation and a fire. Reuters could not independently confirm those details.

UN Rights Council Orders Probe of Atrocities in Sudan's El-Fasher

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - The UN Human Rights Council on Friday ordered a probe into alleged atrocities in Sudan's El-Fasher, acting amid stark warnings of crimes against humanity and genocide.

The United Nations' top rights body adopted a resolution ordering the UN's independent fact-finding mission on Sudan to urgently investigate violations in El-Fasher.

The text also called on the investigative team to "identify, where possible" suspected perpetrators in a bid to ensure they are "held accountable".

The decision came at the end of a special session called to address the situation in El-Fasher, amid mounting warnings of crimes against humanity and the risk of genocide.

"Bloodstains on the ground in El-Fasher have been photographed from space," UN rights chief Volker Turk warned as he opened Friday's session.

"The stain on the record of the international community is less visible but no less damaging."

Since breaking out in April 2023, the war between Sudan's army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces has killed tens of thousands of people, displaced nearly 12 million more and triggered one of the world's worst humanitarian crises.



The violence has escalated dramatically in recent weeks, with the RSF seizing control of the key town of El-Fasher in Sudan's western Darfur region after an 18-month siege and reports of atrocities multiplying.

British ambassador Kumar Iyer, whose country requested the special session along Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands and Norway, insisted that "the scale and severity of the crisis in Sudan can no longer be met with silence".

"The violence in El-Fasher bears the hallmarks of a coordinated campaign against civilians by the Rapid Support Forces," he said, pointing to "credible reports of actively targeted killings, systematic, sexual violence, and the deliberate use of starvation".

Before Friday's resolution was adopted, he urged countries to greenlight the text: "without it, accountability will remain out of reach and the cycle of impunity will continue".

The text was adopted by consensus, although several countries, including Sudan, disassociated themselves from the paragraphs broadening the scope of the fact-finding mission's investigation.

Reports have emerged of executions, sexual violence, looting, attacks on aid workers and abductions in and around El-Fasher, where communications remain largely cut off.



Croatia Qualify for 2026 World Cup, Netherlands Close, Germany in Limbo

PARIS (Dispatches) - Croatia booked their ticket to the 2026 World Cup in North America with an unconvincing 3-1 win over the in-form Faroe Islands as the Netherlands all but booked their spot in the finals too.

Germany's qualification hopes still rest on their final Group A match on Monday at home to Slovakia despite a Nick Woltemade brace giving them a laboured 2-0 win at Luxembourg.

After Geza David Turi had given the Faroes a shock lead, strikes from Josko Gvardiol, Petar Musa and Nikola Vlasic in Rijeka handed 2018 World Cup finalists Croatia their ticket to the finals in Canada, Mexico and the United States.

Victory gave Croatia a six point lead over the Czech Republic at the top of Group L with just a single game left to play.

"For Croatia, for the fans!" a jubilant Gvardiol posted on his X account.

But it was a night when the underdogs struck fear into more illustrious opponents, although without managing to strike a telling blow.

The Faroes, who were on a three-match winning run and still harboured faint hopes of qualification, had the audacity to take the lead against opponents who only needed a draw to progress.

Turi picked up the ball just inside the Croatia half and strode forwards unmolested before trying his luck from outside the box and benefiting from a heavy deflection to beat Dominik Livakovic in the Croatia goal on 16 minutes.

The lead lasted only seven minutes before Manchester City defender Gvardiol lashed in an equaliser after

some hesitant Faroes defending.

With the evergreen Luka Modric still pulling the strings in Croatia's midfield at 40 on the occasion of his 193rd cap, the hosts gradually took control.

And 12 minutes into the second half, Musa fired in at the near post to settle Croatian nerves.

With the Faroes' hopes of becoming the smallest ever nation to reach a World Cup fading fast, Vlasic drove the knife in deeper still 20 minutes from time with a cushioned volley to beat goalkeeper Mathias Lahauge, who had strayed into no-man's land.

Memphis Depay's Dutch record-extending 55th international goal helped push the Netherlands to the brink of qualification with a 1-1 draw in Poland.

Jakub Kaminski had given Poland hope of pipping Netherlands to top spot in Group G two minutes before the break in Warsaw, latching onto Robert Lewandowski's through ball to slot past Bart Verbruggen in the Dutch goal.

But two minutes after the restart, Depay struck to maintain the Netherlands' three-point lead at the top of the group, and a massive goal difference advantage of 13 that makes qualification at home to Lithuania on Monday a formality.

In Group A, plucky Luxembourg gave Germany plenty of scares in a goalless first half before Newcastle forward Woltemade bagged a second-half brace to keep Germany top of the pool.

"I know it wasn't a pretty game but we gave our all, pushed hard and got the three points," Woltemade told Germany's RTL network.

Auger-Aliassime Beats Zverev to Reach ATP Finals Semis

TURIN (Dispatches) - Canada's Felix Auger-Aliassime reached the last four of the ATP Finals with a 6-4 7-6(4) round-robin win over two-times winner Alexander Zverev and Jannik Sinner extended his indoor hardcourt unbeaten run by beating American Ben Shelton.

Germany's Zverev and Auger-Aliassime both defeated Shelton and lost to Sinner to set up a winner-takes-all clash for the runners-up spot in the Bjorn Borg Group and the Canadian clinched a place in Saturday's semi-final against world number one Carlos Alcaraz.

"You want to be in the final but I'll have to go through a great player to do that," Auger-Aliassime said.

"I will take my chance if I have it."

Zverev was left to rue his failure to take any of his seven break points against Sinner, and it was a similarly frustrating story against the Canadian.

The German held break points in both sets but again could not make them count, and the Canadian broke Zverev at 5-4 up to take the first set, before going on to win the second set tiebreak.

Auger-Aliassime was put under pressure in the opening set, saving break points at 2-2 and 4-4, while Zverev came back



from 0-40 down only to lose serve and hand the Canadian the set.

Zverev spent much of the second set gesturing to his team, with Auger-Aliassime winning his first two service games to love before both players were guilty of throwing away chances to break.

Auger-Aliassime let slip a 2-0 lead in the tiebreak, but when Zverev stepped up to serve at 4-5, the Canadian came through to earn consecutive minibreaks and send the German home.

Sinner is unbeaten in 29 matches on indoor hardcourt after a 6-3 7-6(3) victory over Shelton in their dead rubber round-robin match.

There was a relaxed atmosphere in the Inalpi Arena as the Italian had already secured top spot in the group and a semi-final against Alex de Minaur.

Shelton was broken in the opening and closing games of the first set, unable to take advantage of a break point at 2-1 down while Sinner was always capable of pulling out an ace at the crucial time, hitting two in that fourth game to hold serve.

Timberwolves Beat Kings for Fourth Straight Win

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Anthony Edwards scored 30 points and the Minnesota Timberwolves finished strong for a 124-110 win over the Sacramento Kings in Minneapolis.

Julius Randle posted a double-double with 26 points and 11 rebounds for Minnesota, which won its fourth game in a row. Donte DiVincenzo finished with 20 points and made 5 of 10 shots from 3-point range, and Naz Reid had a double-double off the bench with 12 points and 12 boards.

Domantas Sabonis scored 34 points and grabbed 11 rebounds to lead Sacramento. Zach LaVine added 25 points on 8-for-17 shooting for the Kings, who lost their fifth straight game.

The Timberwolves outscored the Kings 32-19 in the fourth quarter to secure the victory.

The score was even at 94-all when Minnesota went on a 9-0 run to grab a 103-94 advantage with 8:57 remaining. Jaden McDaniels started the run with a layup before DiVincenzo



knocked down a 3-pointer, Randle made one of two free-throw attempts and DiVincenzo hit another 3-pointer.

Reid made a 3-pointer to put the Timberwolves on top by double digits for good with 6:23 to go.

Minnesota held on to a 92-91 lead at the end of the third quarter.

Jaylen Clark provided the go-ahead basket on a dunk with 1:41 left in the third quarter. Second-year point guard Rob Dillingham assisted on the play.

The score was even at 61-all at the half.

The Timberwolves crept to a 35-30 lead at the end of the first quarter. McDaniels converted a three-point play with a jump shot and a free throw to put the Timberwolves on top by seven points with 25.7 seconds left in the quarter, and Drew Eubanks closed the gap to five when he made a pair of free throws for the Kings with 2.8 seconds remaining.

Top Players and ATP Want Overhaul of Davis Cup



TURIN (Dispatches) - Jannik Sinner and Carlos Alcaraz are among the world's top players calling for the Davis Cup to return to its traditional home-and-away format and be staged over two years, a proposal backed by ATP chairman Andrea Gaudenzi.

The old format of home-and-away ties played over a few days every year was scrapped by the International Tennis Federation (ITF) in 2019, and this year's Final 8 in Bologna begins two days after Sunday's ATP Finals decider in Turin.

Sinner, who is into the ATP Finals last four and was part of the Italy team which won the last two Davis Cups, ruled himself out of selection this year to concentrate on preparations for his Australian Open defence.

"I never unfortunately played the Davis Cup, the real Davis Cup, where it's away, playing in Argentina or in Brazil with the whole stadium, not against you, but for the other team," Sinner said after his win over Ben Shelton on Friday.

"It can happen that Australia plays against U.S. next year in Bologna. You don't have this Davis Cup feeling."

The relentless calendar and lack of a proper off-season is an ongoing debate and the Professional Tennis Players' Association filed a lawsuit against the sport's governing bodies in March, describing the situation as unsustainable.

"I think playing with this schedule, Davis Cup, it's difficult that you have every year from every country the best players in the world," Sinner said.

"What I would like is having Davis Cup throughout two years. You can set up the semi-finals in the beginning of the year and the final at the end of the year."

World number one Alcaraz, who is competing for Spain this year and is also into the last four of the ATP Finals, was asked about the Davis Cup after his win over Lorenzo Musetti on Thursday, following Musetti's withdrawal from the Italy team.

Pakistan Beat Sri Lanka in Second ODI as Tour Continues Despite Bombing



RAWALPENDI (Dispatches) - Pakistan beat Sri Lanka by eight wickets in the second one-day international in Rawalpindi to seal the three-game series 2-0 amid the backdrop of security concerns and tension in the tourists' camp following a suicide bombing earlier this week.

Sri Lanka cricketers had requested to return home from their Pakistan tour on Wednesday for safety reasons after a suicide bombing in Islamabad, which is close to Rawalpindi, but their board issued a stern directive to stay put or face consequences.

Pakistan then deployed army and paramilitary forces to protect Sri Lanka's cricket team, with Pakistan's Army Chief Asim Munir assuring Sri Lankan Defence Minister Pramitha Bandara Tennakoon of the team's safety.

Chasing 289 for victory, Pakistan's Babar Azam led the charge with a patient century -- his 20th ODI ton and his first in 84 international innings -- as the hosts overhauled Sri Lanka's total with 10 balls to spare.

After being put into bat, Sri Lanka started brightly as the openers put up a 51-run stand before Pathum Nissanka was run out attempting a risky third run.

The top order showed promise but could not capitalise, with Sadeera Samarawickrama (42) falling short of a half-century when he was bowled by Haris Rauf.

But Janith Liyanage (54) and Kamindu Mendis (44) provided the innings' backbone with a crucial 73-run stand while Wanindu Hasaranga was unbeaten on 37. Rauf and Abrar Ahmed shared the bowling honours for Pakistan, each claiming three wickets.