

Foreign Ministry Spokesman Condemned the Illegal Entry of the Israeli Regime Into Syrian Territory and Warned of the Consequences of Its Continued Warmongering and Dominance- Seeking Attempts for Peace and Security in the Region

IRAN NEWS

Foreign Minister Abbas AraQchi in a Telephone Conversation With his Russian Counterpart, Sergei Lavrov, Has Discussed Bilateral Ties, as Well as Regional and International Developments

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DOMESTIC



Iran Highlights Resilience of Digital Development Amid War and Sanctions

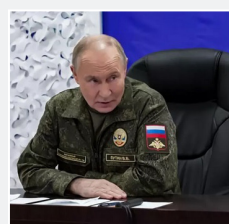
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INTERNATIONAL

U.S.-Backed Plan Would Hand Eastern Territory to Russia

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Miscalculation of Iran's True Power Led to Enemy's Defeat in 12-Day War



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - A spokesman for the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) says the enemy's fundamental miscalculation of Iran's military and social resilience led to their defeat in the 12-day war, describing the war as a strategic turning point.

Speaking during a speech on Thursday, Brigadier General Ali Mohammad Naeini said the war proved that Iran's missile power is both "real and deterrent," forcing the US to acknowledge the difficulty of countering its ballistic missiles.

"This war was the most complex in the world, and the enemy's miscalculations regarding the components of Iran's power and reliance on material structures were the main factors in their defeat," he added.

Naeini stated that the enemy was confident of a swift victory through targeting Iran's top military leadership. However, the plan collapsed due to a critical analytical failure.

He said the enemy fundamentally misjudged Iran's true source of power that is its people. Unlike material assessments, he added, Iran's soft power and popular resilience were underestimated, leaving the adversary blind to the country's real capabilities.

"In this war, the enemy itself became a victim of its own cognitive war; that is, it, believed in the "weak Iran" it had created and operated based on that belief," he further said.

Canada Posturing as Rights Champion Despite History of Racism



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iran has slammed Canada for posturing as a global champion of human rights, saying the North American country should be put on trial over its history of systemic racism against its Indigenous people.

In a statement released on Thursday, Iran's Permanent Mission to the United Nations lambasted Canada after the country welcomed the adoption of an anti-Iran rights resolution it had drafted at the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Issues) of the UN General Assembly.

"Spare us the sanctimonious drivell from Canada—a country with a well-documented history of thousands of Indigenous children dumped in unmarked graves, still steeped in its own entrenched structural racism—now posturing as a global champion of human rights vis-à-vis Iran," it said.

The mission also noted that Canada would have stood trial if human rights had not been misused as a tool for political pressure.

"Had 'human rights' not been hijacked as a geopolitical cudgel by the usual club of serial offenders, Canada would have been the one in the dock, sweating under resolutions, not swaggering upon the stage!"

Iran Warns of Further Countermeasures Against Illegal IAEA Resolution

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - The Foreign Ministry spokesman says Iran is considering more countermeasures against an illegal resolution adopted by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) regarding the country's peaceful nuclear program.

Esmacel Baghaei made the remarks on Friday, one day after the IAEA's 35-member Board of Governors passed the anti-Iran resolution put forward by France, the UK, Germany, and the United States.

In response, Tehran announced the termination of the deal it signed in Egypt's Cairo in September to resume cooperation with the UN's nuclear watchdog. The Ties had been suspended after the deadly US-Israeli aggression against Iran in June.

Baghaei said, "In an official letter to the Agency, we declared that the so-called Cairo agreement — which had been reached with Iran's goodwill and after relatively long negotiations with the agency — is now canceled. Other measures are also under consideration."

He also condemned the IAEA's resolution as a "blatant misuse of the international body" to advance the objectives of the US and the three European countries about Iran's nuclear issue.

The IAEA's "wholly irresponsible and unjustified" measure disregards the agency's own standards and reduces the body to a mere political instrument for exerting pressure on certain member states, the spokesman added.

"The resolution makes no reference whatsoever to the underlying reasons or causes of the present circumstances. Neither in the resolution nor in the statements of the three European countries and the US is there the slightest reference to the fact that Israel and the United States attacked Iran's nuclear facilities in June, ... [which led to] the cessation of the agency's inspections and Iran's cooperation."

The resolution passed with 19 votes in favor, three against and 12 abstentions, urged Tehran to "without delay" report on its enriched uranium stockpile and facilities damaged in the June aggression, while failing to mention Iran's longstanding cooperation with the IAEA.

Baghaei said the resolution itself created a division within the Board of Governors, with about half of the member states either abstaining or casting negative votes.

He further denounced the document as "legally weak," saying it is based on previous anti-Iran efforts at the UN which, Tehran and a significant portion of the international community consider null and void.

He was referring to the recent move by the three European countries and the US to restore all UN Security Council sanctions against Iran via the so-called snapback mechanism.

Meanwhile, the spokesman dismissed the West's claim of a diplomatic approach to resolve Iran's nuclear issue as "utterly deceitful and hypocritical."

"Issuing the resolution itself shows the rejection of a diplomatic solution and reliance on



pressure and sanctions," he emphasized.

Earlier on Friday, Iran's Foreign Ministry condemned the IAEA's "illegal and unjustified" resolution, whose content "reflects US bullying and the duplicitous behavior of the three European states."

Iran's Foreign Ministry has strongly condemned the anti-Iranian resolution adopted by the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), calling it an "illegal and unjustified" measure.

The Board on Thursday narrowly approved the resolution drafted by the European Troika - France, Germany and the UK - and the United States—passing 19-3 with 12 abstentions—that urges Tehran to "without delay" report on its enriched uranium stockpile and facilities damaged in the June aggression by Israel and the US, while omitting any mention of Iran's longstanding cooperation with the agency.

In a statement, the ministry said that the move also proves that the US and the European Troika are bent on misusing the agency to mount pressure on Iran.

The ministry said the resolution was rejected by about half of the IAEA members, including two permanent members of the UN Security Council.

The ministry said that the resolution violates the fundamental principles of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which grants member states the right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

The ministry emphasized that the Board of Governors lacks the authority to reinstate expired UN Security Council resolutions, labeling the actions of the US and its European allies as indicative of "bad faith" and irresponsible behavior.

Furthermore, the ministry warned that the insistence on repeating these actions could lead to legal confusion and exacerbate divisions within international institutions, undermining the foundations of the non-proliferation regime.

The ministry said insistence of the US and European Troika on reviving those resolutions will erode the credibility of the non-proliferation regime and international organizations.

The ministry said the resolution even failed to admit that direct military aggression by the US and Israel was the reason why the agency's inspections in Iran came to a halt.

The ministry emphasized that Iran has never tried to make nuclear weapons, stressing that Israel and its nuclear arsenal pose the main threat to international peace and security.

It stressed that the US and three European countries are complicit in Israel's crimes across the region due to their insistence on ignoring the regime's risk, and trying to find fault with Iran's peaceful nuclear program.

The ministry concluded by making it clear that it will spare no effort to safeguard the rights and interests of the Iranian nation regarding the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Iran Declares End of Cairo Deal After IAEA Passes Western Resolution

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Foreign Minister Abbas AraQchi says Iran now considers the Cairo understanding with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) terminated, following the passage of an anti-Iran resolution at the agency's Board of Governors.

The Board on Thursday narrowly approved the resolution drafted by the European Troika - France, Germany and the UK - and the United States—passing 19-3 with 12 abstentions—that urges Tehran to "without delay" report on its enriched uranium stockpile and facilities damaged in the June aggression by Israel and the US, while omitting any mention of Iran's longstanding cooperation with the agency.

AraQchi condemned the move, calling the resolution "illegal and unjustified." He said the measure was adopted "under pressure from these four countries" despite opposition or abstentions from 15 board members.

AraQchi said the action undermined the IAEA's "credibility and independence" and would disrupt the agency's cooperation with Iran.

He added that although the Cairo understanding had "effectively lost its basis" after the three European countries sought to trigger the return of cancelled UN Security Council resolutions, Tehran has now formally notified the IAEA's director general that the arrangement "is no longer valid and is considered terminated."

The Cairo understanding refers to a deal reached in Cairo, Egypt, between Iran and the IAEA in September 2025, under which they agreed on a technical framework to resume cooperation and inspections.

Iran's IAEA Ambassador Reza Najafi blasted the IAEA's Board for adopting a "political and unconstructive" resolution against Iran's peaceful nuclear program, describing the move by the US and E3 as a "discredited attempt" to compensate for their failed so-called snapback bid.

On August 28, the European trio invoked the "snapback" mechanism to restore UN sanctions against Iran, further complicating diplomacy to resolve tensions.

Iran, Russia, China, and certain other countries have rejected the European move, saying the 2015 nuclear deal has expired and all the relevant UN sanctions against Iran have become null and void.

Najafi said the text of the resolution merely repeats the political positions of its sponsors, distorts safeguards obligations, and reflects "an unconvincing attempt" to revive the so-called snapback mechanism through the IAEA.



Najafi noted that "with this resolution, the US and the E3 cannot compensate for their unlawful and failed snapback attempt in New York."

He said the sponsors of the resolution have "turned a blind eye and a deaf ear," making no reference during the Board's special sessions to the attacks on Iran's safeguarded facilities, nor did they acknowledge the IAEA's official report documenting the Israeli and US strikes in June 2025.

On June 13, Israel launched an unprovoked war against Iran, assassinating many high-ranking military commanders, nuclear scientists, and ordinary civilians.

More than a week later, the United States also entered the war by bombing three Iranian nuclear sites in a grave violation of the United Nations Charter, international law, and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

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

According to Najafi, these countries deliberately avoid any mention of their own "aggressive actions," as one of the perpetrators is simultaneously a key supporter of the draft resolution and seeks to mislead member states to evade responsibility.

He added that such a portrayal is "detached from reality" and ignores the extraordinary circumstances created by the assaults.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has commended Iran's renewed cooperation with the UN nuclear watchdog, confirming that inspectors have resumed work at facilities unaffected by the June military attacks.

The Iranian envoy stated that the latest report by IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi clearly shows that the current situation is the direct result of "unlawful and provocative attacks" by the United States and Israel on Iran's safeguarded nuclear facilities.

The IAEA itself, he said, has acknowledged that normal implementation of safeguards became "practically impossible" due to the security implications of the attacks, forcing the Agency to fully withdraw its inspectors.

Despite this, Iran cooperated in good faith to facilitate the resumption of verification activities, and approved all IAEA requests for access to sites unaffected by the attacks. Inspectors have maintained full access to those locations, he said.

The Iranian ambassador warned that the joint authors of the resolution are "mistakenly relying on pressure and threats," interpreting diplomacy as a tool for stripping Iran of its legitimate rights—an approach that the Iranian nation "has never accepted and will never accept."

Using Force Against Iran Simply Not Workable



TEHRAN (PressTV) - A senior advisor to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has delivered a clear message to Washington, warning that the Trump administration's reliance on force would never compel Iran to alter its path.

"They have tried force, and they now understand it is not acceptable and not workable," Kamal Kharrazi said in a detailed interview with CNN on Tuesday.

The official was referring to the US's decades-old history, including under Trump, of either deploying or soliciting deployment of coercive economic measures against Iran as a means of enforcing its demands upon the Islamic Republic, which has failed to prompt the Islamic Republic to abandon its rightful course.

He was also pointing to Washington's joining forces with the Israeli regime in June towards waging military aggression against Iran, including the country's nuclear facilities, that likewise stopped short of dismantling the Iranian defensive and nuclear infrastructure.



Iran Ranks Second Among Foreign Homebuyers in Turkey

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - According to official data released by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK) for September 2025, Iranian citizens ranked second among foreign buyers of residential property in Turkey. Iranians purchased 202 housing units during the month, following Russian buyers who topped the list with 267 units. Iraqi nationals came in third, purchasing 146 units. In total, 1,867 homes were sold to foreign buyers in September, marking a 7.7% decrease compared to the same month last year. Foreign purchases accounted for 1.2% of all residential property sales in Turkey during the period. The cities with the highest number of foreign property transactions were Istanbul with 744 units, Antalya with 557 units, and Mersin with 124 units. Overall, from January to September, foreign housing purchases declined by 12.6% compared to the previous year, totaling 14,944 units.

Azerbaijan Expresses Readiness to Invest in Iran’s Shahid Rajaei Port



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Azerbaijan has shown interest in investing in Iran’s Shahid Rajaei Port, according to the Iranian Deputy Minister of Roads and Urban Development. Saeed Rasouli, who is also the Managing Director of Iran’s Ports and Maritime Organization, said on Wednesday that negotiations have already taken place regarding the investment. Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the First Summit of Governors of Caspian Sea Provinces in Rasht, he added that Iran welcomes this cooperation, emphasizing that such investment would significantly boost transit volume between the two countries. Rasouli noted that during a recent visit to Azerbaijan, Iranian officials were presented with a report on the country’s port capabilities. Both sides expressed interest in expanding cargo transport and tourism ties, a move he said could further increase commercial exchanges between Iran and Azerbaijan. He added that northern Iranian ports have the capacity to handle 30 million tons of cargo, but currently less than one-third of this capacity is being utilized. According to Rasouli, even without new infrastructure, there is sufficient unused capacity in northern ports that must be efficiently exploited. Despite declining Caspian Sea water levels, Rasouli stressed the need to maximize the use of existing resources by enhancing cooperation among Caspian coastal states, enabling better use of port capacities. Discussing the summit itself, he highlighted its unique value compared to other international events, noting that the presence of provincial governors allows for practical implementation of decisions and contributes directly to regional cooperation. He also emphasized that Iran’s 14th government has granted greater authority to provincial governors, making agreements reached at this summit more feasible to execute.

Logistics Costs in Iran Nearly Double the Global Average



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - A senior trade official reports that logistics costs in Iran are almost twice the global average due to a combination of sanctions, structural inefficiencies, and increased risks in international trade. Mohammad Ali Emami, Director General of Logistics and Support at Iran’s Trade Promotion Organization, stated that studies conducted by the Chamber of Commerce show logistics costs in Iran have reached nearly 24 percent of total trade value, while the global average ranges between 8 and 12 percent. Speaking to ILNA, Emami explained that two of the six UN Security Council sanctions imposed on Iran directly targeted economic and trade sectors—specifically affecting financial systems and logistics-related interactions. While not all goods face restrictions, products with dual-use potential are subject to stricter controls. According to Emami, when the “snapback” mechanism is triggered and maximum pressure policies escalate, Iran’s economy and logistics network face heightened uncertainty, ultimately increasing risks, insurance rates, freight costs, and trade disruptions. Maritime companies become less willing to handle Iranian cargo, raising fears of delays or possible shipment seizures. He noted that higher costs contribute to inflation expectations, drive up production expenses, and increase export costs. Foreign partners, seeking stability, also demonstrate less willingness to engage with Iran under such uncertain conditions.

Iran Highlights Resilience of Digital Development Amid War and Sanctions

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Minister of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) emphasized that the country’s recent digital transformation achievements have been realized despite military attacks on civilian communication infrastructure, cyberattacks, and broad technological and financial restrictions during a recent 12-day conflict. According to the Ministry of ICT, Dr. Seyed Sattar Hashemi delivered these remarks at the opening of the high-level session of the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-25) in Baku. Highlighting Iran’s advances in information and communication technologies, he stressed that equal access to the digital space must be recognized as a fundamental human right. The theme of this year’s conference is “Global, meaningful and affordable connectivity for inclusive and sustainable development.” Hashemi stated that Iran has significantly reduced the cost of high-usage mobile internet packages to 0.3% of GDP per capita, and fixed internet to 0.2%, placing the country among the most affordable in the world. He noted that Iran has removed one of the largest barriers to online access: high costs. The minister added that Iran now has 166.3 mobile internet subscriptions per 100 inhabitants, with more than 92% coverage of 3G and 4G/LTE networks. Deployment of 5G networks has accelerated, with over 2,400 active sites nationwide. Hashemi stressed that internet connectivity should not merely mean being online; it must enable meaningful benefits, creating opportunities for scientific, economic, and social development. He pointed to Iran’s progress in narrowing the digital gap between urban and rural areas, noting that Iran ranks ninth globally in reducing the rural gap in digital payments. Financial technology and online services have become nearly



equally accessible to citizens in both cities and villages. Hashemi attributed these achievements to two major national programs. The first program, he said, is establishing a digital ecosystem for government services, which provides public services through a single platform supported by intelligent agents. These agents handle administrative processes on behalf of users, saving time, energy, and expenses while improving social fairness. The second program focuses on expanding the national fiber-optic network. Iran is transitioning from copper lines to fiber, extending high-speed connectivity to homes and businesses. More than 9 million households are now connected, achieving over 45% of projected national goals. The minister noted that this expansion not only improves internet quality but also provides a stable foundation for future-focused technologies such as smart cities, distance learning, and digital healthcare. Hashemi emphasized that these accomplishments were secured under difficult conditions, including military strikes against civilian communication infrastructure, cyberattacks, and restrictions on advanced technology and financial networks during the recent 12-day conflict. He credited the resilience of Iran’s infrastructure and expertise of its workforce. He said Iran is ready for win-win cooperation with all nations to advance inclusive digital development, aiming to increase the contribution of the digital economy to 10% of the national GDP. Concluding his remarks, the minister highlighted the crucial role of international cooperation in achieving sustainable digital development. He asserted that the target of a 10% digital economy share cannot be met without global partnerships. The Islamic Republic of Iran, he said, welcomes engagement with other nations to foster synergy in building a digital future accessible to all.

Proposal for National Transit Development Headquarters as Iran Seeks Role as Regional Logistics Hub

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The head of Iran’s Chamber of Commerce has called for the creation of a National Transit Development Headquarters aimed at strengthening the country’s role as a strategic logistics hub linking Eurasia to the Persian Gulf and global markets. Speaking at the closing session of the Caspian Sea Coastal Provinces Governors Summit in Rasht, Samad Hassanzadeh said Iran is not only a reliable economic partner for Eurasia, but also a connector of the economies of the Persian Gulf, Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Russia. Held under the theme “The Caspian: A Bridge of Friendship and Regional Development,” the summit focused on the future of regional economic cooperation based on shared strategic interests among the five Caspian nations. Hassanzadeh emphasized that building transit corridors and expanding transport links are now central to global trade power. Countries that diversify transit routes and invest in logistics infrastructure, he said, will gain influence over international trade networks. Highlighting Iran’s North-South geopolitical position and its mix of railways, highways, and active northern and southern ports, he described the country as capable of becoming a “regional logistics hub” offering services such as warehousing, packaging, customs facilitation, smart transport management, and goods distribution. To achieve this goal, Hassanzadeh proposed the establishment of a National Transit Development Headquarters supervised by the First Vice President and composed of key ministries including Economy, Industry and Trade, Foreign Affairs, and Roads and Urban Development. Such a body, he argued, would streamline customs rules, remove excess regulations, and reduce complex bureaucratic barriers for international transport companies. Hassanzadeh described Iran’s permanent free trade agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), implemented in 2025, as a “historic milestone.” Under the agreement, tariffs on 87% of traded goods are eliminated, creating what he called a



new architecture in regional trade. He pointed to increased access to high-demand markets, improved food security cooperation, investment expansion, non-dollar financial transactions, and Iran’s potential to become the primary trade route between Eurasia and the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. Calling northern Iran the “gateway to Eurasia,” he highlighted the complementary roles of the three provinces on the Caspian coast: Gilan as the logistics and cargo transit center, Mazandaran as a processing and food export hub; Golestan as the land trade gateway with Central Asia; and with smart investment in these regions, he said, Iran could command trade management across the Caspian Sea. He also stressed that southern ports—such as Shahid Rajaei in Hormozgan and Chabahar in Sistan and Baluchestan—provide Eurasia’s shortest and most secure access to global waters, completing the north-south trade corridor. Hassanzadeh urged private sector leaders not to wait for government action but to work actively alongside the state to remove business obstacles. The chamber’s responsibilities, he said, include: Training businesses to meet strict Eurasian standards; Creating business cooperation networks with Eurasian companies; Helping build organized export consortiums; Constantly addressing customs, banking, and standards issues; Supporting Iranian brand development in Eurasian markets; and call for Immediate Infrastructure Measures. In his closing remarks, Hassanzadeh urged immediate steps including: Completion of the Rasht–Astara and Rasht–Caspian railways’ Expanding northern and southern ports and equipping them for large-scale container transport; Establishing joint industrial zones with EAEU countries in north and south free trade areas; and developing non-dollar financial systems for settlements in national currencies. According to Hassanzadeh, such measures would cement Iran’s status as Eurasia’s core trade route, ensuring no global power could exclude it from international economic equations.

Iran Opens 22nd Int’l Metallurgy Exhibition With Participation of 723 Companies



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The 22nd Iran International Metallurgy Exhibition (Iran Metafo 2025) opened today in Tehran with the participation of 723 domestic and foreign companies, inaugurated by Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade Seyed Mohammad Atabak. The opening ceremony was held this morning, November 20, 2025 (29 Aban 1404), at the Tehran International Permanent Fairground, with the presence of Minister Atabak, Mohammad Masoud Samiee-Nejad, Head of IMIDRO (Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization), and Mohammad Reza Bahraman, President of Iran Mine House. This year’s exhibition features 610 Iranian companies and 113 foreign companies from 13 countries. Iran Metafo 2025 showcases the latest technologies, equipment, and products in various fields, including iron and steel, casting and molding, non-ferrous metals, mining and mineral industries, industrial furnaces, refractories, and advanced industrial ceramics. The exhibition serves as a platform for experience exchange, technology presentation, and expanding industrial cooperation at both national and regional levels. Participating companies represent a diverse range of countries, including Malaysia, Italy, China, Turkey, Russia, the United Kingdom, Germany, Brazil, Sweden, India, South Africa, Spain, and Austria. The event covers an area of 28,000 square meters, with one hall exclusively designated for knowledge-based companies and startups. The 22nd International Metallurgy Exhibition will be open to industry specialists and the public from November 20 to November 23 at the Tehran International Permanent Fairground.

Iran’s Exports to Russia Remain Far Below Trade Potential



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - A senior member of Iran’s Chamber of Commerce has stated that Iran’s exports to Russia are currently valued at less than \$2 billion, a figure he described as “very insignificant” compared to the immense trade potential between the two countries. Speaking on Wednesday at a meeting with business representatives in Iran’s northern Gilan province, Abdollah Mohajer Darabi, a member of the governing board of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, emphasized that Russia imports goods worth several hundred billion dollars annually, yet Iran’s share remains minimal. According to Mohajer Darabi, Iran’s limited exports are not the result of barriers imposed by Russia. “The low volume of trade has nothing to do with Russia. We suffer from internal problems far more than external obstacles,” he said. He estimated that Iran is capable of exporting at least \$10 billion annually to Russia, highlighting undiscovered and underutilized commercial opportunities. During the meeting, local business leaders from Gilan requested support for a newly launched Rasht–Astrakhan flight route, aimed at improving connectivity and trade. Mohajer Darabi noted that similar initiatives have been successful in other provinces. He cited Mazandaran Province’s Chamber of Commerce, which backed a flight route to Kazakhstan “as a guarantee-based project that eventually proved successful.” However, he stressed that any financial support from the national Chamber of Commerce must cover all provinces and follow a formal policy framework. He suggested that the chamber could particularly support the initiative through promotional activities.

At Least Three Killed After 5.5-Magnitude Quake Hits Bangladesh

DHAKA (Dispatches) - A powerful earthquake struck Bangladesh outside the crowded capital Dhaka, killing at least three people, health officials said.

The 5.5-magnitude quake struck at 10:38am (0438 GMT) near the city of Narsingdi, about 33km from Dhaka, according to the US Geological Survey (USGS).

The Friday morning earthquake sparked terror with many in the Muslim-majority nation of 170 million people at home on their day off.

AFP reporters in Dhaka saw people weeping in the streets while others appeared shocked.



U.S. Military Has New Options to Pursue Group tied to Venezuela's Maduro



WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - President Donald Trump's decision to designate an alleged drug cartel that the U.S. links to Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro as a foreign terrorist organization provides the Pentagon with a range of new options, U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said.

On Sunday, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the U.S. would designate the Cartel de los Soles a foreign terrorist organization, which makes it a crime for anyone in the U.S. to provide material support to the group.

Hegseth spoke with One America News and, in excerpts released on Thursday, was quoted as saying the designation "brings a whole bunch of new options to the United States."

Hegseth said Maduro is "not a legitimately elected leader of Venezuela" and repeated accusations that Maduro is involved in drug trafficking.

Maduro has denied such involvement.

It is unclear when the interview took place, but it will air on Thursday.

U.S. officials have accused Cartel de los Soles of working with the Venezuelan gang Tren de Aragua, which Washington previously designated a foreign terrorist organization, to send illegal narcotics to the U.S.

The Trump administration has alleged that Maduro leads Cartel de los Soles, which Maduro denies.

South Africa, EU Sign Critical Minerals Deal, Vow to Defend Multilateralism



BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - South Africa and the European Union vowed to defend multilateralism on Thursday, ahead of the G20 summit, as they signed a partnership on critical minerals.

South Africa is hosting this year's G20 gathering amid a boycott by its most powerful member, although President Cyril Ramaphosa said the United States was now considering attending in some capacity.

Analysts see a U.S. absence or any obstructive move as an opportunity for South Africa to build closer ties to the European Union and China, its two largest trading partners.

While it seems increasingly unlikely that the meeting will culminate in a substantive declaration, the first G20 in Africa is a showcase for a continent that has fast-growing economies and vast mineral wealth.

"We are signing an unprecedented agreement," Ramaphosa said at a news conference with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and European Council President António Costa, after Ramaphosa's mines minister Gwede Mantashe signed the memorandum of understanding.

"We are no longer going to rely on extracting minerals only. We will want to extract those minerals, have them processed at the point of extraction ... so that South Africa begins to move up the value chain," Ramaphosa said.

EU leaders are scrambling to secure dozens of metals that are vital to the world's transition away from fossil fuels to renewable energy, for the revolution in computing and for defence, as it faces potentially damaging restrictions on supply from China, the world's main supplier of rare earths.

U.S.-Backed Plan Would Hand Eastern Territory to Russia

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The plan put forward by the United States to end the war in Ukraine calls, among other measures, for Kyiv to cede the regions of the Donbas in the country's east to Russia. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Thursday appealed for a "dignified peace", as Russia claimed to have captured the stronghold of Kupiansk.

Ukraine would give up a swathe of eastern territory to Russia and slash the size of its army under a sweeping 28-point peace plan backed by US President Donald Trump, according to a draft obtained by AFP.

Kyiv would also pledge never to join NATO, and would not get the Western peacekeepers they have called for, although European warplanes would be stationed in Poland to protect Ukraine.

A US official told AFP the draft plan includes a powerful security guarantee for Kyiv, modelled on NATO rules, which would commit the US and European allies to respond to any attack on Ukraine.

Russia would meanwhile be readmitted to the G8 group of nations and be integrated back into the global economy under the plan, which US officials said was still a "working document."

"The president supports this plan. It's a good plan for both Russia and Ukraine," White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt told reporters.

Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio had been "quietly" working on the plan with both Russia and Ukraine for around a month, Leavitt said.

She rejected concerns that the plan echoes many of Moscow's maximalist demands.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said he expected to discuss the plan with Trump "in coming days." He said any deal must bring a "dignified peace" with "respect for our independence, our sovereignty."

Zelensky also met a Pentagon delegation headed by US Army Secretary Daniel Driscoll in Kyiv.

Under the document seen by AFP, "Crimea, Luhansk and Donetsk will be recognised as de facto Russian, including by the United States."

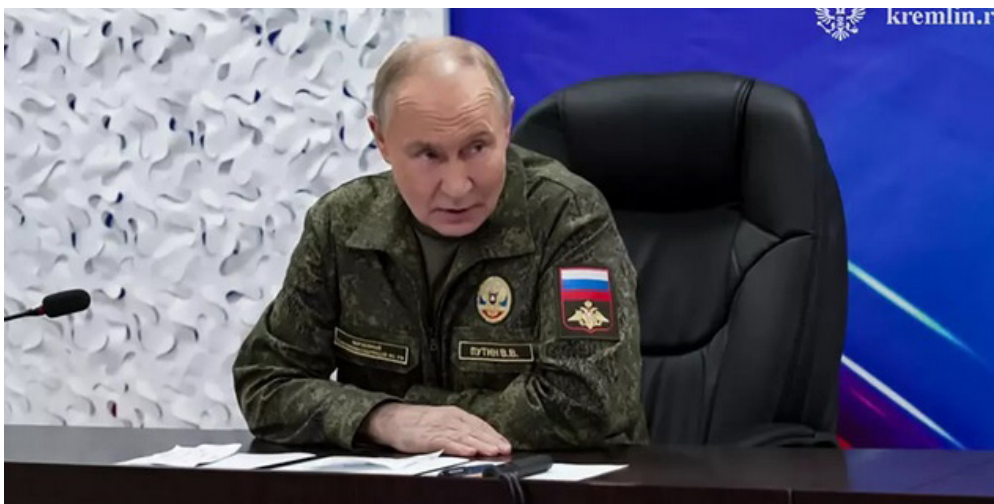
Kyiv still partly holds Luhansk and Donetsk, which together make up the Donbas industrial belt on the front line of the war. Crimea was annexed by Russia in 2014.

Areas from which Ukraine has withdrawn in Donetsk would be deemed a demilitarised zone which Russian forces will not enter, according to the plan.

The southern regions of Kherson and Zaporizhzhia - which Russia falsely claims to have annexed - will be "frozen along the line of contact", it said.

The plan for Donbas, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia corresponds to Moscow's previous demands.

Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant, occupied by Russian forces since March 2022, would be supervised by the International



But European jets would be stationed in neighboring Poland.

Amid a spiralling corruption scandal in Ukraine that has claimed the jobs of two ministers, Kyiv had meanwhile removed language about an audit of foreign aid and replaced it with a call for a "full amnesty", a senior US official said.

Under the proposed deal, Russia would be "reintegrated into the global economy" after nearly four years of tough sanctions and be allowed back into the G8.

"It is expected that Russia will not invade neighboring countries and NATO will not expand further," it says.

But all sanctions would snap back if Russia invades Ukraine again - "in addition to a decisive coordinated military response." The contents of the plan have fuelled suggestions that Moscow was involved in drafting it.

"It seems that the Russians proposed this to the Americans, they accepted it," a senior Ukrainian source told AFP.

But US officials strongly denied that it was a Russian plan, saying it had been drafted after weeks of consultations involving Witkoff, Rubio, the Ukrainians and Moscow.

Since returning to the White House, Trump's position on the Ukraine war has shifted dramatically back and forth.

He rowed with Zelensky in the Oval Office in February before saying in September that Ukraine should try to reclaim its land.

Trump has also hit Russia with sanctions after becoming increasingly frustrated with President Vladimir Putin, with a summit in Moscow having produced few results.

On the ground, Russia claimed Thursday to have recaptured the key city of Kupiansk in eastern Ukraine - which Kyiv denied - as Putin visited an army command post to speak with officers.

A Russian strike on the city of Zaporizhzhia in southern Ukraine on Thursday killed five people and wounded three others, emergency services said.

China Warns Japan to Retract Severely Damaging Taiwan Remarks

BEIJING (Dispatches) - Trade cooperation between China and Japan has been "severely damaged", the Chinese commerce ministry said yesterday, urging the Japanese prime minister to retract her comments on Taiwan or face the consequences.

A diplomatic spat between China and Japan has intensified since Sanae Takaichi told parliament on November 7 that a hypothetical Chinese attack on democratically-ruled Taiwan could trigger a military response from Tokyo.

"Prime Minister Takaichi's openly erroneous remarks concerning Taiwan have fundamentally undermined the political foundation of China-Japan relations and severely damaged bilateral economic and trade exchanges," He Yongqian, a ministry spokesman told a regular news conference.

"Should the Japanese side persist on its course of action and continue down the wrong path, China will resolutely take the measures required and all consequences shall be borne by Japan."

A spokesman for Takaichi said her comments on Taiwan did not change existing Japanese policy.

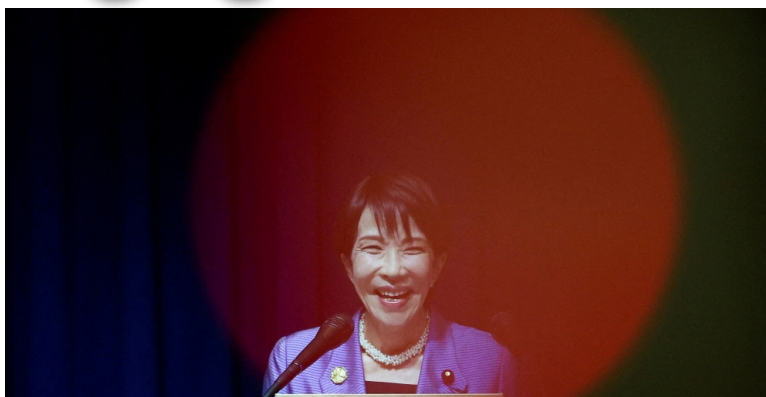
China is Japan's second-largest export market after the United States, buying about US\$125 billion of Japanese goods in 2024, mainly industrial equipment, semiconductors and automobiles, according to UN Comtrade data.

Tokyo could struggle to find alternative markets if China closes its doors to Japanese goods. South Korea, its third-largest export destination, absorbed only US\$46 billion worth last year, the data shows.

He said she had "no information to provide at present" when asked to confirm reports that China had indicated it would ban all imports of Japanese seafood.

The world's second-largest economy has a record of taking coercive trade actions against its neighbour.

In 2023, Beijing imposed a blanket ban on imports of all Japanese seafood



after Tokyo decided to release radioactive water from the Fukushima nuclear plant into the Pacific. The International Atomic Energy Agency, a UN body, had concluded the discharge was safe.

In 2010, China halted rare earth exports to Japan for about seven weeks after Japanese authorities detained a Chinese fishing captain whose vessel had collided with coast guard ships near the Senkaku Islands, which Beijing claims as the Diaoyu Islands.

"Coercion is a hard habit to break for Beijing. But just as the United States stood by Japan during China's last unwarranted ban on Japanese seafood, we will be there for our ally again this time," US Ambassador to Japan George Glass said in an X post yesterday.

The US State Department's deputy spokesman Tommy Pigott posted on X that US support for Japan was "unwavering."

"We firmly oppose any unilateral attempts to change the status quo, including

through force or coercion, in the Taiwan Strait, East China Sea, or South China Sea," Pigott said, without mentioning China.

Before the 2020 ban, China was Japan's top scallop buyer and a major importer of sea cucumbers.

Relations had looked to be improving, with Chinese leader Xi Jinping and Takaichi agreeing in a meeting on the sidelines of last month's APEC summit in South Korea to "build a constructive and stable China-Japan relationship fit for the new era".

Now, Japanese seafood companies fear a return to past restrictions.

"What's frustrating is that things that were moving forward suddenly went backwards. And given the nature of the issue, this might well happen again," said Kazuya Yamazaki, the president of Sanwa Fisheries, a company on Japan's northern Hokkaido island that used to export around 200 metric tons of scallops to China annually before imports ended.

His firm is among almost 700 that applied for export permits after China agreed to restart shipments of Japanese marine products.

There is no easy fix, Japanese officials and analysts say.

"There is no immediate off-ramp, unless Takaichi retracts her comments which she will not do as it will be political suicide. China has elevated the situation to a level where they can not easily back down," said Joseph Kraft, a financial and political analyst at Rorschach Advisory in Tokyo.

"The only solution is to play the long game and wait it out till China begins feeling the pain as well."

Asked at a regular Chinese foreign ministry news briefing yesterday whether China's Premier Li Qiang would meet with Takaichi on the side of this weekend's G20 summit in South Africa, its spokesman said there were no plans to do so.

Israeli Fire Kills Five in Gaza, Casting Further Doubt on Ceasefire

CAIRO (Dispatches) - Israeli airstrikes killed five people and wounded 18 others in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip on Thursday, local health authorities said, after Hamas and Israel accused each other of violating an increasingly fragile near six-week-old truce.

Medics said that one strike on a house in Bani Suhaila town east of Khan Younis killed three people, including a baby girl, and wounded 15 others, while another killed a man and wounded three others in the nearby Abassan town.

Israel's military confirmed the strikes but said it was not aware of casualties.

Later on Thursday, Nasser Hospital officials said a fifth Palestinian was killed by Israeli gunfire in Abassan town too.

On Wednesday, Israel said it struck targets across the enclave after members of the Palestinian militant group fired on its troops, and Gaza medics said at least 25 people were killed, the highest toll since October 29, when at least



100 people were killed.

Hamas called the attacks a dangerous escalation and urged Arab mediators, Turkey and the United States, which brokered the ceasefire, to intervene.

In a statement later on Thursday, Hamas spokesperson Hazem Qassem accused Israel of changing markings that define areas Israel still occupies, in violation of the agreed-upon maps, which keeps Israel in control of over 50% of the enclave's areas.

Residents told Reuters they saw that in Shejaia suburb in eastern Gaza City, adding that yellow barricades marking areas still under Israel's control had been moved 100 meters westward. There was no immediate Israeli comment on the positioning of the markings.

In Gaza City's Zeitoun suburb, where at least 10 people were killed in a building that used to house displaced families on Wednesday, Palestinians sifted through the wreckage to salvage furniture and belongings as rescue workers searched for any further victims.



Spain, Germany reach Davis Cup Semifinals

BOLOGNA (Dispatches) - Spain and Germany will face off in the semi-finals of the Davis Cup after coming through respective last-eight ties in Bologna with the Czech Republic and Argentina on Thursday.

The Spanish came back from one match down to beat the Czech Republic 2-1, while Germany -- and world number three Alexander Zverev -- saw off Argentina by the same scoreline.

Marcel Granollers and Pedro Martinez beat Tomas Machac and Jakub Mensik 7-6 (10/8), 7-6 (10/8) to seal Spain's passage to the last four.

Jaume Munar set Spain up to win the tie by beating Jiri Lehecka 6-3, 6-4 and levelling up the match after Pablo Carreno Busta was beaten by world number 19 Mensik 7-5, 6-4.

Spain's biggest star, Carlos Alcaraz, pulled out of the tournament on Tuesday with a hamstring injury suffered during his defeat to Jannik Sinner in the title match of the ATP Finals on Sunday.

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.

World number one Alcaraz is one of three top-10 players to have dropped out of the Davis Cup finals in northern Italy, where fans have also been denied the chance to see Sinner and Lorenzo Musetti play for the Azzurri.

Former Olympic champion Zverev is the highest-ranked player left at the Davis Cup finals, and he drew the later tie level by beating Francisco Cerundolo 6-4, 7-6 (7/3), after Tomas Martin Etcheverry put Argentina ahead by with a 7-6 (7/3), 7-6 (9/7) win over Jan-Lennard Struff.

Germany secured a clash with Spain on Saturday after Kevin Krawietz and Tim Puetz came through a three-set epic against Andres Molteni and Horacio Zeballos 4-6, 6-4, 7-6 (12/10).

Krawietz and Puetz emerged victorious at just past 0100 on Friday morning in Italy (midnight GMT), after wasting three match matches at 6-3 in the third set tie-break.

Italy will take on Belgium in the first semi-final in front of a partisan crowd.

Arsenal Rocked by Gabriel Setback Ahead of Spurs Clash

LONDON (Dispatches) - Arsenal are expected to be without defensive lynchpin Gabriel Magalhaes when they host London rivals Tottenham Hotspur on Sunday as Manchester City seek to keep up the pressure on the Premier League leaders.

Pep Guardiola's City could cut the Gunners' lead at the top of the table to just one point, at least for 24 hours, if they beat Newcastle tomorrow.

Reigning champions Liverpool desperately need a win after five defeats in their last six Premier League matches, while Rob Edwards takes charge of his first match as Wolves manager.

Arsenal boss Mikel Arteta has a major headache as he considers how to reshuffle his defence against Spurs in the likely absence of the injured Gabriel Magalhaes.

The Brazilian has been at the heart of the near-impregnable Gunners back line that has conceded just five goals in 11 Premier League matches.

But reports suggest he could be sidelined for weeks after suffering a thigh injury during Brazil's 2-0 friendly win over Senegal at the Emirates Stadium last weekend.

Gabriel, who has formed a formidable central defensive partnership with William Saliba and is also a threat from set-pieces, is likely to be replaced by Piero



Hincapie or Cristhian Mosquera.

The Gunners are four points clear of Manchester City after they drew 2-2 with Sunderland earlier this month, ending a streak of eight wins in all competitions with no goals conceded.

Arsenal remain favourites to secure a first Premier League title since 2003/04 and have an eye-catching record against their London rivals -- losing just once in the league at home to Tottenham since 1993.

But Spurs travel to the Emirates boasting the best away record in the league this season -- with four wins and a draw from five games.

Liverpool's hopes of a successful title defence appear to be over after five defeats in six games left them eight points behind leaders Arsenal.

Sports analytics company Opta puts the champions' chances of winning the league at just over seven percent, following their 3-0 humbling by Manchester City before the international break.

Liverpool face Nottingham Forest, the only team who beat them at home last season, tomorrow with Arne Slot's men desperate to put their recent woes behind them.

Texans Sack Allen Eight Times to Beat Bills 23-19



WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Houston's Calen Bullock intercepted reigning NFL Most Valuable Player Josh Allen twice and the league's top defensive unit powered the Texans over Buffalo 23-19 on Thursday.

Allen was sacked eight times, his most in any games, for 70 lost yards and Bullock's final pickoff killed the Bills' last desperate drive with 18 seconds remaining.

The Texans, who have allowed the NFL's fewest points and fewest yards a game this season, shut down Allen, who produced six touchdowns in a victory over Tampa Bay just four days earlier.

"The defense stayed disciplined," Houston's Danielle Hunter said. "We had a game plan to keep him contained in the pocket and I think we did a good job all around."

Davis Mills improved to 3-0 as a starter for Houston in place of injured C.J. Stroud, completing 16-of-30 passes for 153 yards and two touchdowns.

"He's just going to keep going and make plays," Hunter said.

Allen completed 24-of-34 passes for 253 yards but was intercepted twice and rushed all night by an aggressive Texans defensive unit.

The Bills fell to 7-4, two games behind NFL-best New England (9-2) in the AFC East division.

The Texans improved to 6-5, one half-game behind Jacksonville for the last AFC wildcard playoff spot.

James Cook ran 45 yards for a touchdown to put the Bills ahead 6-0 after only 5:49 of the game but Matt Prater missed a conversion kick.

Houston's Ka'imi Fairbairn answered with a 24-yard field goal but Prater connected on a 44-yarder to give the Bills a 9-3 edge.

The Texans responded by marching 77 yards in 12 plays with Christian Kirk's two-yard touchdown catch from Mills and a Fairbairn conversion kick giving Houston a 10-9 advantage, which Fairbairn later boosted with a 43-yard field goal.

Norris Aims to Lock Down Huge Title Lead in Chase for First F1 Crown



LAS VEGAS (Dispatches) - Lando Norris arrives in Las Vegas this week full of confidence after back-to-back wins and in control of the Formula One world championship race as he eyes a maiden title.

The Briton boasts a 24-point lead in the drivers' standings over McLaren teammate Oscar Piastri heading into Sunday's race after a remarkable turnaround in form.

Australian Piastri, who was 34 points clear after winning the Dutch Grand Prix on August 31, has failed to even post a podium finish in the past five races.

Norris has found consistency at the right time, following up his victory from pole position in Mexico with a sprint success and another race win from the front of the grid in Sao Paulo last time out.

No one has failed to convert as big a lead as Norris currently holds with three races left in a season since the points-scoring system was changed in 2010.

But the 26-year-old is not taking anything for granted yet. "They're just strong results, which is exactly what I need, exactly what I'm fighting for every single weekend and every day," he said in Brazil.

"So just very pleased, but it's still a long way to go. So no point getting too happy or excited just yet."

Norris cannot secure the world championship crown this weekend but he could end the title defence of Max Verstappen.

The four-time defending champion charged back into contention but is now 49 points adrift despite a thrilling drive to finish third two weeks ago, having started the race from the pit-lane.

Sengun Leads Rockets to Fifth Straight Win Over Cavaliers

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Alperen Sengun scored 28 points and grabbed 11 rebounds, and Kevin Durant had 20 points to lead the visiting Houston Rockets to a 114-104 victory over the Cleveland Cavaliers.

Aaron Holiday added 18 points, Jabari Smith Jr. had 14 and Amen Thompson amassed 12 points, nine boards, six assists and five steals for the Rockets, whose only losses are against the Oklahoma City Thunder, Detroit Pistons and San Antonio Spurs.

Sengun also had seven assists in Houston's fifth straight win. The Rockets built a 22-point lead in the third quarter before Cleveland pulled within one at 77-76 early in the fourth on a Donovan Mitchell 3-pointer.

Mitchell scored 21 points for Cleveland, but only two in the first three periods on 1-of-7 shooting. De'Andre Hunter led the hosts with 25 points, and Evan Mobley had 18 points and six rebounds.

Reed Sheppard and Smith each had eight points in the first quarter as Houston jumped in front 33-19. The Rockets' lead



swelled to 20 late in the second before they carried a 57-40 advantage into halftime, powered by 13 points from Durant.

Temper flared throughout with Smith and Hunter being whistled for flagrant fouls and technicals, and Cleveland's Nae'Qwan Tomlin being called for a technical midway through the second quarter.

Holiday went on an individual 6-0 run in 46 seconds to extend the Rockets' lead to 103-92 with 3:51 left. That lead remained two scores the rest of the way, finishing off the Cavaliers' last charge at trying to rally.

Cavaliers point guard Darius Garland (left great toe) and swingman Jaylon Tyson (concussion) have not returned to action since being injured Nov. 10 at Miami. Coach Kenny Atkinson said Tyson has entered a return-to-play protocol while Garland is also close to a return.

Smith Jr., who was questionable with right knee soreness, was one of four 6-foot-11 starters in the Rockets' super-sized lineup along with Sengun, Durant and Steven Adams. Thompson, the point guard, rounded it out at 6-7.