

Leader: Iran standing stronger despite loss of resistance figures

International Desk

Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said the Islamic Republic is more powerful than the last year despite the loss of leaders of the resistance front.

Ayatollah Khamenei made the remarks in a meeting with a group of Iranian university students in Tehran on Wednesday.

"Since last year, when this meeting was held, until this year, various events have occurred. Last year, we had a different situation. Last year, when we had a meeting with you students, Martyr Raisi was alive, Martyr Sayyed

Hassan Nasrallah, may God be pleased with him, was with us, Martyr Hanieh, Martyr Safi al-Din, Martyr Sinwar, Martyr Dhaif, and several other prominent revolutionary figures were among us or with us, but they are not here this year," the Leader said.

He referred to the assassination of the valuable leaders of the resistance movements by the Israeli regime and the death of the Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash in May as a great loss for the Islamic Republic.

Ayatollah Khamenei said that enemies and rivals of the Islamic Republic had wrong perception of

the events, but this year the Islamic Republic is stronger than last year in some issues.

The Leader said that the events that occurred in the West Asia region are painful. But, the Islamic Republic is continuing its growth and progress.

During Israel's brutal war on the Gaza Strip and Lebanon since October 2023, the regime has assassinated a number of the leaders and top commanders of the Palestinian and Lebanese resistance groups. Western countries consider the assassinations as a decisive blow to the 'Axis of Resistance' which the Islamic Republic supports it.



Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei speaks during a meeting with a group of Iranian university students in Tehran on March 12, 2025. khamenei.ir

Yemen resumes shipping attacks over Gaza aid cutoff by Israel

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The Yemeni Armed Forces in a statement on Wednesday announced that they will resume attacks on Israeli-bound ships after their deadline for Israel to allow the resumption of aid deliveries into Gaza passed. The Armed Forces said late on Tuesday that it was "resuming the ban on the passage of all Israeli ships" in the Red Sea because Israel had failed to honor the deadline it announced on Friday.

Yemen said the ban would take effect immediately, adding that, "Any Israeli ship attempting to violate this ban shall be targeted in the declared zone of operations."

The "ban" also covers the Arabian Sea, Bab al-Mandeb Strait, and the Gulf of Aden, Yemen said.

"This prohibition will remain until the crossings into the Gaza Strip are reopened and humanitarian aid, including essential food and medicine, is permitted entry," the statement read. Israel has shut down Ga-



za's border crossings as a means of trying to force the Gaza-based resistance movement Hamas into releasing the rest of the Israeli captives that it holds in the coastal sliver.

The shutdown is also meant to mount immense pressure on the Palestinians in Gaza, who have already been suffering under a 15-month-plus war of genocide by Tel Aviv.

"With mediators failing to achieve these objectives (having the regime reopen the terminals and let in aid supplies), Yemen has escalated its stance in support of the Palestinian people," the Armed Forces' statement

noted.

The Yemeni military began taking Israeli ships and the vessels carrying supplies to the occupied Palestinian territories via the waters off the Arab Peninsula country under missile and drone strikes after October 7, 2023, when the regime launched the war on Gaza.

The operations took serious toll on the Israeli economy, contributing to meaningful price increases across commodities consumed by the regime's illegal settlers.

Yemen halted its drone and missile attacks when the Gaza cease-fire was declared in January.

Iran to hold nuclear talks with China, Russia on Friday

Trump's letter delivered to Iranian FM by UAE official

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Iran confirmed Wednesday that it would sit down for talks with China and Russia in the Chinese capital Beijing on its nuclear program.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said in a statement that the three-way talks would focus on "developments related to the nuclear issue and the lifting of sanctions."

Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Kazem Gharibabadi also said the trio would also discuss and exchange views on other issues, including those related to cooperation within the framework of BRICS and Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

China's Foreign Ministry earlier announced that Beijing would host the trilateral talks.

The meeting will be attended by China's Vice Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxu, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov and Gharibabadi.

In recent months, Tehran and Washington have expressed their interests in new negotiations to resolve the standoff over Tehran's nuclear program. However, Iranian officials be-

came skeptical after US President Donald Trump imposed fresh sanctions.

Trump has repeatedly said he wants to negotiate a new deal with Iran while also threatening military action if an agreement is not reached.

The US president recently said he has sent a letter to Iran's leader.

Trump's letter

The letter was delivered to Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on Wednesday by Anwar Gargash, a diplomatic adviser to the president of the United Arab Emirates, IRNA reported.

Iranian officials say Iran will not enter any negotiations with the US so long as the US continues its "maximum pressure" policy.

Under the policy, Trump pulled out of Iran's nuclear deal in 2018 and reinstated and reinforced sweeping sanctions on Tehran.

In February, Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei urged the government not to negotiate with the US, citing Washington's withdrawal from the nuclear deal.



Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (l) welcomes Anwar Gargash, a diplomatic adviser to the president of the United Arab Emirates, in Tehran on March 12, 2025. ISNA

'Iran is not Ukraine'

On Tuesday, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian also sharply rebuked the Trump administration's maximalist approach toward Iran, declaring that Iran is not Ukraine and it will not negotiate with the US under threats or coercion.

"We must maintain relationship with the world. We do not want to be estranged or quarrel with anyone, but that does not mean we will bow in humiliation before anyone," Pezeshkian stated during a meeting of the Iran Entrepreneurs Forum in Tehran on Tuesday.

"We may die with honor, but we will never live in disgrace."

Ukraine showed readiness for cease-fire, Russia must now respond: Zelensky

Ukraine has shown it is willing to adopt a cease-fire and now Russia must respond, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Wednesday, a day after US and Ukrainian officials agreed to put a truce proposal to Moscow.

"Everything depends on whether Russia wants a cease-fire and silence, or it wants to continue killing people," Zelensky said at a press conference in Kiev, adding: "Ukraine has demonstrated its position... and today Russia has to respond to this," AFP reported.

The Kremlin says Russia is "studying" the statements following the talks in Jeddah, adds it is waiting for a briefing from US on the proposal that calls for a halt to all the fighting on land, sea and in the air.

The proposal to pause fighting between Russia and Ukraine after more than three years of brutal warfare came after intensive talks between Ukrainian and US officials in Saudi Arabia.

It also follows an explosive spat between Zelensky and US President Donald Trump, who lifted a freeze on military

aid to Ukraine after Kiev accepted the truce plan -- the latest in a rapid-fire series of developments on the conflict. Zelensky told reporters in Kiev that the United States would pile pressure on Moscow if it did not accept a halt to fighting that has claimed tens of thousands of lives.

"I understand that we can count on strong steps. I don't know the details yet but we are talking about sanctions and strengthening Ukraine," Zelensky told reporters. "Everything depends on whether Russia wants a cease-fire and silence, or it wants to continue killing people," the Ukrainian leader added.

The truce offer comes at a difficult moment on the battlefield for Ukraine which is losing ground in the east and south of the country where officials said eight people were killed on Wednesday.

And even if Russia agrees to a cease-fire, much remains uncertain in negotiations. Ukraine has pressed for security guarantees, but Trump has ruled out NATO membership.

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