

Chief Commander of the IRGC Major General Mohammad Pakpour Says the Elite Force Is Ready to Share Its Anti-Terror Experience with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) States With No Limitations.

IRAN NEWS

The Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the IRGC Issued a Firm Warning to the United States and Its Allies Regarding the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, Saying the Security of the Strategic Waterway Is a “Red Line” for Iran and a Core Mission of the IRGC

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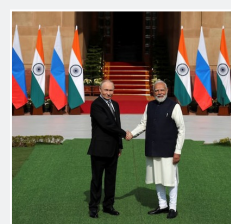
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Tehran Condemns PGCC Over UAE Claims to Iranian Islands



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei has condemned the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC)'s insistence on repeating the UAE's “baseless and incorrect” territorial claims over the Iranian islands of Abu Musa, Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb.

Baghaei said Thursday that the islands are an “inseparable part of Iran's territorial integrity” and that any territorial claim over them is “groundless and invalid,” adding that such positions run counter to the principles of respect for states' territorial integrity and good neighborliness.

He said Iran has exercised “effective, continuous and undisputed” sovereignty over the three islands for centuries, and repeated assertions do not change “geographical and historical realities” nor create any legal rights for claimants.

Reiterating Iran's policy of good neighborliness and cooperation to safeguard regional security and stability, Baghaei urged the UAE and the GCC to avoid provocative positions that undermine neighborly relations.

The Persian Gulf islands of Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs have historically been part of Iran, proof of which can be found and corroborated by countless historical, legal, and geographical documents in Iran and other parts of the world. However, the United Arab Emirates has repeatedly laid claim to the islands.

Iran Open to Diplomacy But National Security, Defense Power Non-Negotiable



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN – Majlis Speaker Mohammad-Baqer Qalibaf says while Iran is open to diplomacy, it will never compromise on its national security and defense power.

He made the remarks in an address to the Meeting of the Standing Committee on Political Affairs of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA) in the holy city of Mashhad on Thursday.

Qalibaf emphasized that genuine diplomacy can only be meaningful when grounded in mutual respect and shared interests, not in coercion or threats.

“I state explicitly that the Islamic Republic of Iran will under no circumstances place its national security, defensive capability, and legitimate right to progress on the negotiating table,” he added.

The top legislator also noted that the Iranian nation has been subject to “one of the most severe and systematically orchestrated hostile campaigns” in modern history, including through inhumane sanctions, efforts to obstruct peaceful scientific and nuclear advancement, and, ultimately, the cowardly Israeli-US aggression earlier this year.

Leader Hails Very Exalted Status of Women in Islam, Slams Corrupt Western Culture

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN – Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has told thousands of women and girls from across Iran that Islam grants women a very high and exalted status and equal rights with men in social and political life, condemning the “corrupt Western culture” toward women.

“The expressions of the Qur'an regarding the identity and character of women are the highest and most progressive,” Ayatollah Khamenei said in a meeting in Tehran.

In a speech citing the qualities of Fatima al-Zahra (SA), the beloved daughter of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him), Ayatollah Khamenei said the Iranian woman “takes lessons from such a sun”.

The Leader described Fatima as “an exalted human being adorned with the highest qualities in all arenas”, including worship and humility, selflessness and sacrifice for the people, resilience in hardships and tribulations, courageous defense of the rights of the oppressed, elucidation and clarification of truths, understanding and political action, housekeeping, managing a household and raising children, and participation in significant events in early Islamic history.

“The Iranian woman, thank God, takes guidance and lessons from such a sun, who, according to the Prophet, is the leader of all women in all times, and moves in accordance with her goals,” he said.

He said women and men in Islam have “equal roles in the life and history of humanity” and “equal opportunity to reach spiritual perfections,” adding that those who misunderstand religion or reject it “are in contradiction” with these principles.

“In Islam, in social activities, business, political activity, attaining most governmental positions, and in other arenas, women have equal rights with men, and in spiritual conduct and individual and public efforts, the path to their advancement is open,” Ayatollah Khamenei said.

Ayatollah Khamenei criticized Western culture, saying: “The corrupt Western and capitalist culture is completely rejected from the perspective of Islam.”

The Leader said Islamic limitations on gender interaction, dress and modesty are aimed at preserving the dignity of women and controlling dangerous and powerful sexual desires, adding that Western culture pays no attention to such issues.

“In Islam, to preserve women's dignity and control very strong and dangerous sexual desires, there are limitations and rulings regarding ‘interaction between women and men, women's and men's dress, women's hijab, and encouragement of marriage,’ which are entirely in line with women's nature and the real interests and needs of society; whereas the control of endless and destructive sexual desires in Western culture is completely ignored.”

The Leader described men and women in Islam as “two balanced elements with many commonalities and some differences arising from the body and nature”.



“These two complementary elements play a role in managing human society, continuing the human race, advancing civilization, meeting societal needs, and managing life,” he said.

Among the rights of women, he cited justice in social and family behavior, security, dignity and respect, and equality of wages in the same job, as well as insurance for working women and special leave provisions.

Ayatollah Khamenei said that forming a family is one of the most important roles. “Unlike the neglect of the family institution in the wrong Western culture, in Islam, for ‘women, men, and children’ as elements forming the family, reciprocal and specific rights have been established,” he added.

Ayatollah Khamenei contrasted the Islamic and capitalist views of women.

“In Islam, women have independence, capability, identity, and the possibility of advancement, but the capitalist perspective subordinates and absorbs the woman's identity into the man and does not respect women's dignity, treating women as material tools and objects of desire,” he said.

The Leader criticized the destruction of the family structure and harms such as fatherless children, reduced family ratios, gangs targeting young girls, and the increasing promotion of sexual immorality in the name of freedom as major sins of the capitalist culture in the past one or two centuries.

“Western capitalism deceitfully calls this vast array of wrongdoing ‘freedom,’ and even uses this term in our country, whereas this is not freedom but enslavement,” he added.

Ayatollah Khamenei said that despite the West's insistence on exporting its flawed culture worldwide, claiming that certain restrictions on women, including the hijab, hinder their progress, “the Islamic Republic has disproved this false logic and shown that a Muslim woman, committed to Islamic covering, can move and play roles in all arenas, more than others.”

The Leader praised unprecedented achievements of Iranian women in science, sports, thought, research, politics, social activities, health, life expectancy, and voluntary support, including assisting the spouses of honored martyrs.

“Iran has never in its history had even one-hundredth of this number of learned, thoughtful, and opinionated women, and it was the Islamic Republic that enabled the advancement of women in all major fields.”

Ayatollah Khamenei cautioned the media against promoting Western capitalist views on women, saying when discussing hijab, women's dress, and cooperation between men and women, domestic media should not repeat or highlight Western perspectives, but rather present the deep and effective Islamic view within the country and in international forums.

“This is the best way to promote Islam and will attract many people around the world, especially women, to it,” the Leader said.

IRGC Navy Launches Major Persian Gulf Drill With Warnings to U.S. Ships

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy has kicked off a large-scale exercise in the Persian Gulf, showing advanced defensive and offensive capabilities enhanced by artificial intelligence.

The IRGC Navy began the exercise on Thursday, emphasizing enhanced intelligence readiness and demonstrating the unwavering spirit and resistance of its sailors to confront any threat.

During the exercise, naval units conveyed their firm message by issuing warnings to American ships present in the region.

Advanced air defense systems including Nawab, Majid, and Misagh were also deployed in electronic warfare conditions. Using artificial intelligence, these systems were able to identify flying and naval targets in a fraction of the time and hit them with high accuracy.

The exercise, codenamed Shahid Mohammad Nazeri, takes place across the Persian Gulf, the Nazeat maritime zone – Abu Musa, Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb, and Siri islands, the Strait of Hormuz, as well as the Sea of Oman.

Nazeri was the commander of the elite commando units of the IRGC Navy. He is widely recognized in Iran for his direct involvement in the capture of 10 American sailors – nine men and one woman – who wandered into Iran's territorial waters on January 12, 2016.

The drill conveys a dual message: peace and friendship to neighboring countries, and a clear warning to enemies that any miscalculation will face a decisive response.

Iranian and American naval forces have had a long history of encounters in the Persian Gulf, the Sea of Oman, and the Strait of Hormuz since the 1980s.

The Iranian Navy frequently conducts large-scale drills in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, demonstrating its capabilities and signaling deterrence against foreign powers.

Chief Commander of Iran's Army Major General Amir Hatami, during a meeting with



members of the Parliament's Planning, Budget and Accounting Commission on Thursday, reiterated that Iran has “not wasted a moment” in enhancing its defense capabilities.

Hatami underlined that protecting the Islamic system is inseparable from safeguarding Iran's independence and territorial integrity, declaring that “the least harm to the Islamic system is harm to the independence and territorial integrity of our beloved country, Iran.”

Addressing long-standing tensions with the United States and Israel, Hatami said hostility from global arrogance has persisted since the victory of the Islamic Revolution and has grown in scope and intensity over

time.

He referred to the recent 12-day war in June, stating that Iran was engaged in negotiations with the United States when it was suddenly attacked by Israel with US support.

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

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

According to Hatami, the aggressors aimed to destroy Iran's nuclear, missile, and defense capabilities and to assassinate key commanders as part of a broader effort to overthrow the Islamic Republic.

Hatami asserted that Iran “won the war” because its adversaries failed to achieve their objectives.

He said that Israel views Iran as an existential threat, adding, “Since the war, we have not wasted a single moment in strengthening our defense capabilities and enhancing our military readiness, and we have made becoming stronger our top priority.”

Why December 7, 1953, Remained Student Day

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian



“Student Day” in Iran, observed every year on December 7 (16 Azar in the Iranian calendar), commemorates a historical event in 1953 during which three students from the University of Tehran—Mostafa Bozorgnia, Ahmad Qandchi, and Mehdi Shariat-Razavi—were martyred during student protests against the coup government and the visit of Richard Nixon.

This incident, considered a turning point in the history of Iran's student movement, not only symbolized resistance against tyranny and colonialism but also became a lasting emblem of students' struggle for justice. In this article, I examine the historical roots, the event itself, its consequences, and the enduring significance of this occurrence in contemporary Iranian history.

After the overthrow of Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh in the coup of August 19, 1953—which was carried out with the collaboration of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and British intelligence—the political climate in Iran became extremely repressive. The coup government, led by General Fazlollah Zahedi, aimed to consolidate Mohammad Reza Shah's power and suppress dissent, systematically silencing all critical voices.

In response to this oppressive environment, nationalists and Mossadegh supporters formed the National Resistance Movement, whose goal was to politically oppose the coup regime. Within this movement, the students of the University of Tehran acted as an influential and operational arm, and universities became the central hubs of anti-government protests.

Protests leading up to December 7, 1953, were organized by students with the support of remnants of political parties and elements of the clergy. On October 7, 1953, large demonstrations were held in protest of Mossadegh's trial. Additional protests occurred on November 12. These demonstrations demonstrated that the University of Tehran had become a center of resistance.

With the re-establishment of relations between Iran and the United Kingdom on December 5, 1953, the Zahedi government formally announced the resumption of political ties with Britain, which had been severed during Mossadegh's premiership amid the nationalization of the oil industry. On the same day, Richard Nixon's official visit to Iran was announced, which opponents interpreted as U.S. approval and gratitude for the coup government's overthrow of the popular Mossadegh administration and the securing of Western interests in Iran.

On the morning of December 7, students entering the University of Tehran encountered an unusual scene: the campus was filled with soldiers and military personnel armed with weapons, signaling the regime's readiness to suppress any protest. Understanding the sensitivity of the situation, the students cautiously attended their classes, avoiding any provocative actions.

In the early hours, military forces, under various pretexts, raided several faculties, including Medicine, Pharmacy, Law, and Sciences, assaulting and arresting numerous students and even some professors. As the situation worsened, the university administration decided to temporarily close the campus and asked students to leave.

During the peak of the clashes, as students were leaving the university, a group of soldiers attacked the Faculty of Engineering. The pretext for this assault was the protest of two civil engineering students against the presence of military personnel on campus. To arrest these students, the soldiers stormed the classroom of Professor “Shams.” When the professor protested, he was threatened with weapons and forced into silence.

During these confrontations, the military opened fire directly on unarmed students, resulting in the martyrdom of three students:

Mostafa Bozorgnia was killed by three bullets.

Mehdi Shariat-Razavi was initially wounded and then killed by a subsequent shot.

Ahmad Qandchi was severely wounded by a soldier's machine-gun fire and transferred to a military hospital. However, hospital authorities refused to treat him, and he died 24 hours later.

Martyr Dr. Mostafa Chamran, who witnessed the event, wrote in his memoirs:

“The events of that day are so vividly imprinted in my mind as if I am seeing them with my own eyes. The sound of machine-gun fire echoes in my ears, the eerie silence after the gunfire shakes my body, and I hear the long, agonizing cries of the wounded amid this painful silence...”

While the University of Tehran remained occupied by military forces and a climate of fear prevailed on campus, Richard Nixon visited Iran and attended the University to receive an honorary doctorate in law. The image of Nixon receiving the honorary degree in a campus that had witnessed the martyrdom of three students only 24 hours earlier became a symbol of the Shah regime's collaboration with colonial powers.

News of the incident spread rapidly in Tehran and other cities. On December 8, all universities in Tehran and many in other cities were on complete strike. Even many school students joined the protests by closing their schools. The event also drew international attention, with many universities in Europe and the U.S. expressing solidarity with the University of Tehran.

In a mocking action, just a few days after the incident, the 2nd Armored Division, in an official circular, praised the soldiers involved in the “mission” at the University of Tehran, awarding three of them the rank of second sergeant and four others the rank of corporal.

Fearing that the martyrs' graves would become centers for opposition gatherings, the Shah regime opposed holding memorial ceremonies on the third and seventh nights after the martyrs' deaths and even attempted to bury Ahmad Qandchi's body separately from the other two. This was thwarted by the family's secret transfer of his body to Imamzadeh Abdullah.

The Confederation of Iranian Students Abroad named this day “Student Day,” and from then on, students in Iran observed it annually through strikes and memorial ceremonies. After the Islamic Revolution, this day was officially recorded in Iran's calendar as “Student Day” and has remained commemorated ever since.



President Pezeshkian Felicitates Thailand on National Day

TEHRAN (IRNA) - President Masoud Pezeshkian has congratulated the King and Prime Minister of Thailand in separate messages on their National Day.

In a message to Maha Vajiralongkorn, the King of Thailand, on Friday, Pezeshkian congratulated the monarch, the royal family, and the people of Thailand on the occasion of their National Day.

He highlighted that while the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Kingdom of Thailand are celebrating the 70th anniversary of their diplomatic relations, the historical and cultural ties between the two nations extend back over 400 years.

Iran, Iraq Explore Opportunities to Expand Space Cooperation



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The president of the Iranian Space Research Institute, in a meeting with Iraq's chargé d'affaires in Tehran, emphasized Iran's readiness to transfer satellite-building expertise, undertake joint applied projects, and expand educational and technological cooperation. He described the talks as an opportunity to deepen bilateral engagement in the field of space.

According to the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology, the meeting between Vahid Yazdani, head of the Iranian Space Research Institute, and Ammar al-Karkhi, Iraq's chargé d'affaires in Tehran, was held on Wednesday, December 2, to review joint cooperation capacities and develop scientific and technological ties in space-related fields.

During the meeting, Yazdani outlined Iran's capabilities in the design, construction, and operation of satellites, stating that the institute is prepared to transfer satellite-manufacturing know-how to Iraq. This includes specialized training, collaboration with Iraqi universities, and creating the necessary conditions for Iraq to localize space technologies.

He added that the two countries are capable of jointly designing and building earth-observation and communications satellites.

Arrival of 35 Chinese Trains in Seven Months



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The Director General of International Commercial Affairs of Iran Railways, highlighting the achievements of the 14th government's rail diplomacy, announced that Iran has become a key intersection of major regional transport corridors. He added that a recent six-party agreement signed in Istanbul has paved the way for a significant increase in China-Europe freight transit through Iran.

According to a statement released Wednesday by the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways, Shahryar Naqizadeh emphasized Iran's unique geographical advantage, saying that the country sits at the heart of strategic regional corridors and serves as a crossroads between the East-West and North-South routes.

Naqizadeh reported record growth in the arrival of Chinese freight trains and a 12% increase in international rail transport. "Last week in Istanbul, we reached a major six-party agreement among China, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Iran, Uzbekistan, and Turkey. The aim is to expand commodity exchanges from China to Europe via Iran," he said, noting substantial progress on reducing tariffs and cutting travel time as part of the agreement.

He added that the East-West corridor has now succeeded in reducing transport time by nearly one-third compared to maritime shipping.

According to Naqizadeh, the entry of Chinese trains has surged to an unprecedented level. "Before 2024, only seven trains had arrived from China to Iran over a span of seven years. However, in the first seven months of this year alone, the 35th train is now entering the country, and four more have departed from Xi'an, expected to arrive soon," he explained.

Addressing Iran's strategic role in the North-South corridor, he stated that its purpose is to connect India and Southeast Asia to Russia and Eastern Europe, with Iran serving as the central link in this route.

Naqizadeh described the Astara-Rasht rail connection as one of Iran's most critical infrastructure projects. "With its completion, the western branch of the North-South corridor will become fully rail-integrated, placing Iran on a major shipping route of 70 million tons between Russia and India," he said.

Competitiveness: The Key to Expanding Iran's Exports to Russia

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - A meeting focused on exploring commercial and investment opportunities between Isfahan and Russia was held with the participation of business leaders and Russian representatives, aiming to assess shared economic capacities and discuss strategies for expanding Iranian exports to the Russian market.

According to the Public Relations Office of the Isfahan Chamber of Commerce, the session was convened to familiarize Isfahan-based businesses with international markets and identify competitive opportunities, paving the way for enhanced trade cooperation between the two sides.

During the meeting, participants discussed challenges related to pricing, strengthening Iranian brands, and the use of e-commerce platforms to introduce Iranian products to Russian consumers—key steps for enabling Isfahan companies to enter new markets.

Mohammadreza Gol-Ahmad, Chairman of the Corporate Social Responsibility Commission and a member of the Isfahan Chamber of Commerce, stated that the main goal of such meetings is to help chamber members and economic actors gain insight into international environments, opportunities in foreign countries, and export markets where Iran holds comparative advantages.

He added that certain countries, due to logistics and shared borders, offer better conditions for exporting Iranian goods. The Chamber aims to identify these opportunities and present them to business owners so they can benefit from existing competitive advantages to expand their activities.

Yefimov Alexei Mikhailovich, the Trade Representative of the Russian Federation in Iran, highlighted the challenges Iranian goods face in the Russian market. He explained that many Iranian products are significantly more expensive than their foreign counterparts, while Iranian brands still lack strong recognition and perceived quality in global markets. Russian consumers, he said, prefer products that are well-tested and competitively priced.

He noted that products such as Iranian ceramics, construction materials, and household goods have potential in Russia if they meet market standards and are offered at reasonable prices.

Mikhailovich emphasized the importance of using e-commerce platforms such as Ozon to introduce Iranian products to Russian consumers, saying this approach can enhance familiarity with Iranian goods.

Vasily Yudovich Vdovin, Trade and Economic Representative of the Republic of Tatarstan, stressed the need for stronger economic cooperation between Iran and



Tatarstan. He noted that Isfahan, with its industrial, cultural, and tourism capabilities, can play a pivotal role in expanding trade with Tatarstan.

He added that accurate planning and a long-term perspective are essential for achieving tangible results and boosting trade interactions. Only through continuous cooperation and joint initiatives, he said, can the two sides turn existing capacities into real economic opportunities.

Ali Heidari, a member of the Isfahan Chamber of Commerce, underscored the importance of strengthening international engagement with Russia, calling it a promising market for Iranian traders.

He pointed to Iran's membership in BRICS and its free trade agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union, saying these create valuable opportunities for cooperation with regional countries. To leverage these opportunities, he noted, traders from Iran and Eurasian countries—especially Russia—must maintain close interaction and share existing capacities.

Heidari emphasized the significant role the Chamber can play as a facilitator in strengthening commercial ties and increasing traders' awareness of opportunities in the Russian market.

Asman Mahdizadeh, another member of the Isfahan Chamber of Commerce, highlighted the positive impact of Iran's cooperation agreement with the Eurasian region, calling it an important opportunity for expanding trade relations.

She said the agreement will provide valuable consultation and cooperation, aligning Iran's trade routes more closely with Eurasian countries. Through these partnerships, Iranian traders can accurately identify which markets offer the best prospects for commercial expansion.

Mahdizadeh emphasized that the agreement could play a key role in strategic planning for Iranian businesses seeking entry into Eurasian markets and could unlock new avenues for foreign trade.

Mohammad Hossein Alijani, a Chamber member who has participated in several similar events, reiterated the importance and effectiveness of these meetings.

He stated that such gatherings offer valuable opportunities for expanding economic cooperation between Isfahan and Russia. Alijani proposed further improvements, suggesting that cooperation should be segmented by industry, with independent frameworks for each product or sector, which he believes would yield better results.

\$450m in Fisheries Exports Recorded in First Seven Months of This Year

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The head of Iran's Fisheries Organization announced that more than 243,000 tons of fisheries products, valued at \$450 million, were exported to target markets during the first seven months of the current year—representing nearly 30% growth compared to the same period last year.

Hamzeh Rostam-Pour said on Wednesday at the opening ceremony of the 9th International Fisheries, Aquatics, Fishing, Seafood, and Related Industries Exhibition at Tehran's International Permanent Fairground that Iran's fisheries exports reached \$700 million last year.

The Deputy Minister of Agriculture added that thanks to the upward trend in production and expanding fish fry propagation, cage farming has grown significantly, with offshore production expected to reach 10,000 tons this year.

He noted that cage aquaculture in open waters has become one of the key development priorities in recent years, and production conditions this year have improved compared to last year.

Rostam-Pour said that in the early stages of developing this industry, supplying fish fry was a missing link. Previously, only four fry-production centers were operating; however, six more have been added this year, bringing the total to 10 by year-end. This expansion will play a major role in stabilizing cage-farming production.

He also forecast that total national aquaculture production will reach 1.5 million tons this year.

Rostam-Pour described shrimp as one of the sector's top priorities. Last year's shrimp production stood at 45,000 tons, while this year's target exceeds 60,000 tons.

Shrimp is among Iran's most important fisheries export products, he said, noting that between 70% and 80% of the country's shrimp output is exported, primarily to European and neighboring countries.

With the shrimp harvest season now beginning, he expects fisheries export revenues to continue rising in the coming months.

The deputy minister emphasized that 99% of fisheries-related activities are carried out by the private sector. Given the sector's importance, it provides around 300,000 direct jobs and one million indirect jobs, highlighting its significant economic and social impact.

He referenced recent initiatives in provinces such as Khuzestan, including new wharf openings and resolving fishermen's issues. While development in recent years has focused more on land-based projects, he noted that investing in marine infrastructure is now essential.

Rostam-Pour stressed the importance of strengthening domestic



markets and reducing consumer prices. Warm-water fish species, he said, are rich in protein and crucial for public health. Lowering production costs and improving efficiency would help reduce market prices and increase access to healthy seafood.

He said domestic and export markets are both stable, with part of the production supplied domestically and the rest exported.

Rostam-Pour reported a fivefold increase in catches by Iranian vessels operating in distant waters near Chabahar compared to the same period last year. He said distant-water fishing is projected to increase by around 50,000 tons in 2025.

He emphasized that access to distant-water resources is a valuable opportunity for Iranian fishermen, noting that producing an equivalent volume on land would require extensive investment in land and water resources.

The Fisheries Organization chief reported significant improvements in fish stocks and catches in northern Iran since early October, with some areas recording up to double last year's haul due to stock restoration efforts and favorable weather.

Rostam-Pour stated that the private sector has invested more than 20 trillion tomans in fisheries this year, compared with 34 trillion tomans last year, of which 29 trillion tomans came from private investors.

He added that some provincial investors have individually invested up to 10 trillion tomans in aquaculture, highlighting the need for continued support for this sector.

The deputy minister said that with proper support and policy measures, Iran's fisheries sector could, within two future development programs, generate up to €8 billion in foreign currency to help finance essential imports.

He stressed that the private sector has enormous capacity and that meeting necessary conditions would make this goal fully achievable.

Regarding seafood pricing, Rostam-Pour stated that the Fisheries Organization does not set prices; instead, supply and demand dictate market prices.

He noted that current retail prices for fish start from around 200,000 tomans per kilogram. While production costs must be considered, he said that increasing production would help lower prices. The nutritional value of fish, he added, should also be taken into account.

According to IRNA, the 9th International Fisheries, Aquatics, Fishing, Seafood, and Related Industries Exhibition will run for four days at Tehran's International Permanent Fairground.

Iranian Freight Trains Gain Access to CIS Countries



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Tehran — The Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (RAI) has announced a major breakthrough in regional rail transport: for the first time, Iranian freight wagons are now permitted to enter and operate within several CIS countries, eliminating long-standing border delays and associated demurrage costs.

Shahriyar Naghi-zadeh, Director General of International Commerce at RAI, confirmed in an interview with ILNA that the first Iranian freight train has officially entered Uzbekistan. Until now, cargo shipments from Iran to Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan were carried only by the rail fleets of those countries. This forced Iranian exporters to wait at the Sarakhs border for foreign wagons to become available.

"From now on, Iranian export cargo to Uzbekistan will be transported using Iranian wagons all the way to the final destination," Naghi-zadeh said.

Naghi-zadeh explained that the CIS countries had previously barred Iranian wagons from entering their rail networks due to technical incompatibilities, notably the difference in rail gauge between Iran and the CIS region. Iran undertook several technical upgrades on its wagons and fulfilled international organizational requirements to meet those standards.

Following extensive negotiations, a tripartite agreement between Iran, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan was finalized. As a result, the first Iranian train—comprising 40 Iranian wagons carrying sponge iron and sanitary valves—successfully delivered export cargo into Uzbekistan.

Qom-Qatar Economic Ties Enter Operational Phase



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The head of the Qom Chamber of Commerce has called for intensified cooperation between Qatari private-sector actors and industrial producers in Qom, stressing that economic relations between the two sides are ready to move from general dialogue to practical implementation.

According to the Qom Chamber's public relations office, Mohammad Irani, President of the Qom Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, met with Qatar's ambassador to Iran in a session also attended by Qom Province's Deputy Governor for Economic Affairs. Irani emphasized the need to strengthen communication channels between business communities in both countries.

He noted that, based on the experience of chambers of commerce worldwide, commercial attachés play a vital role in identifying industrial capacities and establishing stable, long-term links between producers.

Explaining Qom's position in Iran's polymer value chain, Irani said the province consumed about 600,000 tons of polymer products last year, while Iran's total polymer production capacity stands at nine million tons. This gap, he argued, shows that despite strong national production capabilities, many downstream industries still rely on importing certain raw materials or specialized grades. These needs, he added, could form the basis for new partnerships with Qatari petrochemical manufacturers.

Irani noted that some Iranian industries currently procure their required materials from Chinese petrochemical suppliers or indirectly through intermediaries in Turkey and Saudi Arabia. Establishing a direct channel between Qatari producers and Qom's industrial units, he said, would reduce costs, increase supply-chain reliability, and enhance the added value of final products—creating substantial benefits for both sides.

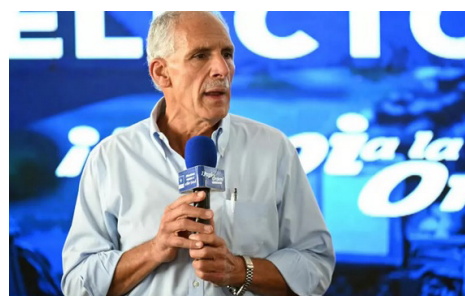
Trump Favorite Reclaims Narrow Lead in Honduras Presidential Vote

TEGUCIGALPA (Dispatches) – A right-wing Honduran presidential candidate backed by Donald Trump reclaimed a narrow lead over his rival Thursday on the fourth day of a plodding vote count.

With over 86 percent of the votes counted, the race was still too early to call.

Trump-backed businessman Nasry Asfura was leading with 40.25 percent compared to 39.40 percent for fellow right-winger and TV personality Salvador Nasralla, according to the National Electoral Council (CNE).

The CNE has come under fire from the US president after announcing Monday that a partial count showed the two men locked in a “technical tie.”



Congo, Rwanda Leaders Affirm Commitment to Trump-Backed Peace Deal



WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - U.S. President Donald Trump gathered the leaders of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda to sign a peace deal in Washington on Thursday even as fighting continued in their war-scarred region.

Rwandan President Paul Kagame and Democratic Republic of Congo President Felix Tshisekedi affirmed commitments to an economic integration compact agreed last month, and to a U.S.-brokered peace deal reached in June. They were also due to sign an agreement on critical minerals.

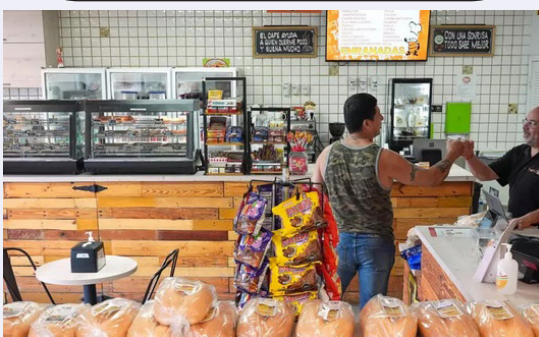
The signing handed Trump the latest in a series of made-for-television diplomatic victories, in this case one at odds with the bloody situation on the ground. Washington wants access to a spectrum of natural resources in Congo and is scrambling globally to counter China's dominance in critical minerals.

“We’re settling a war that’s been going on for decades,” Trump said. “They spent a lot of time killing each other, and now they’re going to spend a lot of time hugging, holding hands, and taking advantage of the United States of America economically - like every other country does.”

Sitting before a “Delivering Peace” backdrop at a peace institute that his administration unofficially renamed after Trump, the African leaders signed and exchanged documents with the U.S. president.

“Thank you for putting a certain name on that building,” Trump told Secretary of State Marco Rubio, adding that it was a “great honor.”

Trump Slashes Migrant Work Permits From Five Years to 18 Months



WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – U.S. President Donald Trump's administration on Thursday cut to 18 months, from five years, the period of time work permits are valid for refugees, asylum seekers and other migrants.

The move, the latest in the administration's sweeping immigration crackdown, took place just two days after it halted immigration applications for citizens from 19 nations.

It also followed allegations that two National Guard members were shot last week by an Afghan man who entered the United States through a resettlement programme after the 2021 military withdrawal.

Joseph Edlow, director of US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), cited the November 26 shooting in the US capital as a reason for the change.

“Reducing the maximum validity period for employment authorisation will ensure that those seeking to work in the United States do not threaten public safety or promote harmful anti-American ideologies,” Edlow said in a statement.

“After the attack on National Guard service members in our nation's capital by an alien who was admitted into this country by the previous administration, it's even more clear that USCIS must conduct frequent vetting of aliens,” he added.

Putin and Modi Discuss Trade, Peace in New Delhi Summit

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - Russian President Vladimir Putin and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi began summit talks in New Delhi on Friday, as New Delhi rolled out the red carpet for the Russian leader and Modi told him India supported peace efforts in Ukraine.

Putin is on his first visit to India in four years, aiming to boost trade with the top buyer of Russia's arms and seaborne oil as Western sanctions squeeze their decades-old ties.

The visit comes at a time when New Delhi is engaged in talks with the U.S. for a trade deal to cut punitive tariffs imposed by President Donald Trump on its goods over India's Russian oil purchases.

Moscow has been India's top arms supplier for decades and has said that it wants to import more Indian goods in an effort to grow trade to \$100 billion by 2030 that so far has been skewed in its favour due to New Delhi's energy imports.

Since European countries cut their reliance on Russian energy after Russia invaded Ukraine nearly four years ago, India ramped up its purchases of discounted Russian crude, only to reduce them under pressure from U.S. tariffs and sanctions this year.

“India is not neutral — India has a position, and that position is for peace,” Modi told Putin as they opened their talks. “We support every effort for peace, and we stand shoulder to shoulder with every initiative taken for peace.”

Putin, in response, thanked Modi for his attention and efforts aimed at resolving the conflict.

“We had the opportunity - and you gave me that opportunity - to speak in detail about what is happening on the Ukrainian track and about the steps we are taking jointly with some other partners, including the United States, toward a possible peaceful settlement of this crisis,” Putin said.

“As our countries and economies grow, the opportunities for cooperation expand,” Putin said. “New areas are emerging - high technologies, joint work in aviation, space, and artificial intelligence. We have a very trusting relationship in the field of military-technical cooperation, and we intend to move forward in all these areas.”

Putin landed in Delhi on Thursday to a warm welcome from Modi, who greeted him with an embrace on the tarmac of the airport. The two men then travelled together in the same vehicle for a private dinner hosted by Modi.

On Friday, Putin was given a ceremonial welcome on the forecourt of Rashtrapati Bhavan, the colonial-era presidential palace, with a 21-gun salute as his convoy drove in.

The two sides are expected to announce a raft of deals at the end of formal talks.



energy trade was “running smoothly.”

India has said Trump's tariffs are unjustified and unreasonable and pointed at ongoing U.S. trade with Moscow. The U.S. and European Union continue to import billions of dollars worth of Russian energy and commodities, ranging from liquefied natural gas to enriched uranium.

Putin arrived in India a day after holding talks with Trump's top envoys on a possible peace deal to end the war in Ukraine, but they did not reach a compromise.

India has resisted condemning Russia over the war and called for peace through dialogue and diplomacy, while saying that its ties with Moscow were being unfairly targeted by Western nations that it said continued to do business with Moscow when it was in their interest.

“India faces a conundrum; by taking steps to strengthen ties with Moscow or Washington, New Delhi risks setting back ties with the other,” Michael Kugelman, senior fellow at Washington's Atlantic Council think tank, wrote in Foreign Policy magazine this week.

European Leaders in Phone Call Voiced Distrust of U.S. Over Ukraine



BERLIN (Dispatches) - European leaders in a conference call this week voiced distrust of US efforts to negotiate an end to Russia's war in Ukraine, according to German news weekly Der Spiegel, which said it had obtained written notes on the call.

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz and French President Emmanuel Macron had expressed scepticism in the call Monday with Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky and others that US negotiators would safeguard Kyiv's interests, the report said.

The magazine quoted Macron as saying during the call that “there is a chance that the US will betray Ukraine on territory without clarity on security guarantees.”

An Elysee source told AFP the reported quote did not match the French presidency's own record of the call.

“The president has publicly stated his position on the ongoing negotiations between Russia and the United States, which is no different in private,” the source added.

According to the report, Merz warned Zelensky to be “very careful in the coming days” and added that “they are playing games with both you and us.”

The German chancellery told AFP: “We cannot comment on individual media reports. Furthermore, we cannot, as a matter of principle, report on

confidential conversations.”

Zelensky's communications adviser Dmytro Lytvyn, asked about the Der Spiegel report by AFP, said: “We do not comment on provocations.”

According to the magazine, Finland's President Alexander Stubb expressed distrust of US President Donald Trump's envoy Steve Witkoff and son-in-law Jared Kushner, who went to the Kremlin for talks earlier this week.

“We cannot leave Ukraine and Volodymyr alone with these guys,” Stubb said, Der Spiegel reported. His office told AFP: “We do not comment on confidential discussions held by the President of the Republic.”

NATO chief Mark Rutte said in the call that “we must protect Volodymyr”, Der Spiegel said, citing what it said were notes on the call, not a verbatim transcript, without naming the author of the notes.

A NATO official said: “As a general rule, we do not comment on leaks. As for the Secretary General's stance on the ongoing work to end the war against Ukraine, he has been clear in his support for the efforts led by President Trump and his team.”

Washington last month put forward an initial 28-point proposal to halt the war in Ukraine, drafted without input from Ukraine's European allies and criticised as too close a reflection of Moscow's maximalist demands on Ukrainian territory.

A flurry of diplomacy followed, with US and Ukrainian negotiators holding talks in Geneva and

Florida before Witkoff and Kushner headed to Moscow on Tuesday.

Der Spiegel said two unnamed participants in the call on Monday had confirmed that the notes accurately reflected the content of the conversation.

They would not, however, confirm the quotes word for word as the leaders' conversation was confidential.

Xi Woos Macron With Sightseeing Trip But Little in the Way of Deals

BEIJING (Dispatches) - Chinese leader Xi Jinping accompanied French President Emmanuel Macron to Chengdu on Friday, a rare gesture seemingly reserved for the head of Europe's second-largest economy that highlights Beijing's focus on Paris in its ties with the European Union.

Even when U.S. President Donald Trump made a landmark visit to China early during his first term in 2017, and Xi lavished him with a private dinner within Beijing's Forbidden City, the trip was confined to the Chinese capital.

But despite the apparent bonhomie between Xi and Macron, the French president's visit so far has resulted in little beyond bolstering Beijing's diplomatic credentials, as world leaders turn to China seeking economic assurances due to Trump's tariffs, analysts say. It has also provided Macron with a chance to project statesmanship after a tough summer in domestic politics.

Investors are watching to see whether a day that began with the French president surprising fellow joggers in the city's Jincheng Lake Park, before joining Xi at a historic dam site, will end with major commercial deals or a thaw in EU-China trade tensions, given that Macron has been joined on his



fourth state visit to China by the heads of some of France's biggest firms.

A meeting in the Chinese capital on Thursday only resulted in 12 cooperation agreements covering areas such as population ageing, nuclear energy and panda conservation, and no monetary total was disclosed.

“I think they (France) thought that Xi would be in a position to offer a lot because Europe is really preparing this economic security doctrine,” said Alicia Garcia-Herrero, senior fellow at the think tank Bruegel.

“Macron probably felt that given his weight and the fact that France is clearly the one that is pushing the most on economic security, that they would get a deal, but nope.”

Beijing may see friendly ties with France as a way into expanding its influence within the 27-strong EU, but is very constrained in its ability to offer Paris major concessions.

The Chinese leader was not expected to sign off on a long-anticipated 500-jet Airbus order, for example, as that would reduce China's leverage in trade talks with the U.S., which is pressing for new Boeing commitments.



MANCHESTER (Dispatches) - Manchester United missed the chance to go fifth in the Premier League when they were held 1-1 by West Ham United at Old Trafford on Thursday, a result which keeps the visitors in the relegation zone.

After a scrappy goalless opening half, the hosts took the lead in the 58th minute through Diogo Dalot but West Ham's Soungoutou Magassa equalised seven minutes from time which led to boos from the home fans at the final whistle.

"Angry and frustrated, that's it," Manchester United manager Ruben Amorim said.

"We are really inconsistent but if you look at the goal (we conceded), we have a long ball, we have everything under control, we need to do better.

"We knew set pieces would be a problem with the difference in height in the team but we could do it. We could maintain the ball after the first goal and again we lost two points."

Man United are eighth in the standings on 22 points, while West Ham remain 18th on 12 points, two adrift of Leeds United in 17th spot.

West Ham had the best of the opening half-hour, played at a pedestrian pace, but never really threatened before the hosts began to take control.

Bryan Mbeumo played a one-two from a short corner before trying a looping shot from outside the area which sent West Ham keeper Alphonse Areola scrambling to tip it over the bar.

Amad Diallo put a ball across the box which Joshua Zirkzee sent goalwards with his thigh and Aaron Wan-Bissaka headed off the line, and seconds later Bruno Fernandes's effort skimmed the outside of the post.

Wan-Bissaka was a rock at the heart of West Ham's defence against his former club, putting in crucial challenges and keeping his side level going in at the break.

Magassa shot into the side netting early in the second half before Man United found the opening goal. An attempted shot from Casemiro took a deflection and the ball fell kindly for Dalot almost on the penalty spot and he sent his shot on the turn past Areola.

"We are disappointed. At 1-0 with 30 minutes to go we have to control the game more, especially at Old Trafford," Dalot told Sky Sports.

"We cannot get as anxious as we got after the goal. Maybe we got sloppy with the ball possession. We had the game there. We think it is down to us rather than credit to West Ham.

"It is a good feeling. Every time you get the opportunity to score a goal for a club like this is amazing, especially at the Stretford End.

"But I would change it for the three points."

The game looked to be petering out to a narrow win for the home side, with West Ham never really looking like finding an equaliser until Jarrod Bowen's flicked header from a corner was cleared off the line by Nussair Mazraoui and Magassa smashed home.

"It felt amazing. We played a good game, and everyone fought," Magassa told Sky Sports.

"I am so happy to score my first goal in the Premier League."

Both teams sprung to life in the final minutes in search of a winner and Fernandes was guilty of a couple of late misses.

LeBron Scoring Streak Ends as Hachimura, Reaves Lift Lakers

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Rui Hachimura drilled a buzzer-beating three-pointer to lift the Los Angeles Lakers to a 123-120 victory over the Toronto Raptors as LeBron James's incredible streak of double-digit scoring games ended.

With the NBA's leading scorer Luka Doncic absent for personal reasons, Austin Reaves delivered a double-double of 44 points and 10 assists for the Lakers in a clash of East and West second-placed teams.

James scored eight points and handed out 11 assists, including the pass from the top of the key to Hachimura in the corner for the game-winner.

"That was crazy," Japanese forward Hachimura said. "I never had a game-winner before."

James saw his streak of 1,297 games with 10 or more points end -- a run that began in January 2007.

But the league's all-time leading scorer said he didn't hesitate to dish to Hachimura on the final play, with his



path to the basket blocked and Reaves also under pressure.

"Just playing the game the right way," said the 40-year-old James, who is in his unprecedented 23rd season. "Always make the right play. That's how I was taught the game."

James last failed to score in double digits on January 5, 2007, but when asked his thoughts on the end of that remarkable run he said he had none, adding only: "We won."

James struggled with his shot much of the night, connecting on just four of 17 and missing all five of his three-point attempts.

"LeBron is acutely aware of how many points he has at that point," said Lakers coach JJ Redick, who added he wasn't surprised to see James make "the right play."

"He did it like he's done so many times," Redick said.

Norris Rejects Idea of Team Loyalty Before Formula 1 Title Showdown



ABU DHABI (Dispatches) - Lando Norris on Thursday rejected the idea of asking title rival and McLaren team-mate Oscar Piastri to support him this weekend in the decisive season-ending Abu Dhabi Grand Prix even if it is the only way he can beat Red Bull's Max Verstappen to the title.

The 26-year-old Briton, who holds a 12-point lead on four-time champion Verstappen and a 16-point advantage on Piastri, said he would welcome help in certain scenarios, but would not seek it -- because it was not how he, personally, felt about it.

He and Piastri made clear that McLaren had not discussed team orders for the race and would continue racing under 'papaya rules' that encourage them to race each other with equal team backing.

"I don't think I would ask for it because -- and I don't know -- it's up to Oscar, if he would allow it," Norris told reporters before Sunday's showdown.

"I don't think it's necessarily down to me.

"It's the same if it's the other way around. Would I be willing to or not? Personally, I think I would -- just because I feel like I'm always like that and that's just how I am."

The three drivers sat together answering questions of which some focused on the possibility that if Verstappen was leading with Piastri third and Norris fourth, it would mean the Dutchman took his record-equalling fifth consecutive title unless the two McLaren men swapped positions.

"I'm not going to ask it," he continued.

"I don't want to ask it because I don't think it's necessarily a fair question, but at the same time if that's how it ends and Max wins, then well. That's it.

"Congrats to him and look forward to next year. It doesn't change anything. It doesn't change my life. He will deserve it over us."

Verstappen, who has won five of the last eight races, appeared to be the most relaxed of the trio while Norris seemed understandably tense and Piastri, who was deprived of a likely victory by bungled team strategy last weekend in Qatar, composed if edgy.

Weatherald Gets Maiden Fifty as Australia Race to 130-1



LONDON (Dispatches) - Jake Weatherald scored his first half-century for Australia as the hosts charged to 130 for one at tea on day two of the second Ashes test in reply to England's first innings 334.

Opener Weatherald was 59 not out from 56 balls, with number three Marnus Labuschagne on 27 on a hot and steamy afternoon at the Gabba.

Travis Head, opening in place of the injured Usman Khawaja, was dropped on three by wicketkeeper Jamie Smith off the bowling of Jofra Archer and went on to make 33 off 43 balls in a largely dreadful session for England's bowlers.

Head, Australia's century-making hero in the first test win in Perth, eventually fell to an innocuous, wobble-seam delivery from Carse, sending a leading edge straight up in the air to be caught at mid-on by Gus Atkinson.

That was as good as it got for England and Carse, who bled 45 runs from his five overs in the session.

With his bowlers being thumped around the ground, Stokes turned to the spin of Will Jacks late in the session but the all-rounder went for nine runs in his one over.

England started day two on 325 for nine and added nine runs before Archer pulled Brendan Doggett to deep backward square where Labuschagne flew for a terrific catch to wrap up the innings.

Lions Down Cowboys to Boost NFL Playoff Bid

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Jahmyr Gibbs ran for three touchdowns and the Detroit Lions never trailed in a 44-30 victory over the Dallas Cowboys in a clash crucial to the NFL playoff hopes of both teams.

The reigning NFC North champion Lions had dropped three of their prior five games to fall to third in the division behind the Chicago Bears and Green Bay Packers, who face off on Sunday.

But they improved to 8-5 to bolster their playoff bid as the Cowboys -- who arrived in Detroit off three straight victories -- fell to 6-6-1 to see their post-season chances dwindle with a month remaining in the regular season.

"They're as hot a team as there is in this league," Lions quarterback Jared Goff said of the Cowboys. "Maybe we can become that now."

Goff said he'd seen an "uptick of urgency" from teammates after their loss to Green Bay last week.

"It was good," he said. "It felt like we got back to kind of who we are."



Goff completed 25 of 34 passes for 309 yards and a touchdown -- a 12-yard scoring pass to Isaac TeSlaa that put Detroit up 27-9 in the third quarter after Dallas quarterback Dak Prescott threw an interception to open the second half.

Dallas sliced the deficit to 30-27 on Prescott's 42-yard touchdown pass to Ryan Flournoy followed by a two-point conversion.

But Gibbs's second touchdown pushed the lead back to 10 and his third TD, a 13-yard run, was the final dagger with 2:19 left to play.

Gibbs now has 47 career touchdowns, tying Barry Sanders for the most in NFL history for a player before his 24th birthday.

David Montgomery added a 35-yard rushing touchdown and Detroit's defense forced three turnovers, including Derrick Barnes's second-half interception of Prescott.

"Man they showed up," Lions coach Dan Campbell said. "The work was there all week. It always is but the intensity, the urgency ... the guys don't get panicked. They just go to work, and they did it again."