

President Masoud Pezeshkian and Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Have Underscored the Need for Stronger Coordination on Regional Developments, as Well as Full Implementation of Agreements Between the Two Neighbors

IRAN NEWS

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi who Has Traveled to Turkmenistan Met and Conferred With His Omani Counterpart Badr Albusaidi Where the Two Top Diplomats Reviewed Bilateral Relations and Consulted on Ways to Expand Relations and Cooperation in All Areas of Mutual Interest, Particularly in the Economic and Commercial Spheres

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2 DOMESTIC



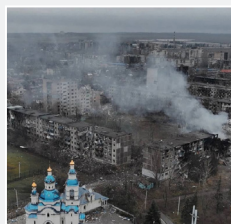
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Iran's External Debt Decreases by 2.5% in 2024



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - According to the latest World Bank report, Iran's external debt fell by 2.5 percent in 2024, totaling \$9.654 billion.

ILNA reports that the World Bank's recent publication on the debt status of developing countries indicates that, overall, these countries' external debt increased by 1.1 percent in 2024, reaching \$8.9 trillion—an increase of approximately \$110 billion compared to 2023.

While total debt among developing nations rose last year, Iran's external debt saw a notable decline. According to World Bank calculations, Iran's debt, which stood at around \$9.901 billion in 2023, decreased by \$247 million to \$9.654 billion in 2024.

Despite ongoing unlawful Western sanctions, Iran has not only avoided increasing its foreign debt in recent years but has successfully reduced it. The country's external debt has fallen from roughly \$19 billion in 2010 to nearly \$9 billion in 2024. Compared to the total debt of developing nations, Iran's external debt remains extremely low—approximately one-thousandth of the \$8.9 trillion owed by these countries.

The World Bank report also provides details on the composition of Iran's external debt. Long-term debt at the end of 2024 was approximately \$1.051 billion, \$65 million less than in 2023. Short-term debt remained unchanged at \$2.285 billion.

Int'l Financial Institutions Consider Iran High-Risk Due to Weak FATF Compliance



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The head of Iran's Financial Intelligence Center (FIC) has warned that international banks and financial institutions classify Iran as a high-risk country due to shortcomings in implementing the standards of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). He emphasized that unless financial transparency improves, Iranian banks will increasingly be excluded from global financial interactions.

According to the Financial Intelligence Center, Hadi Khani made the remarks at the annual meeting of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, which was held on the occasion of International Anti-Corruption Day. Khani noted that the private sector remains “the healthiest and most transparent segment of Iran's economy,” stressing that private businesses, because they rely directly on their own capital and credibility, maintain greater sensitivity to financial irregularities compared with other sectors.

Despite numerous laws passed and the creation of various supervisory bodies, Khani said the expected results in combating corruption have not been achieved. He argued that the country's oversight efforts have focused heavily on identifying corrupt individuals rather than reforming the underlying processes that enable corruption. “Global standards place emphasis on improving the financial environment and monitoring the flow of money, not only on punishing individuals,” he added.

Iran Slams Powers for Granting Israel “Special Right” for Aggression

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - President Masoud Pezeshkian says the policies of major powers in West Asia have created “a special right for the Zionist regime,” a situation which has enabled Israel to pursue military aggression across the region, including on Iran, without facing meaningful international consequences.

Delivering the keynote address at the International Conference on Peace and Trust in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, Pezeshkian said Friday the current global environment of inequality and discrimination has allowed Israel to operate outside the constraints applied to world states.

“In the environment of existing discrimination and inequality, the policy of major powers in West Asia has in practice created a special privilege for the Zionist regime,” he said. “This privilege has been the source of many wars and injustices in the region.”

Pezeshkian said the roots of conflict are not military but structural, shaped by global systems that favor powerful nations at the expense of weaker ones.

“Wars are not sudden events,” he said. “They are the product of selfishness and a sense of superiority. They take root in unjust global economic structures, in institutions that amplify the voices of the powerful and silence the weak, and in legal regimes that make justice conditional on the will of major powers.”

Such a system, Pezeshkian said, has turned peace into “a privilege limited to certain geographies” rather than a universal right.

The Iranian president stated that a combination of geopolitical calculations, Western security interests and the failures of international institutions has contributed to Israel's sense of impunity.

This, he said, has allowed the regime to pursue aggressive policies, citing repeated crimes in Gaza, settlement expansion in the West Bank and “recurrent attacks on Syria, Lebanon, and also the Islamic Republic of Iran and Qatar.”

“When an actor is effectively exempt from international scrutiny and oversight, the roots of injustice deepen and the foundations of sustainable peace are lost,” he said.

Pezeshkian referenced the Israeli aggression on Iran in June. He said the assault “martyred hundreds of my innocent compatriots” and received international support rather than condemnation.

“The attack not only faced no punishment but was met with full political and military backing from powers that claim to defend human rights and global peace,” he said. “As long as such special privilege exists, one cannot speak of peace or a just international order.”

He said that if the world genuinely seeks durable stability, “no country, not even the major powers, should be allowed to place itself above global rules.”



Pezeshkian called for a rethinking of the meaning of peace, stating that security could not be achieved through increased defense spending or rigid alliances.

“Peace will not come from larger military budgets or hardware-based blocs,” he said. “Nor will it come from performative diplomacy. Peace emerges only when we confront the true roots of instability—inequality, monopoly and discrimination.”

He said all countries have a responsibility to demonstrate that international affairs are not the exclusive domain of powerful governments.

This obligation, he said, should be pursued through regional initiatives, engagement with multilateral institutions and diplomacy grounded in ethical principles. The Ashgabat gathering, he said, should be seen as part of this effort.

“This meeting is a reminder of our shared responsibility to prevent clear deviations from the principles of peace and international trust,” he said.

Pezeshkian thanked Turkmenistan for hosting the event, which coincides with the 30th anniversary of its formal adoption of permanent neutrality. He called any initiative that encourages reflection on peace, security and development “a human and ethical undertaking worthy of appreciation.”

Presidents and prime ministers of the participating countries pose for a group photo at the International Conference on Peace and Trust.

The president praised Turkmenistan's “Friends of Neutrality for Peace, Security and Development” initiative, which is supported by the United Nations, calling it “a valuable effort by a country that has demonstrated its commitment to peace and security in practice.”

Pezeshkian emphasized Iran's vision of “active and responsible neutrality,” which he said should not be mistaken for passivity.

“Neutrality does not mean indifference in the face of oppression and aggression,” he said. Instead, he described it as a dynamic approach grounded in international law, humanitarian principles, the UN Charter and “lofty human values.”

“Responsible and active neutrality requires principled and fair positions against any injustice and any clear violation of the sovereignty and rights of nations and individuals,” he said.

Representing “the peace-loving and great people of Iran,” Pezeshkian said Tehran would support “any effort that strengthens the discourse of peace and cooperation at global and regional levels.”

He said he hoped the Ashgabat meeting would help build “the foundations necessary to advance our shared goals” and contribute to “peace, stability and development in the region.”

Trump Does Not Have Very Bad Intentions

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian



In Iran, it is interpreted this way: that Trump's withdrawal from the JCPOA (the nuclear deal) was intended to strike a blow against Iran, and on this basis propaganda and information campaigns are conducted. But this withdrawal is never analyzed in terms of why an action that the previous president had partially accepted became a point of dispute.

Donald Trump was, in essence, a believer in the Monroe Doctrine, and he also made some changes to it. It became clear to him during the JCPOA process that Europe, led by London and using Obama's hand, had deprived the United States of entry into—and return to—the Iranian market, and had viewed everything through a European lens. Therefore, he became upset and withdrew himself from the fray. In essence, Trump's first step in leaving the JCPOA was to break a plan that England had drawn up for the United States. Of course, Iran was also harmed, but the collapse of the JCPOA in the Iranian market mostly harmed a class that, over the past 30 years, had made Iran's economy exclusive to itself. Companies were supposed to come, contracts were to be prepared, and the interests of this newly rich current were to be renewed. But let us see what the Monroe Doctrine is, to which Trump shows commitment.

The Monroe Doctrine is a fundamental principle in United States foreign policy that was announced on December 2, 1823 by James Monroe, the fifth president of the country. In essence, this doctrine had three main objectives: Opposition to “new colonialism” by England, which was formulated against the United States and to preserve England's colonial interests in its colonies.

Opposition to English interference in the affairs of countries that had not yet been colonized.

Creating understanding and cooperation with Europe so that the United States would not interfere in existing conflicts and colonies of England and some other countries such as Portugal, the Netherlands, France, and Belgium.

In practice, this doctrine meant declaring the Western Hemisphere as the “backyard” or exclusive sphere of influence of the United States, granting it the right to respond in the event of European intervention.

Over time, with the discovery of oil and key developments and later interpretations, the nature of this doctrine gradually changed and was used to justify U.S. interventions in the spheres of influence of England and other European countries.

President Theodore Roosevelt, by adding the “Roosevelt Corollary” to this doctrine, granted the United States the right to act as an international police power. According to this, if a Latin American country showed “chronic wrongdoing” in managing its affairs (for example, inability to repay debts to Europe), the United States had the right to intervene militarily in that country to prevent European intervention. This interpretation led to repeated U.S. military interventions in countries such as Haiti, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic—and later even Iran.

During the Cold War, the Monroe Doctrine was strengthened and revived to counter the influence of the Soviet Union and communist ideology in the Western Hemisphere. The most famous example was the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, during which John F. Kennedy invoked this doctrine to force the Soviet Union to remove its missiles from Cuba.

In the contemporary era, although Barack Obama in 2013 implicitly described that doctrine as obsolete, Donald Trump in 2018 explicitly declared that the Monroe Doctrine is alive and used it to warn rivals such as China and Russia—and more recently Europe—about influence in Latin America and other countries of interest to the United States. This is exactly the same logic seen in the 2025 strategy and the policies of maximum pressure against Venezuela, and in the dealings of America's 2025 strategy toward Europe.

Iran and Ethiopia Set Ambitious Goals to Strengthen Political and Economic Ties

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN – Majlis Speaker stated that the Islamic Republic of Iran and Ethiopia, with seven decades of diplomatic relations, have set the goal of expanding their political, economic, and cultural ties. The membership of both countries in BRICS will further smoothen this path.

In a joint press conference held on Saturday, with the Speaker of the Ethiopian House of Representatives, Tadesse Chafow, at the Iranian Parliament, Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said, “Following my visit to Addis Ababa last year, Mr. Tadesse Chafow is on a two-day official visit to Tehran at my invitation. The Iranian people are aware that this visit comes at a time when both Iran and Ethiopia have simultaneously become members of BRICS.”

Qalibaf added that Ethiopia is one of the largest African countries, especially in terms of population, and shares significant cultural ties with Islamic countries, particularly Iran and Muslims.

He continued, “Given the 70 years of political and economic relations between the two countries, we have set the goal of developing relations between Iran and Ethiopia in the economic, political, and cultural spheres.”

The Speaker of Parliament further stated, “The development of economic and trade relations with countries in the Horn of Africa via maritime routes is a priority for both nations.” He also mentioned the need for enhancing parliamentary relations so that friendship and parliamentary groups can work towards creating deeper ties and more opportunities for cooperation, especially between economic committees, in the shortest time possible.

He added, “During a previous visit to Ethiopia, I had discussions with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who promised to visit Tehran, and this trip will undoubtedly lead to further development of political and economic relations.”

Qalibaf emphasized that the Islamic Republic of Iran has always sought to strengthen its ties with African countries, particularly those in the Horn of Africa, which share a closer geographical proximity to Iran. He also mentioned that Iran has supported the territorial integrity and unity of all



countries. He pointed out that Ethiopia's good economic growth, particularly in agriculture, presents a mutual opportunity to expand relations, while Iran can contribute in areas such as energy, technical and engineering services, and knowledge-based industries.

During the meeting, the Speaker of the Ethiopian House of Representatives expressed his gratitude to his Iranian counterpart and said, “Diplomatic relations between our two countries have existed for more than seven decades, and in the last six decades, after the visit of our King to Iran, today the highest Ethiopian delegation is visiting Iran.”

Tadesse Chafow referred to the Speaker of the Iranian Parliament's visit to Ethiopia several months ago and expressed hope that with the current political will, parliamentary relations between the two countries could be strengthened and bilateral relations between the governments and peoples of both nations could be further developed.

He stressed, “Iran and Ethiopia are two ancient countries with long historical backgrounds. We share numerous cultural and historical commonalities. Additionally, both Iran and Ethiopia are members of BRICS, and cooperation between the two countries in the parliamentary, political, and economic spheres is of great importance.”

Chafow highlighted that in this meeting, the two sides have aimed to set the foundation for bilateral cooperation on various issues. He expressed optimism about the growth of political, economic, and cultural relations and the expansion of cooperation across various fields.

“As Mr. Qalibaf pointed out, there are great opportunities in the Horn of Africa, and we are also aware of Iran's excellent capabilities. We hope to establish strong cooperation between our two nations,” said the Speaker of the Ethiopian Parliament.

He concluded by mentioning, “After this visit, we will arrange the visit of an Iranian parliamentary delegation to Ethiopia, and we request that the Ethiopian-Iran parliamentary friendship group visit Tehran, so that through these visits, our cooperation can be further expanded.”

Iran, Russia Stress Implementation of Strategic Partnership Pact

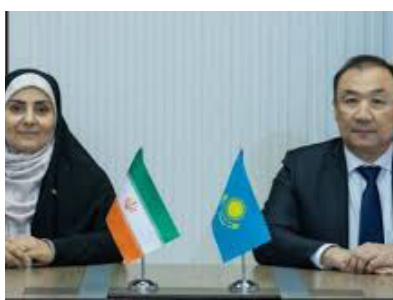


TEHRAN (PressTV) - President Masoud Pezeshkian has expressed Iran's resolve to implement an agreement on a comprehensive strategic partnership with Russia in a meeting with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin.

Pezeshkian made the remarks on Friday on the sidelines of the International Conference on Peace and Trust in Turkmenistan's capital of Ashgabat.

The Iranian president expressed his satisfaction with developing Tehran-Moscow relations and appreciated Russia's support for the Islamic Republic in international forums.

IRAN NEWS



Iran and Kazakhstan Expand Transportation Cooperation

TEHRAN (ILNA) - Iran's Minister of Roads and Urban Development and Kazakhstan's Minister of Transport reviewed ways to expand bilateral cooperation in transit, rail, road, and air transportation during a joint meeting. Farzaneh Sadegh, who is accompanying the President on an official visit to Kazakhstan, met with Nurlan Suranbayev, Kazakhstan's Minister of Transport, on the sidelines of the visit's formal programs to discuss avenues for strengthening transport ties between the two countries.

Iran and Kazakhstan Demonstrate Strong Will to Expand Comprehensive Economic Cooperation



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The Deputy Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade and Head of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPOI) emphasized the expansion of comprehensive cooperation and the achievement of valuable trade agreements to boost economic ties between Iran and Kazakhstan, referring to the visit of Dr. Pezeshkian and a high-ranking delegation to Kazakhstan.

According to IRNA on Friday, citing the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, Mohammad-Ali Dehghan Dehnavi made the remarks at the Iran-Kazakhstan Trade Forum held in Astana. Referring to the visit of Dr. Pezeshkian and the accompanying high-level delegation to Kazakhstan, he said the trip reflects the strong will of both countries to further develop comprehensive cooperation. He expressed hope that, on the sidelines of the visit, companies and business communities from both countries would reach valuable agreements to expand bilateral cooperation.

The Deputy Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade noted that the Islamic Republic of Iran possesses significant industrial capabilities in areas such as petrochemical products, chemicals, agricultural machinery and equipment, mining industries, creative and knowledge-based industries, nanotechnology and biotechnology, detergents and hygienic products, pharmaceuticals and medical equipment, construction materials, and food products. He also highlighted Iran's strengths in the services sector, including technical and engineering services, information technology, tourism, healthcare, and education.

He expressed optimism that negotiations held during the forum would lead to an expansion of industrial, mining, and trade cooperation between Iran and Kazakhstan based on these capabilities.

In conclusion, the Head of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran stated that the Islamic Republic of Iran is also fully prepared to meet its industrial and production needs through Kazakhstan's export capacities. He stressed that discussions held at the event would undoubtedly contribute to strengthening economic, social, and cultural cooperation between the two countries.

According to IRNA, the volume of bilateral trade between Iran and Kazakhstan is estimated at around USD 350 million. Experts believe that, given existing actual and potential capacities, this figure could increase severalfold in the short term.

Expansion of Iran-Zimbabwe Economic and Trade Cooperation



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - At a bilateral meeting between the Head of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPOI) and the Deputy Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade, and the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade of Zimbabwe, shared areas of economic and trade cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Zimbabwe were reviewed, with an emphasis on expanding bilateral trade capacities.

According to the Public Relations Department of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, the meeting was held at the TPOI, attended by the Head of the Organization and the Deputy Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade of Iran, alongside the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade of Zimbabwe and his accompanying delegation. The talks focused on common areas of economic and commercial cooperation between the two countries.

During the meeting, the Head of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran highlighted the significant potential for economic exchanges between Iran and Zimbabwe, stating that bilateral trade could be expanded by preparing and exchanging commodity lists of goods that Iran can export to Zimbabwe and vice versa.

Mohammad-Ali Dehghan Dehnavi added that the two countries should identify shared needs and, in certain areas, pursue joint investments. He noted that if sufficient guarantees for joint investment are in place, Iran is ready to invest in Zimbabwe.

Iran Is the World's Safest and Most Attractive Tourism Destination

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - During the visit of Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts to Athens to attend the meeting of the "Forum of Ancient Civilizations," Seyed Reza Salehi-Amiri met with a group of Iranologists, academics, heads of tourism agencies, and cultural figures from Greece to discuss Iran's tourism, cultural heritage, and handicrafts capacities, as well as the need to strengthen people-to-people relations.

Seyed Reza Salehi-Amiri, Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, on Thursday, during his visit to Athens to participate in the periodic meeting of the "Forum of Ancient Civilizations," held talks with a number of Iranologists, cultural experts, social activists, and representatives of several Greek tourism agencies.

At the meeting, the minister outlined Iran's extensive capacities in the three fields of tourism, cultural heritage, and handicrafts, explaining Iran's unique position on the global tourism map. He said that Iran is among the few countries that simultaneously possess a wide range of historical, natural, and cultural attractions. This diversity, combined with the hospitality of the Iranian people, makes Iran a distinctive and memorable destination for tourists.

Referring to certain inaccurate narratives about Iran, Salehi-Amiri noted that the main problem lies in a distorted and unrealistic perception promoted through Iranophobia projects. "However," he said, "everyone who has traveled to Iran firsthand has presented a completely different and honest picture. They have returned with positive experiences and full satisfaction, which itself is the best form of promotion for the realities of Iran."

Emphasizing the central role of people and cultural elites in developing bilateral relations, he said: "The will of nations is more important than the will of governments. Dialogue with influential cultural and social figures in Greece is of particular importance to us, as they both have a deep understanding of Iranian culture and can convey the true voice of the Iranian people to Greek society."

The minister described removing existing obstacles to Iran-Greece tourism as a shared necessity, adding that two key issues—the lack of direct flights between the two countries and the complexities of visa issuance—must be resolved through bilateral negotiations and cooperation. "Strengthening people-to-people relations is not possible without addressing these issues," he said.

Referring to the presence of representatives of Greek tourism agencies at the meeting, Salehi-Amiri said their views and proposals were important, as they are on the front line of engagement with tourists. A common point in their remarks, he added, was the need to remove structural barriers to expand travel and cooperation.

In another part of the meeting, Greek cultural and academic figures expressed their deep interest in Iranian civilization and stressed the need to facilitate travel, cultural exchanges, joint research projects, and stronger ties among universities, artists, and cultural activists of the two countries.

In a separate meeting with the Greek Minister of Culture in Athens, Salehi-Amiri emphasized the deep ties between the two great civilizations and announced Iran's readiness to expand long-term cultural cooperation, hold a major exhibition of Iranian artifacts in Athens, and stage a joint symphony titled "Persepolis-Acropolis." The proposals were met with full welcome and firm agreement by the Greek side.



At the outset of the meeting, he expressed satisfaction with the continuation of cultural consultations between the two countries, describing it as a sign of a "shared will to open a new chapter in cultural cooperation." He stressed that Iran and Greece, as two pillars of world civilization, share a history and roots that are inseparable.

Describing cultural diplomacy as a reliable bridge between nations, Salehi-Amiri said cultural officials must go beyond political considerations to pave the way for dialogue and friendship between peoples.

Referring to his positive talks with the Greek Minister of Tourism, he spoke of agreements on facilitating visa issuance, resuming direct flights, and creating new tourism routes, noting that these measures could accelerate people-to-people relations between the two countries.

Emphasizing the importance of exhibiting museum artifacts as reflections of national cultural identity, he said the time has come for the people of both countries to once again witness their shared historical ties and heritage firsthand. In this context, he proposed holding a major exhibition of Iranian museum artifacts at the Byzantine Museum of Athens, a proposal that was welcomed by the museum's head and met with Iran's official readiness.

Salehi-Amiri also stressed the need to draft and sign a comprehensive cultural and tourism memorandum of understanding between the two countries to lay the groundwork for long-term cooperation in cultural heritage, tourism, and handicrafts. Highlighting Iran's exceptional handicrafts capacities, he called for creating joint platforms for bilateral markets and exhibitions, emphasizing that Iran is ready to host Greek art and handicrafts.

He further cited expanded academic cooperation, faculty and student exchanges, interaction between Iran's Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Greek academic centers, sharing experiences in restoration, and cooperation in underwater heritage protection as other key areas discussed.

Referring to the successful performance of the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra at Persepolis, he proposed staging a joint "Persepolis-Acropolis" orchestra—an event he described as a symbol of the historical grandeur and musical connection of the two great civilizations—suggesting it be held once in Athens and once in Shiraz.

Linda Mendoni, Greece's Minister of Culture, expressed her satisfaction with the renewal of dialogue, emphasizing that cultural ties between Iran and Greece are "unbreakable" and should be strengthened at the highest level by cultural authorities.

Welcoming the proposals, she stressed the Greek government's readiness to promptly sign a comprehensive cultural and tourism memorandum of understanding and called for its drafting by a joint committee of the two countries.

Mendonis also officially announced Greece's agreement to host a major exhibition of Iranian museum artifacts in Athens and described the joint "Persepolis-Acropolis" symphony as an "inspiring initiative that can be realized in the shortest possible time."

She said Greece sees no limitations or obstacles to expanding cultural and artistic cooperation with Iran and considers the path toward strengthening relations to be "fully prepared."

Mobilizing All National Export Capacities at the Int'l Eurasia Trade Exhibition

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The Head of the Organizing Committee of the 4th International Exhibition on Trade with Eurasia said at a coordination meeting for the event that all of the country's export capacities and potential have been utilized to ensure the successful organization of the exhibition and to invite countries involved in trade with the Eurasian region to participate.

According to the Public Relations Department of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPOI), the coordination meeting for the 4th International Exhibition on Trade with Eurasia was held at the TPOI, attended by Amir Roshanbakhsh Ghanbari, Deputy Head of the Organization; Farzad Piltan, Adviser and Assistant to the Head of TPOI for International Affairs; Alireza Jafari, Head of the Iran Trade Center in Belarus and Executive Director of the exhibition; as well as several commercial counselors of Eurasian Economic Union member states based in Iran.

At the opening of the meeting, Amir Roshanbakhsh Ghanbari, in his capacity as Head of the Organizing Committee of the exhibition, stated that one of the main objectives of the session was to establish communication with representatives of Eurasian countries and their neighbors, which could develop effective trade relations along the Eurasian corridor.

The Deputy Head of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran added that every effort has been made to leverage all national export capacities and potentials in organizing the exhibition, in order to invite countries that are in some way involved in trade with the Eurasian region to take part. He noted that, using the budgets and government incentives allocated to the TPOI, the organization has assumed hosting-related matters and associated costs in line with existing protocols.

Roshanbakhsh emphasized that trade delegations, official delegations, and members of chambers of commerce from participating countries will cover their respective expenses in accordance with hosting protocols, expressing hope for strong and active participation by economic operators from Eurasian member states.

Referring to the specialized meetings planned during the



exhibition, the Head of the Organizing Committee said that four key topics have been selected for discussion in expert panels: first, monetary and financial issues of importance in the Eurasian region; second, an examination of the North-South Corridor involving Eurasian Economic Union member countries; third, standards for goods of member and observer countries; and finally, a review of products with competitive advantages in the region. These topics will be examined in detail during the specialized sessions.

He added that a separate meeting will be held in Moscow next week, to which economic operators and exhibition participants have been invited in order to introduce Eurasia's trade capacities. Neighboring countries will also be formally invited to take part actively in the exhibition.

Farzad Piltan, Adviser and Assistant to the Head of TPOI for International Affairs, said that the 4th International Exhibition on Trade with Eurasia is being held within the framework of Iran's macro trade policies aimed at expanding economic and commercial relations with neighboring countries, particularly members of the Eurasian Economic Union. He added that planning has also been carried out to invite other interested countries and trade delegations wishing to visit the exhibition.

He noted that TPOI's country offices, in coordination with the organization's commercial counselors, will serve as the main communication hubs for arranging visits by foreign trade delegations. In addition, the capacities of Iran's trade centers in Eurasian member states will be utilized in organizing the exhibition.

Alireza Jafari, Executive Director of the 4th International Exhibition on Trade with Eurasia, said that special facilities have been arranged for officials, heads of associations, and trade delegations from Eurasian Economic Union member countries to enable more effective participation in the event. He added that specific programs have also been planned for national and provincial pavilions.

Jafari noted that the exhibition guidebook provides comprehensive information on the fields of activity covered by the 4th International Exhibition on Trade with Eurasia, adding that the organization's offices in Tehran, Moscow, and Belarus will coordinate all necessary arrangements in this regard.

Tehran-Tabriz Railway Line Threatened by Land Subsidence



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The Head of the Hazard Vulnerability Department at Iran's Road, Housing and Urban Development Research Center has warned that the recent land subsidence incident in Vali-Asr Township, located in Tehran's District 18, had been anticipated and previously reported, stressing that the Tehran-Tabriz railway line passing through the area is also at serious risk.

Ali Beitollahi, speaking to ILNA, said that Vali-Asr Township, situated south of Qaem Park and Narges Women's Park, had long been identified as a high-risk area. "We had already prepared and submitted reports on the potential for land subsidence in this zone and issued clear warnings before this incident occurred," he noted.

Beitollahi explained that the incident represents localized subsidence caused primarily by excessive groundwater extraction to supply Tehran's drinking water. He added that the rate of subsidence in this area and across District 18 has increased dramatically. "Over the past two years, the subsidence rate here has tripled compared to previous years," he said.

He described the phenomenon as sudden subsidence, also known as ground collapse. "Unfortunately, in addition to the gradual subsidence that is widely recognized across Tehran, we are now witnessing sudden collapses in this area," Beitollahi said. He noted that the affected zone lies along the path of old qanat systems, which exacerbate the risk. Rainfall intensifies underground water flows through these qanats, increasing soil erosion and triggering sudden collapses similar to the incident that occurred recently in Vali-Asr Township.

According to Beitollahi, the annual subsidence rate in this area exceeds 22 centimeters. He warned that the soil in District 18 is largely loose, non-cohesive, and highly porous. "As subsidence progresses, the soil becomes increasingly fragile. Combined with the presence of underground water channels and rainfall, this leads to severe localized erosion, vibrations, and ultimately ground collapse," he explained.

340,000 Tons of Materials Recycled Through Vehicle Scrapping



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The Head of the Board of the Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO), Farshad Moghimi, announced that scrapping 505,000 vehicles over the past 20 months has returned 340,000 tons of materials to the national economy, valued at approximately 9.5 trillion rials (around \$225 million USD).

Moghimi highlighted the environmental and economic benefits of vehicle recycling. "Scrapping old vehicles not only reduces pollution and environmental impacts but also returns significant industrial and mineral resources to the economy," he said.

According to Moghimi, recycling a single vehicle produces about 400 kg of steel, 26 kg of glass, 120 kg of plastics and polymers, 68 kg of rubber and plastomers, 16 liters of fluids and oils, 5 kg of copper, 30 kg of aluminum, and 6-15 kg of lead and magnesium, among other materials.

He stressed that recovering these resources reduces environmental damage caused by abandoned vehicles. "Every scrapped vehicle helps prevent further extraction of mineral resources while contributing to a circular economy," he added.

Currently, about 200 vehicle scrapping centers operate across Iran, employing an average of 20 people each, providing jobs for over 4,000 individuals. "In addition to recycling natural resources and reducing pollution, vehicle scrapping contributes directly to employment," Moghimi said.

Thousands Strike and March in Italy Against Meloni's Budget

MILAN (Dispatches) - A national strike by Italy's largest trade union to protest against Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's 2026 budget brought thousands onto the streets on Friday and disrupted trains, schools and other public services across the country.

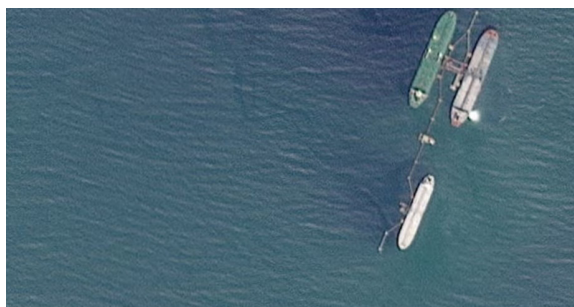
The CGIL union estimated that some 61% of all public and private sector workers had joined the strike, while more than 500,000 people marched in rallies in Italy's main cities.

The CGIL has some 5 million members, half of whom are pensioners.

Police estimates of the number of demonstrators were not immediately available.



Venezuela-U.S. Tensions Spike in Wake of Seized Tanker



CARACAS (Dispatches) - Venezuelan opposition leader Maria Corina Machado on Friday promised political change after slipping out of the country in secret to collect the Nobel Peace Prize, as the shock waves intensified from the Trump administration's seizure of an oil tanker earlier this week.

That escalation came on the heels of a large-scale U.S. military buildup in the southern Caribbean as President Donald Trump campaigns to oust Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro, pushing relations to their most volatile point in years.

The effects could ripple through the region, with Venezuelan oil exports falling sharply and crisis-stricken Cuba, already straining to power its grid, at risk of losing supply.

The U.S. seizure of the Skipper tanker off Venezuela's coast on Wednesday marked the first U.S. capture of Venezuelan oil cargo since sanctions were imposed in 2019.

The vessel is now heading to Houston, where it will offload its cargo onto smaller ships, Reuters reported.

The Trump administration does not recognize Maduro, in power since 2013, as Venezuela's legitimate leader.

Washington has signalled more seizures are planned as part of efforts to choke off sanctioned oil flows, and subsequently imposed new sanctions on three nephews of Maduro's wife and six tankers linked to them.

Irish Minister Defends "Limited" Trade Curbs on Israeli Settlements



DUBLIN (Dispatches) - Ireland's planned curbs on trade with Israeli settlements will be limited strictly to goods, a minister told Reuters, offering the first clear signal on the scope of the contested legislation and rejecting accusations that the country is anti-Semitic.

Ireland has been preparing a law to curb trade with settlements in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, facing pressure at home to widen the scope of the ban from goods to services, while Israel and the United States want the bill scrapped.

Ireland has been one of the European Union's most outspoken critics of Israel's assault in Gaza, which authorities in the Palestinian enclave say has killed more than 67,000 people.

But Thomas Byrne, Ireland's Minister of State for European Affairs and Defence, told Reuters that the bill is limited to the import of goods and that it would not become law this year.

"It's an extremely limited measure, which would prohibit imports of goods from illegally-occupied territories," he said in an interview. "Similar measures have already been brought in in a number of European countries."

Byrne's comments give insight into Dublin's thinking as Ireland seeks to deflect pressure, including from U.S. companies based in the country, to soften its criticism of Israel. Ireland's bill is expected to help shape how other European nations launch similar curbs on trade with Israeli settlements.

Ukraine Could Join EU by January 2027 Under U.S. Plan to End War With Russia

KYIV (Dispatches) - Ukraine would join the European Union as early as January 2027 under the latest US plan to end the war with Russia, a senior source familiar with the matter told AFP.

The complicated EU accession process usually takes years and requires a unanimous vote from all 27 members of the bloc, and some countries, most notably Hungary, have consistently voiced opposition to Ukraine joining.

The idea of a speedy accession is included in the latest version of a US-led plan to end the war, which would also see Ukraine cede land to Russia, and has triggered a diplomatic frenzy across Europe in recent weeks.

"It's stated there but it's a matter for negotiation, and the Americans support it," the senior official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said, referring to the US plan.

Meanwhile, Europeans and Ukrainians are asking the United States to provide them with "security guarantees" before Ukraine negotiates any territorial concessions, the French presidency said on Friday.

"We need full visibility on the security guarantees that Europeans and Americans can give to Ukrainians before any settlement on contentious territorial issues," the Elysee said ahead of a Monday meeting in Berlin with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, other European leaders, and the heads of the EU and NATO.

Washington has the leverage needed to convince leaders opposed to Ukraine's membership to change their stance, Zelensky told journalists, including AFP, on Thursday.

"The United States can take steps to unblock our path to the European Union," he said, adding that "the US president has various levers of influence and that this will have an effect on those who are currently blocking Ukraine."

Kyiv has long strived for EU membership and has been implementing reforms since a pro-European 2014 revolution but has struggled to eradicate endemic corruption—a core prerequisite for joining the bloc.

After completing a diplomatic tour across Europe last week, Zelensky is due in Berlin on Monday for more talks on the plan, full details of which have not been released.

Zelensky will discuss "the status of peace negotiations in Ukraine" with "numerous European heads of state and government,



weapons, has been grinding forward on the battlefield for months, notching up its quickest advance for a year in November.

However on Friday, Ukraine claimed to have retaken two settlements near Kupiansk—a strategically important city and a key railway hub in the northeast of the country.

Zelensky visited the troops near Kupiansk to congratulate them—and recorded a video of himself on a road at the entrance to the southwest of the city.

A Russian air strike damaged a Turkish-owned cargo vessel in Ukraine's Black Sea region of Odesa, Kyiv and the operator said Friday, triggering fresh calls from Ankara to halt strikes on port infrastructure.

Turkey earlier warned of a "worrying escalation" in the Black Sea after Ukraine claimed naval drone attacks on Russia-linked tankers in the area, and called for a "suspension" of attacks.

EU Agrees to Indefinitely Freeze Russian Assets, Removing Obstacle to Ukraine Loan

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - The European Union agreed on Friday to indefinitely freeze Russian central bank assets held in Europe, removing a big obstacle to using the cash to help Ukraine defend itself against Russia.

The EU wants to keep Ukraine financed and fighting as it sees Russia's invasion as a threat to its own security. To do so, EU states aim to put to work some of the Russian sovereign assets they immobilised after Moscow's 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

A first big step, which EU governments agreed on Friday, is to immobilise 210 billion euros (\$246 billion) worth of Russian sovereign assets for as long as needed instead of voting every six months on extending the asset freeze.

This removes the risk that Hungary and Slovakia, which have better relations with Moscow than other EU states, could refuse to roll over the freeze at some point, forcing the EU to return the money to Russia.

The indefinite asset freeze is meant to help convince Belgium to support the EU's plan to use the frozen Russian cash to extend a loan of up to 165 billion euros to Ukraine to cover its military and civilian budget needs in 2026 and 2027.

The loan would be paid back by Ukraine only when Russia pays Kyiv war damages, making the loan effectively a grant that advances future Russian reparations payments.

EU leaders - the European Council - are to meet on December 18 to finalise details of the reparations loan and resolve remaining problems, which include guarantees from all EU governments for Belgium that it would not be left alone to foot the bill should a potential Moscow lawsuit prove successful.

Before that, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky will visit Berlin for talks with German Chancellor Friedrich Merz on Monday, with further European, EU and NATO leaders joining them later, the German government



said.

Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Svyrydenko, writing on X social platform in English, praised the decision as a "landmark step toward justice and accountability".

"This decision strengthens the foundation for the reparations loan mechanism and brings us closer to a future in which Russia pays for its crimes and destruction caused," she wrote.

Germany sees no alternative to the reparations loan and would provide 50 billion euros in guarantees, European diplomatic sources said.

Danish Finance Minister Stephanie Lose, whose country holds the rotating EU presidency, told reporters "some worries" still needed to be addressed but "hopefully we'll be able to pave the way towards a decision at the European

Council next week."

European Commissioner for Economy Valdis Dombrovskis said solid guarantees were being put together for Belgium.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban said on Facebook he believed the EU move to freeze Russian assets indefinitely via a qualified majority vote - requiring the support of 15 of the 27 member states representing 65% of the EU population - would cause irreparable damage to the bloc.

Hungary would do all it could to "restore a lawful state of affairs," he said.

Russia's central bank said the EU plans to use its assets were illegal and reserved the right to use all available means to protect its interests, remarks shrugged off by Dombrovskis.

The bank also said it was suing the Brussels-based central securities depository Euroclear - which holds 185 billion euros of the total assets frozen in Europe - in a Moscow court over what it said were damaging actions, affecting its ability to dispose of its funds and securities.

Euroclear has been subject to Russian lawsuits in Moscow courts since the EU froze the assets in 2022.

The Financial Times reported that Ukraine could join the EU by January 1, 2027 under proposals being discussed in U.S.-mediated talks on ending the war. Talks on EU accession, a long-held goal for Kyiv as it seeks to move further out of Moscow's orbit, usually take many years.

A European diplomat briefed on the plan said Ukrainian accession would be "extremely difficult" to achieve by 2027 and that it was not clear whether the EU leadership backed this.

Several other European officials and diplomats said the target date was "absolutely impossible."

Fighting Continues Between Thailand, Cambodia After Trump Claim of Ceasefire

BANGKOK (Dispatches) - Cambodia said Thai forces, including fighter jets, continued to strike targets across their disputed border on Saturday morning, in the hours after U.S. President Donald Trump claimed to have brokered a ceasefire.

"Thai forces have not stopped the bombing yet and are still continuing the bombing," the Cambodian ministry of information said.

Thailand and Cambodia had agreed "to cease all shooting" effective on Friday, Trump said after calls with the Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul and Cambodian premier Hun Manet on Friday night.

But neither leader referenced an agreement in statements after the call, and Anutin said there was no ceasefire. When asked about Trump's claim, Thailand's foreign ministry referred reporters to his statement.

In a statement on Saturday on Facebook, Manet referred to the call with Trump and an earlier discussion with Malaysian leader Anwar Ibrahim and said Cambodia continues to seek a peaceful resolution of disputes in line with an earlier agreement signed in the Malaysian capital of Kuala Lumpur



in October.

Still, Manet said he advised the U.S. and Malaysia use their intelligence gathering capabilities to "verify which side fired first" in the latest round of fighting.

Since Monday, Cambodia and Thailand have been firing rockets and artillery at multiple points along their disputed 817-km (508-mile) border, in some of the heaviest fighting since the five-day clash in July, which Trump halted with calls to both leaders.

Trump was keen to intervene again to rescue that truce, which was expanded in October when he met the Thai and Cambodian prime ministers in Malaysia. The two sides agreed on a process to withdraw troops and heavy weapons and release 18 Cambodian prisoners of war.

But Thailand last month suspended that agreement after a Thai soldier was maimed in the latest in a series of incidents involving landmines that Bangkok says were newly laid by Cambodia. Cambodia rejects the allegations.



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Donovan Mitchell scored a season-high 48 points on Friday to help the visiting Cleveland Cavaliers rally for a 130-126 victory over the Washington Wizards.

Mitchell hit eight 3-pointers, while Evan Mobley added 23 points and 13 rebounds and Darius Garland chipped in 18 points for the Cavaliers, who trailed by 17 points late in the third quarter. De'Andre Hunter scored 15 and Jaylon Tyson had 13 for Cleveland, which outscored Washington 45-26 in the fourth.

CJ McCollum and Bub Carrington led Washington with 27 points apiece. Marvin Bagley III finished with 15 points and 13 rebounds in the Wizards' fourth straight loss. Kyshawn George and Jamir Watkins both scored 15, followed by Tristan Vukcevic's 14.

After Washington trailed by two points at halftime, Carrington's consecutive 3-pointers capped a 14-2 run to begin the third quarter, giving the Wizards a 74-64 edge.

Bagley's five straight points and Will Riley's dunk then extended Washington's lead to 16 midway through the third.

Mitchell's layup trimmed Cleveland's deficit to 15 to stamp a quarter that saw the Wizards outscore the Cavaliers 40-23.

From there, Mitchell's 3-pointer and Garland's basket pulled Cleveland within 10, forcing Washington to use a timeout less than a minute into the fourth.

Trailing by eight, the Cavaliers rattled off seven straight points to cut Washington's lead to 107-106 at the 8:11 mark.

Carrington's mid-range jumper snapped a three-minute streak for Washington without a made field goal, giving the Wizards a 122-119 cushion with 2:31 left. Mitchell then drained a game-tying

3-pointer on the next possession.

After Washington missed three shots on one possession, Mitchell's layup with one minute left gave the Cavaliers their first lead since the opening minute of the second half.

Mobley drained two free throws with 23.7 seconds left, before Mitchell's layup with 5.9 seconds left sealed the comeback win.

After Tre Johnson's layup gave Washington a 24-21 edge, Mitchell finished the first quarter with back-to-back 3-pointers, stamping a 14-0 Cleveland run to give the visitors a 35-24 lead entering the second.

The Wizards opened the second period with nine straight points, including Carrington's triple to pull Washington within two.

Meanwhile Isaiah Stewart amassed 17 points, five rebounds and five assists to lead a balanced attack as the Eastern Conference-leading Detroit Pistons overwhelmed the visiting Atlanta Hawks, 142-115, on Friday night.

Detroit, which has won five of its last six games, recorded its third victory over the Hawks in the past month.

Eight Pistons recorded double figures in scoring and two others tallied nine points. Cade Cunningham and Duncan Robinson contributed 15 points apiece, while Jalen Duren supplied 14 points and seven rebounds.

Ronald Holland and Ausar Thompson added 12 points apiece, while Caris LeVert chipped in 10 points with eight assists. The Pistons shot 58.2% from the field.

Cunningham added seven assists and 11 of 13 Pistons hit 50% or better from the field.

Vonn Claims Sensational First Ski World Cup Win Since 2018

ST. MORITZ (Dispatches) - Lindsey Vonn cemented her remarkable comeback at the age of 41 in style with her first World Cup win since 2018 on Friday, throwing down the gauntlet to her far younger rivals in the downhill at the upcoming Winter Olympics.

The veteran American rolled back the years to start a season that will lead to the Games in Milan-Cortina, claiming her 83rd career World Cup win two decades after her first to become the oldest winner of all time on the circuit.

The Minnesota-born veteran rejoined the US team last season after retiring due to a serious knee injury in 2019.

She underwent a reconstruction of her knee using titanium and returned to competition last season, picking up the first podium in the second chapter of her decorated career at Sun Valley in March when second in the Sun Valley super-G.



After going one better on Friday she punched the crisp Swiss air with delight and celebrated taking her career haul at St Moritz to six victories before her phone started buzzing with congratulatory calls, including an emotional chat with her father back in the United States.

The unstoppable Vonn has teamed up with close friend, retired Norwegian double Olympic champion Aksel Lund Svindal, this season to give her the best possible chance of adding to her Olympic medal haul next year.

"We worked really hard," Vonn told TNT.

"Not just me, the whole team. I hired Aksel, I knew I was skiing fast, you never know until the first race, but I think I skied faster than I thought."

Lund Svindal commented: "I knew we were well prepared and fight for the win, it's unbelievable, she can be so clean, that's where she can pull away from the field."

Sabalenka Says Kyrgios Match Will Not Harm Women's Tennis Reputation

LONDON (Dispatches) - World number one Aryna Sabalenka says she is not concerned that losing to Nick Kyrgios in this month's 'Battle of the Sexes' exhibition could damage the reputation of women's tennis.

Four-time Grand Slam champion Sabalenka will play the Australian, ranked 672 in the world, on December 28.

"I am not putting myself at any risk," the 27-year-old Belarusian told the BBC. "We're there to have fun and bring great tennis. Whoever wins, wins."

"It's so obvious that the man is biologically stronger than the woman, but it's not about that. This event is only going to help bring women's tennis to a higher level."

Some have criticised the event which has echoes of the



original 1973 Battle of the Sexes match in which women's trailblazer Billie Jean King was challenged by 55-year-old former Grand Slam winner Bobby Riggs who claimed women's tennis was far inferior to men's.

King won the match in Houston with the contest attracting a reported 90 million television viewers.

Unlike Riggs, Kyrgios is still an active Tour player although he played only five professional matches in 2025 because of the injuries that have dogged his career.

"It's not going to be an easy match for Nick," Sabalenka said. "I'm going to be there competing and showing women are strong, powerful and good entertainment."

"He's in a lose-lose situation. I'm in a win-win situation."

Norris Gets His Hands on F1 Trophy



LONDON (Dispatches) - Lando Norris laid hands on the Formula One winner's trophy at a prize-giving gala in Tashkent on Friday as outgoing champion Max Verstappen stayed away due to illness but sent a congratulatory message to the Briton and McLaren.

Norris clinched the title in the final race in Abu Dhabi last Sunday, beating Red Bull's Verstappen by two points in the 24-round season with McLaren teammate Oscar Piastri third overall.

The 26-year-old is the 35th Formula One champion since the first in 1950 and 11th Briton to win the crown.

"Obviously this is a lot of people's dreams, a lot of racing drivers' dreams and I got to finally live it," Norris told the audience in the Uzbek capital. "Live that one dream that I had when I was a little kid."

Norris used an expletive as he spoke alongside newly-re-elected FIA president Mohammed Ben Sulayem, who has cracked down on drivers swearing and jokingly replied '10,000'.

"I got fined. But I can pay it off now," said Norris.

Four-times champion Verstappen was awarded the F1 Action of the Year in his absence for his overtake on Piastri in the opening lap of the Imola race.

"I'm very sorry that I couldn't be with you tonight. The doctors have prevented me from flying," said the Dutch driver in a recorded message.

"A big congratulations to McLaren and especially Lando. You guys had an unbelievable season, and it was really cool to be able to race against you guys until the end."

All Eyes on the Prizes, Sydney Silversmiths Deliver for Australian Open



SYDNEY (Dispatches) - That great attention to detail is the hallmark of a great tennis tournament will come as no surprise to silversmith Paul Smith, who is responsible for crafting the trophy taken home from the Australian Open by the women's singles champion.

While the Daphne Akhurst Memorial Cup that has been awarded to the winner of the women's singles since 1934 stays in Australia, Sydney-based smithery W.J. Sanders produces an exact replica that leaves Melbourne with the champion.

"It's not technically an easy trophy to make," Smith told Reuters.

"It's quite simple in its design, which means you've got to be quite accurate."

"Its simple silhouette means it's a very elegant trophy. To me, it's kind of the epitome of a trophy, isn't it?"

Smith is part of a team of 10 hard at work in the back streets of Sydney crafting 150 trophies for the 2026 Australian Open, which also include an exact replica of the Norman Brookes Challenge Cup for the men's champion at Melbourne Park.

For General Manager Darren May and his team, work on the trophies began before the 2025 edition of the Grand Slam and will conclude when the fruits of their labours are handed out to title winners on Rod Laver Arena early next year.

"When we get to that final, men's and women's and doubles final, and they hold that trophy up, we all remember the time it took us to create those trophies and the craftsmanship that went into it," May told Reuters.

The 'major' trophies - the men's and women's singles, men's and women's doubles and mixed doubles - are all handmade from roughly 18 kg of silver and have a value of at least A\$860,000 (\$573,534).

The skill set required to make these trophies by hand is dying out and it is officially considered an "endangered craft" on Britain's Heritage Crafts Red List.

May, though, would not craft the trophies any other way.

"Sure, you can mass produce, but mass production, it takes the life out of the object," he said.