

Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi Says the Country's Strategic Naval Forces Are Prepared to Give a "Firm and Regret-Inducing" Response to Any Possible Act of Aggression by Enemies

IRAN NEWS

Iranian Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations reaffirmed Tehran's "Full and Unequivocal" Right to Seek Accountability From the United States and Pursue Compensation for Losses Resulting From the Illegal June Aggression

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Iran Condemns Australia's Dangerous Move Against IRGC



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has strongly condemned the Australian government's decision to designate the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) as a "state sponsor of terrorism," slamming Canberra for acting under Israeli influence.

"The political move by the Australian government is a dangerous and criminal precedent, designed under the influence of the Zionist regime to divert public attention from the genocide in Gaza," Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement released on Thursday.

"Therefore, it amounts to collaboration by the initiators of this action with the criminals who are under investigation by the International Criminal Court," it said.

The Australian government listed the IRGC as a "state sponsor of terrorism" on Thursday over baseless accusations that the IRGC had orchestrated attacks against Australia's Jewish community.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry strongly condemned the decision, denouncing it offensive and unjustified. "The Islamic Republic of Iran considers this action illegal, unjustifiable, and a violation of international legal rules and norms in respect of the national sovereignty of states."

The ministry expressed "disgust at the adherence of certain Australian politicians to the evil policy of the genocidal Israeli regime in spreading lies against Iran", and underscored the Australian government's international responsibility for "this unlawful act".

Iranian FM Warns Region Cannot Withstand Further Conflicts



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi warned that West Asia "cannot withstand further tensions and conflicts," pointing to Israel as a principal source of instability and criticizing Western support that shields it from international accountability.

His warning in an interview with the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting on Thursday came as Israel's war minister, Israel Katz, said that Tel Aviv is prepared to launch a new war on Lebanon.

"What is important is that the region cannot withstand further tensions and conflicts, and the main factor behind these tensions and conflicts is the Zionist regime, which has unfortunately been given an unacceptable immunity by the United States and Western countries, allowing it to do whatever it wants and for them to prevent any action against the Zionist regime in international forums," Araghchi said.

Araghchi's remarks followed a meeting in Paris on Wednesday with French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot. The two officials discussed a broad range of issues, including Iran's nuclear program, regional security developments, European matters, the war in Ukraine, and bilateral relations between the two countries.

U.S., With All Its Modern Military Arsenal, Suffered Defeat in 12-Day War

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN – Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei says the U.S. suffered severe losses during the 12-day war with Iran in June, despite deploying its most advanced military equipment, including submarines, fighter jets, and state-of-the-art defense systems.

"In the 12-day war, the Iranian nation undoubtedly defeated both the United States and the Zionist regime. They came and committed mischief, but were beaten and returned empty-handed, failing to achieve any of their objectives — this was a real defeat for them," Ayatollah Khamenei said in a televised speech on Thursday night.

The Leader said that according to some accounts, the Zionist regime had planned and prepared for the war for 20 years.

"They had planned a war in which they hoped to provoke the people and force them to fight against the system. But the situation was reversed, and they failed so completely that even those who had disagreements with the system stood alongside it, creating a general unity in the country," he added.

Ayatollah Khamenei referred to the heavy losses suffered by the US in the 12-day war despite deploying its most advanced military equipment, including submarines, fighter jets, and state-of-the-art defense systems.

"The United States was severely damaged in this war, since despite using the latest offensive and defensive weapons, it could not achieve its goal of deceiving the nation and winning their support. Instead, the unity of the people increased, and the United States was also thwarted," he said.

"Of course, we also suffered losses, and, as is the nature of war, precious lives were lost. But the Islamic Republic demonstrated that it is a center of will and power, able to stand strong and make decisions without fear of the noise around it. Moreover, the material damage inflicted on the invading enemy was far greater than the material losses we suffered," he added.

Ayatollah Khamenei touched on the severe disgrace and infamy of the Zionist regime in the Gaza tragedy as one of the most important disasters in the region's history.

"The United States stood alongside the usurping regime and became severely disgraced and discredited, because the people of the world know that the Zionist regime is not capable of causing so much devastation without America."

He called the current Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, the most hated person in the world today and the Zionist regime the most hated organization and ruling clique, adding: "Because the United States stands alongside them, the hatred of the Zionists has also spread to the United States."

Ayatollah Khamenei cited U.S. interventions in different parts of the world as another factor in its increasing isolation, saying U.S. interference in any region causes war, genocide, destruction, and displacement.

He touched on the "costly and futile war" in Ukraine as an example of U.S. interference, saying the current U.S. president, who said he would solve the conflict in three days, is now - after nearly a year - imposing a 28-point plan on the country they dragged into the war.

The plan, crafted by President Donald Trump and the Kremlin without Ukraine's involvement,



reportedly acquiesces to many Russian demands that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has categorically rejected on dozens of occasions, including giving up large pieces of territory.

Ayatollah Khamenei pointed to Israeli attacks on Lebanon, incursions into Syria, crimes in the West Bank, and the dire situation in Gaza as other examples of overt US support for the war and crimes of the "vile regime" of Israel.

The Leader dismissed "rumors that the Iranian government had sent a message to the United States through such-and-such country, saying 'This is pure lies, and such a thing certainly did not exist.'"

He touched on "U.S. betrayal of even its friends in favor of the Zionist and criminal clique and efforts to incite wars worldwide for oil and underground resources, including in Latin America".

"Such a government is certainly not a government that the Islamic Republic seeks to cooperate or maintain relations with," he said.

Ayatollah Khamenei referred to the necessity for nations to resist the greed and interference of powers seeking domination.

He said, "The great element of resistance, which was established and grew in Iran, can today be seen in the slogans supporting Palestine and Gaza across various parts of the world, including Western countries and even the United States."

The Leader said a volunteer force like the Basij could serve any country well. He added that Iran, which has openly confronted international bullies and aggressors, relies on the Basij more than most.

The vitality and dynamism of the Basij, he said, contribute to strengthening the resistance of nations against global oppressors. As resistance grows, he added, the world's downtrodden feel a greater sense of support and empowerment.

Ayatollah Khamenei described the Basij in broad and inclusive terms as a force able to confront enemy strategies in military, economic, industrial, technological, and other sectors.

"The dear scientists who were martyred in the 12-day war, the designers, builders, and launchers of missiles, anyone who has enlightened others with sound reasoning and clear expression against rumors and temptations, the devoted doctors and nurses who did not abandon hospitals during the war, and the athletes who express their devotion to God, religion, country, and nation on the international stage — whether or not they are formal members of the Basij — are all Basij," he added.

Ayatollah Khamenei urged the Iranian people, first and foremost, to preserve and strengthen national unity. He acknowledged the existence of differences among social groups and political factions but stressed the importance of standing together against the enemy, as was seen during the 12-day war, noting that such solidarity is essential to the nation's strength.

The Leader, recommending support for the president and the administration, stated that running the country is difficult and demanding.

He said the administration has already begun implementing positive measures, including continuing unfinished projects initiated by the late President Ebrahim Raisi, and expressed hope that the people would soon see the results.

U.S.-Israeli Efforts to Destroy Iran's Nuclear Capability Immature and Foolish

TEHRAN (PressTV) - The secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) has stated that US and Israeli efforts to eliminate Iran's nuclear capabilities are "immature and foolish," as Iran's nuclear industry is an indigenous technology pursued with full determination.

Speaking to HUM News during his official two-day visit to Pakistan, Ali Larjani said U.S. President Donald Trump's claims about halting Iran's nuclear activities were baseless.

"The idea of the United States and the Zionist regime to destroy Iran's nuclear capabilities is an immature and foolish notion, because the nuclear industry is an indigenous knowledge that we are pursuing with determination," he said.

Larjani rejected the claims saying Iran's nuclear program is a reality, and "the essence of this indigenous knowledge is in the brains of our scientists."

He added that Israel's actions, including assassinations and other terrorist operations, are "nothing but foolish," stating that Iran has thousands of nuclear experts and that assuming its nuclear program has ended is "an immature and foolish notion."

He stressed that Iran is not seeking nuclear weapons but is firmly committed to pursuing peaceful nuclear energy, adding "We will deal with these conditions, and if the enemies commit an atrocious act 10 times, we will face it."

Larjani reiterated that diplomacy is the only real solution, noting "We have never rejected genuine negotiations, whether direct, indirect, or within the 5+1 format."

According to the security chief, the problem arises when the other side predetermines the outcome, which he said is "a farce that merely carries the name of negotiations."

Elsewhere in his remarks, Larjani said that Tehran-Islamabad relations are "deep-rooted and genuine," grounded in shared interests, religious beliefs, and cultural proximity.

He noted that among Iran's neighbors, Pakistan enjoys a particularly privileged position.



"Both countries are pillars of regional power and can play an effective role in establishing peace."

Larjani underlined that Iran and Pakistan can play complementary roles in the region. "There are no limits to expanding ties," he said, emphasizing that both sides are determined to boost cooperation in all areas.

Iran's top security official expressed regret over recent Pakistan-Afghanistan tensions, saying both nations have suffered from long wars.

Larjani noted that Iran had asked Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and President Asif Ali Zardari to specify whatever assistance they believed Tehran could provide, saying Iran is ready to play any role required.

"Pakistan is very dear and noble to Iranians," he said, adding that Tehran is willing to give Pakistan "a carte blanche to use whenever needed".

Commenting on Israel's recent actions in the region—including its attack on Hamas elements in Qatar—and the Pakistan-Saudi strategic defense pact, Larjani slammed the Israeli operation as a "clear reflection of the regime's adventurous nature."

He warned that Israel seeks regional dominance with direct backing from the US. "Their common objective is for the entire region to submit or face destabilization."

Larjani said events in recent months have convinced regional actors, including Saudi Arabia that "the region must rely on itself."

While acknowledging that countries may differ in interpretation, he said stronger Muslim unity ultimately serves the interests of all regional nations.

Larjani criticized U.S.-led initiatives, including the so-called Gaza peace agreement, as unilateral and illegitimate and reiterated Iran's clear stance on Palestine, emphasizing that the future of the Palestinian people should be determined through a democratic vote.

The United States Is Also Indebted to China

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

The relationship between China and the United States is so deeply intertwined that without a comprehensive study, its dimensions are impossible to understand. According to a new study from the AidData research lab at William & Mary University, a claim published in Newsweek shows that China's lending pattern—contrary to public perception—is not focused on developing countries, but rather on wealthy nations. In fact, the United States is the largest recipient of loans from China in the world.

The most important figures from this research, which analyzes 24 years of data (2000–2023), are summarized below:

Key Data	Findings
Total volume of China's lending	\$2.2 trillion
Credit extended to	200 countries worldwide
Largest loan recipient	United States of America
Loan amount to the U.S.	Over \$200 billion
Number of U.S. projects financed	Nearly 2,500 projects
Geographical distribution of projects	Spread across virtually every U.S. state

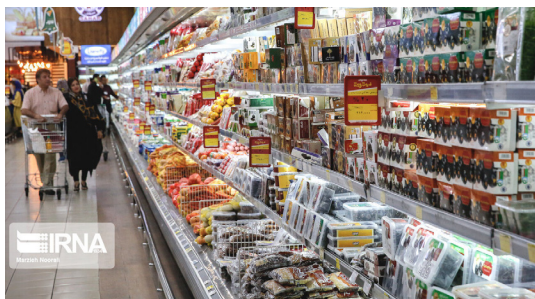
These loans to wealthy nations are focused on critical infrastructure, key minerals, and the acquisition of high-tech assets, including companies that manufacture semiconductor chips.

The report shows that China's strategy is not merely aiding the development of other countries; rather, these loans are increasingly aligned with China's national security priorities and economic interests. More than three-quarters of China's lending operations are now directed at high-income and upper-middle-income countries. This shift contradicts the traditional image of China as a "lender to the developing world."

Following the announcement of the "Made in China 2025" plan, the share of loans dedicated to sensitive and advanced technology sectors (such as robotics, biotechnology, and semiconductors) has increased from 46% to 88% of China's loan portfolio for cross-border acquisitions.

The report also notes that China uses methods such as shell companies in confidential jurisdictions and even secret contracts to conceal the origin of these loans. At the same time, the study highlights a key point: the confidentiality of these loan contracts obligates borrowing companies to hide information about such loans from their own governments. Therefore, as Newsweek points out, this report may only reveal part of the extent of these loans and their underlying dimensions.

Iran's Annual Inflation Rate Reaches 40.4% in November



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's Statistical Center announced that the country's annual inflation rate reached 40.4% in November 2025, marking a 1.5 percentage point increase compared to the previous month.

According to the Statistical Center of Iran, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for households nationwide rose to 417.5 points in November. This reflects a 3.4% month-to-month increase, a 49.4% jump compared with November 2024, and a 40.4% rise over the twelve months ending this month compared with the same period last year.

Point-to-point inflation—defined as the percentage change in CPI compared with the same month last year—stood at 49.4%. This means that Iranian households spent, on average, 49.4% more for the same basket of goods and services than they did in November 2024. The point-to-point inflation rate increased by 0.8 percentage points compared with the previous month.

Monthly inflation, calculated as the price change compared with the previous month, registered 3.4% in November. The breakdown shows that prices for food, beverages, and tobacco rose by 4.7%, while non-food goods and services increased by 2.6%.

The report shows that annual inflation differs among income brackets. In November, inflation ranged from 39.5% for the highest-income decile to 41.7% for the lowest-income group. The inflation gap between income deciles widened to 2.2 percentage points, up from 1.9 points the previous month.



Iran and Afghanistan Discuss Removal of Trade Barriers

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade held talks with his Afghan counterpart in Istanbul, emphasizing the need to remove barriers hindering trade between the two neighboring countries. Nouruddin Azizi, Afghanistan's Minister of Commerce and Industry, met with Seyyed Mohammad Atabak, Iran's Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade, to discuss ways to expand bilateral trade cooperation. During the meeting, Atabak stressed the importance of strengthening commercial relations and called for the elimination of existing trade obstacles between Tehran and Kabul.

Iran Invites Russian Companies to Participate in Regional Food Hub Initiative



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Minister of Agriculture has invited Russian companies to invest and participate in Iran's plan to become a regional food hub, emphasizing opportunities for joint production, processing, and re-export of agricultural goods. Speaking at a meeting held Thursday with executives and representatives of major Russian agricultural producers and exporters at the Iranian Embassy in Moscow, Minister Gholamreza Nouri Ghazalje highlighted the expanding cooperation between the two countries, following the signing of a comprehensive strategic agreement by the presidents of Iran and Russia in January 2025.

He noted that agriculture and food currently account for two-thirds of trade between Tehran and Moscow. "Iran and Russia are fully capable of supplying each other's food and agricultural needs," Nouri Ghazalje said, adding that Tehran is committed to meeting Russia's demands with high-quality production.

The minister emphasized that Iran's policy prioritizes sourcing grains, edible oils, and essential agricultural inputs from Russia. He pointed out that a significant portion of Iran's processing capacity in grain milling, oil extraction, and livestock feed production remains underutilized. The government's new strategy, he said, is to activate these semi-operational units and maximize their production.

Nouri Ghazalje highlighted that Iran's existing processing capacities create an opportunity for importing larger volumes of Russian agricultural commodities and re-exporting processed products to regional markets, including neighboring and African countries.

He invited major Russian companies to take part in grain production, processing, and logistics inside Iran, offering opportunities to ship products to third markets. "Any company ready to operate with simpler and more flexible conditions can secure a larger share of the Iranian and export markets," he stated.

He added that no major obstacles remain to expanding agricultural trade, and announced that Tehran is negotiating a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Russia's Ministry of Agriculture to streamline plant quarantine procedures for bilateral trade. He also said that Russian companies could increase their market share by obtaining land and terminals at Iranian ports.

Iran-Russia Trade on the Rise



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The volume of trade between Iran and Russia is steadily increasing, according to Iran's Minister of Agriculture, Gholamreza Nouri. Speaking to reporters upon arriving in Moscow, Nouri announced that a significant amount of livestock feed originating from Russia has been stored in Iran's northern ports, describing it as an important step toward strengthening food security and meeting domestic needs.

Nouri emphasized that relations between Iran and the Russian Federation are "strategic and strongly supported by senior officials of both countries." He noted that, following President Masoud Pezeshkian's visit to Moscow in December 2024 and the signing of a comprehensive strategic treaty between the two countries, the Ministry of Agriculture began expanding cooperation with Russia, particularly in the fields of agriculture and food.

Nouri explained that, during this period, contracts were signed with Russian companies and memoranda of understanding were reached with the Russian Ministry of Agriculture to facilitate trade in this sector. He added that Russia is a valuable market for some Iranian agricultural products and a key supplier of essential commodities such as grains and oil.

"After the signing of the strategic treaty, the ministry focused on sourcing the country's grain needs from Russia," he said. Nouri highlighted several factors encouraging Iranian traders to work with Russia, including easier access, trade provisions outlined in recent agreements, the ability to conduct transactions in national currencies, and the opening of letters of credit through banking cooperation.

Investment Package for Iranian Business Leaders

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - During a visit of an Iranian trade delegation to Cuba, Samad Hassanzadeh, President of Iran's Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture, met with Cuba's Minister of Domestic Trade to discuss expanding economic cooperation between the two countries. Hassanzadeh welcomed Cuba's investment proposals, highlighting Iran's capabilities across various sectors, including industry, agricultural technologies, food production, healthcare, mining, tourism, and oil and gas. He emphasized that Iran's Chamber of Commerce, relying on its members who lead the country's major economic enterprises, is well-positioned to implement Cuba's proposed investment initiatives.

Hassanzadeh recalled Iran's appreciation for Cuba's cooperation during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in supplying vaccines to Iran, and said the main proposal from Iranian businesses is readiness to help revive and reconstruct Cuba's large, long-inactive factories and enterprises.

He stressed that for such collaboration to succeed, Iranian investors must become familiar with Cuba's foreign investment regulations, and necessary facilitation measures should be provided to ensure investment security while enhancing the appeal for Iranian participation.

Qadir Gheifeh, Vice President of Iran's Chamber of Commerce, noted the wide range of cooperation opportunities between Iran and Cuba, emphasizing the potential for mutually beneficial "win-win" partnerships. Gheifeh highlighted that Cuba's governance structure relies heavily on state mechanisms for major projects and underscored that investment security is a prerequisite for attracting investors. He added that Iranian businesses must gain greater familiarity with Cuban industrial and trade regulations to enter the market successfully.

He predicted that if the legal framework is favorable, bilateral trade between Iran and Cuba could reach \$1 billion within five years. Gheifeh identified priority sectors for Iranian investment, including construction, road development, food production, agriculture, and mining, noting Iran's technical expertise in mining and mineral processing could facilitate collaboration from exploration to production.

The Cuban Minister of Domestic Trade, citing directives from the Cuban President, announced efforts to identify opportunities for importing food, clothing, and consumer goods from Iran following the Iranian pavilion's showcase at the 2025 Havana International Fair. He emphasized Cuba's flexibility in trade and the potential to establish new joint ventures and expand bilateral economic activities.

The minister said Cuba's main policy is to meet the population's priority needs by building domestic production infrastructure. He stressed that domestic investment is the most effective way to offset the economic impact of U.S. sanctions.



Reiterating Cuba's commitment to support foreign investors, the minister also noted that investors must accept the inherent risks. He added that the Iranian Embassy in Havana would facilitate communication regarding Cuba's priority needs, including energy, food, and clothing sectors, and expressed readiness for cooperation in these areas.

Meanwhile later Hassanzadeh emphasized Iran's capacity to help revive Cuba's sugar industry and establish cement factories during a meeting with Antonio Caricarte Corona, President of Cuba's Chamber of Commerce. Hassanzadeh requested that Cuba provide a list of idle factories and priority needs to guide Iranian businesses in expanding trade and investment.

Speaking during the Iranian trade delegation's visit to Cuba, Hassanzadeh highlighted the Havana International Fair as an excellent opportunity to strengthen commercial relations. "Chambers of commerce worldwide have a social responsibility toward their nations, and we are committed to fulfilling this role," he said.

He noted that both Iran and Cuba have long experienced harsh sanctions but stressed that Iran has developed substantial capabilities in technical and engineering services, modern agricultural technologies, food production, and industrial machinery despite these challenges.

Hassanzadeh explained that Iran is ready to participate in restoring Cuban production units that remain inactive due to sanctions. "Cuba has a long history of sugarcane cultivation, sugar production, and exports worldwide, but the industry is not as vibrant today. We believe Iran can play a significant role in revitalizing this sector," he said.

The Iranian chamber president also highlighted opportunities for joint cooperation in medical and pharmaceutical fields, noting Cuba's medical capabilities and Iran's production of drugs and medical equipment.

He emphasized the importance of expanding domestic production and self-sufficiency as a key element of economic resilience. "For example, cement is not something Cuba should rely on imports for. Iranian investors are ready to establish several cement factories in Cuba under defined regulations and guarantees," Hassanzadeh said.

In conclusion, he requested that the Cuban Chamber of Commerce provide a comprehensive list of idle factories and priority needs to help Iranian businesses better understand opportunities for collaboration.

Qadir Gheifeh, Vice President of Iran's Chamber of Commerce, added that despite sanctions, Iran has achieved significant industrial growth. "The peoples of Iran and Cuba understand each other well. Cubans have endured unilateral sanctions for over 65 years, and Iran has faced the harshest sanctions. Yet these challenges have not stopped us from striving for development," he said.

Iran, Pakistan to Implement Goods Barter Mechanism Through Consortium Formation

IRAN NEWS Economic DESK

TEHRAN - The Commercial and Investment Counsellor of Pakistan in Iran, in a meeting with the Deputy for International Affairs and Trade Development of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, as well as Iran's Commercial Counsellor in Pakistan, emphasized accelerating the implementation of a barter mechanism and removing trade barriers between the two countries.

According to the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, at the start of the meeting, Hessameddin Hallaj, Deputy for International Affairs and Trade Development of the Tehran Chamber, referred to the history of cooperation between the chambers of Tehran, Karachi, and Lahore, as well as previous exchanges of business delegations between the private sectors of Iran and Pakistan. He noted that trade volume between the two countries has reached \$3.3 billion for the first time in history, a promising development. To achieve the targeted \$10 billion trade level, Hallaj said that the Tehran Chamber of Commerce is prepared to arrange measures such as mutual visits by business delegations, participation in trade events, and holding business matchmaking meetings to identify opportunities, exchange data, and enhance collaboration between traders of both countries.

Hallaj also pointed to the potential formation of joint consortia made up of Iranian and Pakistani companies to execute projects and conduct barter operations. He added that both countries are working on finalizing a list of goods eligible for barter, and that expediting this process would help accelerate trade exchanges.

He further invited Pakistan's embassy to send textile and apparel industry delegations to participate in the "Iran Mode" exhibition scheduled for January.

Aamna Jawaira, Pakistan's Commercial and Investment Counsellor in Tehran, stressed the need to remove trade restrictions between the two nations. She said that Iran has yet to



submit its list of goods eligible for barter, and urged that the list be finalized soon so that business operators can take advantage of new trade facilities.

Jawaira noted that Iran's domestic support policies complicate the establishment of preferential or free trade arrangements between the two countries. She also mentioned her proposal for forming a joint committee on transportation and announced Pakistan's readiness to create a matching consortium in Karachi, adding that these consortia would begin

preliminary barter operations even before a public call for participation.

She expressed hope that once Iran finalizes its barter mechanism, trade flows will accelerate and remaining issues will be resolved through joint working committees. Jawaira also highlighted Iran's restrictions on imports of certain goods, including garments, and stressed the need to lift such barriers, stating that joint investment in the garment sector is also possible.

In the meeting, Morad Nemati Zargaran, Iran's Commercial Counsellor in Pakistan, provided an update on the barter implementation process. He stated that Pakistan has finalized its cooperation arrangements and emphasized that the mechanism must be executed through a consortium model rather than individual or bilateral arrangements.

According to Nemati, the consortium approach will ease implementation and prevent future challenges, as its members would be jointly responsible for fulfilling obligations, creating greater trust and ensuring proper execution of agreements. He proposed forming a pilot consortium in Iran, to be matched with a similar consortium in Pakistan, to connect the two structures. The involvement of credible and well-known companies would help secure the confidence of the Pakistani side, he added.

Increase in Iran–Turkey Trade Volume to \$10b



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Minister of Industry, Mine, and Trade announced that commercial exchanges between Iran and Turkey are expected to rise by \$2 billion next year, bringing the total trade volume to \$10 billion. He emphasized the need to remove barriers hindering the expansion of economic cooperation between Tehran and Ankara.

According to the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade, Seyyed Mohammad Atabak, who is in Turkey to attend the ECO Trade Ministers' Meeting, met with Turkish Trade Minister Ömer Bolat to discuss bilateral trade relations.

Atabak described Turkey as one of the most important trade partners of the Islamic Republic of Iran and stressed the necessity of increasing the volume of trade between the two neighboring countries. He noted that trade between Iran and Turkey has the potential for a significant boost, and expressed hope that resolving minor obstacles would help achieve this target.

Turkish Trade Minister Ömer Bolat stated that trade volume between the two countries has increased by five percent in the current calendar year, reaching \$8 billion. He confirmed that the goal for next year is to reach \$10 billion in trade exchanges. Bolat added that, based on the historical ties and geographical proximity of the two countries, Turkey is prepared to further develop commercial relations with Iran.

During the meeting, both ministers reviewed a number of bilateral trade issues and reached several understandings on expanding cooperation.

Iran's Agricultural Trade Balance Improves by \$3b



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's agricultural trade balance improved by \$3 billion last year despite ongoing challenges and sanctions, according to Gholamreza Gol Mohammadi, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and head of the Agricultural Research, Education, and Extension Organization. He attributed this achievement to teamwork within the sector and the efforts of knowledge-based companies.

Speaking on Thursday at the 4th National Pomegranate Festival in Saveh, Gol Mohammadi reported positive growth in the agricultural sector this year. "Despite serious challenges such as water scarcity and climate change, agricultural growth rose from minus 2.6 percent to positive 3.2 percent," he said.

He added that the agricultural trade deficit decreased from \$11 billion to \$8 billion, indicating a \$3 billion improvement.

According to the deputy minister, the organization under his management employs 17 percent of the country's researchers and produces more than 90 percent of Iran's agricultural technological inputs. He noted that the organization currently preserves over 5.5 million genetic samples.

Gol Mohammadi highlighted Saveh's capacity as the "pomegranate capital of Iran," noting that the country's oldest pomegranate research station is located there. Out of 12 commercial pomegranate varieties introduced nationwide, four originate from Markazi Province, he said.

He also pointed to technological initiatives such as shading systems designed to prevent fruit cracking and sunburn, adding that Iranian pomegranates are now recognized as healthy and organic products.

Death Toll From Hong Kong Tower Blaze Rises to 128

HONG KONG (Dispatches) - The death toll from Hong Kong's deadliest fire in nearly 80 years has risen to 128, with about 200 people still unaccounted for at the Wang Fuk Court high-rise complex in Tai Po, the city's security chief said on Friday.

Firefighting operations have now ended, a government spokesperson added.

The fire, which broke out on Wednesday afternoon, engulfed the estate's eight 32-storey towers, many wrapped in bamboo scaffolding and green mesh for renovation, Reuters reported.

Hong Kong Security Chief Chris Tang said fire alarms in the complex had not been working properly.

Rescue operations concluded after at least 79 people, including 12 firefighters, were injured.



General Sworn In as new Guinea-Bissau Leader, Ousted President Arrives in Senegal



BISSAU (Dispatches) - Guinea-Bissau's military installed Major-General Horta Inta as transitional president on Thursday, a day after soldiers toppled the civilian leadership in a swift power grab made before the results of a weekend election could be announced.

The president who was ousted in the coup, Umaro Sissoco Embalo, arrived in Senegal aboard a special flight following an intervention by the West African regional bloc, Senegal's foreign ministry said in a statement late Thursday.

It was the ninth coup in West and Central Africa in five years and continued a pattern of instability in Guinea-Bissau, a notorious cocaine transport hub with a long history of military interventions in politics.

The self-styled "High Military Command for the Restoration of Order" announced in a televised statement on Wednesday that they had seized power from Embalo. They said the move came in response to a destabilisation plan involving politicians and drug barons, without going into more detail.

Wearing a military uniform and flanked by other military officials, Inta made his first public appearance as leader at a ceremony broadcast Thursday on state television. He said the coup was necessary to stave off a plot by "narcotraffickers" to "capture Guinean democracy" and said the transition would last one year, beginning immediately.

Trump Vows to Freeze Migration From Third World Countries After D.C. Attack

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - U.S. President Donald Trump said on Thursday his administration will "permanently pause" migration from all "Third World Countries", following the death of a National Guard member in an attack near the White House.

The comments mark a further escalation of migration measures Trump has ordered since the shooting on Wednesday that investigators say was carried out by an Afghan national who entered the U.S. in 2021 under a resettlement program.

Trump did not identify any countries by name or explain what he meant by third-world countries or "permanently pause". He said the plan would include cases approved under former President Joe Biden's administration.

"I will permanently pause migration from all Third World Countries to allow the U.S. system to fully recover, terminate all of the millions of Biden illegal admissions, including those signed by Sleepy Joe Biden's autopen, and remove anyone who is not a net asset to the United States," he said on his social media platform, Truth Social.

Trump said he would end all federal benefits and subsidies for "non-citizens", adding he would "denaturalize migrants who undermine domestic tranquility" and deport any foreign national deemed a public charge, security risk, or "non-compatible with Western civilization."

White House and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services did not immediately respond to Reuters' requests for comment.

Trump's remarks followed the death on Thursday of National Guard member Sarah Beckstrom, 20, who was shot in the ambush. Fellow Guardsman Andrew Wolfe, 24, was "fighting for his life", Trump said.

Earlier, officials from the Department of Homeland Security said Trump had ordered a widespread review of asylum cases approved under Biden's administration and Green Cards issued to citizens of 19 countries.



The alleged gunman, identified by officials as 29-year-old Rahmanullah Lakanwal, was granted asylum this year under Trump, according to a U.S. government file seen by Reuters.

He entered the U.S. in a resettlement program set up by Biden after the U.S. military withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021 that led to the rapid collapse of the Afghan government and the country's takeover by the Taliban.

In a separate post prior to his "permanently pause" announcement, Trump claimed that hundreds of thousands of people poured into the U.S. totally "unvetted and unchecked" during what he described as the "horrendous" airlift from Afghanistan.

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services on Wednesday stopped processing all immigration requests relating to Afghan nationals indefinitely.

Trump indicated that his administration's goals are aimed at significantly reducing "illegal and disruptive populations", suggesting that measures would be taken to achieve this outcome.

Even though Lakanwal was in the country legally, the incident bolsters Trump's immigration agenda. Cracking down on both legal and illegal immigration has been a key focus of his presidency, and this case gave him an opportunity to broaden the debate beyond legality to include

stricter vetting of immigrants.

Trump has already deployed additional immigration officers to major U.S. cities to achieve record deportation levels, including many long-term residents and individuals with no criminal record.

Over two-thirds of the roughly 53,000 people arrested by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and detained as of November 15 had no criminal convictions, according to ICE statistics.

Brazil Congress Revives Controversial Environmental Bill



BRASILIA (Dispatches) - Brazil's conservative-led Congress on Thursday reinstated much of a bill that makes it easier for companies to secure environmental permits, infuriating the leftist government and green groups.

President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva had vetoed dozens of provisions of what has been dubbed the "Devastation Bill", but Congress has the power to override those actions.

Lawmakers reversed around 80 percent of Lula's vetoes in a major blow to his government just days after Brazil wrapped up the hosting of COP30 UN climate talks.

The bill "kills environmental licensing in the country", said the Climate Observatory, a coalition of NGOs, vowing to take legal action against it.

For some permits, all that will be required is a simple declaration of the company's commitment to preserving the environment.

This move "contradicts the government's environmental and climate efforts, right after hosting COP30. Very bad news," Institutional Relations Minister Gleisi Hoffmann wrote on X.

The government had warned a day earlier that overturning the vetoes could have "immediate and hard-to-reverse effects," citing the "alarming rise in extreme climate disasters."

Putin Says U.S.-Ukraine Text Could Form Basis for Future Peace Deal

BISHKEK (Dispatches) - Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Thursday that outline draft peace proposals discussed by the United States and Ukraine could become the basis of future agreements to end the conflict in Ukraine, but that if not Russia would fight on.

U.S. President Donald Trump has long said he wants to end the war in Ukraine, Europe's deadliest conflict since World War Two, but his efforts so far, including a summit with President Vladimir Putin in Alaska in August, have not brought peace.

A leaked 28-point U.S. peace plan emerged last week, spooking Ukrainian and European officials who felt it bowed to Moscow's key demands on NATO, Moscow's control of a fifth of Ukraine and restrictions on Ukraine's army.

European powers then gave their counter-proposal for peace and at talks in Geneva, the U.S. and Ukraine said they had created an "updated and refined peace framework" to end the war.

Putin, speaking in Bishkek after a summit with the leaders of a grouping of former Soviet republics, told reporters that the discussions so far were not about a draft agreement of any kind but about sets of issues.

He said that in Geneva, the U.S. and Ukraine had decided to divide up the 28 points into four separate components - and that a copy had been transmitted to Moscow.

"In general, we agree that this could be the basis for future agreements," Putin said. "We see that the American side takes into account our position."

Putin said that some things still needed to be discussed. If Europe wanted a pledge not to attack it, then Russia was willing to give such a formal



pledge, he said, though he added that it was "complete nonsense" to suggest Russia would attack Europe.

Putin mixed a clear public expression of readiness to engage with the Trump administration over a possible peace plan for Ukraine with several warnings that Russia was prepared to fight on if necessary and take more of Ukraine.

Russian forces control more than 19% of Ukraine, or 115,600 square km, up one percentage point from two years ago, and have advanced in 2025 at the fastest pace since 2022, according to pro-Ukrainian maps.

Russia, Putin noted, was being told that it should cease the fighting but needed Kyiv's forces to pull back before it could do so.

"Ukrainian troops must withdraw from the territories they hold, and then

the fighting will cease. If they don't leave, then we shall achieve this by armed means. That's it," Putin said.

Putin said that he considered the Ukrainian leadership to be illegitimate and so it was legally impossible to sign a deal with Kyiv.

It was therefore important, he said, to ensure that any agreement was recognised by the international community - and that the international community recognised Russian gains in Ukraine.

"Therefore, broadly speaking, of course, we ultimately want to reach an agreement with Ukraine. But right now, this is practically impossible. Impossible legally," Putin said.

He said that the Crimean peninsula, which Russia annexed from Ukraine in 2014, and the eastern Donbas region should be a topic for discussions with the

U.S.

Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff plans to visit Moscow early next week, Putin said. U.S. sanctions on Russian oil companies were unexpected, he added.

Commenting on the leak of a recording of a call between top advisers to Trump and Putin, the Kremlin chief rejected the suggestion that Witkoff had shown himself to be biased towards Moscow in peace talks over Ukraine, describing it as nonsense.

"It would be astonishing if he ... rained curses down upon our heads, was very rude and then arrived to develop ties with us," Putin said of Witkoff, casting him as a patriot defending U.S. interests.

Israel Strikes Southern Lebanon on Ceasefire Anniversary

TEL AVIV (Dispatches) - The Israeli military carried out a fresh series of strikes against Hezbollah in southern Lebanon, exactly a year into a ceasefire with the group.

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency said Israeli aircraft launched "a series of raids on Al-Mahmoudiya and Al-Jarmak", just north of the Litani River.

The November 27, 2024 ceasefire sought to end over a year of hostilities between the two sides.

But Israel has repeatedly bombed Lebanon despite the truce, usually saying it is targeting Hezbollah members and infrastructure to stop the group from rearming.

Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam said his country was "in a one-sided war of attrition that is escalating".

The Israeli military said it "struck and dismantled Hezbollah terror infrastructure in several areas in southern Lebanon", in a statement after Thursday's strikes.

It also said it had hit "several launch sites where Hezbollah weapons were stored", "military posts" used by the Iran-backed group, and a storage facility containing weapons.

Israel's military "will continue to operate to remove any threat to the State



of Israel", it said.

Israel said that ever since the ceasefire, it has been trying to prevent Hezbollah from rebuilding by dismantling infrastructure, thwarting its intelligence operations and diminishing its military capabilities.

It said it had carried out around 1,200 "targeted activities" and "eliminated more than 370 terrorists" from Hezbollah, Hamas and other Palestinian groups during the ceasefire.

According to the ceasefire agreement, Hezbollah was required to pull its forces north of the Litani River, some 30 kilometres from the border with Israel, and have its military infrastructure there dismantled.

Under a government-approved plan, the Lebanese army is set to dismantle Hezbollah's military infrastructure south of the river by the end of the year, before tackling the rest of the country.

The US has been piling pressure on the Lebanese government to disarm Hezbollah.

The Lebanese military has said it is carrying out its plan to disarm the group, but Washington and Israel have accused Lebanese authorities of stalling the process.



Malen Powers Villa as Forest Pick Up Vital Europa League Win

PARIS (Dispatches) - Donyell Malen scored twice as Aston Villa beat Young Boys 2-1 in a Europa League tie marred by crowd trouble on Thursday, while Nottingham Forest eased to victory over Malmö.

Malen nodded hosts Villa in front from a Yuri Tielemans cross but was struck on the head while celebrating by an object thrown from the section housing the away supporters.

The Dutch international suffered a small cut but shrugged off the incident and doubled Villa's lead after being teed up by Morgan Rogers just before half-time.

Young Boys fans clashed with police after the goal and captain Loris Benito went over and pleaded with them to settle down as the match was briefly interrupted.

Joel Monteiro pulled one back in the 90th minute for Young Boys with a thumping finish but Villa secured a fourth win in five games to leave them trailing only Lyon and Midtjylland on goal difference.

Villa are on a run of 10 wins in 12 matches in all competitions after a five-match winless run to start the Premier League season.

"I think we've turned it around quite well and we just have to keep this form and stay humble and work hard," Malen told TNT Sports, insisting he was "fine" after being hit by a plastic cup.

Ryan Yates, Arnaud Kalimuendo and Nikola Milenkovic scored as Forest cruised to a 3-0 win over Malmö at the City Ground in a repeat of the 1979 European Cup final.

Yates curled Forest in front before French striker Kalimuendo turned in from close range to net his first goal for the club.

Milenkovic sealed a second win in five European outings for Forest on the hour as Sean Dyche's team climbed into 16th place on eight points.

"It is unbelievable. These nights at the City Ground in Europe, we have to cherish them. They are just so special," Yates told TNT Sports.

"We knew if we performed to what we know we can, we would get the result."

Lyon took over top spot with a 6-0 rout of Maccabi Tel Aviv in Serbia as captain Corentin Tolisso grabbed a hat-trick. Abner Vinicius, Moussa Niakhate and Adam Karabec were also on the scoresheet for the visitors.

Danish side Midtjylland lost their perfect record in the league phase after going down 2-1 away to Serie A leaders Roma.

Neil El Aynaoui and Stephan El Shaarawy got the goals for the Italians before Paulinho's consolation effort.

Celtic earned a precious 3-1 win at Feyenoord despite falling behind to an early strike from Ayase Ueda.

The Scottish champions replied with goals from Yang Hyun-jun, Reo Hatate and substitute Benjamin Nygren to climb up into the play-off places following just a second win in five games.

Rangers picked up their first point after four successive defeats, drawing 1-1 at home to Braga as both teams finished with 10 men.

James Tavernier scored from the spot for Rangers before Braga levelled courtesy of Gabrí Martínez.

Verstappen Chases Qatar Hat-Trick



DOHA (Dispatches) - Max Verstappen is seeking a hat-trick of wins at the Qatar Grand Prix this weekend as this year's Formula One world championship reaches boiling point in the Persian Gulf.

But he will know, better than most, that even with luck on his side he is unlikely to overhaul a 24-point deficit that separates him from McLaren's Lando Norris as they approach the final two events of the season.

Despite being disqualified along with McLaren team-mate and title rival Oscar Piastri, after finishing second at the Las Vegas Grand Prix last Sunday, Norris arrives in Qatar as favourite to lift his first title and clinch McLaren's first team-and-driver double since Mika Hakkinen's success in 1998.

The 26-year-old Briton needs only to hold his nerve and out-score his rivals by two points to leave Qatar as champion on Sunday night.

Of the three, Norris is the only one who has an opportunity to take the crown this weekend.

Having won it four times in a row, Verstappen has the experience and mentality on his side while nerves and apprehension eat at Norris and the seemingly luckless Piastri appears to flounder in search of his recently lost form.

A multitude of scenarios have been thrown up as possibilities, but it is clear that with a substantial cushion Norris has the simplest task and least reason to take risks in Saturday's sprint race and Sunday's floodlit Grand Prix.

Verstappen has closed a 104-point gap behind then-leader Piastri since the start of September with a phenomenal surge of form that has left McLaren fans biting their nails and considering the wisdom of the team's honourable decision to allow their drivers to fight each other.

Such sporting stances have often brought conflict and disappointment, a fact not lost on team boss Andrea Stella, who has been adamant that McLaren will support both men equally until one is mathematically out of the title race.

Cowboys Hold Off Chiefs to Bolster NFL Playoff Bid

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Dallas quarterback Dak Prescott threw for 320 yards and two touchdowns to lead the Cowboys to a crucial 31-28 NFL victory over Kansas City on Thursday that further dimmed the Chiefs' playoff hopes.

The Cowboys, who have now won three straight to revive their own post-season bid, withstood two fourth-down touchdown passes from Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes.

Mahomes threw for four TDs without an interception but couldn't get Kansas City into the win column.

CeeDee Lamb caught seven passes for 112 yards and the Cowboys' first touchdown of the night.

Javonte Williams ran for 59 yards and caught a TD pass and Malik Davis ran for a 43-yard touchdown for Dallas, who have beaten the Super Bowl champion Philadelphia Eagles and last year's Super Bowl runner-



up Kansas City in less than a week.

"We're a hot team right now," said Prescott, brandishing a turkey drumstick in honor of the Thanksgiving holiday.

The Chiefs got off to a quick start as Jaylen Watson intercepted Prescott on the third play from scrimmage to set the stage for a Kansas City touchdown.

But the Cowboys took a 17-14 lead into half-time and pushed the advantage to 20-14 late in the third before Mahomes found Rashee Rice with a three-yard TD pass early in the fourth quarter to put Kansas City back on top 21-20.

Dallas responded with an eight-play, 68-yard drive capped by Prescott's three-yard scoring pass to Williams and a two-point conversion for a 28-21 lead.

Hamilton Says He Has No Regrets Over Joining Ferrari



DOHA (Dispatches) - Lewis Hamilton on Thursday declared he had no regrets about joining Ferrari this year and dismissed his earlier comments, in which he said he was not looking forward to next year, as having been said in the "heat of frustration".

Speaking to reporters at the Lusail International Circuit ahead of this weekend's Qatar Grand Prix, the penultimate event of the year, the 40-year-old seven-time champion admitted it would take him time "to build and grow" at Ferrari.

He distanced himself from his impetuous comments of recent weeks, when he described his season with Ferrari as "a nightmare" and said he was not looking forward to 2026.

"I would be surprised if the other drivers are excited about next year at the end of a season," he said. "Usually, you don't have a lot of energy at the end of the season..."

"It was in the heat of frustration and often there is a lot of frustration at the end of a race, when it doesn't go well. I am excited to see what the team does next year."

Hamilton had been particularly glum in Las Vegas where, for the first time in his career, he was last in qualifying on pure pace but recovered to finish 10th, promoted to eighth following the disqualification of both McLarens.

It extended his run of poor form throughout 2025 with Ferrari as he failed to break his unwanted record of going 22 races with the team without scoring a podium finish. He has never completed a season without a podium.

Liverpool Humbled Again as Arsenal Down Bayern

PARIS (Dispatches) - Liverpool slumped to an embarrassing 4-1 Champions League defeat at Anfield by PSV Eindhoven to pile more pressure on Arne Slot, while Arsenal ended Bayern Munich's unbeaten start to the season with a "statement" win.

Holders PSG saw off Tottenham in an eight-goal thriller at the Parc des Princes and Kylian Mbappe scored four times in a Champions League match for the first time as Real Madrid beat Olympiacos 4-3.

Beleaguered English champions Liverpool suffered a ninth defeat in 12 games in all competitions as they crumbled against PSV.

Liverpool conceded in just the sixth minute when Virgil van Dijk inexplicably handled the ball while appealing for a foul from a corner, with Ivan Perisic dispatching the resulting penalty into the corner.



Slot's struggling side hit back quickly as Dominik Szoboszlai slotted in after visiting goalkeeper Matej Kovar could only parry Cody Gakpo's shot.

PSV came out firing after the interval and restored their lead when Mauro Junior's brilliant pass was steered in expertly by Guus Til.

The hosts' latest humiliation, after a 3-0 home loss to Nottingham Forest at the weekend, was confirmed as Couhaib Driouech twice took advantage of calamitous defending to score late on.

"The emotions are very negative and disappointing, but I have to be positive about the reaction of the players after we went 1-0 down," Slot said.

"Because I think until half-time we played a very good game. We had enough chances to go 2-1 up."