

The U.S. Placed Sanctions on Entities and Individuals Based in Iran and Three Other Countries for What It Called Aiding Iran's Drone Program, Repeating Its Unsubstantiated Claim of Tehran's Support for Russia's War Effort in Ukraine

IRAN NEWS

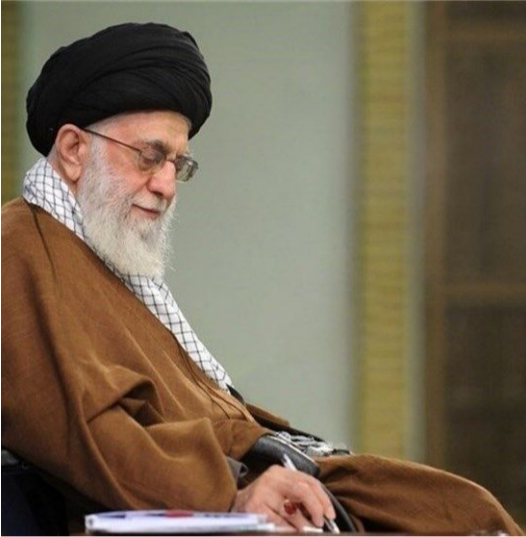
Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Mohammad Eslami met and held negotiations With his Pakistani Counterpart Over Development of Bilateral Cooperation Between the Two Countries in Various Spheres of Civilian Nuclear Energy

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Leader Calls Martyrs Eternal Role Models for All Generations



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Supreme Leader of Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has termed martyrs as the eternal role models for all generations. The message was read out by Hujjat al-Islam Mousavi Moghaddam, the Supreme Leader's representative in the Foundation of Martyrs and Veterans Affairs, at ceremonies in the martyrs section of Behesht-e Zahra cemetery, Tehran on Thursday. Supreme Leader described the martyrs as the stars and role models of independence for all people and generations. Martyrs' behavior is a lesson, he said, adding that the Sacred Defense Week is the most suitable time to commemorate the memory and name of martyrs and hear their message. Sacred Defense Week marks the imposed Iraqi Baathist regime war against Iran from 1980 to 1988.

Iran Foils Serial Assassination Plot

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK



TEHRAN - Intelligence minister has announced that the country has managed to foil a plot aimed at the serial assassination of several Sunni clerics, judges, and members of the country's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC). Esmail Khatib made the remarks during a speech in the holy city of Mashhad on Thursday. The plot, which had been devised for implementation "on September 30," had been hatched towards "fueling ethnic and religious differences" in the country, he said. "The enemies are after afflicting the country's eastern borders with insecurity," Khatib noted, urging vigilance on the part of Shia and Sunni clerics as well as relevant authorities. The remarks came after the Intelligence Ministry released a statement, announcing that its agents had managed to frustrate a plot aimed at triggering as many as "30 simultaneous explosions" throughout the capital Tehran. Twenty-eight terrorists were arrested in connection with the plot, which had sought to target the city's "populous centers," the statement noted. The explosions in question had sought to send across a false image of the prevalence of insecurity in the country, sow despair and fear across the society, and trigger chaos and protest, the ministry said. The plot had been designed for implementation on the anniversary of last year's foreign-backed riots throughout the country, it stated. The riots spread out throughout the country last September following the unfortunate death that month of a young girl named Mahsa Amini. Amini fainted at a police station and was pronounced dead days later at a Tehran hospital. An investigation attributed her death to a medical condition, dismissing allegations that she had been beaten by police forces. Also recently, the Intelligence Ministry managed to discover 400 bombs, dozens of which had been planned to be set off across religious gatherings across the nation. Addressing the issue of the foiled bombing plots, Khatib recently said, "We receive many reports saying that they (the enemies) are trying to take advantage of another [wave of] fabricated riots. During this time, we collected about 400 bombs, including more than 40 which were supposed to be set off in mourning congregations of the first 10 days of [the lunar calendar month of] Muharram."

Iran's Customs Revenues Up 67% y/y in March-September



TEHRAN (IRNA) - The Islamic Republic of Iran's Customs Administration (IRICA) has reported a significant growth of 67% in total customs revenues in the six months to late September, saying receipts reached 805.27 trillion rials, or around \$1.6 billion. The figures released by the IRICA on Wednesday showed that the total customs revenues collected from imported goods during the first six months of the current Iranian year (March 21-September 22) topped 272.15 trillion rials, marking a 58% increase compared to the same period last year. Revenue collected from import taxes, automobiles and mobile phones worth over \$600 million and 22 more income categories amounted to 372.46 trillion rials during this period, reflecting a significant 70% growth compared to the same period last year. Additionally, the IRICA highlighted the value-added tax collected from imported goods during the first half of this year, totaling 432.8 trillion rials, demonstrating a notable 65% increase from last year.

President Hails Nour-3 Satellite Launch

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK



TEHRAN - President Ebrahim Raisi has hailed the successful launch of the Nour-3 satellite into orbit as both a national triumph and a testament to the failure of the enemy's sanctions and threats. In a message, Raisi offered his congratulations to the Iranian nation and space experts of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) on the successful production and launch of the Nour-3 (Light-3) imaging satellite and thanked all those who played a role in this achievement. He said the launch was a "national success" and the result of his administration's attention to the country's space industry. It once again proved that the enemy's sanctions and threats have no impact on the determination of Iranian experts and scientists to tread the path of progress, he added. The Iranian president also called on the Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Technology as well as the Iranian Space Agency to continue to pave the way for further progress of the country's space industry. The IRGC Aerospace Force successfully launched the homegrown imaging satellite Nour-3 into orbit 450 kilometers above the Earth on Wednesday morning. Nour-3 (Light-3) was launched by satellite carrier Qased (Messenger) and was placed into an orbit 450 kilometers above the Earth's surface. Meanwhile, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian hailed the successful launch of the Nour-3 satellite which he said was the outcome of the round-the-clock efforts of the country's young experts. "This honorable project is the result of the study and round-the-clock efforts of our country's young scientists and experts in the space industry and those within Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps," Amir-Abdollahian said in a post on his X account on Wednesday. Despite sanctions imposed by Western countries in recent years, Iran has managed to take giant strides in the civilian space program. It is among the world's top 10 countries capable of developing and launching satellites.

Iran Starts Tapping Newly-Unfrozen Funds in Qatar



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran and Qatar have agreed a mechanism that allows Tehran to tap funds recently unfrozen and deposited into bank accounts in the Arab country as part of a deal with the United States. Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Governor Mohammad-Reza Farzin and Qatar's top banker Sheikh Bandar bin Mohammed bin Saoud Al Thani reached an agreement in Doha on Wednesday to start banking operations to use the funds transferred to Iranian bank accounts in Qatar earlier this month, a CBI statement said. The statement said the agreement was reached as part of a broader discussion between Farzin and Sheikh Bandar to boost banking cooperation between Iran and Qatar. Farzin said on September 18 that some 5.573 billion euros of Iran's foreign assets had been successfully transferred to accounts held by six Iranian banks in Qatar's Ahlibank and Dukhan Bank. The transfer took place under a Qatari-mediated deal between Iran and the US whereby the US agreed to lift sanctions on Iranian funds that had remained blocked in two South Korean banks since 2018. The two sides also exchanged prisoners as part of their deal. Qatar paid for banking fees related to the change and transfer of the funds from South Korea via Swiss National Bank to Qatari banks. The CBI statement identified the six Iranian banks holding accounts in Qatar for the purpose of processing the unfrozen funds as Keshavarzi, Saman, Pasargad, Gardeshgari, Shahr and Karafarin. Iranian authorities have indicated in previous statements that they will use the newly-unfrozen funds in Qatar for purchase of non-sanctioned goods, including for imports of animal feed for which Iran spends billions of dollars each year.

Iran, Saudi Arabia Call for Activating Mutual Trade Ties



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Alireza Enayati, and Saudi Arabia's undersecretary of the Foreign Ministry for Political Affairs Saud Al-Sati have stressed the need for the activation of Tehran-Riyadh trade relations. Enayati met and held talks with Al-Sati in Riyadh on Thursday. During the meeting, the two sides discussed mutual ties as well as regional issues and emphasized the activation of trade relations. Iran's new ambassador started his mission in Riyadh on September 5 after a seven-year hiatus. The two countries agreed to resume diplomatic ties back in March following a Chinese-brokered deal after a seven-year estrangement. Iran officially reopened its embassy in Riyadh in June, followed by its consulate in Jeddah and representative office with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. The Saudi embassy in Tehran and its consulate in Mashhad have also resumed operations.

Nour-3 Satellite to Be Used for Military Intelligence Purposes

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - The chief commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) says the elite force will use the newly-launched Nour-3 imaging satellite for military intelligence purposes. "We use the collection of what we receive (from the satellite) and [the information] it gathers from the Earth to meet the IRGC's intelligence demands," said Major General Hossein Salami as he was addressing a gathering of IRGC officers and veterans in Tehran. His comments came hours after the IRGC placed Nour-3, also known as Najm, into orbit using its home-grown Qased satellite carrier. Iran's telecoms ministry said the satellite, which will be used for measurement and reconnaissance missions, had been successfully placed into an orbit of 450 kilometers from Earth. Information released by the IRGC said the satellite had traveled with a speed of 7.6 kilometers per second allowing it to be placed into orbit some 500 seconds after its launch. Elaborating on the specifications of the Nour-3,

Salami said the satellite is seven kilograms heavier than its previous version Nour-2 and features imaging equipment that are more precise and produce pictures with better quality. Commander of IRGC's Aerospace Division Brigadier General Amir-Ali Hajizadeh said after the launch that the force plans two more satellite launches until the end of the current Iranian calendar year which will be late March. Hajizadeh said the launches will enable Iran to have a "constellation of satellites" in the space in the near future.



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EU Deal to Share Out Asylum Seekers Due in Days

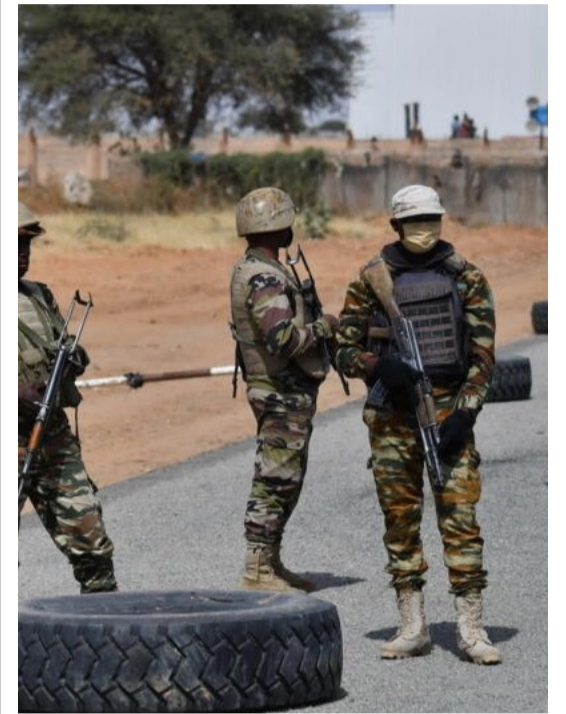
BRUSSELS (dispatches) - The European Union's top migration official said the bloc was set to agree on how to handle irregular immigration soon after ministers' talks yielded no final deal on Thursday with Berlin and Rome worried over rising arrivals ahead of key elections. The ministers were searching for agreement on a long-stalled system for the sharing out across the EU of asylum seekers who reach Europe outside of official border crossings. "I'm sure that in a few days we will have a formal decision on the general approach for the crisis mechanism," said EU Home Affairs Commissioner Ylva Johansson, declining to give details. She put irregular arrivals this year at 250,000 people -- mostly those who fled wars and poverty in the Middle East, Africa and South Asia, and reached the EU across the Mediterranean. All eyes were on whether German Interior Minister Nancy Faeser backed the so-called "crisis mechanism" for distributing people to avoid overwhelming Italy and other countries of entry after Berlin sunk a similar proposal last summer. A diplomat told Reuters that Berlin agreed to an updated scheme during talks of the bloc's 27 migration ministers in Brussels on Thursday. But there was no full announcement of an agreement, with diplomatic sources pointing to Italy for delay. Asked about the matter during a visit in Berlin on Thursday, Italy's Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani said Rome had asked for more time to examine the latest proposal. The bloc's 27 governments want to have a functioning migration system in place to look in control for their voters ahead of a pan-EU parliamentary election in 2024. On Wednesday Germany announced new border controls within what normally is Europe's zone of open travel, saying that was required to push back against people smuggling. The border checks with neighbouring Poland and the Czech Republic came after Germany recorded a nearly-80% rise in asylum requests this year, a concern for the centre-left ruling coalition facing a challenge from the far right in a local election in Bavaria next month. Such controls highlight



how difficulties in handling migration challenge cooperation inside the bloc. "Obviously, nobody is happy with new internal border controls," said a senior EU diplomat, adding that an agreement on the "crisis mechanism" would shore up the EU's struggling migration system and reduce the need for such measures. Migration experts, however, warn about practical difficulties in implementing any such schemes, while rights groups denounced earlier proposals as violating human rights. The ministers also discussed seeking a deal with Egypt to prevent more people from setting off from the southern shores of the Mediterranean for Europe. Critics have said a recent such agreement with Tunisia falls short on human rights grounds but more potential deals are on the cards as Rome sounds alarm over Lampedusa arrivals topping those in 2022 - the year when Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni won a national election on an anti-immigration ticket. Italian data shows more than 133,000 sea arrivals to date in 2023, compared to nearly 181,500 in the

country's record year, 2016. The EU - a bloc of some 45 million people - has been pushing tougher policies to curb irregular immigration since more than a million people reached its shores in 2015, catching the union by surprise and overwhelming countries including Italy. At the same time, member states have been divided over how to share the task of caring for those who make it to Europe. "We are closer than ever before," EU Commissioner Margaritis Schinas told the ministerial talks of the agreement, which is expected to be finalised next week. Schinas said a deal would "finally deprive the demagogues and the populists in Europe" of their argument "that we are not able to sort out our migration problem". Though unable to block the deal on their own, Poland and Hungary oppose hosting asylum seekers from the Middle East or Africa. They have, however, welcomed several million refugees from Russia's war in Ukraine. Johansson said 4 million Ukrainians live under special protection status inside the EU.

Dozens of Soldiers Killed in Suspected Jihadist Attack in Niger



DIFFA (Dispatches) - Seven soldiers were killed Thursday in Niger's southwest in an attack by suspected jihadists, and five others died in a traffic accident while trying to respond to the assault. The deaths come as former colonial power France prepares to withdraw an anti-terrorism force stationed in the country at the request of its new military leaders, who seized power in a coup two months ago.

Niger's defence minister, Salifou Mody, said in a statement that a military unit had been "violently attacked by several hundred terrorists" in the town of Kandadji on Thursday, adding that seven soldiers were killed in the fighting. "During an intervention" launched in response to the attack, "a tragic traffic accident led to the loss of five of our brave soldiers", he continued. Another seven people were injured and evacuated to a hospital, he said. "A search and sweep operation is now under way in order to track down the enemy," the minister said. The Tillaberi region, where the attack took place, is located in the so-called "three borders" zone where Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali meet. The area is a hideout for jihadists, particularly those affiliated with Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State group. In the country's southwest, where it shares a border with Nigeria, it is similarly plagued by attacks by Boko Haram and its dissident branch, the Islamic State in West Africa Province. The leaders of the coup that toppled Niger's elected government in late July had cited the deterioration of the security situation in the country as justification. According to the NGO Acled, the number of deaths in jihadist attacks in Niger has risen since the generals seized power. In mid-August, at least 17 soldiers were killed and 20 wounded in a suspected jihadist attack near the border with Burkina Faso. It was the deadliest known attack in the country since the coup. France is currently preparing to withdraw -- as demanded by the post-coup government -- a contingent of 1,500 troops stationed in Niger as part of an anti-jihadist deployment in the Sahel region. French President Emmanuel Macron has said the pullout would be completed by the end of the year, while alleging that the country's post-coup authorities "no longer wanted to fight against terrorism". The coup against democratically elected president Mohamed Bazoum was the third such putsch in the region in as many years, following similar actions in Mali and Burkina Faso, both of which were also once French colonies. The earlier coups also forced the pullouts of French troops, and all three countries have been targeted by jihadist attacks for several years. The United States, which has about 1,100 military personnel in Niger, has said it will "evaluate" its future steps following France's announcement that its troops would withdraw.

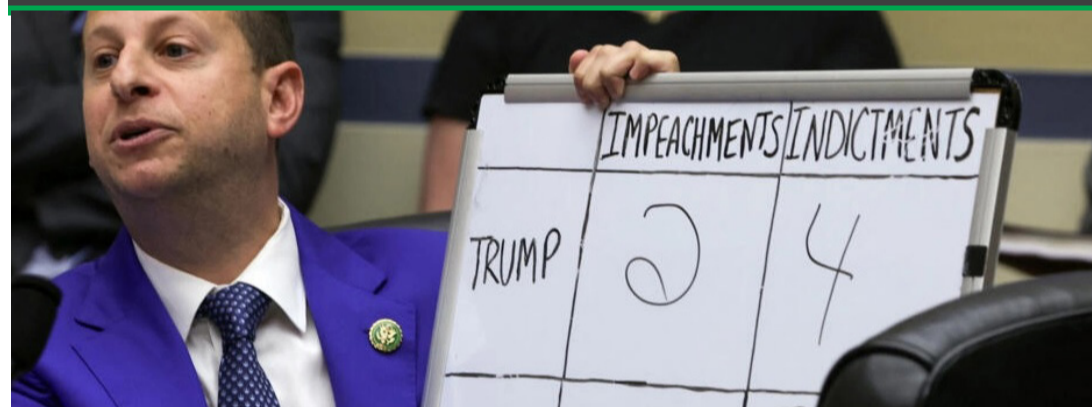


Ukrainian Forces Are Gradually Gaining Ground

KYIV (Dispatches) - NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, on an unannounced visit to Kyiv, said on Thursday that Ukrainian forces were "gradually gaining ground" in their counteroffensive against Russian forces.

Speaking at a joint press conference with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Stoltenberg said "every metre that Ukrainian forces regain is a metre that Russia loses". "And there is a stark contrast: Ukrainians are fighting for their families, their future, their freedom," he added. "Moscow is fighting for imperial delusions." Zelenskyy stressed Ukraine's need for more air defence against Russian attacks, saying Moscow had used more than 40 Shahed drones in strikes on Ukraine the previous night alone. "And so it is almost every night. In the conditions of such intense attacks against Ukrainians, against our cities, ports - which are important for global food security - we need a corresponding increase in pressure on Russia and a corresponding increase in our air shield," he said. Stoltenberg said he was "constantly pushing" NATO allies to provide more support to Ukraine and speed up delivery, "not least" of air defence systems. Stoltenberg announced that NATO now had over-arching framework contracts in place with arms companies worth 2.4 billion euros (\$2.53 billion) for ammunition, including 1 billion euros in firm orders. He said such contracts would allow NATO members to replenish their depleted stockpiles while also continuing to provide Ukraine with ammunition, a key factor in the war. Stoltenberg also condemned Russian strikes near Ukraine's border with NATO member Romania. He said there was no evidence such strikes were a deliberate attack on Romania but branded them "reckless" and "destabilising".

House Republicans Hold First Formal Biden Impeachment Hearing



WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - House Republicans launched a formal impeachment hearing Thursday against President Joe Biden, promising to "provide accountability" as they probe the family finances and lucrative business dealings of his son Hunter and make their case to the public, colleagues and a skeptical Senate. The chairmen of the Oversight, Judiciary, and Ways and Means committees used the opening hearing to review the constitutional and legal questions involved with impeachment. They are trying to show what they say are links to Biden's son Hunter's overseas businesses, though key witnesses said they do not yet see hard evidence of impeachable offenses. Rep. James Comer, R-Ky, the Oversight chairman, said the lawmakers have "a mountain of evidence" that will show that the elder Biden "abused his public office for his family's financial gain." Comer announced he was issuing subpoenas for additional banking records from Hunter Biden and the president's brother, James Biden. He said the panel will continue to "follow the money and the evidence to provide accountability." It's a high-stakes opening act for Republicans, taking place just before a potential federal government shutdown, as they begin a process that can lead to the ultimate penalty for a president, dismissal from office for what the Constitution describes as "high crimes and misdemeanors." The White House pushed back with statements throughout the hearing saying nothing can distract from the Republicans' inability to govern as the shutdown loomed. Spokesperson Sharon Yang called the hearing a "baseless stunt" and said, "President Biden will always stay focused on the priorities of the American

people - not these political games." The more than six-hour hearing came as House Republicans face scattered resistance to an impeachment inquiry from their own ranks and deep reluctance in the Senate from Republicans who worry about political ramifications and say Biden's conviction and removal from office is unlikely. As the hearing began, Democrats displayed a screen showing the days, hours and minutes left until the government shuts down as Congress struggles to fund the government before Saturday's deadline. "We're 62 hours away from shutting down the government of the United States of America and Republicans are launching an impeachment drive, based on a long debunked and discredited lie," said Rep. Jamie Raskin, the top Democrat on the Oversight panel. Raskin questioned the legitimacy of the hearing since the House has not voted to formally launch the impeachment inquiry. He said Republicans are rehashing five-year-old allegations raised by Donald Trump, who is Biden's chief rival in 2024, during the former president's 2019 impeachment over Ukraine. "They don't have a shred of evidence against President Biden for an impeachable offense," he said. The hearing Thursday did not feature witnesses with information about the Bidens or Hunter Biden's business. Instead, the panel heard from outside experts in tax law, criminal investigations and constitutional legal theory. A top Republican-called witness, Jonathan Turley, a George Washington University law professor who is an expert in impeachment issues, said he believed the House had passed the threshold for an inquiry but that the current evidence was not enough for charges.

Turkish Opposition Hopeful Touts Plan to Finally Defeat Erdogan

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Ozgur Ozel aims to become leader of Turkey's main opposition party this year and break through its historic ceiling of 25% support nationwide to finally defeat President Tayyip Erdogan, who has enjoyed two decades of election victories. But Ozel, 49, said in an interview that his Republican People's Party (CHP) must first rebuild the trust of its own voters, disillusioned after its latest painful defeat to Erdogan in May presidential and parliamentary elections. Setting out his plans to challenge veteran CHP leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu, Ozel said he would also reach out and address the problems of voters who have

hitherto rejected the centre-left, secularist party. "We aim to rebuild the shattered hopes, faith and sense of trust among the 25 million people who voted for us," Ozel told Reuters, two weeks after announcing his bid to challenge Kilicdaroglu for the CHP leadership. The CHP, established by modern Turkey's founder Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, has always struggled to reach beyond its secularist grassroots towards conservatives. "We aim to shatter this 25% invisible glass ceiling. We want to do this by being ourselves and determining our own position," he said, saying he aimed to restore the party's left-wing, social democratic identity. Berk Esen,

associate professor at Sabanci University, said there could be some change in the CHP if Ozel were elected leader, repairing recent damage done to the party, but he was sceptical about the prospects for fundamental transformation. "The main opposition party is heading towards a very serious breaking point," Esen said. "It is rotting from the inside, and I don't think the staff that has watched that rot for a long time can change it." The CHP has long been hit by internal disagreements over its leadership and policy direction and the latest election showings have deepened the disputes. The CHP won 25% of the vote in May's parliamentary election while

Erdogan, who has maintained power through his broad appeal to conservative and nationalist voters, comfortably beat Kilicdaroglu in the second round of the presidential vote. Ozel said the CHP failed to analyse those defeats or set out a road map for March local elections, where it is hoping to retain control of the key Istanbul and Ankara municipalities that it won in 2019 after nearly two decades of AKP control. A leadership vote will be held at the CHP congress on Nov. 4-5, with Kilicdaroglu and Ozel among five candidates. Kilicdaroglu, 74, has led the party since 2010. Ozel said electing a new leader was the only way forward.