

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Rafael Grossi Held a Phone Call on Sunday With Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and Discussed the Latest Developments Related to Indirect Negotiations Between Iran and the United States

On the Occasion of the Holy Month of Ramada, Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei Has Donated 50 Billion Rials for the Release of Prisoners in Need

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### Iran, Other Muslim States Slam U.S. Envoy's Endorsement of "Greater Israel" Plot



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iran, along with several Islamic and Arab countries and organizations, has condemned comments by the U.S. ambassador to the occupied territories, who suggested Israel has a right to expand its occupation to much of West Asia. The denunciations came after Mike Huckabee said on a podcast released on Friday that it would be "fine" if Israel stole all of the land between the Nile River in Egypt and the Euphrates in Syria and Iraq. Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei said Huckabee's remarks are "a bold testament to American active complicity in the Israeli regime's expansionist wars of aggression as well as its colonial genocide of Palestinians." He also warned that the US envoy's "extremist ideological rhetoric" would further embolden the usurping regime to "persist in its atrocity crimes and illegal measures against Palestinians as well as its constant aggression against the nations of the region."

"It would be fine" if Israel "took it all," and expand from the Nile to the Euphrates, is a bold testament to American active complicity in Israeli regime's expansionist wars of aggression as well as its colonial genocide of Palestinians.

Similarly, Qatar, Egypt, Jordan, the UAE, Indonesia, Pakistan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain, Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine, together with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and the Arab League condemned the UN diplomat's "dangerous and inflammatory" comments.

In a joint statement, they said Huckabee's remarks "constitute a flagrant violation of the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, and pose a grave threat to the security and stability of the region."

### Iran's Military Alertness Main "Deterrent" Against Enemy Miscalculations



TEHRAN - A senior Iranian commander said the constant alertness and readiness of the country's Armed Forces constitute the "most important deterrent" against any adventurism or miscalculation by enemies. Commander of the Iranian Army Ground Force Brigadier General Ali Jahanshahi made the remarks on Saturday during a visit to a mobile assault brigade in the city of Piranshahr, West Azarbaijan Province, which was conducted to assess the combat readiness and operational capabilities of the units. He said the Army's Ground Forces are "continuously and vigilantly" defending Iran's territory as they are monitoring and neutralizing all the enemy's actions and threats. He pointed to the guidelines of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei about the importance of maintaining full readiness in the face of the enemy, saying the Armed Forces' alertness is the key factor that deters enemies from any action against Iran's interests and security. "The Ground Forces have reached a level of capability and deterrence that can nip any threat in the bud," Jahanshahi emphasized.

## Iran Not to Bow to Pressure or Coercion



### IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

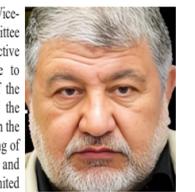
TEHRAN - President Masoud Pezeshkian has declared that Iran would not bow under external pressure or internal hardship, vowing steadfastness "to the very last drop of our blood" as tensions persist with the United States. Speaking during a ceremony on Saturday, Pezeshkian pointed to the difficult conditions facing the country and underscored the government's determination to overcome them. "We will strive for Iran to the very last drop of our blood. Despite all the shortages, problems, pressures, and injustices, the government, by God's grace and relying on the unity and cohesion of society, will endeavor to overcome these hardships and will not allow any obstacle to remain in the path of the nation's dignity," he stated. The president continued, "We will not bow in surrender to difficulties. Despite all the troubles and pressures, even if certain powers stand against the Iranian nation with unfair conduct, our resolve to stand firm and advance will not weaken." Pezeshkian added, "Even if the world and powerful states stand against us to force us to bow before them, they should know that we will not bow to these difficulties. Despite all the troubles and problems they have created for us, and despite the wounds inflicted upon society, we must heal these wounds." The president's remarks came amid significant American military buildup around Iran that has followed deadly US- and Israeli-backed riots across the country in January that cost the lives of thousands. Meanwhile referring to the determination and efforts of disabled and differently-abled athletes, he continued: "You did not surrender in the face of difficulties; likewise, despite all the problems that have been created and the wounds inflicted upon our society, we will not yield to hardships

or bullying. We must heal the wounds of our society. We are one nation and one country; we must unite as one and stand firm against adversity. We must set aside differences and problems and place a balm on the wounds of society." The President expressed hope that differently-abled athletes would continue to be a source of pride as in the past and said: "I promise that we will provide the necessary conditions and opportunities for your growth and advancement." Addressing the American military posturing on Thursday, Amir Saeid Iravani, Iran's envoy to the United Nations, said the Islamic Republic would not initiate war, but would respond firmly to any act of aggression. "In the event that it (the Islamic Republic) is subjected to military aggression, Iran will respond decisively and proportionately in the exercise of its inherent right of self-defense under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations," the ambassador said in a letter addressed to the UN secretary-general and the president of the Security Council. Earlier this week, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei also issued a strong warning against any fresh American military adventurism targeting the Islamic Republic, noting, "The American president [Donald Trump] repeatedly says that their military is the strongest in the world." "The strongest military in the world, however, can sometimes be struck so hard that it cannot even get back on its feet," Ayatollah Khamenei stated. "They keep saying, 'We have sent an aircraft carrier toward Iran.' Fine—an aircraft carrier is certainly a dangerous piece of equipment. But more dangerous than the carrier is the weapon capable of sending it to the bottom of the sea," the Leader noted.

### Iran: Guardian of the United Nations Charter

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

The election of the Islamic Republic of Iran as Vice-Chair and member of the Bureau of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations reflects Iran's active standing in international legal forums. Allow me to introduce the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations so that we may better understand the significance of this position. The Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization is a specialized and permanent body within the framework of the United Nations. Regarding its history, the Committee was established in 1974—five years before the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran—by the United Nations General Assembly. Its formation stemmed from two separate initiatives in the late 1960s: one proposal by Colombia to review the Charter, and another by Romania to strengthen the role of the United Nations. These two tracks ultimately led to the creation of an Ad Hoc Committee, which in 1975 was transformed into the present Special Committee. The Committee's primary mission is to carefully examine proposals by Member States aimed at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the commitments and decisions of the United Nations. However, such reviews must always take place within the framework of the United Nations Charter. In other words, the Committee seeks ways to better implement the provisions of the Charter and strengthen the Organization's role in key areas. Its responsibilities include: Reviewing proposals and views of countries concerning the United Nations Charter. Examining ways to strengthen the UN's role in maintaining international peace and security, developing cooperation among nations, and promoting the rules of international law. Compiling a list of proposals submitted and identifying those that enjoy broader support. As the only permanent committee dedicated specifically to Charter-related matters, it holds special importance. Among the most significant issues on its agenda are: Maintaining international peace and security; examining various aspects to strengthen the UN's role. Promoting methods such as negotiation, mediation, and international arbitration. Reviewing the effects of Security Council sanctions on third countries and exploring ways to assist them. Updating the Organization's records and supervising the preparation and revision of two important sources: Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs and Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council, which function as the institutional memory of the Organization. According to official UN reports, the Islamic Republic of Iran has consistently maintained an active presence in this Committee. Iran has not only participated as a member but has often represented the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), articulating the views of this large group of countries. For example, during the 71st (2016) and 72nd (2017) sessions of the General Assembly, Iran's representative was identified as the spokesperson of the Non-Aligned Movement. This selection reflects other Member States' trust in Iran's legal diplomacy. Now, Iran's election as Vice-Chair and member of the Bureau indicates that at the Committee's most recent session in New York, the Islamic Republic of Iran was chosen for these leadership roles. Such appointments within UN diplomacy carry significant weight and signify a more influential role for Iran in guiding the Committee's agenda, facilitating negotiations, and setting priorities. At the same time, this achievement demonstrates the country's high level of expertise and diplomatic capacity in the field of international law, as recognized by other nations. Membership in the Bureau provides Iran with an opportunity to more effectively defend its interests and those of like-minded countries regarding key issues such as UN structural reform, the clarification of states' lawlessness—particularly the United States' use of sanctions—and peaceful settlement of disputes. In committees such as the Special Committee on the Charter, members of the Bureau (including the Chair, Vice-Chairs, and Rapporteur) are generally elected by consensus, following informal consultations among regional groups. In other words, there is no formal recorded vote in which one can identify which countries voted "yes" for Iran. Iran's election therefore indicates that during consultations, there was no opposition from Member States. Moreover, under current circumstances—when the Trump administration seeks to further discredit the United Nations—this selection was accompanied by implicit approval and collective support of nations, reflecting the political significance and the underlying views of countries regarding Iran. It should be acknowledged, however, that the primary reason for this collective agreement also lies in Iran's active and constructive role within the Committee. Iran has a longstanding record of representing the Non-Aligned Movement as its spokesperson in Committee sessions. This diplomatic and legal capability has earned the confidence of other countries and convinced them that Iran can effectively contribute to guiding the Committee's agenda. Bureau positions in such committees are typically held for a one-year term, corresponding to the working year of the General Assembly, which begins each September. These terms are renewable, subject to consensus and agreement at the Committee's subsequent annual meeting. Therefore, for Iran to retain this position next year, it must once again receive Member States' approval. The Impact of the Special Committee on the Charter: The Special Committee plays a subtle, specialized, and foundational role within the UN system. Its influence can be analyzed in several key areas: 1. A Platform for Safeguarding the Rule of Law: The Committee's most important function is providing a specialized forum for interpreting and implementing the United Nations Charter accurately. At a time when the international order faces serious challenges, this Committee serves as a legal platform where fundamental principles—such as sovereign equality of states, prohibition of the use of force, and peaceful settlement of disputes—are supported and examined by experts. In other words, by promoting these principles, the Committee contributes to strengthening the rule of law and preserving the credibility of the international legal system. 2. A Forum for Reviewing and Proposing Reforms: The Committee's main mission is to review Member States' proposals aimed at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations within the framework of the Charter. This means that any idea for reforming UN structures or working methods undergoes preliminary legal examination in this Committee before further action. Recently, António Guterres has issued warnings regarding the efficiency of the United Nations. Reform—particularly of the Security Council—remains a recurring and pressing issue in international forums. Although final decisions rest with the General Assembly and the Security Council, much of the preparatory and technical work is carried out in committees such as the Special Committee on the Charter. The Secretary-General has repeatedly emphasized the need for reforms to enhance efficiency, and this Committee is where that necessity is translated into legal language. 3. Institutional Memory of the United Nations: One of the Committee's vital yet less visible responsibilities is overseeing the preparation and updating of two key documents: Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs and Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council. These documents serve as the institutional memory of the United Nations, recording precedents in interpreting and applying Charter provisions. They are considered essential and authoritative resources for diplomats, legal scholars, and international judges at the International Court of Justice. 4. An Opportunity for Developing Countries: For countries such as Iran, this Committee provides an important platform to articulate their perspectives—and those of like-minded countries such as the Non-Aligned Movement—on fundamental issues of international law. Participation in the Bureau enables the Islamic Republic of Iran to play a more active role in steering these specialized discussions and to defend principles emphasized in the Charter, such as sovereign equality and non-intervention in domestic affairs, against emerging challenges. In short, the Committee's impact may be compared to that of a fundamental jurisprudential or constitutional council within a system. Its decisions may not be directly operational, but it establishes the framework and interpretations that other organs and states consider themselves bound to respect.



## Iran Labels EU Naval, Air Forces as "Terrorist Organizations" in Reciprocal Move

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iran has declared the naval and air forces of all European Union member states as "terrorist organizations" following the bloc's move to add the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) to its terrorist list.

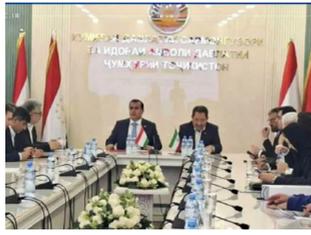
In a statement on Saturday, Iran's Foreign Ministry said the "reciprocal" move comes following the EU member states' "unlawful and unjustified" decision to label a part of the Islamic Republic's Armed Forces. It added that the EU member states have designated the IRGC, which is recognized as one of the pillars of Iran's Armed Forces, as a terrorist organization, contrary to the fundamental principles and rules of the United Nations Charter and international law. The statement emphasized that, based on the principle of reciprocal action and a parliamentary law, the Iranian government is compelled to respond with proportional legal measures. The ministry was referring to Article VII of a law passed by the Iranian Parliament in April 2019 regarding reciprocal actions in response to the US designation of the IRGC. According to the article, all countries that in any way follow or support the decision of the United States to designate the IRGC as a terrorist organization shall be subject to reciprocal action. The European Union added the IRGC to its terrorist list in response to Iran's measures against foreign-backed rioters who violently wreaked havoc across the country on the invitation of a monarchist and the public incitement of US and Israeli leaders in late December and early January.



Foreign-backed armed rioters and terrorists hijacked peaceful, sporadic protests over economic grievances on January 8 and 9 and turned them into scenes of murder, torching of mosques, clinics, ambulances, commuter buses and destroying public and private property. Iranian authorities have confirmed that US and Israeli spy agencies were directly involved, providing funding, training, and media support to rioters and armed terrorists acting on the streets. On Thursday, the EU Foreign Affairs Council formally added the IRGC to the bloc's terrorist list following a political agreement reached by the council on January 29. The IRGC will also be subject to restrictive measures under the EU counterterrorism sanctions regime. This includes the freezing of its funds and other financial assets or economic resources in EU member states, and the prohibition for EU operators to make funds and economic resources available to the group.

There are now 13 persons and 23 groups and entities subject to the restrictive measures under the so-called EU terrorist list. In a statement on February 1, the IRGC said the European Union's decision shows its alignment with the interventionist policies of the United States. "Such moves will not only fail to weaken the resolve and missions of the IRGC but will instead strengthen internal cohesion and increase national determination to safeguard the country's interests and security," the statement added.

# IRAN NEWS



## Tehran and Dushanbe Determined to Boost Mining Cooperation

TEHRAN (ILNA) - Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade and the head of Tajikistan's State Committee on Investment emphasized the need to move beyond memorandums of understanding toward the practical implementation of joint projects in mining, industrial and trade sectors.

Seyed Mohammad Atabak, Iran's Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade, met with Sultan Rahimzade, Chairman of the State Committee on Investment and State Property Management of Tajikistan, alongside Iranian government officials and representatives from the private and industrial sectors.

## Capacity Exists for \$10b in Trade Between Iran and Russia



### IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The head of the Russia-Iran Business Council stressed the need for greater mutual awareness of trade capacities and enhanced information exchange, estimating that bilateral trade between the two countries could exceed \$10 billion.

According to ILNA, citing the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Leonid Lozhzhko, head of the Russia-Iran Business Council, said the implementation of the customs agreement between the Eurasian Economic Union and the Islamic Republic of Iran would improve prospects for expanding trade relations.

"We believe the private sector should play a greater role in trade operations, and we see the potential for bilateral trade volume to surpass \$10 billion," he said.

Lozhzhko emphasized that significant efforts are still required, particularly in strengthening legal infrastructure to remove certain restrictions. He noted that standards must be mutually recognized by both sides, adding that governments have already taken major steps in this direction.

"Today we are witnessing signed and implemented agreements under which standards that were valid in Russia until 2022 are now recognized in Iran. In return, European standards currently applied in Iran are also being accepted by Russia," he stated.

The council chief underlined that communication is a top priority. He called for the creation of a comprehensive database of Russian and Iranian entrepreneurs ready to cooperate with one another.

Greater outreach to local businesses in Iran is necessary, he said, while the Russian side must also strengthen its information networks and introduce Iranian companies more actively within Russia.

Lozhzhko added that cooperation should extend beyond agricultural products to include a wider range of industrial sectors.

He noted that Iran is home to numerous innovative and technology-based companies whose products could easily be exported to Russia, yet awareness of these firms remains limited.

"In reality, there has not been sufficient promotion of Iranian companies in Russia," he said.

## 7% Growth in Exports Under the Fourteenth Gov't

### IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - A review of trade performance during the first 18 months of the Fourteenth Government indicates a 7 percent increase in exports and a 37.1 percent decrease in imports compared to the same period previously.

According to the economic correspondent of Islamic Republic News Agency, total imports during the 18-month period declined from \$94.7 billion to \$93.4 billion. Officials stated that the reduction was implemented to manage imports and support domestic production.

Exports under the Fourteenth Government reached \$85.6 billion, marking a significant increase compared to the same period in the previous administration.

Expanding non-oil exports has been one of the government's primary strategies. Efforts have focused on increasing production and investment in mining and mineral industries. Last year, 23 million tons of mineral products and steel chain products were exported. However, structural imbalances reportedly prevented completion of the production chain, eliminating the potential for an additional \$4 billion in exports.

The total value of metal products supplied and sold domestically exceeds \$35 billion, resulting in \$14 billion in non-oil exports and reducing dependence on imported raw materials for other industries.

Trade statistics for the first 10 months of the current year show the trade deficit narrowing from negative \$10 billion to negative \$4 billion. Transit figures also improved, decreasing from negative 15 percent to negative 4 percent.

Non-oil exports reached 130 million tons worth \$45 billion. During the same period last year, 128 million tons of goods valued at \$48 billion were exported, indicating a 1.33 percent increase in export volume.

China accounted for the largest share of Iran's exports at \$10.918 billion (24.25 percent), followed by:

Iraq: \$7.917 billion (17.59 percent)  
United Arab Emirates: \$6.448 billion (14.32 percent)  
Turkey: \$5.66 billion (12.57 percent)  
Afghanistan: \$2.088 billion (4.64 percent)

Imports fell from \$57.1 billion during the same period last year to \$49 billion this year, reflecting a 15.5 percent decrease. Officials attributed the decline to policies supporting domestic production and prioritizing the import of essential and lower-cost intermediate goods.

In terms of import sources, the United Arab Emirates ranked first with more than \$14 billion, accounting for over 30 percent of total imports. It was followed by:

China: \$13.439 billion (27.37 percent)  
Turkey: \$7.921 billion (16.13 percent)  
India: \$1.547 billion (3.15 percent)



Germany: \$1.436 billion (2.92 percent)

Trade facilitation has been among the government's key priorities. Measures taken include reviving the Supreme Council for Non-Oil Export Development, restoring the Export Goods Development Office, reactivating the Office of Trade Agreements and International Organizations, convening working groups for non-oil export development, and approving executive regulations for border trade management laws. Support packages for non-oil exports and foreign currency earnings have also been introduced.

The Supreme Council for Non-Oil Export Development was originally formed under the country's Second Development Plan to strengthen the national economy, increase the value-added of exported goods, improve product quality, modernize industries, and expand industrial exports. In 2013, it was recognized as a key economic initiative.

After nearly four years of inactivity, the council's eleventh meeting was held on January 2 of last year, following efforts by the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade and the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, and by order of the President.

According to Iraj Masoumi, head of the council's secretariat, the body aims to foster cross-sector coordination between the private and public sectors. Its objectives include preventing overlapping institutional functions, creating stability in export regulations, and identifying structural barriers to exports.

The council includes 11 ministers from economic and infrastructure ministries, three vice presidents, representatives from three private-sector chambers, and organizations such as the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, the Central Bank, and Customs Administration, making it a unique body for addressing complex, cross-sector export challenges.

Another major initiative of the Fourteenth Government has been the implementation of free trade agreements, particularly with Eurasian partners, aimed at expanding market access and increasing trade share.

According to reports from the secretariat of the Iran-Eurasia Free Trade Agreement, exports during the first eight months of the year reached \$1.454 billion, weighing 3.884 million tons. This represents a 13 percent increase in value and a 10 percent increase in volume compared to the same period last year.

The industrial sector accounted for the largest share of exports to Eurasia at \$611 million (42 percent), followed by agriculture at \$474 million (32 percent), and mining and mineral industries at \$233 million (16 percent).

On the import side from the Eurasian bloc, industrial goods ranked first, totaling \$1.887 billion and accounting for 56 percent of imports from the union.

## Fivefold Growth in Solar Power Plant Development

### IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The Director General of Planning, Budget and Regulatory Affairs at the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization of Iran (SATBA) announced an unprecedented rise in renewable power plant capacity, stating that growth in the solar energy sector has increased more than fivefold.

Speaking in an interview with IRNA, Mehdi Hosseini pointed to the country's electricity shortfall and recent power outages affecting both industrial and residential sectors, describing renewable power plant development as one of the government's top priorities.

He said that renewable power capacity under the current administration has expanded by approximately 2.5 times compared to all previous periods combined, calling it a significant achievement.

Hosseini added that substantial financial resources have been injected through the National Development Fund. For the first time, following an August resolution by the Economic Council, the financing model has shifted from loan-based support to joint investment partnerships with the private sector.

"This new mechanism has resulted in the installation of about 4,162 megawatts of renewable power capacity nationwide—an achievement that until recently seemed unattainable," he said.

The SATBA official noted that, based on current planning and continued financial injections, renewable power capacity is targeted to reach 11,000 megawatts by the end of the peak demand period in 1405 (late summer 2026).

He explained that this expansion, alongside improved efficiency and completion of the electricity production chain through thermal power plants, could significantly reduce the country's electricity imbalance.

Referring to the goals of Iran's Seventh Development Plan, Hosseini said the country is required to reach 12,000 megawatts of renewable power capacity. He predicted that this objective will be achieved by the end of next year, ahead of the program's official deadline.

He described the renewable energy sector's performance in 1404



(2025) as one of the most successful components of the plan's implementation.

Addressing measures to stimulate demand in the green electricity market, Hosseini said two key resolutions by the government and the Supreme Energy Council require industries to supply 20 percent of their electricity consumption from renewable sources starting in 1407 (2028). In addition, government buildings must secure 40 percent of their electricity either from renewables or through purchases on the Green Exchange.

"These measures will create a clear and promising outlook for the green electricity exchange market," he said.

He added that enabling household electricity purchases through the Green Exchange is also under consideration as another demand-side incentive.

Hosseini described solar power plants as the lowest-risk investment option in electricity generation. Unlike gas-fired power plants, which face uncertainty regarding fuel supply and pricing, solar plants are not dependent on input fuel and offer greater price stability and controlled investment risk.

He also announced that in 1404 the Planning and Budget Organization fully secured the budgetary resources required for guaranteed renewable electricity purchases.

Additional measures to promote renewable energy development include securing fuel allocation permits from the Ministry of Oil and the Energy Optimization and Management Organization, expanding renewable plants in industrial zones under a new Ministry of Energy resolution, allowing household power plants with capacities above five kilowatts to enter the Green Exchange through aggregators, and issuing capacity certificates for sale.

Hosseini further stated that launching a carbon market or selling carbon revenues in international markets could increase the internal rate of return of renewable power plants by approximately 5 to 10 percent, enhancing their investment appeal. He noted that this initiative is currently under review in consultation with investors.

## Economic Reforms Are the Biggest Support for Agricultural Producers



### IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's Minister of Agriculture Jihad rejected what he described as inaccurate predictions about potential commodity shortages, announcing the successful implementation of a major economic reform plan and full market supply, while calling recent economic reforms the strongest support for agricultural producers.

Gholamreza Nouri Qezeljah made the remarks on Saturday during a meeting of deputy ministers and senior managers.

Referring to the large public turnout during the rallies marking the anniversary of the Islamic Revolution on February 11 (22 Bahman), he criticized analyses circulated in recent months predicting famine and long queues for essential goods.

"Two months after the implementation of the major economic reform plan, we have not experienced even a single day of shortages," he said.

The minister added that the most accurate forecasts had been made by experts within the Ministry of Agriculture Jihad. Despite heavy market demand, he said, work discipline had been maintained and tangible satisfaction was now evident among lower-income groups.

Nouri Qezeljah emphasized that the recent economic reforms represent the greatest support for producers, stating that farmers will now be able to sell their products at fair prices without facing price suppression or restrictive government-imposed pricing.

He stressed that improving quality is the only way to connect Iran's production sector to global markets.

## Target Set to Increase Iran's Apparel Exports to \$200m



### IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture has set a target to raise Iran's apparel exports to \$200 million, as industry representatives seek to expand their share in Russia's multi-billion-dollar clothing market.

For the second consecutive year, the Tehran Chamber, in cooperation with the Iranian Textile and Apparel Production and Export Union, organized a joint pavilion at the 45th edition of CPM Collection Première Moscow, a major international fashion exhibition held in Russia.

Speaking on the sidelines of the exhibition, Amin Moghadam, a member of the Tehran Chamber's board of representatives and board member of the textile and apparel union, said Iranian apparel producers participated in a more organized manner this year and are aiming to expand their footprint in Russia's large clothing market.

He noted that the value of Russia's apparel market is estimated at approximately \$32 billion. With Russia's gross domestic product standing at around \$1.5 trillion, the clothing sector accounts for nearly two percent of the country's GDP.

According to official Russian sources, annual imports of apparel and footwear total about \$27 billion, of which nearly \$20 billion is related specifically to textiles and clothing. In addition, around one billion pieces of apparel enter the Russian market each year.

## 46% of Domestic Trips Concentrated in Six Provinces



### IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The Director General for Domestic Tourism Development said that more than 46 percent of domestic trips are made to six provinces, announcing that 114 alternative cities have been identified and introduced to the public in order to reduce travel pressure during the Nowruz holidays.

Speaking in an interview with IRNA, Seyed Mostafa Fatemi stated that the provinces and cities attracting the highest number of travelers during the Nowruz holidays of 1404 (2025) were, respectively: Mashhad, Shiraz, Tehran, Isfahan, Bandar Abbas, Qom, Karaj, Rasht, Ahvaz, Khorramabad, Bushehr, Qeshm, Yazd, Bandar Genaveh, Kermanshah, Bandar Anzali, Tabriz, Hamedan, Nowshahr, Gorgan, Sari, Dargahan, Kish, Dezful, Zanjan, Ramsar, Chalous, Amol, Babolsar, Ardabil, Kashan, Semnan, Mahmoudabad, Lahijan, Shahroud, Marzanabad, Lavandevl, Babol, Chamestan and Shushahr.

He added that despite the country's diverse natural and cultural attractions, the capacities of other cities must be properly introduced to ensure a more balanced distribution of travel—especially during Nowruz—and to provide higher-quality services to travelers.

Fatemi continued that, in addition to Tehran Province, which has adequate accommodation capacity, complementary travel destinations in eastern Iran have been identified.

In Kerman Province, these include Rafsanjan, Jiroft, Bam and Sirjan.

In Sistan and Baluchestan Province: Konarak, Zarabad, Nikshahr, Hamoun, Zabol and Zahak.

In Yazd Province: Ardakan, Mehriz, Bafq and Abarkuh.

In South Khorasan Province: Ferdows, Birjand and Tabas.

In Isfahan Province (eastern areas): Ardestan, Naein and Varzaneh.

## Kim Jong Un Outlines New Five-Year Goals

SEOUL (Dispatches) - North Korea's ruling Workers' Party held the third day of its Ninth Congress yesterday, with leader Kim Jong Un continuing a report reviewing the party's work in the last five years, state media said today. According to the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), Kim's report assessed the party's activities over the past term and outlined a new strategy and goals for the next five years, including tasks across all sectors aimed at advancing socialist construction. Delegates said the report set out strategic and tactical directions for what it described as a new stage of national development and reaffirmed confidence in the country's future, KCNA reported.



## Thousands Rally in Lyon for Slain Far-Right Activist



LYON (Dispatches) - At least 3,200 people marched in the southeastern city of Lyon on Saturday under heavy security in tribute to 23-year-old far-right activist Quentin Deranque, whose killing is blamed on the hard left. More arrests are possible as police investigate suspects behind Nazi salutes, racist slurs and homophobic insults made during the procession, according to the local prefecture. The crowd -- many wearing black and some covering their lower faces with masks -- marched through the city of Lyon carrying flowers and placards bearing pictures of Quentin Deranque and the words, "justice for Quentin" and "the extreme left kills". The 23-year-old died from head injuries following clashes between radical left and far-right supporters on the sidelines of a demonstration against a politician from the left-wing France Unbowed (LFI) party in Lyon last week. The authorities had deployed heavy security, including drones, fearing further clashes at the event that saw at least 3,200 people attend, according to local officials. Hours before the gathering, French President Emmanuel Macron had urged "everyone to remain" calm. He said the government would meet next week to discuss "violent action groups" in the wake of the fatal beating, which has ignited tensions between the left and right ahead of the 2027 presidential vote.

## Cuban Security Forces Exit Venezuela as U.S. Pressure Mounts



CARACAS (Dispatches) - Cuban security advisers and doctors have been leaving Venezuela as Interim President Delcy Rodriguez's government faces intense pressure from Washington to unwind Latin America's most consequential leftist alliance, according to 11 sources familiar with the matter. Venezuela's Interim President Delcy Rodriguez has entrusted her protection to Venezuelan bodyguards, according to four of the sources, unlike deposed president Nicolas Maduro and his predecessor, the late president Hugo Chavez, who both relied on elite Cuban forces. Thirty-two Cubans were killed in the U.S. military attack that captured Maduro on January 3, according to the Cuban government. These soldiers and bodyguards were part of a deep security agreement between Caracas and Havana that began in the late 2000s in which Cuban intelligence agents embedded throughout the military and Venezuela's formidable DGICIM counterintelligence unit, which was fundamental to weeding out domestic opposition. "The Cuban influence was absolutely essential" to the survival of the Chavista government, said Alejandro Velasco, an associate professor of history at New York University and an expert on Venezuela. Inside DGICIM, some Cuban advisers have been removed from their posts, according to a former Venezuela intelligence official. Some of the Cuban medical workers and security advisers have travelled from Venezuela to Cuba on flights in recent weeks, two of the sources said.

# Hezbollah Vows Resistance After Deadly Israeli Strike

BEIRUT (Dispatches) - Hezbollah warned Saturday that it would have no choice but to fight on after an Israeli strike on targets in Lebanon killed eight of its operatives. Lebanon's government has vowed to disarm Hezbollah, but Israel insists it retains the right to defend itself by striking the Iran-backed militant group. On Friday, the Israeli military said it had hit Hezbollah command centres in eastern Lebanon and targets linked to the Palestinian group Hamas in the south. Hezbollah said Saturday that eight of its fighters had been killed, after Lebanon's health ministry said 10 people died in the east and two in the south. "What happened yesterday in the Bekaa is a new massacre and a new aggression," Hezbollah official Mahmud Qamati said, in a speech broadcast by the Al-Manar network. "What option do we have left to defend ourselves and our country? What option do we have other than resistance? We no longer have any option." Lebanon's President Joseph Aoun also condemned the attacks, which came just days after the government said the army will start implementing the second phase of its plan to disarm Hezbollah in the south of the country. The strikes came as tensions were also building between the United States and Iran, with US President Donald Trump threatening military action over the Islamic republic's nuclear program. In Lebanon's eastern city of Baalbek, a mass funeral was held for commander Hussein Mohammad Yaghi and one of the fighters, with hundreds of people gathered, waving Hezbollah flags and chanting support. A Hezbollah official, speaking on condition of anonymity, told AFP all eight members of the group were attending a meeting in the eastern Bekaa region when a strike killed them. The Israeli military said it had targeted "several terrorists of Hezbollah's missile array in three different command centres in the Baalbek area". An AFP correspondent in eastern Lebanon saw a bulldozer clearing debris following the strike on Bednayeel, and a heavily



damaged building between Riyak and Ali al-Nahri, where the Hezbollah official said the members were meeting. The raids were against targets in residential areas, according to the correspondent. They came hours after an Israeli strike on the country's largest Palestinian refugee camp in the south killed two people, according to the health ministry, with Israel's army saying it had targeted Hamas. In a statement, Hamas condemned the attack, which it said led to civilian casualties as the targeted building "belongs to the joint security force charged with maintaining security and stability in the camp". Israel has kept up regular strikes on Lebanon despite a November 2024 ceasefire that sought to halt more than a year of hostilities with Hezbollah, usually saying it is targeting the group, but occasionally also Hamas militants. Aoun called Friday's attacks "a blatant act of aggression aimed at thwarting diplomatic efforts" by the United States and other nations to establish stability. Washington is one of five members of a multinational committee overseeing the ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah, with the body scheduled to meet again next week. Hezbollah lawmaker Rami Abu Hamdan said the group "will not accept the authorities acting as mere political analysts, dismissing these as Israeli strikes we have grown accustomed to before every meeting of the committee". He called on Beirut to "suspend the committee's meetings until the enemy ceases its attacks".

Lebanon's government last year committed to disarming the group, with the army saying last month it had completed the first phase of the plan covering the area near the Israeli border. Israel, which accuses Hezbollah of rearming since the war, has called the Lebanese army's progress on disarming the militant group insufficient. Against the backdrop of the tensions between Washington and Iran, Hezbollah leader Naim Qassem said last month that any attack on the group's backer would also be an attack on the militants.

# Global Summit Calls for Secure, Trustworthy and Robust AI

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - Dozens of nations including the United States and China called for "secure, trustworthy and robust" artificial intelligence, in a summit declaration on Saturday criticized for being too generic to protect the public. The statement signed by 86 countries did not include concrete commitments to regulate the fast-developing technology, instead highlighting several voluntary, non-binding initiatives. "AI's promise is best realised only when its benefits are shared by humanity," said the statement, released after the five-day AI Impact Summit. It called the advent of generative AI "an inflection point in the trajectory of technological evolution". "Advancing secure, trustworthy and robust AI is foundational to building trust and maximising societal and economic benefits," it said. The summit -- attended by tens of thousands including top tech CEOs -- was the fourth annual global meeting to discuss the promises and pitfalls of AI, and the first hosted by a developing country. Hot topics discussed included AI's potential societal benefits, such as drug discovery and translation tools, but also the threat of job losses, online abuse and the heavy power consumption of data centres. Analysts had said earlier that the summit's broad focus, and vague promises made at the previous meetings in France, South Korea and Britain, would make strong pledges or immediate action unlikely. The United States, home to industry-leading companies such as Google and ChatGPT maker OpenAI, did not sign last year's summit statement, warning that regulation could be a drag on innovation. "We totally reject global governance of AI," US delegation head Michael Kratsios said at the summit on Friday. The United States signed a bilateral declaration on AI with India on Friday, pledging to "pursue a global approach to AI that is unapologetically friendly to entrepreneurship and innovation".



But it also put its name to the main statement, the release of which was originally expected on Friday but was delayed by one day to maximise the number of signatories, India's government said. Amba Kak, co-executive director of the AI Now Institute, criticised the lack of a meaningful declaration, saying it was just "another round of generic voluntary promises". "The fact that this declaration drew such wide endorsement, especially from the US, which held out in Paris, tells you what kind of agenda it is: one that is AI-industry approved, not one that meaningfully protects the public," she told AFP. Saturday's summit declaration struck a cautious tone on AI safety risks, from misinformation and surveillance to fears of the creation of devastating new pathogens. "Deepening our understanding of the potential security aspects remains

important," it said. "We recognize the importance of security in AI systems, industry-led voluntary measures, and the adoption of technical solutions, and appropriate policy frameworks that enable innovation." On jobs, it emphasised reskilling initiatives to "support participants in preparation for a future AI driven economy". And "we underscore the importance of developing energy-efficient AI systems" given the technology's growing demands on natural resources, it said. Computing expert and AI safety campaigner Stuart Russell told AFP that Saturday's commitments were "not completely inconsequential". "The most important thing is that there are any commitments at all," he said. Countries should "build on these voluntary agreements to develop binding legal commitments to protect their peoples so that AI development and deployment can proceed without imposing unacceptable risks", Russell said. The event was also the source of several viral moments, including the awkward refusal of rival US tech CEOs -- OpenAI's Sam Altman and Dario Amodei of Anthropic -- to hold hands on stage. The next AI summit will take place in Geneva in 2027. In the meantime, a UN panel on AI will start work towards "science-led governance", the global body's chief Antonio Guterres said Friday. The UN General Assembly has confirmed 40 members for a group called the Independent International Scientific Panel on Artificial Intelligence. India has used the summit to push its ambition to catch up with the United States and China in the AI field, including through large-scale data centre construction powered by new nuclear plants. Delhi expects more than \$200 billion in investments over the next two years, and US tech giants unveiled a raft of new deals and infrastructure projects in the country during the summit.

# Trump to Raise U.S. Global Tariff Rate From 10% to 15%

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) -- U.S. President Donald Trump said he was hiking the import levies from 10 to 15 percent on Saturday, a day after the Supreme Court ruled much of his aggressive tariff policy was illegal. Trump added that over the next few months, his administration would seek further alternative ways to impose "legally permissible" tariffs. Trump said on his Truth Social platform that after a thorough review of Friday's "extraordinarily anti-American decision" by the court to rein in his tariff program, the administration was hiking the import levies "to the fully allowed, and legally tested, 15% level." The US leader had announced an initial 10 percent duty in the immediate aftermath of the Supreme Court ruling. And Trump added that over the next few months, his administration would seek further alternative ways to impose "legally permissible" tariffs. Saturday's announcement is the latest in a careening process that has seen a multitude of tariff levels for countries sending goods into the United States set and then altered or revoked by Trump's team over the past year. It also appears on its face to be an attempt to circumvent the Supreme Court's latest



ruling, which offered perhaps the firmest rebuke yet of the Republican leader's sweeping and often arbitrary duties, his signature international trade policy. The new duty by law is only temporary -- allowable for 150 days. According to a White House fact sheet, exemptions remain for sectors that are under separate probes, including pharma, and goods entering the US under the US-Mexico-Canada agreement. Trump spent much of the past year imposing various rates to cajole and punish countries, both friend and foe. On Friday, the White House said US trading partners that reached separate tariff deals with Trump's administration would also face the new global tariff. The conservative-majority high court ruled six to three on Friday that a 1977 law Trump has relied on to slap sudden rates on individual countries, upending global trade, "does not authorize the President to impose tariffs." Trump, who had nominated two of the justices who repudiated him, responded furiously, alleging without evidence that the court was influenced by foreign interests. "I'm ashamed of certain members of the court, absolutely ashamed, for not having the courage to do what's right for our country," Trump told reporters.



## Man City Beat Newcastle to Tighten Title Race

LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester City piled pressure on Premier League leaders Arsenal as Nico O'Reilly's brace clinched a crucial 2-1 win against Newcastle, while Chelsea's bid to reach the Champions League was dented by a 1-1 draw against lowly Burnley.

O'Reilly put City ahead in the first half at the Etihad Stadium and restored their lead after Lewis Hall had equalised.

Pep Guardiola's side weren't at their best but they held on for a victory that moved them within two points of leaders Arsenal.

The Gunners travel to Tottenham today, but regardless of the result in the north London derby, City control the destiny of the title.

They will have a game in hand on Arsenal after this weekend and host Mikel Arteta's men in April, with 11 wins from their last 11 matches guaranteed to secure the seventh title of Guardiola's reign.

While Arsenal have spluttered with two wins from their last seven league games, City are heating up at just the right time.

A fifth successive win in all competitions extended their unbeaten run to eight games.

"We saw today this is how we need to play. It's coming to the best part of the season. Every single game will be similar to today," Guardiola said.

"Of course in terms of points it's important, but we have to improve to have the chance to compete until the end. Now we deserve three more days off. Then another battle in Leeds."

At Stamford Bridge, Chelsea climbed into the top four only on goal difference after they paid for failing to build on Joao Pedro's fourth-minute opener.

Chelsea were dominant until Wesley Fofana was sent off with 18 minutes remaining for a second yellow card.

Burnley took full advantage as Zian Flemming headed in from a corner in the 93rd minute to boost their battle to beat the drop.

"It is not enough clean sheets and not enough basic values of defending set-pieces. That is something I have to address," said Chelsea boss Liam Rosenior.

"There were players on the pitch who were assigned to do their job and who didn't do their job. That is what cost us the two points."

The Claret's are still eight points from safety in their daunting fight for survival.

Villa defied the odds to keep pace with Arsenal and Manchester City in the title race until recent weeks, but a 1-1 draw continued their poor run at Villa Park.

Anton Stach's spectacular free-kick from fully 40 yards at an angle caught out Emi Martinez at his near post to give Leeds the advantage.

Daniel Farke's men have lost just twice in their last 14 league games to relieve their fears of being dragged into a battle for safety.

But Tammy Abraham then snatched a point for Villa two minutes from time.

## Alcaraz Routs Fils to Win Qatar Open

DOHA (Dispatches) - Carlos Alcaraz was at his devastating best yesterday as he claimed the Qatar Open title with a ruthless 6-2, 6-1 win over Arthur Fils.

The seven-time Grand Slam champion needed just over 50 minutes to see off his French opponent and claim the 26th title of his career.

Following Australian Open success earlier this month — completing his career Grand Slam at just 22 years of age — Alcaraz backed it up by storming to the title in Doha in his first tournament back since Melbourne and extending his match-winning streak to 12.

"I came this year hungry for more," said Alcaraz.

"I think after every tournament, we just have to set new goals. I'm just really happy and proud of everything I have done with my team on and off the court.

"It's been a really strong start to the year. It wasn't easy... I had to be strong mentally with my



team. I'm just playing great tennis and I'm really happy about this week. This trophy means a lot to me."

For 40th-ranked Fils, returning gradually to action after a lengthy injury absence, the Spanish world number one was a step too far at the end of a fine week in which he recorded wins over top-10 seeds Jakub Mensik and Jiri Lehecka.

The run to his first tour-level final since Tokyo in 2024 will propel the former world number 14 up to 33 in the next ATP rankings.

"It's been eight long months with my injury," said Fils.

"So in a time like this, you just have to think about the last eight months when I was struggling, not playing tennis. I just want to thank my team... Today was not the day but I think we did a hell of a job."

## Klaebo Makes Olympic History as Gu Forced to Wait

MILAN (Dispatches) - Norwegian cross-country skier Johannes Klaebo won a ground-breaking sixth gold at the Milan-Cortina Winter Olympics, while heavy snow forced China's freestyle skiing superstar Eileen Gu to wait for her elusive first title in Italy.

Klaebo's victory in the men's 50km mass start event saw him clinch his 11th Winter Olympics gold medal, extending the record he set earlier in these Games.

The 29-year-old also became the first athlete to win all six cross-country skiing races in one Olympics.

The only athlete in Winter or Summer Games history with more Olympic golds is American swimmer Michael Phelps, who won 23.

Gu had been aiming to win a gold of her own at these Games on Saturday, having taken two silvers so far.

But heavy snowfall forced organisers to postpone the



women's freestyle halfpipe final.

The event at Livigno Snow Park, high in the Italian Alps, has been pushed back to 0940 GMT on Sunday, the final day of competition.

Gu arrived at the Games targeting a clean sweep of golds in her three events after winning two golds and a silver at the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, where she was the host nation's darling.

"Thank God this is my last event," the 22-year-old US-born athlete said after qualifying earlier in the week. "I'm exhausted, I just want to go home to bed."

A host of other gold medals were up for grabs on the final full day of action.

Emily Harrop and Thibault Anselmet combined to win gold for France in the mixed relay event of ski mountaineering in Bormio.

## Green Rescues Suns at Buzzer of Double OT Bout With Magic



NEWYORK (Dispatches) - Grayson Allen scored 27 points in his return and Jalen Green made up for a miserable shooting night with a game-winning 3-pointer at the final buzzer as the host Phoenix Suns overcame an injury to Dillon Books in a 113-110 double-overtime victory over the Orlando Magic.

Collin Gillespie added 19 points for the Suns, who blew an 11-point fourth quarter lead before Green took over. Green countered Jevon Carter's game-tying 3-pointer with 1.1 seconds remaining with just his second made three of the game to beat the buzzer.

Green, who was 6-of-26 from the field, scored the Suns' final six points and gave them a 110-107 lead on a driving left-handed layup with 33.9 seconds remaining.

Desmond Bane scored 34 points before fouling out in overtime, Paolo Banchero scored 26 and Carter had 15 points for the Magic, who made 10 of 39 3-pointers after hitting a franchise-record 27 in a victory over Sacramento on Thursday.

Banchero had 14 rebounds and eight assists.

Jordan Goodwin scored 17 points before leaving with an apparent left leg injury in the fourth quarter for the Suns, who had lost four of five.

Orlando opted not to foul with the Suns holding a 110-107 lead late in the second overtime, and the Suns turned the ball over on a shot-clock violation to give the Magic a chance.

The Magic ended regulation on a 16-5 run to force overtime after Goodwin's 3-pointer gave the Suns their first double-digit lead, 91-80, with 7:37 remaining.

Allen, who missed the previous four games with a knee injury, was 8-of-22 from the field and made 4 of 14 3-pointers.

The Suns were 16 of 55 from distance (29.1%) while playing without Devin Booker, who sustained a hip injury in a 121-94 loss to San Antonio on Thursday and will be reevaluated in a week, the team said.

## Pegula Sees off Svitolina to Win Dubai WTA 1000 Title



DUBAI (Dispatches) - Jessica Pegula gave herself an early birthday present by clinching her fourth WTA 1000 crown with a comfortable 6-2, 6-4 victory over Elina Svitolina in the Dubai final.

The fourth-seeded American denied Svitolina a chance to win a third title in the northern emirate, and improved her record against the Ukrainian to 6-3 head-to-head.

Pegula, who turns 32 on Tuesday, has made at least the semi-finals in each of her last seven tournaments and walks away from Dubai with a 10th career title.

Pegula fought back from a set and a break down in the semi-finals against Amanda Anisimova on Friday, while Svitolina battled through a three-hour marathon against Coco Gauff.

It was Svitolina who appeared to be suffering the most from the aftermath of the previous night, though, and it gave Pegula the chance to jump to a double-break lead early in the final, and she never looked back as she wrapped up the victory in 72 minutes.

"I couldn't ask for a better birthday present. I'm just super proud of myself. I had to play at a very high level, it was awesome," Pegula said in her on-court interview.

"I feel like when you can get off to a quick start, that eases the nerves a little bit.

"Mentally, I think, especially the match yesterday, I was down a set and 3-1, and I fought back, which made me feel free today. I trusted the things we've been working on and it paid off."