

Iranian Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Jordan Discussed Bilateral Relations, as Well as Regional and International Development, Including Upcoming IAEA Board of Governors (BOG) Meeting, in a Telephone Conversation on Tuesday

IRAN NEWS

Chinese Ambassador to Tehran Cong Peiwu Says China Is Determined to Advance Its Comprehensive Strategic Relations With Iran Over the Long Term and Contribute to Building Justice-Based Structures in the International System

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2 DOMESTIC



Iran, France Explore Expanded Cooperation in Non-Sanctioned Sectors

> SEE PAGE 2

3 INTERNATIONAL

Trumps Defends MBS Over Khashoggi Murder, Strikes F-35 Jet, Nuclear Deals



> SEE PAGE 3

Iran Warns UN Adoption of U.S. Resolution on Gaza Legitimizes Occupation



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iran has criticized a US-drafted resolution adopted by the UN Security Council that imposes a foreign guardianship mechanism on the Gaza Strip, warning it undermines the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people.

In a statement issued Tuesday, the Foreign Ministry said the resolution's drafters "consciously ignored" the central role of the United Nations and previous UN resolutions concerning Palestine.

Resolution 2803, passed on Monday, endorses the establishment of an "International Stabilization Force (ISF)" in Gaza under a 20-point plan devised by US President Donald Trump, who says the plan is aimed at ending the Israeli regime's war of genocide on Gaza that began in October 2023.

The ministry expressed "serious concern" about the resolution, reiterating Iran's support for any regional or international initiative aimed at ending the Israeli genocide and crimes in Gaza, facilitating humanitarian aid, and ensuring the complete withdrawal of occupying forces.

According to the statement, parts of the resolution effectively impose a "guardianship system" on Gaza, stripping "the Palestinian people of their fundamental rights, especially the right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with al-Quds as its capital."

Western Countries Submit Draft Anti-Iran Resolution to IAEA Board



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - The United States and the European trio—France, the United Kingdom, and Germany—have submitted a draft resolution to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors, demanding that Iran provide a full report on its enriched uranium stockpiles.

According to Reuters, the draft calls for immediate access to Iran's nuclear sites and a comprehensive report on its enriched uranium. While Western diplomats have attempted to frame the draft as technical, analysts note that it contains language perceived as threatening and reproachful, criticizing Iran's cooperation with the IAEA. The resolution also urges Iran to fully implement the Additional Protocol, which allows the IAEA to conduct extensive, unannounced inspections at undeclared sites—a measure experts say exceeds the 2015 nuclear deal's requirements and infringes on Iran's national sovereignty.

The draft resolution comes ahead of this week's IAEA Board meeting in Vienna, where members are set to review Iran's nuclear program. Western powers are seeking to pressure Tehran by emphasizing its uranium stockpiles and nuclear facilities, despite repeated Iranian assertions that its program is entirely peaceful.

SCO PMs Reject West's Anti-Iran Stance, Declare UNSC Resolution 2231 Expired

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - The prime ministers of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member states have concluded their 24th meeting in Moscow with a joint statement rejecting Western actions against Iran under the pretext of concerns over its nuclear program.

The closing statement by member states on Tuesday opposed the West's unilateral coercive measures, including economic sanctions, that violate the UN Charter and international law.

Leaders warned that such measures obstruct global cooperation and hinder the achievement of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

Delegations also highlighted the importance of preserving the spirit of inclusivity and consensus that underpinned the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2231, noting that under operative paragraph 8, its provisions have lost validity.

The United States and its European allies have imposed numerous sanctions on Iran over its nuclear program, claiming that the country seeks nuclear weapons.

Iran has repeatedly denied the allegation, citing regular IAEA inspections over decades that proved the peaceful nature of its nuclear activities, as well as Islamic teachings banning the development of weapons of mass destruction.

The parties signed a 2015 deal, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), that lifted sanctions in exchange for confidence-building curbs on Iran's nuclear activities.

At the close of the summit, SCO prime ministers signed a comprehensive cooperation document covering economic development, transportation, and social support, underscoring the organization's drive to deepen integration among member states.

Earlier on Tuesday and addressing the event, first Vice President of Iran, speaking called for strengthening economic integration within the organization. He emphasized Iran's commitment to playing an active and constructive role in regional cooperation.

Mohammad Reza Aref described the SCO Council of Prime Ministers meeting as an opportunity to review the organization's economic achievements and discuss upgrading its activities amid rapid global change. He noted that the world is experiencing major political, economic, and technological shifts, leading to a new international order shaped by emerging economies, technological transformation, and increased regional cooperation. He argued that unilateralism no longer aligns with today's realities.

Aref thanked SCO members for condemning what he called military aggression against Iran. He strongly denounced Israeli attacks—carried out with U.S. support—on Iranian nuclear facilities, civilians, academics, and military personnel, labeling them clear violations of international law and crimes against humanity. Despite these pressures, he stated that Iran



remains committed to fulfilling its responsibilities as an active regional and multilateral player.

He reaffirmed Iran's support for genuine multilateralism, respect for the UN Charter, and opposition to the misuse of international institutions. Aref added that global security, development, and justice can only be achieved through equal cooperation among nations and the rejection of sanctions and coercive policies. He also condemned the situation in Gaza, describing the starvation and suffering imposed on civilians as an obvious crime against humanity and continuation of genocide.

Highlighting global challenges—such as energy and food insecurity, climate change, technological threats, and the risks created by dominant financial systems—Aref stressed the need for collective resilience. He called for

deeper economic interdependence and stronger national and regional economic frameworks. According to him, the SCO should become a major engine for regional economic integration, leveraging its vast human resources, natural wealth, strategic geography, and expanding infrastructure.

Aref urged the organization to deepen trade, economic, scientific, and cultural cooperation among members, observers, and dialogue partners. He noted that engaging observer states can help expand shared markets, transfer technology, encourage scientific exchange, and strengthen people-to-people ties. He highlighted the recent SCO summit in Tianjin, where leaders emphasized modernizing economic cooperation mechanisms, improving governmental coordination, and launching various initiatives—including a ten-year development strategy, an energy cooperation roadmap, and statements on artificial intelligence, green industry, and multilateral trade.

Iran, he said, is ready to contribute actively to implementing Tianjin's decisions, strengthen financial mechanisms based on national currencies, develop sustainable transport networks, facilitate trade and travel, foster joint production, and enhance innovation centers for digital economy and AI. He underlined the important role of the private sector and supported expanding the SCO Business Council and Interbank Association.

Aref also emphasized Iran's commitment to developing safe and independent transit corridors to boost regional trade, energy security, and supply chain stability. He described cooperation within the SCO as a long-term strategy for building a strong region through improved transport, energy cooperation, technology development, and financial integration.

He concluded by praising Russia's hosting of the meeting and expressing hope that the outcomes would deepen mutual trust, sustainable development, and regional convergence among SCO members.

The Only Issue Iran Is Willing to Discuss With the U.S. Is the Nuclear File

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Seyed Kamal Kharrazi, head of Iran's Strategic Council on Foreign Relations, said in an interview with CNN that the nuclear issue is the only topic Iran is prepared to negotiate with the United States and other countries. He stressed that Iran will not halt uranium enrichment and considers its ballistic missile program non-negotiable.

Kharrazi stated that any talks with Washington must be based on equality and mutual respect, adding that "to ensure clarity, both sides must agree on a negotiation agenda beforehand." He insisted that the U.S. should take the first step, demonstrating readiness to engage under conditions set by Iran.

He emphasized that Iran's nuclear program is "indigenous," rooted in the expertise of Iranian scientists and engineers, and "cannot be eliminated by force." While rejecting any suspension of enrichment, he said the level of enrichment could be subject to negotiation: "We must continue enriching uranium because we need fuel for our power plants and medical activities."

Kharrazi firmly ruled out discussions on Iran's ballistic missile program, calling it essential for national defense. "We will not negotiate our missile activities with anyone," he said, adding that Iran would continue to strengthen its missile capabilities. He described the program as primarily domestic, though cooperation with other nations on technical equipment is possible.

Addressing U.S.-Iran tensions, Kharrazi said the Trump administration did not believe in diplomacy and "preferred force to achieve its objectives." However, he noted that Iran has



always been open to diplomatic talks if the terms are fair: "If the U.S. adopts a positive approach, it will be reciprocated—provided they refrain from using force. They tried it and now know it is neither acceptable nor effective."

Regarding Iran's nuclear facilities, Kharrazi confirmed that enrichment-related medical activities were ongoing but said the extent of damage from recent attacks on Natanz and Fordow had not yet been fully assessed.

Asked whether Iran would consider altering the Supreme Leader's fatwa prohibiting nuclear weapons, he replied: "The fatwa cannot be changed." Kharrazi also reiterated that Iran is not seeking nuclear weapons and that effective mechanisms could be negotiated to guarantee this while preserving its right to enrichment.

On the possibility of renewed military conflict with the U.S. or Israel, Kharrazi said: "Anything

is possible, but we are prepared."

The interview also touched on the Israeli-Palestinian issue. Kharrazi said Iran's support for resistance groups aims at achieving "a satisfactory outcome" for Palestinians. If Palestinians establish a state and determine their own future, Iran will not object. However, he added that Iran still does not recognize Israel: "Israel is based on occupation. But if Palestinians decide to form their own state, we will not oppose them."

Kharrazi concluded that Iran remains open to nuclear negotiations but will not discuss its missile program or other strategic issues with the United States or Western powers.

Countering Anti-Iran Propaganda a Key Responsibility for Ambassadors



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - President emphasized the crucial role of public diplomacy in strengthening Iran's relations with other nations, highlighting that one of the key responsibilities of Iranian ambassadors is to neutralize false narratives and anti-Iranian propaganda promoted by certain actors.

The remarks were made during a ceremony in Tehran marking the departure of Iran's new ambassadors to Ireland, Norway, and Armenia. The event was attended by Masoud Pezeshkian, who presided over the farewell ceremony on behalf of the government.

The President stressed the importance of proactive and smart diplomacy to enhance Iran's international standing. He noted that Iran maintains extensive cultural, historical, social, and economic ties with Ireland, Norway, and Armenia, and ambassadors should fully leverage these opportunities to deepen cooperation and advance bilateral relations.

Pezeshkian also underscored the need to build sustainable communication infrastructure to facilitate long-term collaboration. He urged ambassadors to promote economic partnerships, joint investments, trade development, and cooperative projects while identifying and addressing obstacles to expanding relations with host countries.

Highlighting public diplomacy, the President noted that fostering cultural commonalities, encouraging people-to-people exchanges, promoting academic, scientific, and tourism cooperation, and showcasing Iran's economic, technological, mining, energy, and tourism potential can significantly strengthen bilateral cooperation. He reiterated that neutralizing anti-Iranian campaigns is a critical part of the ambassadors' responsibilities.

Iran Ranked Among World's Top 11 Space Powers



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran has secured a position among the world's top 10 to 11 countries with independent space capabilities, according to the head of the Iranian Space Agency, who said the nation is targeting an even higher rank among global space powers.

Hassan Salarieh, Deputy Minister and President of the Iranian Space Agency, outlined Iran's major space achievements between 2023 and 2025 (1402-1404 in the Iranian calendar) and announced the launch of the first phase of the Chahabhar Spaceport.

He stated that the spaceport's first test launch is scheduled to take place later this year. According to Salarieh, construction and installation of the site's main infrastructure are nearing completion, with newly released images showing significant progress.

Salarieh also presented a performance report on Iran's space exploration and bio-space programs — sectors that play an increasingly important role in the global space economy. Iran began its initial space launch experiments in the late 2000s, and in 2023 stabilized the performance of its solid-fuel launch vehicles with the successful deployment of the "Soraya" satellite. That same year, the "Qased" and "Qaem-100" launch vehicles also achieved successful missions.

He highlighted the "stabilization of Simorgh's performance" as one of Iran's major recent milestones, a mission that successfully placed three satellites into orbit.



Iran and UAE Strengthen Bilateral Cooperation in Aviation

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - With the official visit of the head of Iran's Civil Aviation Organization to the United Arab Emirates, expanding air transport cooperation between the two countries has been placed on the agenda. According to the Civil Aviation Organization of Iran, Hossein Pourfarzaneh, Deputy Minister of Roads and Urban Development and head of the Civil Aviation Organization, arrived in the UAE along with his accompanying delegation at the official invitation of Saif Mohammed Al Suwaidi, Director General of the UAE General Civil Aviation Authority. During this visit, both sides will hold joint meetings with the participation of senior officials from the civil aviation authorities of Iran and the UAE to discuss plans aimed at strengthening bilateral cooperation in the aviation sector.

Marand-Cheshmeh Soraya Railway to Link China and Europe



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's Minister of Roads and Urban Development announced that the strategic Marand-Cheshmeh Soraya railway, now under accelerated construction, will complete the southern rail branch of the Silk Road by connecting China to Europe through Iran. Minister Farzaneh Sadegh, during her visit to China, delivered remarks at the Second International China-Europe Rail Connectivity Summit in Xi'an, outlining several of Iran's plans for deepening cooperation with regional partners. Expressing satisfaction with participating in the event hosted by the People's Republic of China, Sadegh said she was confident that the exchange of views at the summit would help transform rail transit from Asia to Europe via various corridors. She emphasized that rail transport is a core pillar of sustainable development and a key driver of regional integration. Efficient rail systems, she noted, help reduce physical bottlenecks, eliminate non-physical barriers, and simplify procedures across borders. Sadegh stressed that expanding transport infrastructure in Iran to support east-west transit aligns closely with the goals of the Belt and Road Initiative and remains a firm policy priority for the Iranian government and the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development. She added that Iran continues to pursue the development of infrastructure and the removal of bottlenecks—especially in the rail sector—through bilateral and multilateral cooperation with neighboring countries. Highlighting one of Iran's major strategic projects, Sadegh said construction of the Marand-Cheshmeh Soraya railway, which will link Iran's rail network to Turkey's, is being followed "with seriousness and determination."

Russia Approves \$1.6b Loan to Complete Rasht-Astara Railway



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Deputy Minister of Roads and Urban Development announced that Russia has agreed to provide a \$1.6 billion loan to complete the Rasht-Astara railway, while confirming the acquisition of 300 hectares of land along the route. Houshang Bazvand, speaking to, highlighted the latest progress on the Rasht-Astara railway, describing it as the missing link in the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC). He stated that land acquisition for roughly 90 kilometers of the route—covering more than 300 hectares—has been completed, marking significant progress that continues to advance. Bazvand said authorities are currently awaiting approval from Iran's top decision-making council regarding a tax exemption. "Once this authorization is issued, we will be able to sign the executive contract," he added. The CEO of Iran's Construction and Development of Transportation Infrastructures Company noted that field operations will begin formally after the contract is signed, although the contractor has already initiated preliminary work. "We need to finalize the executive contract in order to receive the \$1.6 billion loan from the Russians, which is essential for pushing this major project forward," he said. Bazvand also reported that 34 kilometers of the acquired land have already been handed over to the Russian side, and that nearly 90 kilometers will soon be delivered.

Iran, France Explore Expanded Cooperation in Non-Sanctioned Sectors

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - In a meeting aimed at easing long-standing economic pressures and political constraints, senior Iranian and French economic officials underscored their shared interest in expanding cooperation in sectors exempt from international sanctions. The discussions took place between Samad Hassanzadeh, President of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), and Pierre Cochard, France's Ambassador to Tehran, during a recent session focused on advancing bilateral economic ties. Hassanzadeh opened the meeting by acknowledging the political challenges that have strained Iran-France relations in recent years. Despite these obstacles, he emphasized that enhanced economic engagement could help reduce the impact of political limitations. "Although political issues have created restrictions, developing economic relations can help diminish some of these constraints," he said. He noted that the French Embassy, in collaboration with the Iran Chamber of Commerce, has the capacity to play a constructive role in minimizing the impact of such limitations. Highlighting the continued interest of French private-sector companies in operating within Iran, Hassanzadeh urged France—as a country long associated with principles of liberty and a deep-rooted civilizational heritage—to adopt a more realistic perspective toward Iran. He argued that many of the current restrictions have been imposed "unreasonably" and do not reflect the true nature of potential bilateral cooperation. One of the most pressing challenges, according to the ICCIMA president, relates to visa restrictions and logistical disruptions affecting trade. He stated that the French Embassy has imposed stricter visa procedures for Iranian traders, including long-time business partners. Additionally, Iranian truck drivers responsible for transporting goods between Iran and Europe have faced new limitations. Hassanzadeh called for a review of these policies, stressing that trade-related mobility is essential to sustaining economic ties. He also emphasized that even under the harshest conditions, goods and services that directly affect human health should never be restricted. He pointed to significant opportunities for cooperation in non-sanctioned areas such as pharmaceuticals, agriculture, and food industries. Current bilateral trade—estimated at around \$400 million—is "very small," he said, and there is ample room for growth, particularly in sectors exempt from international sanctions. Turning to domestic challenges, Hassanzadeh addressed Iran's severe water crisis and pointed out that France possesses advanced technologies and specialized expertise in water management. He called for a "humanitarian" approach from France that would allow Iran to access such capabilities. Moreover, he noted that Iran's petrochemical, polymer, and food industries offer products of high quality and competitive prices that could gain a strong foothold in the French market.



Mehdi Mir-Emadi, President of the Iran-France Joint Chamber of Commerce, echoed these sentiments, particularly regarding Iran's pharmaceutical needs. With 98% of medicines produced domestically, Iran still relies on imports for a small but critical range of specialized drugs. "Medicine is not under sanctions," he stressed, urging France to help facilitate the import of essential medical products that it manufactures. Mir-Emadi also emphasized that education is another non-sanctioned field with strong potential for expanded cooperation, calling for new pathways to strengthen exchange and training programs. Arash Najafi, head of ICCIMA's Energy Commission, highlighted the long history of Iran-France relations—spanning more than five centuries, predating even the establishment of the United States. He underscored past collaborations in energy and carbon-reduction initiatives and noted that Iran has outperformed its commitments under the Paris Agreement in emissions reduction. The main obstacle to deeper cooperation in this area, he said, has been the unresolved issue of FATF compliance, which he hopes will be resolved soon. Najafi stressed the vast potential for joint ventures related to energy efficiency, renewable energy, and carbon-reduction technologies. He described the global annual turnover of such sectors as exceeding \$100 billion, representing a significant opportunity for both countries. Iran, he added, holds 9% of the world's natural resources, and aims to improve efficiency in leveraging these assets. French Ambassador Pierre Cochard reaffirmed France's appreciation for Iran's cultural, intellectual, and economic potential, adding that centuries of bilateral engagement provide a strong foundation for future ties. "We do not want sanctions to remain in place," he said, clarifying that EU and UN sanctions are focused primarily on military and nuclear issues and are not as broad as US sanctions. As a result, sectors such as pharmaceuticals, agriculture, and food production remain open for cooperation. Cochard acknowledged that certain political developments have negatively affected perceptions and relations but stressed that overcoming these issues could help French businesses adopt a more positive outlook toward Iran. He reiterated that the French Embassy is committed to expanding cooperation in non-sanctioned sectors. Addressing concerns about visa restrictions, Cochard claimed that France maintains an "open policy," especially toward economic actors, and aims to facilitate their participation in French exhibitions and business forums. He also highlighted the strength of France's water-industry companies, expressing optimism that Iran and France could establish meaningful collaboration in this field in the future.

Kazakhstan to Invest in Shahid Rajaei Port

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The Deputy Minister of Roads and Urban Development and the Managing Director of Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization announced that several neighboring countries have expressed interest in investing in Iranian ports, particularly in the field of transit. He said that Kazakhstan will soon sign an investment agreement for Shahid Rajaei Port. Speaking to an IRNA reporter on Tuesday during a press conference held on the sidelines of the International Summit of Governors of Caspian Littoral States in Rasht, Saeid Rasouli said: "Today, this summit was held in Rasht at the initiative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, with the participation of the Foreign Minister, the Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, the governors of coastal provinces including Hormozgan and Sistan-Baluchestan, and many local, national, and international officials." He added that the Ports and Maritime Organization is taking the opportunity to pursue bilateral and multilateral cooperation with Caspian neighbors during this summit. "In terms of transit, the Islamic Republic of Iran offers a strategic corridor that provides Central Asian countries with access to open waters and the Persian Gulf." Rasouli emphasized that Iran's northern ports currently operate with a capacity of over 30 million tons. He noted that a recent meeting was held in Makhachkala to form a Caspian Sea maritime consortium with the participation of Russia and Iran. He continued: "Several neighboring countries have shown interest in investing in our ports. Soon, we will witness the signing of Kazakhstan's investment agreement at Shahid Rajaei Port, and we are also in negotiations with several other



countries." Rasouli stated that Iran's coastal border stretches approximately 5,800 kilometers. "In the Caspian Sea, we hold the second-largest fleet after Russia, significantly ahead of neighboring countries in terms of fleet size. Therefore, we must make maximum use of current capacities, existing investments, and our ongoing development programs." The Managing Director of the Ports and Maritime Organization said that declining water levels in the Caspian Sea in recent years pose a threat to the depth of Iran's coasts and commercial docks. "One of our important cooperation topics with neighboring Caspian states is managing this phenomenon. We are holding continuous expert-level and managerial meetings with our Caspian partners to address this challenge while expanding our collaborative capacities." The first summit of governors from the coastal provinces of Caspian littoral states, held under the slogan "Caspian Sea: A Bridge of Friendship and Regional Development," began this morning (Tuesday, November 17, 2025) in Rasht with the presence of high-ranking Iranian and foreign officials. According to IRNA, the two-day summit—hosted by Iran—aims to strengthen regional cooperation, boost economic interaction, and enhance coordination on sustainable development and environmental protection in the world's largest enclosed body of water. Delegations from nine foreign regions and five Iranian provinces are participating. The summit will continue on Tuesday and Wednesday, November 17 and 18, focusing on strengthening regional cooperation, expanding economic, cultural, and tourism links, and fostering synergy among the coastal provinces of the five Caspian littoral states.

21m Liters of Fuel Smuggled Out of Iran Daily



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The head of the Economic Security Police of FARAJA stated that fuel smuggling—both into and out of the country—has increased in recent years, with more than 21 million liters of fuel smuggled out of Iran every day, worth approximately 1 trillion toman. Speaking at the first National Conference on Preventing and Combating the Smuggling of Petroleum Products on Tuesday, Brigadier General Hossein Rahimi said that according to the latest estimates by the Headquarters for Combating Smuggling of Goods and Currency, the total volume of smuggling in the country stands at about \$30 billion, a figure based on data from two years ago. Rahimi noted that 80% of this smuggling is inbound and 20% outbound. He added that in recent years, inbound smuggling has risen by 8%, while outbound smuggling has increased by 28%, and that 30% of Iran's economy is now affected by smuggling. The highest share of outbound smuggling, he said, involves petroleum products, which account for about \$2.5 billion and rank first among smuggled goods leaving the country. Referring to the smuggling of over 21 million liters of fuel every 24 hours, Rahimi stressed that he believes the real volume is significantly higher than current estimates. He explained that, following an order from the national police commander, a special task force for preventing and combating smuggling was established, with key missions including targeting major smuggling networks and conducting continuous operations.

Tehran and Baku Strengthen Frequency, Space, and Infrastructure Cooperation



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Minister of Communications highlighted the importance of joint cooperation between Tehran and Baku in satellite communications and digital infrastructure, emphasizing that the alignment of technical viewpoints between the two sides can contribute to greater convergence in space-based services and spectrum management. On the sidelines of the 2025 World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC) in Baku, Iran's Minister of Communications and Information Technology met with Rashad Nabiye, Azerbaijan's Minister of Digital Development and Transport. The two officials discussed infrastructure collaboration, frequency coordination, expansion of space-related cooperation, cybersecurity, and strengthening data transit routes between the two countries. During the meeting, Seyyed Sattar Hashemi expressed appreciation for Azerbaijan's "excellent" hosting of the ITU summit, noting that relations between Iran and Azerbaijan have been growing in recent months, particularly following the Iranian president's visit to Baku. Hashemi underscored the president's continued efforts to enhance bilateral relations, stating: "Iran and Azerbaijan are two long-standing friendly nations with inseparable ties, and digital and infrastructure cooperation represents a key component of their strategic interests." Hashemi stressed that one of the main areas of collaboration is frequency provisioning and signal management in border regions—an issue that has faced challenges for years.

White House Working With Russia on New Ukraine Peace Plan

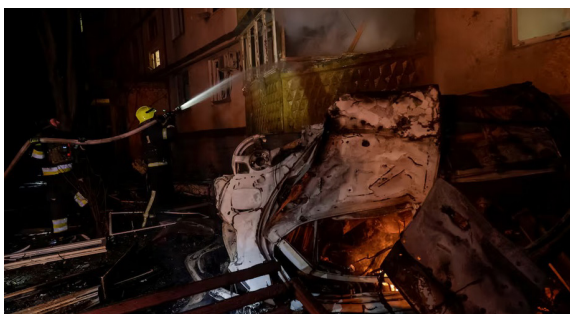
WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The Trump administration has been secretly formulating a new plan to end the war in Ukraine in consultation with Russia, Axios reported Tuesday, citing U.S. and Russian officials.

It is a 28-point roadmap inspired by U.S. President Donald Trump's plan for the Gaza ceasefire, the news outlet reported. Similar to the Gaza plan, the proposal would consist of "peace in Ukraine, security guarantees, security in Europe, and future U.S. relations with Russia and Ukraine," Axios reported, citing sources.

The U.S. special envoy, Steve Witkoff, is leading the formation of the plan and "has discussed it extensively with Russian envoy Kirill Dmitriev," Axios reported, citing a U.S. official.



Russian Drones Hit Kharkiv, Injuring 32 People



KHARKIV (Dispatches) - Russian drones struck apartment buildings in Ukraine's second largest city, Kharkiv, injuring 32 people, including two children, sparking fires and forcing dozens of residents to flee their homes, regional officials said.

According to preliminary information, Russian forces launched 19 drones at the Slobidskyi, Osnovianskyi and Nemyslianskyi districts after midnight, regional governor Oleh Syniehubov said, adding that six of the wounded had been hospitalised. Kharkiv, about 30 km (18 miles) from the Russian border, repelled Russian forces in the first weeks of Russia's February 2022 full-scale invasion and has since endured near-daily missile and drone strikes on residential districts and infrastructure.

Syniehubov said 48 people, including three children, were evacuated from the smoke-filled stairwell of a multi-storey building and that at least 10 civilian cars, a nearby residential house, garages, an office roof and a supermarket were damaged.

Photos released by Ukraine's State Emergency Service showed the attack had torn open shopfronts and apartment blocks, with rescuers guiding injured residents past crumpled, still-smouldering cars and twisted metal scattered across a blackened courtyard.

Kharkiv Mayor Ihor Terekhov said that a drone struck near a medical facility, injuring a doctor and damaging the building and nearby cars.

"I heard the Shahed (drone) getting closer ... I was literally pushed into the hallway by the blast wave," said Danilo Bondarev, a 22-year-old student who lives on the third floor of one of the damaged buildings.

"It's just a residential area, there's only a school and a kindergarten here, and there's absolutely nothing else here."

IMF Gold Sales Among Measures to Tackle Debt



JOHANNESBURG (Dispatches) - South African President Cyril Ramaphosa welcomed Tuesday a G20-commissioned report proposing the sale of some of the IMF's "hoard of gold" and a review of lending practices among measures to tackle Africa's crippling debt.

The proposals were included in an expert study commissioned for the first G20 summit in Africa which will bring around 20 heads of state to Johannesburg this weekend.

"Globally, more than 3.4 billion people live in countries which spend more on servicing debt than on education or healthcare," said the document handed to Ramaphosa.

"Governments are literally defaulting on development in order to honour their debt obligations," it said, citing figures that public debt in developing countries surpassed \$31 trillion in 2024.

The G20 should work with the IMF and the World Bank to create a debt refinancing scheme for low-income and vulnerable countries, the report said.

One way would be to sell some of the tens of millions of ounces of gold held by the IMF, said the head of the Africa Expert Panel, former South Africa finance minister Trevor Manuel.

This gold was held at its historic price of \$50 an ounce even though the metal currently sold for more than \$4,000 an ounce on the market, he said.

The call is for the creation of a transparent mechanism for the sale of some of this resource to fund countries in debt distress, Manuel said.



WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - U.S. President Donald Trump used a White House visit by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to unveil major F-35 and civilian nuclear agreements, even as he downplayed U.S. intelligence findings on the 2018 murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi. The announcements marked a sweeping deepening of defence and energy ties.

The United States and Saudi Arabia approved a civilian nuclear deal and the sale of F-35 jets as Trump sought to brush the murder and dismemberment of the Washington Post columnist under the carpet.

Trump raged at a journalist who asked the prince in the Oval Office about the case for "embarrassing" the Saudi royal on his first US trip since the murder, and called Khashoggi "extremely controversial."

"A lot of people didn't like that gentleman that you're talking about," he said. "Whether you like him or didn't like him, things happened, but he (the prince) knew nothing about it. And we can leave it at that. You don't have to embarrass our guest by asking a question like that."

The Saudi royal, who came bearing a pledge of a \$1 trillion investment in the United States on his first US visit since the killing, said Khashoggi's murder was "painful" and a "huge mistake."

Trump's comments were at odds with a US intelligence assessment in 2021 that concluded Prince Mohammed had ordered the operation to kill Khashoggi, who was murdered inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul. Saudi officials blamed rogue agents.

The journalist's widow, Hanan Elatr Khashoggi, said there was "no justification to murder my husband" and urged the Saudi prince to "meet me, apologise and compensate me."

The killing during Trump's first term caused a diplomatic crisis, but the US president made it clear he now wanted to paper over it as he boosts his relationship with the Saudis.

Trump called for US broadcaster ABC, whose journalist asked the question about Khashoggi's murder, to have its

licence revoked in a furious diatribe against the "crappy" company.

Earlier Trump, 79, pulled out all the stops to impress Prince Mohammed, 40, giving him a fly-by featuring US-made F-35 stealth fighters and thundering cannon fire.

The flattery continued inside the Oval Office, as Trump called the Saudi a "very good friend" and hailed him as being "incredible, in terms of human rights, and everything else."

The two countries later signed a host of deals to deepen their cooperation.

The White House said they ratified a "civil nuclear energy cooperation deal" for a multi-billion-dollar partnership between the US and the kingdom that would last decades.

Trump also approved a "major defence sale package" that includes "future deliveries" of F-35s. They also agreed to share AI technology "while protecting US technology from foreign influence."

The pomp continued later with a gala dinner hosted by First Lady Melania Trump. Portuguese football legend Cristiano Ronaldo, who plays in Saudi Arabia, will also be at the White House, a US official told AFP.

Trump said he had also pushed Prince Mohammed to normalise relations with Israel through the Abraham Accords, as he seeks to turn the fragile ceasefire between Israel and Hamas in Gaza into a longer-lasting regional peace.

The Saudi said he wanted to join the accords — Trump's signature diplomatic achievement during his first term — but first needed a "clear path" to Palestinian statehood.

Prince Mohammed has fostered close ties with Trump and his family over the years, including through investment pledges to the property billionaire-turned-US president.

Trump denied any conflicts of interest, a day after a Saudi developer announced a new hotel partnership in the Maldives with the Trump Organization, which is run by his sons.

"I have nothing to do with the family business. I have left," Trump said.

Brazil Pushes for Early COP30 Climate Deal, Though Divisions Persist

BELEM (Dispatches) - Brazil, Nov 18 (Reuters) - Brazil said on Tuesday it still expects to land a deal on some of the most contentious issues at the COP30 climate summit ahead of schedule, but conceded there were still wide gaps between countries on issues like fossil fuels.

The two-week summit in the Amazon city of Belem has brought together governments from across the world to strengthen the complex U.N. framework underpinning global action to halt rising greenhouse gas emissions and cope with the damage caused by warming temperatures.

Host nation Brazil wants a deal agreed in two stages: one package on Wednesday, including subjects like cutting fossil fuel use and delivering promised climate finance that were a week ago deemed too thorny to even include on the formal agenda, and another wrapping up any outstanding issues by Friday.

Confirming that negotiators would work late into the night for the second day in a row, COP30 President Andre Correa do Lago said he still expected the first deal to be approved on Wednesday, but that it could be "very late".

Any such deal would confound expectations set by recent COP summits - all of which have run way past their scheduled end. The conference is due to end at 2100 GMT on Friday.

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva will attend the conference on Wednesday to give fresh political impetus to the negotiations. He will



meet U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

Lula said the meeting was designed to "strengthen climate governance and multilateralism."

Earlier, the COP30 presidency, invoking the Brazilian Portuguese concept of "mutirão" - a spirit of collective effort - released a first draft of a possible summit deal titled "Global Mutirão: uniting humanity in a global mobilization against climate change".

After a day of country-by-country consultations, a new version of the text

is expected to be drawn up overnight and presented on Wednesday for further feedback.

The toughest topics include pinning down how rich countries will provide finance to poorer countries to switch to clean energy, and what must be done about a gap between promised emissions cuts and those needed to stop temperatures rising.

Some nations, including Brazil, also want a roadmap to help countries implement an agreement reached at COP28 in 2023 to transition away from fossil fuels, though the draft deal only listed this as an optional inclusion.

"The current reference in the text is weak and it's presented as an option. It must be strengthened and it must be adopted," said Tina Stege, Climate Envoy for the Marshall Islands, at a press conference alongside representatives from more than a dozen supportive countries.

However, underscoring the task ahead for the presidency, not everyone agreed.

Correa do Lago later indicated that one of the options put forward in the first draft, which would see countries submit plans to reduce their fossil fuel use, had already been rejected by a number of other countries as too onerous.

"Most of the countries are either very favorable or it's a red line," he said.

Ukraine Plans \$44b Claim Against Russia for Wartime Emissions

BELEM (Dispatches) - Ukraine plans to seek nearly \$44 billion from Russia for the damage linked to an increase in climate-warming emissions from the ongoing war, a government minister told Reuters.

The move marks the first time a country is claiming damages for such an increase in emissions, including from the fossil fuels, cement and steel used in fighting the war, and from the destruction of trees through resultant fires.

"A lot of damage was caused to water, to land, to forests," said Pavlo Kartashov, the country's deputy minister for economy, environment, and agriculture.

"We have huge amounts of additional CO2 emissions and greenhouse gases," Kartashov told Reuters in an interview on the sidelines of the COP30 climate summit in Brazil.

A member of the Russian delegation at COP30 declined to comment.

Dutch carbon accounting expert Lennard de Klerk estimated the war had



generated about 237 million tons of additional CO2-equivalent emissions since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, nearly equal to the annual emissions for Ireland, Belgium and Austria combined.

De Klerk told Reuters he had helped Ukraine to calculate the damage figure based on a 2022 study in Nature estimating the so-called social cost of carbon, an estimate of damages to society from CO2, at about \$185 a ton.

He said Ukraine was preparing to submit a claim through a new compensation process being set up by the Council of Europe that has already received some 70,000 claims by Ukrainian individuals for wartime damages.

All the claims, including any filed by other legal entities such as companies, will then be decided by a claims commission.

It remains unclear where the compensation will come from. De Klerk suggested that the billions of dollars in frozen Russian assets could be used in covering the claims.



Scotland Beat Denmark 4-2 in Thriller to Reach World Cup

GLASGOW (Dispatches) - Scotland reached the World Cup finals for the first time since 1998 in hair-raising fashion as stoppage-time goals by Kieran Tierney and Kenny McLean secured a memorable 4-2 victory over Denmark at a rocking Hampden Park on Tuesday.

When Patrick Dorgu equalised for the second time in the 81st minute, it seemed 10-man Denmark would secure the point they needed to top Group C and book their place in the finals while sending Scotland into the playoffs.

But after a rollercoaster qualifying campaign for the Scots, including a 3-2 defeat in Greece on Saturday, the biggest twist was saved to the very end as they sparked the loudest party the city of Glasgow has seen for years.

When the ball came out to substitute Tierney in the third minute of stoppage time, he looked up and curled a superb left-footed shot past a diving Kasper Schmeichel.

The drama was not over though as with Denmark desperately trying to salvage the situation and Schmeichel way out of his goal, McLean launched a shot from the halfway line into the empty net to ensure Scotland's fabled Tartan Army can start booking flights for next year's North American showpiece.

"That just sums up this squad. Never say die. We just keep going right to the end and one of the craziest games," Scotland captain Andy Robertson said. "We put the country through it, but I'm sure it's worth it. We're going to the World Cup."

Denmark, who only needed to avoid defeat to make sure of their third successive World Cup finals appearance, were left crestfallen.

From a position of control in the group they managed only one point from their last two games,

including the home draw with Belarus on Saturday, which opened the door for Scotland to seal an automatic place with victory on Tuesday.

The Danes were the better side for most of the night too but must now face last-chance saloon in the playoffs.

Meanwhile Spain booked their ticket to the 2026 World Cup with a 2-2 draw against Turkey in their final qualifier on Tuesday to top Group E.

Turkey finished second and will compete in the play-offs after they became the first team to force Luis de la Fuente's Euro 2024 champions to drop points.

Dani Olmo fired Spain ahead but Deniz Gul and Salih Ozcan struck for Turkey as the hosts conceded their first goals in the qualification process.

Mikel Oyarzabal hit back to equalise in Seville for a Spain team looking to win football's biggest prize for the second time.

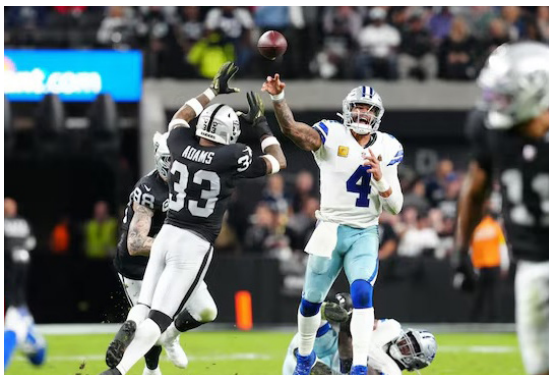
Spain scored 21 goals in qualifying while conceding just twice and have not tasted defeat in a national record 31 consecutive games.

However, that run includes a 2-2 Nations League final draw with Portugal after extra-time in June, with Spain losing on penalties.

Turkey showed De la Fuente's side are not flawless, although Spain were missing several key players, including Lamine Yamal, Nico Williams and Rodri.

"There's a lot of work to do and time to think about a lot of things, but we will prepare well," said De la Fuente, who was upset by Barca star Yamal undergoing treatment on a groin injury which ruled him out of the final qualifiers.

Prescott Fires 4 TD Passes as Cowboys Crush Raiders



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Eleven days after Dallas defensive end Marshawn Kneeland died during the team's bye week, the Cowboys returned to the field and emerged victorious, decisively beating the Las Vegas Raiders 33-16.

Dak Prescott completed 25 of 33 passes for 268 yards and four touchdowns to four different receivers. Three of Prescott's passing TDs came during a 21-3 onslaught in the second quarter.

George Pickens finished with nine catches for 144 yards and a score for Dallas (4-5-1). Cowboys running back Javonte Williams gained 93 yards on 22 carries.

Raiders quarterback Geno Smith threw for 238 yards, one touchdown and one interception on 27-of-42 passing. Brock Bowers logged seven receptions for 72 yards.

Despite trailing 6-3 after the first period, the Cowboys broke through in the second, as Prescott's trifecta of touchdowns gave the Cowboys a comfortable 24-9 lead at halftime.

The first of those three touchdown passes came just nine seconds into the second quarter, when Prescott found a wide-open CeeDee Lamb from 18 yards out to give the Cowboys a 10-6 lead. Lamb's touchdown was the culmination of a six-play, 68-yard drive.

Dallas' next possession resulted in a 12-play, 79-yard touchdown drive that ate 6:33 of the game clock. Prescott found paydirt through tight end Jake Ferguson, who caught his seventh touchdown of the season from 5 yards out to put the Cowboys up 17-6 with 5:16 remaining in the half.

The third touchdown was the most impressive of the bunch, a 37-yard connection from Prescott to Pickens that saw the wide receiver spin away from Raiders cornerback Kyu Blu Kelly before evading two more defenders on his way to the end zone.

Brandon Aubrey's third extra point of the quarter gave Dallas a 24-6 lead with 1:20 remaining in the half, though the Raiders cut the deficit to 15 points at halftime on Daniel Carlson's third field goal of the game, from 38 yards out.

Celtics Move Above .500 With Victory Over Nets

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Jaylen Brown scored 23 of his 29 points in the second half as the Boston Celtics did enough in the fourth quarter and moved above .500 for the first time this season with a 113-99 victory over the Brooklyn Nets Tuesday night in New York.

The Celtics won their third straight and for the eighth time in 12 games since opening the season with a three-game skid.

Brown made 9 of 19 shots along with 8 of 10 free throws in front of many Boston fans in the stands.

Payton Pritchard added 22 and Derrick White contributed 15 for the Celtics, who struggled to shake off a pesky challenge by the Nets for most of the night before beating Brooklyn for the 15th time in the past 16 regular-season meetings. Pritchard and White combined to hit eight of Boston's 19 3-pointers.

Anfernee Simons added 11 and Sam Hauser finished with eight as the Celtics shot 49.3% and overcame committing



a season-worst 20 turnovers.

Michael Porter Jr. scored 25 points, but the Nets dropped to 0-7 at home and were unable to win consecutive games for the first time this season. Day'Ron Sharpe added 16, Noah Clowney contributed 13 while rookie Egor Demin and Ziaire Williams finished with 12 apiece.

The Nets struggled in the fourth quarter by getting outscored 24-14 while shooting 4-of-15 and committing seven turnovers. Brooklyn was held under 100 points for the third time this season.

After the Celtics settled for a 62-61 lead by halftime, they appeared to seize control in the third.

Brown converted a 3-point play and sank a 3-pointer in a span of 36 seconds to give Boston a 75-65 lead with 7:28 left and the Celtics held an 11-point lead after he hit a short jumper nearly three minutes later.

LeBron Rules Out 2028 Olympic Return, Curry Doubtful



LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - LeBron James has ruled out playing in the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics and USA teammate Stephen Curry says he is highly unlikely to feature in the Games.

James and Curry teamed up in a star-studded USA line-up last year to win gold at the Paris Olympics, defeating hosts France in a memorable final.

But Los Angeles Lakers star James, who would be 43 by the time of the next Olympics, says there is no chance of a reunion.

Speaking on an episode of his "Mind the Game" podcast released Tuesday, basketball great James told co-host Steve Nash he planned to watch the Olympics from afar.

"You already know my answer," James told Nash when asked if there was any chance of him returning for one last Olympic hurrah.

"Don't even ask. I will be watching from Cabo... I'm done."

Golden State Warriors star Curry, who also appeared on the episode, was not as definitive but said he doubted he would be part of the US campaign.

"It is the opposite answer of what I told him last year," Curry said, referring to the conversation he had James when he was recruited to the Paris team.

"It was like, God willing, I still have the choice and the physical option to be like, I could actually impact the team. Never say never, but I highly doubt it."

Curry was one of the stars of the victorious USA Olympic campaign last year, scoring 24 points -- including a flurry of three-pointers -- in the gold medal match against France.

Belgium Beat France to Reach Last Four of Davis Cup

BOLOGNA (Dispatches) - Belgium reached the semi-finals of the Davis Cup after winning both singles matches against France in Bologna, where fans have been denied star power following injured Carlos Alcaraz's late withdrawal.

Raphael Collignon and Zizou Bergs came through respective singles clashes against Corentin Moutet and Arthur Rinderknech to set up a potential clash in the last four with holders and hosts Italy.

Collignon came back from a set down to beat world number 35 Moutet 2-6, 7-5, 7-5, while Bergs saw off Rinderknech, France's highest ranked player at 29 in the world, 6-3, 7-6 (7/4).

The two wins for Belgium mean that the scheduled doubles match featuring Belgium's Sander Gille and Joran Vliegen against Benjamin Bonzi and Pierre-Hugues Herbert will not be played.

Italy will be favoured to face Belgium in the semi-finals ahead of Wednesday's match against Austria in front of a



passionate crowd in northern Italy.

The Azzurri will be without stars Jannik Sinner -- recent winner of the ATP Finals -- and Lorenzo Musetti, who were key to the 2023 and 2024 Davis Cup triumphs for the Mediterranean nation.

Both players sit in the top 10 of the men's single rankings and their absence makes Italy's match with Austria more difficult to call.

There was more bad news for the tournament as world number one Alcaraz also pulled out of the tournament on Wednesday morning with a hamstring injury suffered against Sinner in their ATP Finals showdown on Sunday night.

The six-time Grand Slam champion said in the aftermath of that defeat that his hamstring hadn't affected him, even though it was strapped up during a medical time out.

But he has dropped out of the tournament two days before Spain's quarter-final with Czech Republic, leaving the beleaguered event without the hoped-for stardust.