

National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) CEO Hamdi Bovard Said That Iran Has Launched a Project to Produce Natural Gas From a Key Joint Oilfield on Its Maritime Border With Qatar

IRAN NEWS

Marking the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the Iranian Foreign Ministry Reiterated the Country's Unwavering Support for Palestinians, Describing Their Plight as "the Deepest Wound in Human Conscience"

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Iran's Foreign Trade Surpasses \$76.5b in Eight Months



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's foreign trade reached a total of 131.05 million tons valued at \$76.54 billion during the first eight months of the current year, according to data released by the Iranian Customs Administration.

According to reports, from the beginning of the year to the end of Aban (late November), the total volume of imports and exports amounted to 131.05 million tons of various goods, valued at \$76.537 billion. Compared to the same period last year, the trade volume increased slightly by 1.53 percent in weight but declined by 9.38 percent in value.

During this period, Iran exported 105.23 million tons of goods valued at \$36.997 billion to various countries. This represents a 1.17 percent increase in volume compared to the same period last year, while the value of exports decreased by 3.48 percent.

Imports totaled 25.82 million tons, worth \$39.54 billion, showing a 3 percent increase in weight but a 14.29 percent decline in value compared with the same period last year.

Analysts attribute part of the increase in export volume to energy imbalances in industrial and mining sectors. These energy shortages have left production capacities underutilized, prompting some manufacturers to export raw materials such as iron ore concentrate and pellets rather than processing them domestically.

Trump's Announcement of Venezuelan Airspace Closure Reckless, Arbitrary



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran strongly condemns the United States claim of closing Venezuela's airspace, calling it a "blatant breach" of international law and the principles governing civil aviation.

In a statement on Saturday, Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei underscored that Washington's so-called declaration was part of a long pattern of hostile actions against Venezuela's sovereignty, describing the move as arbitrary, reckless, and devoid of legal legitimacy.

He warned that such self-described directives from the White House represented an unprecedented threat to international flight safety, potentially destabilizing global aviation norms and endangering peace and security far beyond South America.

The statement echoed concerns raised across diplomatic and aviation circles, as experts noted that no country had the authority to unilaterally close another one's airspace under global civil aviation law.

Earlier, US President Donald Trump used his social media platform, Truth Social, to issue an informal warning, claiming that airlines and pilots were to treat Venezuela's airspace as "entirely closed."

Venezuela dismissed the warnings as politically motivated and aimed at isolating the country rather than ensuring safety.

It swiftly revoked the licenses of six international airlines that had suspended operations, denouncing them for aligning with US pressure and contributing to "state terrorism."

Majlis Speaker Blasts Australia's Moves Against IRGC

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - In a forceful address to Iran's Parliament on Sunday, Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf condemned the Australian government's recent decision to impose designations against the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), calling the move a "dangerous and futile attempt" that would neither diminish the IRGC's regional influence nor distract global opinion from Israel's actions in Gaza.

Speaking during an open session of the Majlis, Qalibaf used the opportunity to call for stronger national unity, emphasize unwavering support for the administration, and highlight pressing domestic issues — most notably the worsening air pollution crisis that affects major Iranian cities each winter.

He sharply criticized the Australian government's recent step to apply sanctions and labels against Iran's IRGC, asserting that such actions were politically motivated and aimed at appeasing Israel.

He stated that the IRGC, "as a people-rooted institution with a decisive role in confronting terrorism in West Asia," would not be weakened by "baseless accusations." Qalibaf argued that Canberra's policies were designed to shift attention away from what he described as the "genocide in Gaza" and the Israeli government's military operations there.

"If Australia believes it can buy favor with the Zionist regime through such a dangerous act, it should know that the disgrace of supporting the Zionists will remain imprinted in the minds of the region's nations and the Muslim world," he declared.

This marks one of the strongest reactions from an Iranian official since Australia tightened its posture toward organizations linked to Iran earlier this year.

Earlier in his address, Qalibaf thanked Iran's Supreme Leader for clarifying what he described as "the true picture of Iran's victory" following the recent 12-day conflict, pushing back against Western media portrayals of Iran as weakened.

Reiterating the Supreme Leader's message, Qalibaf urged lawmakers and political factions to avoid partisan divides.

"We must never — under any excuse or justification — place factional interests above national interests," he stressed. "In all sincerity, we must consider the government's success as our own success and provide genuine support to a deeply committed and hard-working president and his administration."

His remarks appeared aimed at reinforcing cooperation between Parliament and the executive branch at a time when both institutions face major economic and geopolitical pressures.

Turning to domestic concerns, Qalibaf expressed alarm at the seasonal resurgence of severe air pollution, a recurring issue especially in Tehran and other industrial centers.



"This is a phenomenon that grows more severe each year," he noted, adding that temporary or short-term measures will not resolve the crisis.

He instructed the Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources and Environment Committee — with the support of the Oversight Department — to present a comprehensive report to Parliament on the implementation status of the Clean Air Act. The report is expected to identify shortcomings among executive bodies and propose legislative amendments to strengthen enforcement.

Qalibaf also commemorated the anniversary of the martyrdom of Ayatollah Seyyed Hassan Modarres — a symbol of parliamentary independence — and used the occasion to highlight Parliament's priorities during its twelfth term.

He said that Iran's Seventh Development Plan, recently approved with a problem-solving approach, includes clear provisions intended to address economic and structural challenges. Executing these policies in a prioritized and consistent manner, he argued, could rapidly improve daily life for ordinary citizens while also paving the way for long-term reforms.

He emphasized that the plan contains critical "drivers of progress" capable of placing Iran on a robust development path if properly implemented.

"Parliament stands beside the government with all its capacity," he said. "Through consultation and sincere oversight, we aim to ensure that the objectives of the Seventh Plan are realized so that people can see tangible results both in the short and long term."

He highlighted Parliament's recent activity during the 12-day conflict, noting that lawmakers continued legislating despite heightened regional tensions.

Among the key measures passed was the law suspending Iran's cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency — legislation he described as enhancing Iran's "strategic leverage" amid international pressure.

Concluding his remarks, Qalibaf said the administration and Parliament share a unified commitment toward implementing the Seventh Development Plan. He praised the president for his cooperation and expressed optimism that this alignment would lead to meaningful progress.

"Our shared covenant with the people is the Seventh Development Plan," he said. "With the brotherhood that exists today between the government and Parliament, and the president's sincere cooperation, we hope to achieve a new level of success in implementing its provisions."

Tehran's Palestine Initiative Centers on Palestinians' Right to Self-Determination

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian reaffirmed that Iran's proposed political framework for resolving the Palestinian issue is grounded in the return of refugees and the exercise of Palestinians' right to self-determination through a national referendum.

Pezeshkian detailed Iran's official position in a formal letter addressed to the United Nations. The president emphasized that Tehran views the Palestinian question as inseparable from international law, democratic norms, and the historical rights of the indigenous population of Palestine.

Pezeshkian said the Islamic Republic's plan — officially submitted to the United Nations — calls for the return of all Palestinian refugees to their homeland and the holding of a comprehensive referendum among what he termed the "original people of Palestine," including Muslims, Christians, and Jews.

He described this as a lawful and democratic alternative to previous initiatives that he argued have failed to secure justice or lasting stability.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that the only fundamental solution to the Palestinian issue is ending the systematic occupation of the historic land of the Palestinian nation, enabling the return of Palestinian refugees, and allowing them to exercise their right to self-determination," he wrote.

In his letter, Pezeshkian described 29 November — the UN-designated International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People — as a moment for the global community to reflect on "eight decades of occupation" and the ongoing hardships faced by Palestinians.

He condemned what he described as Israel's continued "crimes" against Palestinians,



particularly in Gaza, claiming these actions unfold "before the eyes of the world" while certain governments remain silent.

The Iranian president argued that the occasion serves as a reminder of the international community's moral and legal responsibility to support the Palestinian people, particularly in their efforts to pursue statehood.

Pezeshkian also criticized global organizations for what he described as their failure to hold Israel accountable.

He wrote that the inability of international institutions to curb Israeli policies demonstrates the "greatest threat to global peace and security," adding that governments must now take "serious and effective steps" in line with global public opinion to halt aggression against Palestinians.

Reiterating Iran's longstanding position, Pezeshkian stressed that Tehran will continue to support the Palestinian cause across political, humanitarian, and diplomatic fronts.

He praised the "legitimate resistance" of Palestinian youth and urged the international community to confront Israel's actions, which he argued violate international law and numerous UN resolutions.

The letter highlights Iran's effort to formally present its proposal as a legally framed solution rather than a political slogan. Pezeshkian wrote that the initiative seeks to resolve the Palestinian question based on two key principles:

- The right to self-determination, and
- The right of return for all Palestinian refugees to their ancestral lands.

By placing these principles at the center of any future settlement, the plan aims to ensure a lasting resolution rooted in historical rights rather than temporary political arrangements.

Pezeshkian concluded the letter by expressing full solidarity with the Palestinian people and honoring what he called their "brave resistance" against Israeli actions. He offered prayers for their victory and for the liberation of Palestine.

We Are Preparing for War

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

The quantitative and qualitative enhancement of the Army's Ground Force is the axis of readiness. Accordingly, based on official reports, Brigadier General Ali Jahanshahi, the newly appointed commander of the Army Ground Force, announced five strategic principles as this force's charter of action in his first speech. These principles were emphasized by the Commander-in-Chief in his appointment decree.

The Five Strategic Principles of the Army Ground Force:

- Leadership-centered (Velayat-oriented);
- Justice-centered; Efficiency; Technology; and skill enhancement

Brigadier General Jahanshahi stressed that the direction of the Army Ground Force is defined according to these five principles and by the direct instructions of Iran's leader in his appointment order.

Based on this, his main mission is: "Making worthy efforts to enhance mobility, efficiency, human capital, and weaponry and equipment in responding to modern threats by utilizing spiritual strength, experience, available capacities, and emerging technologies."

He also referred to the experience of the 12-day imposed war and the transition of warfare from a hard form to "cognitive and hybrid warfare", declaring the full readiness of the force under his command to respond to any threat.



Brigadier General Ali Jahanshahi, who was appointed commander of the Army Ground Force in Azar 1404 (December 2025), possesses widely praised command and staff experience.

His record reflects these qualifications: Deputy for Field Oversight and Evaluation, Khatam al-Anbia Central Headquarters (2020-2025); Coordinating Deputy of the Army Ground Force (2016-2020); Commander of the Northeastern Regional Headquarters of the Ground Force (2013-2016); Commander of the 77th Khorasan Infantry Division (2010-2013); a Commander of the 04 Training Center in Birjand (2007-2010); and Readiness Outlook

The new commander of the Army Ground Force has outlined upcoming programs within the framework of the five principles, with the following objectives:

- A Mobile, Agile, and Efficient Force:
- Emphasis on becoming a force that will have significant capabilities in future wars.
- Use of Emerging Technologies:
- Artificial intelligence
- Strengthening drone and air-defense sectors
- Cooperation with knowledge-based companies and scientific elites
- Modernization and Upgrading:
- Updating weapons and enhancing capabilities in areas such as electronic warfare, missile systems, and artillery
- Strengthening Human Capital:
- Multi-skilling of personnel
- Improving their livelihood and morale

This strategic framework outlines the roadmap for Iran's Army Ground Force under the new command.

Therefore, both the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and the Islamic Republic of Iran Army, with exceptional morale, are in full readiness for an all-out war to decisively settle the score with the enemy, while simultaneously enhancing combat spirit and equipment.

Iran Navy Ready to Support Friendly and Neighboring Countries' Vessels

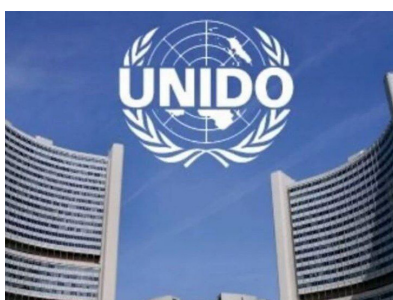


IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The Iranian Navy has announced its readiness to provide services to the vessels of friendly and neighboring countries, in line with the Islamic Republic's policy of peace and friendship, Navy Commander Rear Admiral Shahram Irani said.

The statement came during the unveiling ceremony of the newly commissioned support base Kurdistan and the induction of the refurbished destroyer Sahand into the fleet of the Iranian Navy's First Naval Region. Rear Admiral Irani highlighted the operational capabilities of the modernized Sahand, describing it as a versatile, multi-purpose combat vessel equipped with state-of-the-art systems for various naval operations.

IRAN NEWS



Iran Elected to Two Principal Policy-Making Bodies of UNIDO

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) has included the Islamic Republic of Iran as a member of two of its main policy-making bodies, namely the Industrial Development Board (IDB) and the Program and Budget Committee (PBC).

UNIDO, one of the specialized agencies in the UN based in Vienna with 168 members, took the decision on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group during the 21st session of the organization's General Conference in the capital of Saudi Arabia, this week.

Iran was proposed for the IDB and PCB membership in the Riyadh meeting that brought together member and observer countries of the UNIDO, as well as participants and representatives from regional, international, and specialized institutions related to sustainable industrial development.

Qom's Silk Carpets Hold Potential for New Trade Links With Malaysia



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - In a recent meeting with Malaysia's ambassador to Iran, Peyman Bagheri, Vice President of Iran's Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, highlighted the unique capacity of Qom's handmade silk carpets to strengthen commercial exchanges between the two countries.

During a visit to the city of Qom, Bagheri took part in a joint session attended by the Malaysian ambassador, as well as the president and board members of the Qom Chamber of Commerce, the head of the Iran Chamber's Carpet Commission, and the chairman of the Qom Handmade Carpet Exporters Union. In this gathering, Bagheri underscored the economic and cultural significance of Qom, calling it a province with considerable potential in both traditional and industrial sectors.

Bagheri noted that Iran's network of 34 provincial chambers demonstrates varying levels of activity and influence, with Qom recognized as one of the more dynamic and impactful branches. He pointed out that Qom occupies a unique position in Iran due to its religious, cultural, and industrial attributes. Among its most distinguished products—such as the renowned local sweet “sohan”—Qom's handmade silk carpets stand out as globally recognized handicrafts that contribute substantially to the economic identity of the province.

Expressing appreciation for the Malaysian ambassador's visit to Qom, Bagheri emphasized that the envoy's participation in an event dedicated to handmade carpets offers an important opportunity for dialogue. He expressed hope that such exchanges would pave the way for expanded economic and cultural cooperation between Qom and Malaysia, particularly in the handmade carpet sector.

Bagheri stressed that Qom's industrial and export capacities, especially the internationally acclaimed reputation of its silk carpets, provide a solid foundation for enhancing trade relations between Iranian and Malaysian business communities. He added that more structured and targeted economic diplomacy can significantly strengthen handicraft exports and open new avenues for international marketing, enabling Iranian products to achieve a more prominent presence in global markets.

Cultural Exchanges Between Tehran and Beijing Should Evolve Into a Lasting Partnership



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - On the sidelines of the General Assembly of the Asia Cultural Heritage Alliance (ACHA), Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri, held a significant meeting with Li Chun, Vice Minister of Culture and Tourism of China and Chairman of ACHA. The talks opened a new, positive chapter for strengthening cultural and tourism cooperation between the two countries and outlined a clearer path for future joint initiatives.

According to a report from the Iranian Ministry of Cultural Heritage, the meeting took place during the ACHA General Assembly in the Chinese city of Chongqing. Salehi-Amiri expressed appreciation for China's extensive and effective cooperation in the fields of cultural heritage and tourism, highlighting Iran's rich capacities in both tangible and intangible heritage.

Referring to Iran's numerous UNESCO-listed sites and the country's diversity across 20 tourism categories, Salehi-Amiri emphasized that Iran possesses a wide range of cultural and tourism attractions capable of deepening long-term, purposeful cooperation with China.

He also noted the growing interest among Iranian tourists in visiting China's historical and cultural destinations. In this context, he stressed the importance of learning from China's successful experiences in developing museums, exhibition technologies, and the application of modern tools such as artificial intelligence in cultural sectors.

Private Sector Cleared to Participate in Attracting Foreign Investment

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's Acting Head of the Organization for Investment, Economic, and Technical Assistance announced that, for the first time, the private sector will be able to operate “foreign investment promotion agencies,” a move he described as a significant step toward activating the real engine of Iran's private economy to capture international capital.

Mehdi Heydari said the recently issued guidelines for the establishment, operation, and oversight of Foreign Investment Promotion Agencies (FIPAs) aim to create a specialized, professional network dedicated to attracting foreign investment into the country.

Under Article 30 of the Law on Financing Production and Infrastructure, the organization is obligated to design a framework for the establishment of such agencies.

Heydari explained that the guideline provides the necessary prerequisites to clarify how these agencies will be formed, along with the standards for their establishment, operations, supervision, and accountability.

“Believing that Iran's private sector has reached a level of maturity and dynamism that enables it to identify and showcase the country's economic capacities—turning them into negotiable opportunities and facilitating the international engagements necessary for attracting investment and financing—we are working to ensure that these efforts take place through the genuine economic infrastructure of the country,” he said.

The deputy minister noted that in most countries, investment promotion is a fully professional, competitive, and specialized field, relying on the expertise of investment consulting firms.

“In Iran, these agencies will play three main roles: promoting and shaping Iran's foreign investment image, producing relevant content, presenting opportunities, and participating in global events with targeted marketing strategies,” he said.

He added that the agencies will also provide comprehensive advisory and operational services to foreign investors—from initial project familiarization to company registration, licensing, inter-agency coordination, commencement of operations, post-investment support, problem resolution, licensing follow-up, and investment development.

“This model will enhance agility, specialization, and the private sector's capacity in attracting foreign investment,” he said.

Heydari emphasized that beyond their services, the agencies are expected to act as trustworthy and professional advisors, helping improve the investment climate, identify obstacles, and propose practical solutions.

Explaining the criteria for receiving a license, Heydari said Iran's economic landscape, combined with the private sector's capabilities, requires forming credible and reliable institutions capable of professional international engagement and smooth information exchange.

For this reason, he outlined several strict, competency-based requirements for applicants, including:

A minimum capital of 20 billion tomans; Capability to conduct feasibility analyses; Content production abilities in three languages; and experienced management with no history of financial misconduct.

“These criteria ensure that both foreign investors and domestic partners can build accurate trust in these agencies, and that the market remains protected from



unprofessional activity,” Heydari noted.

He explained that the establishment license is issued after document review by the Secretariat and the Evaluation Board and is valid for six months. To obtain an operating license, the agency must demonstrate sufficient capital, an appropriate office, an updated statute, and fully developed analytical and content production infrastructure. After evaluation, a two-year operational license is granted.

Heydari highlighted that the guideline establishes strong and multi-layered supervisory mechanisms, including periodic evaluations, continuous

reporting, audits of financial statements, field inspections, and case-specific inquiries. In the event of violations, the Evaluation Board can recommend renewal, suspension, warning, or revocation of a license.

“These evaluations are among the most important criteria for license renewal and ensure that service quality and professional conduct are consistently maintained,” he said.

Asked what services foreign investors will receive, Heydari stated that investors typically need clarity on three questions before entering a country:

Which projects are ready and credible? How will administrative processes proceed, and who will guide them? Which institution is responsible if challenges arise?

“These agencies are designed specifically to answer those questions,” he said, noting that they will analyze opportunities, prepare professional investment packages, conduct legal and administrative follow-ups, and accompany investors at every stage.

“In essence, we have created a specialized, single point of contact in the private sector for facilitating foreign investment.”

The official noted that with the Investment Organization's approval, agencies may establish domestic or overseas branches—a significant advantage, as these offices will introduce Iran's economic capacities directly and professionally in target countries.

“Having professional promotion agencies is one of the key indicators in international investment evaluations. Building this network improves the quality of project promotion, facilitates investor engagement, and enhances Iran's ranking,” he said.

He added that high-quality service provision can also strengthen the agencies' reputation inside and outside the country, turning them into powerful engines for foreign capital attraction.

Heydari stated that holding economic and educational events, participating in domestic and international exhibitions, and offering policy recommendations are all essential parts of the agencies' role.

As agile, intelligent advisors to policymakers, their input can accelerate improvements in Iran's investment environment.

The Investment Organization will introduce these agencies as official, accredited service providers to foreign investors and domestic beneficiaries, incorporating them into ongoing international and domestic engagements whenever possible.

Heydari concluded by stressing that priority will be given to venture investment agencies, which—through structural reforms pursued by the Ministry of Economy and the Investment Organization—will be able to mobilize financial resources and execute high-risk, high-potential investment projects.

Annual Selection of Heritage-Friendly Cities and Villages Proposed for Asia



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts emphasized the need for greater cooperation among Asian countries to safeguard their shared heritage, proposing the annual selection of “heritage-friendly cities and villages” as a continent-wide initiative to boost public participation and promote sustainable heritage management.

According to a report by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri presented a new regional governance initiative during the second General Assembly of the Asian Cultural Heritage Alliance (ACHA) in Chongqing, China.

“I propose that the annual selection of heritage-friendly cities and villages be implemented as a comprehensive, continent-wide program,” he said, noting that such an initiative would foster healthy competition among regions and strengthen public engagement in heritage preservation.

Salehi-Amiri described the role of local administrations as “central and decisive,” adding that mayors and local officials can take meaningful steps to protect and revive historical sites and cultural traditions by involving local communities, strengthening their sense of belonging, and making informed decisions. The annual selection, he said, would create a platform for sharing experiences and scaling successful models across Asia.

The minister expressed gratitude to the Chinese government and Sun Yeli, China's Minister of Culture and Tourism, before outlining Iran's views on the future of Asian cooperation in the field of cultural heritage.

Iran's Minister Thanks Turkey for Assisting in Extinguishing Elit Forest Fire



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's Minister of Agriculture Jihad expressed gratitude to Turkey for its cooperation in extinguishing the wildfire in the Elit forests of Chalus.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture Jihad, Gholamreza Nouri Ghazaleh met with Turkish Minister of Agriculture and Forestry Ibrahim Yumaklı during the international conference on “Preventing Food and Water Loss” in Turkey, where the two officials discussed expanding bilateral cooperation.

During the meeting, Nouri Ghazaleh thanked Turkey for assisting in fighting the forest fires in northern Iran, calling the gesture a reflection of the close, constructive, and mutually beneficial relations between the two neighboring countries.

Highlighting ongoing interactions, he stated that the broad range of shared issues between the agriculture ministries of Iran and Turkey necessitates stronger cooperation in the fields of food security and agriculture.

Emphasizing the importance of exchanging expertise in agriculture, drought management, livestock affairs, water resource management, and agricultural research, Nouri Ghazaleh also stressed the need to remove obstacles and facilitate cross-border trade, expressing Iran's readiness for joint collaboration with Turkey.

Turkish Minister of Agriculture and Forestry Ibrahim Yumaklı stated that food security and improved water productivity are two major factors influencing economic stability and development—especially for key regional countries like Iran and Turkey.

He noted that both nations face serious challenges and concerns regarding the consequences of these issues and must therefore engage in deep and meaningful cooperation.

A Major Step Toward Normalizing Iran's FATF Status

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - A roadmap outlining the Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism's (EAG) technical assistance to the Islamic Republic of Iran—aimed at helping the country exit the FATF list of high-risk jurisdictions and enhance its national anti-money laundering (AML) and counter-terrorist financing (CFT) system—was officially approved at the EAG's 43rd plenary meeting.

According to the Financial Intelligence Center of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance, Hadi Khani, Secretary of the High Council for Preventing and Combating Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing and head of Iran's delegation to the meeting, highlighted Iran's three-year engagement with the EAG.

“Although Iran is an observer member, over the past three years we have made full use of the limited opportunities available to observers to consistently present reports on our domestic AML advancements,” he said.

Khani explained that this steady transparency and reporting led EAG members at the group's 41st plenary in Indore, India, in 2024 to approve a proposal for providing technical assistance to Iran.

The head of the Financial Intelligence Center noted that a series of exchanges between Iran, the EAG Secretariat, and member states since 2024 culminated in the adoption of a joint cooperation program.

The program—consisting of 23 specific actions across various areas of AML and CFT—was approved at the closing session of the 43rd plenary in Minsk, Belarus, on November 27 and



communicated to all members and the Secretariat for implementation.

Khani described the approval of such a program for a non-member country as historic and unprecedented, emphasizing:

“Despite Iran not having sought full membership and remaining an observer state—without paying the costs associated with membership—the extensive technical and training support provided by member countries signals a shift in the international

community's perception of Iran's approach to global AML/CFT engagement.”

He added that Iran should make use of this new platform to deepen trust with aligned countries and expand its network of international partners.

Khani also highlighted Iran's active participation in EAG sessions over the past three years.

“At the recent plenary, we presented some of Iran's achievements in developing smart systems for monitoring financial flows, which received broad recognition,” he said.

He stressed that the Financial Intelligence Center remains firmly committed to strengthening domestic technical and legal infrastructure for AML enforcement, enabling Iran to present a realistic picture of its performance internationally and counter efforts by hostile states to portray the country as high-risk.

The Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism is one of the nine FATF-style regional bodies. Its 43rd plenary meeting was held in Minsk, Belarus, from November 24 to 27, with the participation of 35 delegations from 18 countries and more than 15 international organizations.

Macron to Host Zelensky for Talks in Paris on Monday

PARIS (Dispatches) - Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky will visit French President Emmanuel Macron in Paris on Monday, said the French presidential office, as the U.S. pushes a plan to end the war between Moscow and Kyiv. Meanwhile, Ukraine used drones to attack two "shadow fleet" tankers, believed to be covertly transporting sanctioned Russian oil, a Ukrainian security official said Saturday.



Death Toll From Gaza War Surpasses 70,000



GAZA CITY (Dispatches) - The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza on Saturday said more than 70,000 people have been killed since the war between Israel and Hamas erupted more than two years ago.

The milestone comes as a fragile US-brokered ceasefire largely holds, but with both sides accusing the other of violating the terms of the deal.

In a statement, Gaza's health ministry said the death toll from the war had risen to 70,100.

The ministry said that since the ceasefire came into effect on October 10, 354 Palestinians had been killed by Israeli fire.

Two bodies arrived at hospitals in the Gaza Strip in the past 48 hours, the ministry said, one of which had been recovered from beneath the rubble.

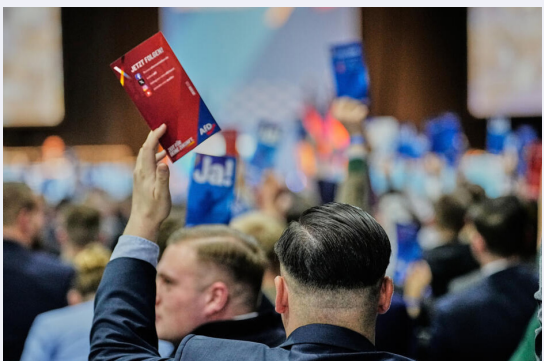
It noted that the spike from the last death toll was due to the fact that the data relating to 299 bodies had been processed and approved by the authorities.

Despite the ceasefire, the Palestinian territory remains in a deep humanitarian crisis.

The latest toll comes as the United Nations marks the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, on November 29 each year.

"In so many ways, this tragedy has tested the norms and laws that have guided the international community for generations," UN chief Antonio Guterres said in a statement.

Germany's Far-Right AfD Sets Up Youth Wing, Drawing Thousands of Demonstrators



BERLIN (Dispatches) - Thousands of demonstrators gathered Saturday in the central German city of Giessen for the launch of far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party's new youth organisation. The meeting was delayed as some AfD supporters clashed with police.

A confident far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) gathered Saturday to found its new youth organisation as thousands of protesters converged on the western city of Giessen, some of them clashing with police.

Demonstrators began descending on the central town from the early morning, with police also out in force. The meeting had been due to start at 10am local time but only got underway hours later, accompanied by audible whistles, drums and chants from the protesters outside.

Demonstrators blocked or tried to block roads in and around the city of some 93,000, delaying many delegates' arrival. Police said they used pepper spray after stones were thrown at officers at one location. In another case, police said they used water cannons to clear a blockade by some 2,000 protesters after they ignored calls to leave.

AfD's leaders condemned the protests as the meeting opened at the city's convention centre. "What is being done out there - dear left-wingers, dear extremists, you need to look at yourselves - is something that is deeply undemocratic," party co-leader Alice Weidel said.

Trump Ramps Up Venezuela Threats, Warns Airspace "Closed"

PALM BEACH (Dispatches) - U.S. President Donald Trump sharply escalated his threats against Venezuela yesterday, ominously warning that the country's airspace should be considered "closed."

Caracas, which views a large U.S. military buildup in the Caribbean as a pressure campaign to oust President Nicolas Maduro, slammed Trump's warning as a "colonialist threat."

"To all Airlines, Pilots, Drug Dealers, and Human Traffickers," Trump wrote on his Truth Social network, "please consider THE AIRSPACE ABOVE AND SURROUNDING VENEZUELA TO BE CLOSED IN ITS ENTIRETY."

The U.S. president did not elaborate.

His warning comes days after U.S. aviation regulators told airlines to use increased caution near Venezuela over the mounting tensions, prompting multiple major carriers to suspend flights.

A statement by the Venezuelan foreign ministry called the latest remarks from a Trump a "new extravagant, illegal, and unjustified aggression against the people of Venezuela."

It warned that the airspace disruptions would also mean a halt to repatriation flights of Venezuelan migrants from the United States.

At mid-afternoon, aviation tracking site FlightRadar24 showed only a few airplanes operating over Venezuela.

Trump's administration is piling pressure on Venezuela, with a major military deployment in the Caribbean that includes the world's largest aircraft carrier.

Washington says the aim is to curb drug trafficking, but Caracas insists regime change is the ultimate goal.

U.S. forces have carried out strikes against more than 20 alleged drug-smuggling vessels in the Caribbean Sea and eastern Pacific Ocean since early September, killing at least 83 people.

Washington has yet to release evidence that the vessels it targeted were used to smuggle drugs or posed a threat to the United States and experts say the strikes amount to extrajudicial killings even if they target known traffickers.



Portugal's TAP, Colombia's Avianca, Chile and Brazil's Latam, Brazil's GOL and Turkish Airlines—for "joining the actions of state terrorism promoted by the United States government."

Leftist Maduro, whose re-election last year was widely rejected by the international community as fraudulent, believes the operation is secretly aimed at overthrowing him.

He has reacted defiantly, staging military exercises and mass rallies aimed at projecting strength and popular support.

The New York Times reported on Friday that Trump and Maduro had spoken by phone last week and discussed a possible meeting in the United States.

Tens of Thousands March Across Europe in Show of Support for Palestinians

PARIS (Dispatches) - Tens of thousands rallied in Paris on Saturday to show support for Palestinians in Gaza, as protesters accused Israel of violating a fragile U.S.-brokered ceasefire and demanded tougher international action amid soaring death tolls and ongoing restrictions on aid. Gaza's health ministry, run by Hamas, said Saturday that more than 70,000 people have been killed since the war began.

"Gaza, Gaza, Paris is with you." Marking the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, tens of thousands of people, according to organisers, marched in Paris on Saturday to show support for Palestinians in Gaza, devastated by more than two years of war between Israel and Hamas that has killed more than 70,000 people, according to updated figures released Saturday by Gaza's health ministry.

Protests were also held in London, Geneva, Rome and Lisbon.

As the UN marked the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said that "the killing of so many civilians, the repeated displacement of an entire population and the obstruction of humanitarian aid should never be acceptable."

"The October ceasefire agreement offers glimmers of hope. And the adoption of the resolution on Gaza by the Security Council is an important step in its consolidation," he added in a statement.

A dense crowd - estimated at 50,000 by organisers and 8,400 by Paris police - marched from Place de la République to Place de la Nation, chanting "Gaza, Gaza, Paris is with you" and "From Paris to Gaza,



resistance!", and waving Palestinian flags and signs reading "Palestine: we will not be silenced" and "Gaza: silence, people are being killed. Stop the genocide."

Several left-wing politicians, including France Unbowed leader Jean-Luc Mélenchon, joined the march.

Seven weeks after a ceasefire took effect on October 10, "nothing has been resolved", said Anne Tuillon, head of the France Palestine Solidarity Association (AFPS), one of about 80 NGOs, unions and parties behind the call to protest.

"The ceasefire is a smokescreen. Israel violates it every day, blocks humanitarian aid and continues to destroy homes and infrastructure in Gaza.

We are calling for a permanent ceasefire and an end to the genocide," she told AFP.

Under the U.S.-brokered truce, Israeli forces have pulled back behind a so-called "yellow line" inside the Gaza Strip, still controlling more than half the territory. But the pause in fighting remains fragile, with both sides accusing each other of daily breaches.

"We need sanctions. It's the only way to make Israel respect international law," Tuillon said, condemning what she called an "unprecedented acceleration" of settlement expansion in the West Bank and record levels of settler violence.

Saleha, 72, wearing a beret and draped in a Palestinian flag, said she came to march against the "genocide" in Gaza.

"All of humanity is watching and can do nothing. It's total impunity," she said. "It's shocking to see this and be unable to act. The only thing we can do is mobilise."

Bertrand, a 42-year-old IT technician who declined to give his full name, said "the massacre continues", citing videos circulating online of two men shot dead Thursday during a joint Israeli police-army raid in Jenin. The UN has called for an investigation into what it described as an "apparent summary execution".

Without economic sanctions, "pressure in the streets and through elected officials" must continue, he added.

Three people were arrested, Paris police said, without giving details.

Ukraine Hits Two Russian Shadow Fleet Oil Tankers With Naval Drones

KYIV (Dispatches) - Ukrainian naval drones hit two sanctioned tankers in the Black Sea as they headed to a Russian port to load up with oil destined for foreign markets, an official said on Saturday, as Kyiv tries to pile pressure on Russia's vast oil industry.

The two oil tankers, identified as the Kairos and Virat, were empty and sailing to Novorossiysk, a major Russian Black Sea oil terminal, the official at the Security Service of Ukraine told Reuters.

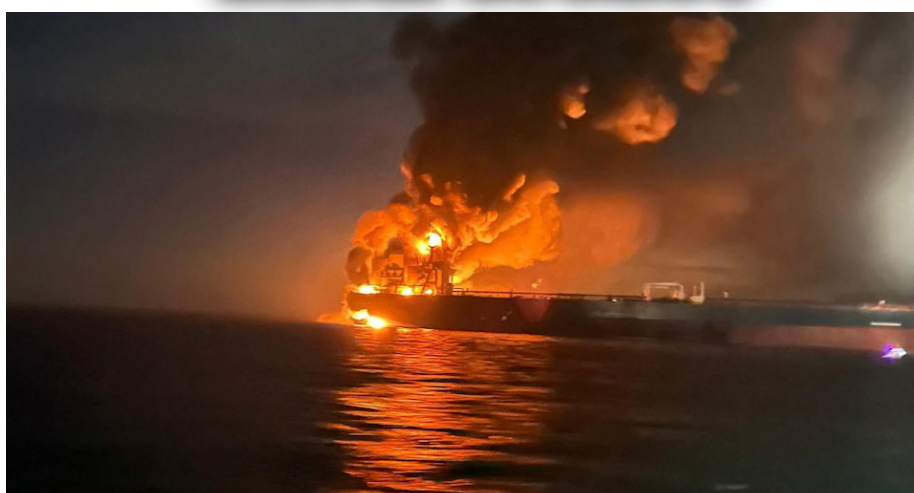
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Naval drones could be seen speeding towards hulking tankers followed by powerful explosions that caused fires on the vessels, video footage shared by the official showed.

Reuters could not independently verify the identity of the tankers in the clips or the location and date of the footage.

"Video shows that after being hit, both tankers sustained critical damage and were effectively taken out of service. This will deal a significant blow to Russian oil transportation," the official said in a written statement.

Ukraine has been attacking Russian oil refineries for months, using long-



range aerial drones to strike far behind the front lines of Moscow's full-scale war against Ukraine. The strikes on the tankers represent a different kind of attack.

Kyiv has repeatedly called on the West to take real action against Russia's so-called "shadow fleet", which the Ukrainian government says is helping Moscow export large quantities of oil and fund its war in Ukraine despite Western sanctions.

The fleet of hundreds of often ageing, unregulated vessels came to prominence after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, bypassing Western sanctions aimed at reducing Moscow's oil revenue.

Separately, the Caspian Pipeline Consortium, which handles more than 1% of global oil, said on Saturday it halted operations after a mooring at Russia's Black Sea terminal was significantly damaged by a Ukrainian naval drone attack.

CPC exports mainly from Kazakhstan via Russia and the Black Sea terminal. Kazakhstan called the attack unacceptable.

Naval drones are uncrewed speed boats packed with explosives that sail towards their targets before detonating. They played a prominent role in Ukraine's counteroffensive in the Black Sea, helping to push back Russia's large fleet of warships.



Last-Gasp Foden Goal Spares Man City's Blushes, Spurs Crash Again

LONDON (Dispatches) - Phil Foden spared Manchester City's blushes after the Premier League title challengers blew a two-goal lead in a dramatic 3-2 victory over Leeds, while Tottenham boss Thomas Frank's problems mounted in a 2-1 defeat to Fulham.

Pep Guardiola's side were in danger of losing more ground in the title race following a second-half collapse at the Etihad Stadium.

Foden and Josko Gvardiol put City two up before the interval, but third-bottom Leeds hit back through Dominic Calvert-Lewin and Lukas Nmecha.

Foden clinched a nerve-jangling victory that lifted City into second place, four points behind leaders Arsenal, who travel to third-placed Chelsea.

It was a much-needed win after consecutive defeats against Newcastle last weekend and Bayer Leverkusen on Tuesday.

"It was a relief," Guardiola said. "The game was not perfect in the first half but it should be over with the chances we had.

"Football is emotions. We conceded the second and after we made a step-up. In the end it's the quality of Phil."

City had made their worst start to a campaign for five years and their second-worst under Guardiola.

But they took just 59 seconds to move in front as Foden fired a close-range strike in off the bar.

Leeds had no answer to City's slick start and Gvardiol looked to have put the hosts in complete control with a tap-in from Nico O'Reilly's header in the 25th minute.

Calvert-Lewin made an immediate impact after coming off the bench, reducing the deficit with a clinical finish after pouncing on Matheus Nunes's woeful pass inside the City area in the 49th minute.

Leeds equalised in the 68th minute when Nmecha's penalty—awarded for Gvardiol's foul on Calvert-Lewin—was saved by Gianluigi Donnarumma before the forward recovered to score from the rebound.

In stoppage-time, Foden cleverly made room in the area for an ice-cool finish as Guardiola breathed a sigh of relief.

At the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium, Frank's men made a disastrous start as Kenny Tete put Fulham ahead before Harry Wilson's superb strike punished a calamitous blunder from goalkeeper Guglielmo Vicario.

Tottenham were booed off at half-time and although Mohammed Kudus pulled one back after the interval, there were more jeers at the final whistle.

With only three wins in their last 13 games in all competitions, Tottenham have slumped to 10th place.

Tottenham are without a home league victory since the opening weekend of the season, wining only four of their 10 matches in front of their fans in all competitions this season.

Frank was critical of the fans who taunted Vicario, saying: "I didn't like that our fans booed at him. They can't be true Tottenham fans because everyone supports each other when you're on the pitch and we do everything we can to perform.

Piastrì Shines Under Qatar Lights, Trims Norris's Lead

DOHA (Dispatches) - Oscar Piastrì boosted his bid for a maiden drivers' world championship on Saturday when he reduced McLaren team-mate Lando Norris's lead to 22 points by winning the sprint race at the Qatar Grand Prix.

Driving with assurance after a fine start from pole position, the 24-year-old Australian delivered a cool drive reminiscent of his early-season domination to finish 4.951 seconds clear of Mercedes' George Russell with Norris 1.3 seconds adrift in third.

Four-time champion Max Verstappen came home fourth for Red Bull ahead of team-mate Yuki Tsunoda and teenage rookie Kimi Antonelli in the second Mercedes.

The latter two were both handed five-second penalties for exceeding track limits.

Piastrì's third consecutive sprint race win at the Lusail International Circuit trimmed Norris's lead while Verstappen dropped further behind, by a point, to 25 points behind the Briton.

It was Piastrì's first success since he won the Dutch Grand Prix on August 31 when he led the title race.



"It's been good so far and everything went smoothly," said Piastrì.

"I'm happy so far and now just have to keep it rolling."

Norris, who can win the title if results go his way, said he had ignored the threat from the defending champion who finished fourth behind him.

"I never saw him," he said.

"Just George ahead.... I wasn't looking behind. It felt like a lot of pushing and it will be a tough race tomorrow."

Piastrì explained his return to form as a recovery of pace and performance on the high-speed high-grip circuit that suited his style.

The dash began with only 16 cars on the grid and four in the pitlane – both Alpines, Aston Martin's Lance Stroll and Lewis Hamilton (Ferrari) – as Piastrì led away from a near-perfect start on pole to lead Russell and Norris.

Flamengo Beat Palmeiras 1-0 to Win Copa Libertadores

LIMA (Dispatches) - Flamengo defeated Palmeiras 1-0 to win the Copa Libertadores on Saturday, becoming the most successful Brazilian team in the history of South America's top club competition by lifting the title for a fourth time.

A second half headed goal from Flamengo center-back Danilo settled a scrappy encounter at the Estadio Monumental in Lima – the fifth Libertadores final in the past six seasons to feature two clubs from Brazil.

Flamengo's win avenged their 2-1 defeat to Palmeiras in the 2021 Libertadores final and leaves the famous Rio de Janeiro club firmly on course for a hat-trick of trophies in 2025.

Flamengo began the year with victory in the Brazilian Super Cup and need only two points from their remaining two league fixtures to clinch Brazil's domestic championship.

Flamengo's third win in the tournament since 2019 and



fourth overall put them level with Argentina's Estudiantes, three behind another Argentinian club, Independiente, with seven titles.

Palmeiras meanwhile were left ruing a golden chance to equalize in the 89th minute, when Vitor Roque blasted over the bar from point blank range.

That was to be arguably the best Palmeiras chance of a mostly fractious final littered with 33 fouls and seven yellow cards shared between the two teams.

A scrappy first half saw Flamengo enjoy the better chances, with Bruno Henrique the first to trigger alarm in the Palmeiras ranks with a 15th-minute strike that flew high and wide.

Flamengo continued to find space down the flanks, and moments later Samuel Lino threatened to break the deadlock, cutting in from the left and flashing a shot wide.

Pakistan Rout Sri Lanka to Win T20I Tri-Series



RAWALPINDI (Dispatches) - Mohammad Nawaz and Shaheen Shah Afridi starred with the ball as Pakistan won the T20I tri-series with a thumping six-wicket victory over Sri Lanka in the final.

Nawaz took 3-17 and Shaheen 3-18 as Sri Lanka were dismissed for a paltry 114 in 19.1 overs, before Pakistan romped home with eight balls to spare at Rawalpindi Stadium.

Zimbabwe were the third team in the tri-series but lost three of their four matches to finish bottom.

Sri Lanka were never in the hunt in the decider after posting a below-par total as Saim Ayub (36) and Sahibzada Farhan (23) gave Pakistan a solid 46-run opening partnership inside the first eight overs.

Babar Azam hit 37 not out to ensure Pakistan did not derail despite losing skipper Salman Agha (14) and Fakhar Zaman (three) in quick succession.

"It was a great performance from us," said Agha.

"This has been a very good two months for us, we won against South Africa and now against Sri Lanka."

Earlier, Sri Lanka, sent in to bat, lost nine wickets for a mere 30 runs after being well set on 84-1 in the 11th over.

Opener Kamil Mishara hit a robust 47-ball 59, with the help of four sixes and two boundaries, to set a platform for a good total for the visitors.

Mishara added 64 runs for the second wicket with Kusal Mendis, who scored 14, but once both departed in the space of three overs the innings fell apart.

Nawaz dismissed Mendis, while Mishara holed out off Ayub, as the Pakistan bowlers relentlessly cranked up the pressure.

None of the later Sri Lankan batters could reach double figures as Nawaz and Shaheen tore through the middle and lower order.

"We couldn't build on a good platform because Pakistan bowled very well," said Sri Lankan skipper Dasun Shanaka.

"We need to fine-tune our game ahead of the next series and the World Cup."

India and Sri Lanka co-host the Twenty20 World Cup in February-March next year.

Robinson Wins Copper Mountain World Cup Giant Slalom



LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - New Zealand's Alice Robinson captured her fifth World Cup victory in dominant style, clocking the fastest time in both runs to win the giant slalom at Copper Mountain, Colorado.

Robinson, who turns 24 on Monday, had a two-run total time of 1min 58.91sec to beat Austrian Julia Scheib by 96-hundredths of a second.

Norway's Thea Louise Stjernesund finished third, matching Robinson's top time in the second leg to move up from fifth after the first run and claim her podium place 1.08sec behind the winner.

US superstar Mikaela Shiffrin, who has extended her record for World Cup victories to 103 this season with a pair of slalom wins, settled for 14th.

"It was definitely a day of two runs," Robinson said. "The first run I felt so in control and so smooth. And the second run just felt so out of control and felt like I was just recovering the whole time.

"So I was pretty shocked to see the big green light at the finish, but obviously I'm so grateful."

Robinson admitted that she wasn't feeling very confident coming into the week after an eighth place finish in the first giant slalom of the season last month at Soelden, which was won by Scheib.

"I honestly felt pretty gutted about Soelden and I think in the past I'd always let poor prior performances affect my performance," Robinson said.