

522 BC

Darius I of Persia kills the Magian usurper Gaumata, securing his position as king of the Persian Empire

480 BC

Battle of Salamis: The Greek fleet under Themistocles defeats the Persian fleet under Xerxes I



1567

War of Religion breaks out in France as Huguenots try to kidnap King Charles IX

1829

First units of the London Metropolitan Police appear on the streets of the British capital, the city's first modern police force

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01



I condemn the continuing military escalation between Israel & the Houthis. Everyone has to ensure that civilians are respected & protected at all times, in accordance with international law. I remain deeply troubled about the risk of further escalation in the region & continue to urge all to exercise utmost restraint.

@antonioguterres

02



The unfortunate incident during a political rally in Karur, Tamil Nadu, is deeply saddening. My thoughts are with the families who have lost their loved ones. Wishing strength to them in this difficult time. Praying for a swift recovery to all those injured.

@narendramodi

03



After a week at #UNGA marked by divisions, playing football with my grandson Kai last night reminded me of the joy and hope found in simple moments. May leaders everywhere choose peace so that every family can cherish their moments together.

@DrTedros

04



I feel confident we successfully separated this company from TikTok global...made it so that we control people's data security, we can ensure that the algorithm isn't being used as a propaganda tool by a foreign government

@VP

Disclaimer: (Views expressed by columnists are personal and need not necessarily reflect our editorial stance)

Iran denounces 'unjustifiable' return of UN sanctions

The return of the sanctions ends months of tense diplomacy

● Western leaders stressed channels for dialogue remained open

● Rubio urged Iran to "accept direct talks, held in good faith"

● Russia made clear it would not enforce the sanctions

● Return of nuclear sanctions 'must not be the end of diplomacy with Iran': EU's Kallas

● Iran rial hits record low against US dollar after sanctions reimposed

● Iran vows 'firm and appropriate' response to sanctions

● The sanctions are a "snapback" of measures frozen in 2015

AFP | Tehran, Iran

Iran yesterday condemned as "unjustifiable" the reinstatement of United Nations sanctions over its nuclear programme, after the collapse of talks with Western powers and Israeli and US strikes on its nuclear sites.

The measures, which bar dealings linked to the Islamic republic's nuclear and ballistic missile activities, took effect overnight after Western powers triggered the so-called "snapback" mechanism under the 2015 nuclear accord.

"The reactivation of annulled resolutions is legally baseless and unjustifiable... all countries must refrain from recognising this illegal situation," the Iranian foreign ministry said in a statement.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran will firmly defend its national rights and interests, and any ac-



Iranian women speak with a shop owner at the Grand Bazaar in Tehran

tion aimed at undermining the rights and interests of its people will face a firm and appropriate response," it added.

The return of the sanctions ends months of tense diplomacy aimed at reviving nuclear talks derailed since June, when Israeli and US forces bombed Iranian nuclear facilities.

Despite the reimposition, Western leaders stressed channels for dialogue remained open.

Kaja Kallas, the European Union's top diplomat, on Sunday said the reimposition of sanctions "must not be the end of diplomacy", adding that "a sustainable solution to the Iranian nuclear issue can only be achieved through negotiations".

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio urged Iran to "accept direct talks, held in good faith".

He also called on UN member states to "immediately" implement sanctions to "pressure Iran's leaders to do what is right for their nation, and best for the safety of the world".

The British, French and German foreign ministers said in a joint statement they would continue to seek "a new diplomatic solution to ensure Iran never gets a nuclear weapon".

They also called on Tehran "to refrain from any escalatory

action".

'No choice'

Iran had allowed UN inspectors to return to its nuclear sites, but President Masoud Pezeshkian said the United States had offered only a short reprieve in return for handing over its whole stockpile of enriched uranium, a proposal he described as unacceptable.

An 11th-hour effort by Iran allies Russia and China to postpone the sanctions until April failed to win enough votes in the Security Council on Friday, leading to the measures taking effect at 3:30 am in Tehran (0000 GMT) on Sunday.

Germany, which triggered the return of sanctions alongside Britain and France, had "no choice" as Iran was not complying with its obligations, Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul said.

"For us, it is imperative: Iran must never acquire a nuclear weapon," he told the UN General Assembly.

"But let me emphasise: we remain open to negotiations on a new agreement. Diplomacy can and should continue."

Russia made clear it would not enforce the sanctions, considering them invalid.

The sanctions "finally ex-

posed the West's policy of sabotaging the pursuit of constructive solutions in the UN Security Council, as well as its desire to extract unilateral concessions from Tehran through blackmail and pressure," Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said.

Iran has long contended that it is not seeking nuclear weapons.

Newspapers in the Islamic republic gave contrasting reactions to the reimposition of the sanctions.

The ultraconservative newspaper Kayhan, which opposes any dialogue with the United States, suggested the sanctions would likely have been imposed even if Iran had engaged in negotiations.

The reformist daily Ham Mihan wrote: "The big question is whether Russia and China will maintain their position".

Economic impact

The sanctions are a "snapback" of measures frozen in 2015 when Iran agreed to major restrictions on its nuclear programme under a deal negotiated by former president Barack Obama.

The United States already imposed massive sanctions when President Donald Trump with-

drew from the deal in his first term.

Iran and the United States had held several rounds of Oman-brokered talks earlier this year before they collapsed in June when first Israel and then the United States attacked Iranian nuclear facilities.

Iran recalled its envoys from Britain, France and Germany for consultations on Saturday, state television reported.

On the ground, Iranians lamented the likely impact of the new sanctions on an already squeezed economy.

"The current (economic) situation was already very difficult, but it's going to get worse," said an Iranian engineer who asked to be identified only by his first name Dariush.

"The impact of the renewed sanctions is already evident: the exchange rate is increasing, and this is leading to higher prices," the 50-year-old said, complaining that the standard of living is "much lower" than it was two or three years ago.

The economic strain was underscored on Sunday when the Iranian rial plunged to a record low against the US dollar on the black market, trading at around 1.12 million per dollar, according to the currency-tracking websites Bonbast and AlanChand.



Iran has been under various international sanctions since 1979, but the most extensive were imposed by the United States, the European Union, and the United Nations over its nuclear programme. At their peak in 2012, these sanctions cut Iran's oil exports by more than half, from about 2.5 million barrels per day to just 1.1 million barrels per day, severely impacting its economy.

New Gaza-bound flotilla sets off from Sicily

AFP | Rome, Italy

A flotilla of 10 vessels set off for Gaza from Sicily, southern Italy, on Saturday, with 60 people on board including elected officials from nine nations, said organisers.

A statement from the Freedom Flotilla Coalition (FFC) and the Thousand Madleens to Gaza (TMTG) said they intended to "break the illegal Israeli block-



(FILES) This photograph shows a flotilla departing for Gaza

ade" to deliver aid to the Palestinian territory.

"For the most part, our boats carry medical supplies, dry food and school equipment, as this was highlighted as some of the biggest priorities by Palestinians on the ground," they added.

They intend to join the Global Sumud Flotilla which is also bound for Gaza carrying aid supplies.

On board are elected officials from the European Parliament and from countries including Belgium, France, Ireland, Spain and the United States.

On Wednesday, the United Nations called for an investigation into alleged drone attacks off Greece against the Global Sumud Flotilla, which activists have blamed on Israel.