

Abbas Johari, Secretary of the Election Headquarters of Tehran Province, Said That the Final List of Candidates Who Will Participate in the Snap Presidential Elections in Iran Will Be Announced on June 11

# IRAN NEWS

Majlis Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, Judiciary Chief Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejei, and acting president Mohammad Mokhber Held a Meeting on Saturday to Coordinate Plans for the Upcoming Presidential Election, Slated for June 28

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## 2 DOMESTIC

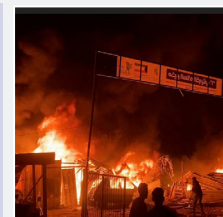
### New Iranian Parliament inaugurated



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### Israeli Airstrikes Kill at Least 35 in Rafah



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### Leader calls on new parliament to increase hope among nation



TEHRAN, May 27 (MNA) – Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has called on the new parliament to increase hope and motivation among the Iranian nation. The 12th round of the Iranian Parliament commenced on Monday morning. Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei issued a message on the occasion of the commencement of the new round of the Iranian Parliament. Every new parliament can increase the hope and motivation among the nation, the Leader said, stressing that inviting people to empathy and brotherhood among the nation is one of the tasks of parliament. He further stressed that the parliament members' oath is not a show, and it is a true oath that would make them responsible. The last point is that each member of parliament is a representative of the entire nation of Iran; This means that the main work of the representative is to pursue national interests. Elsewhere in the letter, Ayatollah Khamenei hailed the historic participation of the Iranian nation in the farewell ceremonies of the late Iranian president, foreign minister, and their companions who lost their lives in a helicopter crash last week.

### Iran, Oman to cooperate to stop Israeli crimes in Gaza



TEHRAN, May 27 (MNA) – The interim Iranian foreign minister Ali Bagheri Kani says the Iranian and Omani governments will cooperate more seriously to stop the Israeli regime's crimes in Gaza Strip. The interim Iranian foreign minister Ali Bagheri Kani held talks with visiting Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, the foreign minister of the Sultanate of Oman in Tehran on Monday which was followed by their joint press conference. In the press conference, Ali Bagheri said that, "We must launch more serious efforts to stop the [Israeli] crimes immediately and make a serious effort to send humanitarian aid [to Gaza]. Iran and Oman will have serious and effective cooperation in the coming period." Elsewhere in the presser, the interim Iranian foreign minister said that he and his colleagues in the foreign ministry will continue the neighborliness policy

pursued by the late president Ebrahim Raeisi and his foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, adding that, "Iran's determination is that there should be no gaps in its friendly relations with its neighbors." The Omani foreign minister, for his part, said that, "Today we talked about the continuation of consultations between the two countries. Also, we discussed various other cases, regarding bilateral cooperation and common issues in the region, most importantly the Palestinian issue. Al Busaidi is also slated to meet with other high-ranking Iranian officials. Earlier this week after the tragic helicopter crash, the Sultan of Oman Haitham bin Tariq expressed his condolences in a message to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution over the martyrdom of Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi and his accompanying delegation.

### Removing Taliban from terror list proposal on Putin's table



TEHRAN, May 27 (MNA) – The Russian Foreign and Justice Ministries have reported to President Vladimir Putin that the Taliban can be removed from the list of terrorist organizations. Director of the Foreign Ministry's Second Asian Department said. According to Zamir Kabulov, this position was supported by a number of governmental bodies. "Positive," he said, when asked about the Foreign Ministry's position on the issue. "This (removal of the Taliban from the list of banned organizations before its recognition) must be done," he said in an interview with TASS. He added that without this, it will be premature to talk about recognition, adding that therefore, work on this issue continues. "All considerations have been reported to the top leadership of Russia. We are waiting for a decision," Kabulov added. According to him, the Taliban has come a long way towards being recognized since it came to power in Afghanistan in 2021. "But there are still a few hurdles to overcome, after which the Russian leadership will make a decision," Kabulov pointed out. The diplomat also said that Moscow has no plans to hold any events or exchange congratulatory telegrams with the Taliban government on the 105th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Russia and Afghanistan. "For a purely formal reason: the lack of official recognition," he explained.

### At least 35 killed in Israeli bombing of Rafah refugee camp



TEHRAN, May 27 (MNA) – At least 35 Palestinians were killed in the Israeli bombing of the Rafah refugee camp, the Palestinian Ministry of Health reported. Israeli forces struck a tent camp in the Tell es-Sultan area in northwestern Rafah where displaced people were staying, killing at least 35 Palestinians, including women and children, the ministry said. Al Jazeera TV channel reported that the attack on the Tell es-Sultan area coincided with the bombing of the Jabalia and Nuseirat refugee camps and the city of Gaza. At least 160 people have been killed in the past 24 hours, it added. Israel waged a genocidal war on the besieged Gaza on October 7 after the Palestinian Hamas Resistance group carried out a historic operation against the occupying entity in retaliation for the regime's intensified atrocities against the Palestinian people. Israel has imposed a complete siege on the densely populated territory, cutting off fuel, electricity, food, and water to the more than two million Palestinians living there.

### 330 condolence messages sign of successful foreign policy

TEHRAN, May 27 (MNA) – The spokesman of the Iranian foreign minister hailed the lots of messages of condolences to Iran over tragic helicopter crash as a sign of Iran's successful foreign policy. Speaking during his regular press conference on Monday, the spokesman of the Iranian foreign ministry Nasser Kan'ani once gain extended his condolences over the martyrdom of President Raeisi and his companions in the tragic helicopter crash and expressed gratitude towards foreign high-ranking delegations for taking part in memorial services for the martyrs. "We received more than 330 messages from top officials of different countries, which is a sign of the success of Iran's foreign policy to develop international ties." The spokesman hailed President Raeisi and his foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian for their efforts to develop Iran's ties with other countries and international bodies, which according to him, enhanced the Islamic Republic's status at the regional and international level. True evidence for that is the great number of messages of sympathy the Islamic Republic received from other countries, coupled with the participation of foreign delegations in the mourning ceremonies held inside Iran, Kan'ani noted. He added that the presence of foreign officials in Iran's diplomatic missions in other countries, minutes of silence observed at various international bodies as well as public mourning announced in some countries are other signs showing the success of Iran's foreign policy. Despite the occurrence of the tragic incident, the Islamic Republic's support of Palestine will not be interrupted and Tehran will continue its international, diplomatic and legal supports as the country sees the supports as a duty and moral issue, the spokesman underlined. Message of condolence from Bahrain The spokesman said he appreciated the Bahraini king for offering a message of sympathy over the martyrdom of President Raeisi and his companions including Foreign Minister Amir-Abdollahian. Through focusing on neighborhood policy, the late President Raeisi tried to remove misunderstandings and strengthen relations with the neighbors, particularly those in the Persian Gulf region. Iranian government's policy on Africa In his remarks, the spokesman referred to the Africa Day on May 25, saying the expansion of ties with Africa was on the agenda

of President Raeisi's administration as his three trips to African states show. Meanwhile, the deaths of president and his entourage will not hinder implementation of such a policy, he said. "Our approach to fostering relations with different countries, the neighbors in particular, will not change." Legal, international grounds for putting an end to the ongoing war in the Gaza Strip are available, he said. Iran-US indirect talks Commenting on the latest indirect negotiation between Iran and the US, Kan'ani said that the two sides' interactions have been centered on the lifting the imposed sanctions and nuclear issues. The Islamic Republic has always held talks within the certain framework of the country, he said, adding that the media reports on this regard are invalid and inaccurate. Iran's negotiating team has always advanced the talks under the supervision and guidance of the higher bodies in the political system of the country, he noted. He went on to say that the team has leveraged the capacity of all authorities to this end. Iran-IAEA cooperation Iran's approach to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is positive and constructive, he said. Grossi's recent visit to Iran also shows that it was done to expand constructive cooperation between the two sides and resolve misunderstandings, he added. Iran has always stated that the agency must avoid taking a political approach, he said, adding that the IAEA should take action professionally. Upcoming visit of Oman FM to Iran The Omani Foreign Minister is to visit Iran to offer condolences and express the sympathy of the Omani government to Iran, he said. Of course, high-ranking delegations from Oman attended the funeral procession of Iran's Martyr President Raeisi, and his accompanying officials who lost their lives in a copter crash on May 19 in northwestern Iran. The minister of foreign affairs of the country, however, has decided to travel to Iran individually as the two sides enjoy friendly and brotherly relations. I.R. policy on Balkan region Responding to a question by an IRNA correspondent, the spokesman elaborated on Iran's foreign policy on the Balkan region and the country's vote in favor of a UN General Assembly resolution on Srebrenica genocide, which was held on May 23.

### Enhancing Iran-Cuba ties beneficial for independent states



TEHRAN, May 27 (MNA) – Iran's acting foreign minister Ali Bagheri Kani says that the strengthening of relations between Iran and Cuba is beneficial for independent countries and could contribute to multilateralism. Bagheri Kani made the remarks in a meeting with Pedro Luis Pedroso Cuesta, Special Envoy of the President of Cuba, in Tehran on Sunday. During the meeting, Pedro Luis Pedroso Cuesta offered sincere condolences to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, and the Iranian nation over the tragic passing of the late Iranian president Ebrahim Raeisi and the country's late Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian in a helicopter crash. He stressed that the Iranian government and people will successfully pass this critical era. Calling Iran the closest friend of Cuba in the West Asia region, he called for expanding and deepening relations between the two countries in all fields, especially in the field of economy. Bagheri Kani, for his part, appreciated the visit of the special envoy of the Cuban president to Tehran, describing this trip and the messages of sympathy and condolence as consoling in this difficult situation. With the support of the people, Iran has always overcome such hardships and turned threats and challenges into opportunities, he added. Saying that strengthening relations between Tehran and Havana is beneficial for the independent countries and can contribute to multilateralism, he expressed hope that by holding the new round of the joint economic commission of the two countries, Iran and Cuba would implement the agreements and memorandum of understandings reached by the presidents of the two states.



# IRAN NEWS



## Amir-Abdollahian helped leverage Iran's position globally

Martyr Amir-Abdollahian was a person of strong moral character. He was known for his modest, friendly, and intimate approach in his interactions with colleagues, friends, and even strangers. In addition to his political initiatives and revolutionary spirit, he had a commanding presence in the region, a sharp mind, and a strong memory. His clear and calculated speech during public addresses and meetings was another positive trait. Media and foreign policy experts often highlighted this as one of the strengths of his diplomatic speeches. Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian were martyred in a helicopter crash in the northwestern province of East Azarbaijan on Sunday. The helicopter carrying President Raisi and his accompanying delegation crashed on Sunday in the Dizmar forest, nestled between the cities of Varzaqan and Jofa in East Azarbaijan Province. In an interview with Mehr News Agency, regarding the martyrdom of Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, Indonesian Ambassador to Tehran Ronny Prasetyo Yuliantoro touched upon his role in boosting Iran and Pakistan relations.

## West Asia in desperate need of enhanced Iran-Saudi ties: Interim president



Interim Iranian President Mohammad Mokhber says West Asia is in desperate need of improving relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Tehran-ISA- Mokhber made the remarks in a phone conversation with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman on Friday as the latter offered his condolences to the Iranian government and nation over the martyrdom of President Ebrahim Raisi, Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and their companions in a helicopter crash in the northeastern province of East Azarbaijan on Sunday. He described ties between Iran and Saudi Arabia as crucial for the Muslim world, saying, "Despite some powers' opposition, our relations have reached a good level and the region is in desperate need of such relations." Mokhber urged the two countries to increase economic exchanges, remove obstacles and meet mutual needs in order to further improve political relations. He emphasized that the loss of popular and hardworking President Raisi is painful but will not make any change in Iran's diplomatic path. He noted that Tehran and Riyadh will continue to boost cordial relations as in the past. The interim president stressed the importance of pursuing the policy of neighborliness and expansion of relations among all the countries in the region which will guarantee regional stability and prosperity. Mokhber also hailed Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz and the crown prince's messages of sympathy with Iran over the tragic incident and the participation of the country's foreign minister in ceremonies to pay tribute to the late president and his entourage. The Saudi crown prince, for his part, said Iran and Saudi Arabia play a key role in the region and the Muslim world and added that improved mutual relations will lead to a bright future. Salman expressed Riyadh's readiness to boost economic cooperation with Tehran. He stressed the need to continue President Raisi's path to develop mutual and regional ties. The passing of President Raisi and Foreign Minister Amir-Abdollahian was very painful for Saudi Arabia, he said, vowing to continue expansion of ties with Iran. The conversation comes as it was in March 2023 and under the tenure of President Raisi that Iran and Saudi Arabia agreed to restore diplomatic ties after seven years. The tragic helicopter crash engulfed Iran in shock and grief and generated a groundswell of support and solidarity from Muslims and non-Muslims across the world.



## New Iranian Parliament inaugurated

TEHRAN, May 27 (MNA) – The newly-elected Iranian lawmakers held the first session of the 12th Parliament after victory of the Islamic Revolution on Monday, May 27. The first meeting of the new Parliament kicked off on Monday morning with high-ranking officials, including acting president Mohammad Mokhber, Judiciary Chief Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejei, senior

military commanders, and the foreign ambassadors to Tehran in attendance. The oldest lawmakers have formed a transitional presiding board that is tasked with supervising the inauguration ceremony and electing an official presiding board. Alaeddin Boroujerdi, representing the people of Lar, has been elected as the transitional speaker of the Parliament as the oldest MP.

## Iran reaffirms commitment to promotion of ties with Pakistan

TEHRAN, May 27 (MNA) – Reaffirming Iran's commitment to the promotion of ties with Pakistan, Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces maintained that no external factor will harm the brotherly relations between the two Muslim neighbors. In a telephone conversation with Chief of Army Staff of Pakistan Asim Munir on Sunday, the top Iranian general emphasized that Iran's policies have not changed after the passing away of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian. The plans for the expansion of relations with the neighbors and the enhancement of friendly and brotherly ties with Pakistan are unchanging policies of Iran, the top commander stated. Expressing confidence that Iran and Pakistan will be able to broaden interaction seriously, General Baqeri emphasized that no external factor could undermine the friendship and brotherhood between the two neighbors. In a meeting with Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Tehran on May 22, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei described Pakistan as a brotherly neighbor of Iran, saying the

relationship with Islamabad is very important for Tehran. Expressing his heartfelt gratitude for the sympathy displayed by the Pakistani government and nation over the passing away of President Raisi in the helicopter crash, the Leader said, "Relations with Pakistan are very important for the Islamic Republic of Iran, and we completely view this country with a sense of brotherhood. However, the relations between the two countries have had their ups and downs in recent years. We believe that with the new government in Pakistan, there is the possibility of a renewed peak in these relations." Referring to the emphasis of the late President Raisi on the importance of relations with Pakistan, the Leader added, "Mr. Raisi's recent visit to Pakistan can be a turning point in the relations between the two countries, and Dr. Mokhber will pursue the path of cooperation and agreements." Ayatollah Khamenei noted that "friendly relations between brotherly countries are not always a smooth process, and obstacles must be overcome and the progress of cooperation should be pursued diligently and put into action."



## Iran's Support for Palestine Unshakable



TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Acting President of Iran Mohammad Mokhber gave an assurance that Tehran's backing for Palestinian resistance groups would by no means falter after the loss of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi. In a telephone conversation with Secretary General of the Islamic Jihad movement Ziad al-Nakhala on Saturday, Mokhber highlighted the late Iranian president and foreign minister's concerns about the Palestinian people's rights and resistance. "The Islamic Republic of Iran's fundamental strategy of supporting the resistance current, particularly the Palestinian resistance groups, would not change with a change of individuals," the acting president said. Mokhber described resistance as the most effective strategy for countering the Zionist regime's crimes and acts of aggression. The acting president also hailed Iran's retaliatory 'True Promise' operation against the Israeli military targets as an outcome of the resistance current that humiliated the US and the Zionist regime. In a meeting with head of the political bureau of the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas in Tehran on May 22, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei hailed the remarkable resistance displayed by the people of Gaza, which he said has surprised the world.

## Iran Opens Major Railway Link Between Yazd, Fars Provinces



YAZD (IRNA) - Iran has inaugurated a main railway link between the central province of Yazd and the southern province of Fars. The railway is one of the most important railway projects in Iran in the north-south railway corridor. The route includes 270 km of mainline with 11 stations. The speed of passenger trains on the railway will be 160 km per hour while the speed of a freight train will be 120 km per hour. Iranian Minister of Roads and Urban Development Mehrdad Bazrpash attended the inauguration ceremony on Sunday. During the event, the official said that rail and road transit grew by 57% in the first two months of the Iranian calendar year (March 20-May 20) compared to the same period last year.



## Tehran, Washington hold indirect talks, Iranian UN mission confirms

Iran's UN mission in New York has affirmed that indirect discussions took place between Iran and the US this week. The talks occurred in Oman and are described as part of "an ongoing process." Tehran-ISA- Moreover, the mission emphasized that such negotiation processes have happened before and will continue. This confirmation came after Axios reported that two high-ranking US officials engaged in indirect talks with Iranian counterparts in Oman. According to Axios, Brett McGurk, President Joe Biden's top advisor for the Middle East, and Abram Paley, the acting US envoy for Iran, represented the US side. However, the identity of the Iranian representatives remains unclear. Axios further noted that these talks, the first since similar negotiations in January 2024, aimed to address tensions in the West Asia region and explore avenues for de-escalation. Earlier on Saturday, Iranian government spokesperson Ali Bahadori Jahromi lashed out at US lawmakers for granting immunity to Israeli officials amid reports that the International Criminal Court (ICC) was preparing to issue arrest warrants to members of the Israeli government, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, over the war on the Gaza Strip. Bahadori Jahromi pointed out on Friday that certain Western countries blatantly violate international law, exploiting its weaknesses.

### State of Emergency to Be Lifted in Riot-Hit New Caledonia

PARIS (Dispatches) - Seven more mobile force units will soon arrive as reinforcements in New Caledonia, the Elysée said in a statement on Monday, also indicating a state of emergency would end as planned in the French Pacific territory on Tuesday morning local time. The state of emergency would end on Monday evening at 8:00 pm in Paris (Tuesday 5:00 am in Noumea). Seven people have been killed, hundreds arrested and large numbers of buildings and cars destroyed in a fortnight of upheaval triggered by a contested electoral reform and fuelled by sharp economic disparities between the indigenous Kanak population and people of European background. Police shot dead a man on Friday evening, a day after French President Emmanuel Macron visited to try to calm tensions. The arrival of an additional 480 gendarmes will bring the number of French security forces in the Pacific territory to some 3,500. Macron's decision not to renew the state of emergency illustrates Paris's desire to start the process of de-escalation and re-establish conditions for dialogue, the statement added. The main pro-independence political coalition, FLNKS (Kanak and Socialist National Liberation Front) issued a communique on Saturday saying the priority was easing tensions and the only viable solution was a "political and non-repressive solution".



### Zelenskyy Urges Biden and Xi to Join Peace Summit



KYIV (Dispatches) - President Volodymyr Zelenskyy appealed to U.S. President Joe Biden and Chinese leader Xi Jinping on Sunday to attend his peace summit as Ukraine struggles to stave off unrelenting attacks by Russia in its 27-month-old invasion. Ukraine hopes to host as many countries as possible at Kyiv-led talks in Switzerland next month aimed at uniting global opinion on how to halt the war and piling pressure on Russian President Vladimir Putin, who has not been invited. Zelenskyy spoke in an English-language video recorded in the northeastern city of Kharkiv, inside the charred remains of a printing house that was destroyed on Thursday in a Russian missile strike. He said more than 80 countries would attend. But it was unclear whether Biden would be there, nor has Beijing, which maintains close ties with Moscow, said whether it would attend. A U.S. official said on Sunday that the United States will participate in the summit, but declined to say who or at what level. "I am appealing to the leaders of the world who are still aside from the global efforts of the Global Peace Summit - to President Biden, the leader of the United States, and to President Xi, the leader of China," said Zelenskyy. "Please, show your leadership in advancing the peace - the real peace and not just a pause between the strikes," he said. Zelenskyy added that the summit would "show who in the world really wants to end the war." Kyiv, in its peace plan, calls for a full withdrawal of Russian troops and a restoration of its internationally recognised borders, something Moscow considers a non-starter. Last week, Russian sources told Reuters that Putin was ready to halt the war in Ukraine with a negotiated ceasefire that recognises the current battlefield lines. In response, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said that the Russian leader was "trying to derail" the Switzerland event because he was "scared of its success." "His entourage sends these phony signals of alleged readiness for a cease-fire despite the fact that Russian troops continue to brutally attack Ukraine while their missiles and drones rain down on Ukrainian cities and communities," he wrote on X. Russia has previously said it sees no point in Ukraine's conference. In recent months Moscow's forces have made slow but steady gains along several parts of the sprawling eastern front and are attempting to push deeper into the northeastern Kharkiv region after a ground incursion launched earlier this month.

### Lithuanian Nausėda Calls Victory in Presidential Election



VILNIUS (Dispatches) - Lithuanian Gitanas Nausėda announced his re-election in a presidential ballot on Sunday, following a campaign dominated by security concerns in the European Union and NATO member next door to Russia. The Baltic nation of 2.8 million people has been a staunch ally of Ukraine since Russia's 2022 invasion. Like other countries in the region, it worries it could be Moscow's next target. Ballots from nearly 90% of polling stations showed Nausėda, 60, winning roughly three quarters of the vote, followed by Prime Minister Ingrida Simionyte, 49, from the ruling centre-right Homeland Union party. If confirmed by final results, Nausėda's backing in his bid for a second term will be highest in the country since it split from the Soviet Union in 1991. A former senior economist with Swedish banking group SEB who is not affiliated with any party, Nausėda won the first round of the election on May 12 with 44% of the votes, short of the 50% he needed for an outright victory. Just over half of Lithuanians believe a Russian attack is possible or even very likely, according to an ELTA/Baltijos Tyrimai poll conducted between February and March. Russia has regularly dismissed concerns that it might attack a NATO member. Nausėda told jubilant supporters in the capital Vilnius that he will continue working on the country's defence capabilities. "Lithuanian independence and freedom is like a fragile vessel which we need to cherish and keep from cracking," he said. Both Nausėda and Simionyte support increasing defence spending to at least 3% of Lithuania's gross domestic product, from the 2.75% planned for this year.



### Israeli Airstrikes Kill at Least 35 in Rafah

CAIRO (Dispatches) - Israeli air strikes killed at least 35 Palestinians and wounded dozens in an area in the southern Gaza Strip city of Rafah designated for the displaced, Palestinian health and civil emergency service officials said. The Israeli military said its air force struck a Hamas compound in Rafah and that the strike was carried out with "precise ammunition and on the basis of precise intelligence." It took out Hamas' chief of staff for the West Bank and another senior official behind deadly attacks on Israelis, it said. "The IDF is aware of reports indicating that as a result of the strike and fire that was ignited several civilians in the area were harmed. The incident is under review." The spokesman for the health ministry in the Hamas-run Gaza, Ashraf Al-Qidra, said 35 people were killed and dozens others, most of them women and children, were wounded in the attack. The strike took place in Tel Al-Sultan neighborhood in western Rafah, where thousands of people were taking shelter after many fled the eastern areas of the city where Israeli forces began a ground offensive over two weeks ago. The International Committee of the Red Cross said its field hospital in Rafah was receiving an influx of casualties, and that other hospitals also were taking in a large number of patients. Senior Hamas official Sami Abu Zuhri described the attack in Rafah as a "massacre", holding the United States responsible for aiding Israel with weapons and money. "The air strikes burnt the tents, the tents are melting and the people's bodies are also melting," said one of the residents who arrived at the Kuwaiti hospital in Rafah. Earlier on Sunday, the Israeli military said eight projectiles were identified crossing from the area of Rafah, the southern tip of the Gaza Strip where Israel kept up operations despite a ruling by the top U.N. court on Friday ordering it to stop attacking the city. A number of the projectiles were intercepted, it said. There were no reports of casualties. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was convening his war cabinet later on Sunday to discuss continued operations in Rafah. Israel argues that the

U.N. court's ruling allows room for some military action there. In a statement on its Telegram channel, the Hamas al-Qassam Brigades said the rockets were launched in response to "Zionist massacres against civilians". Rafah is located about 100 km (60 miles) south of Tel Aviv. Israel says it wants to root out Hamas fighters holed up in Rafah and rescue hostages it says are being held in the area, but its assault has worsened the plight of civilians and caused an international outcry. On Sunday, Israeli strikes killed at least five Palestinians in Rafah, according to local medical services. The Gaza health ministry identified the dead as civilians. Israeli tanks have probed around the edges of Rafah, near the crossing point from Gaza into Egypt, and have entered some of its eastern districts, residents say, but have not yet entered the city in force since the start of operations in the city earlier this month. Israeli war cabinet minister Benny Gantz said the rockets fired from Rafah "prove that the (Israel Defense Forces) must operate in every place Hamas still operates from". Defence Minister Yoav Gallant held an operational assessment in Rafah where he was briefed on "troops' operations above and below the ground, as well as the deepening of operations in additional areas with the aim of dismantling Hamas battalions", his office said in a statement. Itamar Ben Gvir, a hardline public security minister who is not part of Israel's war cabinet, urged the army to hit Rafah harder. "Rafah with full force," he posted on X. Nearly 36,000 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's offensive, Gaza's health ministry says. Israel launched the operation after Hamas-led militants attacked southern Israeli communities on Oct. 7, killing around 1,200 people and seizing more than 250 hostages, according to Israeli tallies. Fighting also continued in the northern Gaza area of Jabaliya, the scene of intense combat earlier in the war. During one raid, the military said it found a weapons storage site with dozens of rocket parts and weapons at a school.

### China's PM Hails New Beginning With U.S.- Allied South Korea, Japan



SEOUL (Dispatches) - Chinese Premier Li Qiang praised what he called a restart in relations with Japan and South Korea as he met their leaders for the first three-way talks in four years on Monday in Seoul, striving to revive trade and security dialogues hampered by global tensions. Li, South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol, and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida will adopt a joint statement on six areas including the economy and trade, science and technology, people-to-people exchanges and health and the aging population, Seoul officials said. They may also agree to resume three-party free trade agreement negotiations, which have been stalled since 2019, according to Japanese media reports. At the summit, Li called for the comprehensive resumption of trilateral cooperation with an open attitude and transparent measures, China's official Xinhua news agency reported. He said relations between the three nations had not changed despite profound global transformations. "Our meeting today, first in more than four years, is both a restart and a new beginning," Li said, according to a post on X by China's foreign ministry. China and U.S.-allied South Korea and Japan are trying to manage rising distrust amid the rivalry between Beijing and Washington and tensions over democratically ruled Taiwan, which China claims as its own. Yoon and Kishida have charted a closer course with each other and to Washington, embarking on unprecedented three-way cooperation with the United States on military and other measures. Monday's summit comes a day after the leaders met separately for bilateral talks with each other. In those

meetings, Li and Yoon agreed to a diplomatic and security dialogue and resume free trade talks, while Kishida and the Chinese premier discussed Taiwan and agreed to hold a new round of bilateral high-level economic dialogue. Yoon also asked China to play a constructive role with its partners in North Korea, which is expanding its nuclear weapons and missile arsenal in defiance of United Nations Security Council resolutions. North Korea has notified Japan of its plan to launch a rocket carrying a space satellite between May 27 and June 4, the Japan Coast Guard said on Monday. Officials from the United States, Japan, and South Korea held phone talks in response to the notice and demanded that North Korea cancel the launch because it would use ballistic missile technology in violation of the U.N. resolutions, Japan's Foreign Ministry said. The trade relationship between China, South Korea and Japan has evolved over the past decade to become increasingly competitive. Those ties have been further tested by U.S. calls for its allies to shift their supply chains for key products, such as semiconductors, away from China. Officials and diplomats from South Korea and Japan have set a low bar for the summit, saying it is uncertain whether there will be major announcements but that just gathering will help the three countries revive and reinvigorate their strained relations. The three leaders are also due to attend a forum with top business executives. South Korea, Japan and China held 16 rounds of official negotiations over a three-way FTA after they first kicked off in 2012.



### Twelve Moldovan Parties Clinch Pro-Europe Pact

CHISINAU (Dispatches) - Twelve parties in Moldova clinched a pact committing them to act in favor of European Union membership for the ex-Soviet state as the campaign for an October referendum on European integration heats up. But not all the parties support pro-European President Maia Sandu, who is running for re-election in a poll taking place alongside the referendum. Some of them intend to put up a joint candidate to run against her. The Oct. 20 referendum pits Sandu and pro-European forces against a group of disparate pro-Russian parties which are already holding rallies with the slogan "No to the EU". Sunday's accord was signed by Sandu's Party of Action and Solidarity (PAS), which holds a majority in parliament in one of Europe's poorest countries, lying between Ukraine and Romania. But the pact's initiators, four parties jointly dubbed "Together", accuse Sandu of "privatising" European integration by relying solely on her PAS party. The group, which polls show could secure enough votes to win seats in parliament, call on Sandu to dismiss her government and bring other pro-European parties into the administration. With pro-Russian parties running an organized "no" drive in the referendum campaign, analysts say the key is to muster support for EU integration in the plebiscite without devoting too much attention to Sandu's chances of re-election. "Voters must remember that on October 20, defeat in the referendum will mean defeat for Moldova, casting it into the past," Vitalii Andrievskii, Director of the Institute for Effective Policy, told Reuters. "The referendum on EU membership and the presidential election are different things. Maia Sandu should not be viewed in association with the referendum." Sandu says Russia and corruption are the biggest threats to Moldova and she places EU membership at the centre of her policies.

### Anti-Gov't Protests in Armenia Over Azerbaijan Land Transfer

YEREVAN (Dispatches) - Thousands of Armenians staged an anti-government protest on Sunday, demanding Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's resignation over territorial concessions to arch foe neighbor Azerbaijan. Protests erupted in the Caucasus nation last month after the government agreed to hand over to Baku territory it had controlled since the 1990s. The ceded area is strategically important for landlocked Armenia because it controls sections of a vital highway to Georgia. Armenian residents of nearby settlements say the move cuts them off from the rest of the country and accuse Pashinyan of giving away territory without getting anything in return. On Friday, in a key step toward normalising ties between the rivals -- who fought two wars over then-disputed Nagorno Karabakh region -- Yerevan returned to Azerbaijan four border villages it seized decades ago. An AFP reporter said several thousand people flooded Yerevan's central Republic Square in a fresh protest spearheaded by charismatic archbishop Bagrat Galstanyan, a church leader from the Tavush region, where villages were handed over to Azerbaijan. "Our people want to change the bitter reality which was imposed on us," Galstanyan told the crowd, adding that fixing the volatile border with Azerbaijan "must only be carried out after a peace treaty is signed" with Baku. One of the demonstrators, 67-year-old Artur Sargsyan, said: "We demand an immediate



resignation of Nikol (Pashinyan). "I had fought in two wars with Azerbaijan and will not let him give away our lands." Pashinyan defended the territorial concessions as aimed at securing peace with Baku. But they sparked weeks of protests and demonstrators blocked major roads in an attempt to force him to change course. In a televised statement on Friday evening, he said resolving border disputes with Azerbaijan "is a sole guarantee for the very existence of the Armenian republic within its internationally recognised and legitimate frontier." Galstanyan is seeking to launch an impeachment process against Pashinyan, a former journalist who was propelled to power in the wake of peaceful street protests he led in 2018. The archbishop said on Sunday that he would renounce his clerical office to run for prime ministerial post, and called for snap parliamentary elections. "My spiritual service is above all possible posts, but I am ready to sacrifice it for the sake of change in this country," he told the cheering crowd. He then called on protesters to march toward Pashinyan's residence. Opposition parties would require the support of at least one independent or ruling party MP to launch the impeachment process and success would then hinge on at least 18 lawmakers from Pashinyan's own party voting to unseat the leader. Last year, Azerbaijan recaptured Karabakh in a lightning offensive against Armenian separatists who had held sway over the mountainous enclave for three decades.

## Osaka, Alcaraz Win, Murray Ousted in French Open



PARIS (Dispatches) - Naomi Osaka swept to her first victory at the French Open in three years on Sunday, setting up a potential showdown with Iga Swiatek, as Carlos Alcaraz maintained his record of never losing in the first round of a Grand Slam. However, Andy Murray's French Open career was ruthlessly ended in straight sets by fellow three-time major winner and 2015 champion Stan Wawrinka. The 39-year-old Swiss hailed his beaten rival as a "great champion" as the former world number one bid adieu to the tournament ahead of his expected retirement later in the summer. Osaka, a four-time major winner who has yet to get past the third round in Paris, needed three sets to defeat Italy's 48th-ranked Lucia Bronzetti on the showpiece Court Philippe Chatrier, 6-1, 4-6, 7-5. The 26-year-old fired 31 winners, including six aces, and 45 unforced errors in a match where she gave up a 4-0 lead in the decider before finding herself 5-4 down. However, she rallied strongly to register her first win

at a Grand Slam since the 2022 Australian Open. "It feels really nice to be back and I'm just really grateful to be here in front of everybody," said Osaka. "I think there were moments when I played really well." The Japanese star, a former world number one now at 134 in the rankings, has endured a bittersweet relationship with the French capital. In 2021, she was fined for opting out of mandatory media commitments before withdrawing from the tournament in order to protect her mental health. A year later, she fell in the first round before leaving the sport in September 2022 for 16 months to give birth to her daughter. Top seed and defending champion Swiatek, chasing a fourth French Open, will face Osaka if the Pole gets past qualifier Leolia Jeanjean. World number three and reigning Wimbledon champion Alcaraz eased to a 6-1, 6-2, 6-1 win over America's J.J. Wolf, the 107th-ranked player who entered the main draw as a 'lucky loser' from qualifying.

## Brazil's Ronaldinho Stars in Charity Match for Flood Victims



RIO DE JANEIRO (Dispatches) - Brazilian football great Ronaldinho came out of retirement for a charity match to raise funds for those affected by devastating flooding in the country's south. The Paris Saint-Germain and Barcelona legend notched two goals and an assist in the 5-5 tie at the match in Rio de Janeiro's Maracana stadium. Ronaldinho, whose full name is Ronaldo de Assis Moreira, is from Brazil's Rio Grande do Sul state, which has been reeling from weeks of unprecedented floods that have killed more than 160 people and left 90 percent of its towns inundated. A slew of Brazilian football stars got together for Sunday's charity match, including coach Dorival Junior and former right-back Cafu. "It's moving to see all these people coming together to help my people," Ronaldinho said. "After this immeasurable tragedy, we see the Brazilian people uniting again," Junior said. Ronaldinho, 44, put in his team's fourth and fifth goals, while Cafu also shone with a goal and an assist. He left the pitch with 15 minutes on the clock, to a standing ovation. Women's stars also took part in the match, including Formiga. Cities and rural areas alike in Rio Grande do Sul have been hit for weeks by an unprecedented climate disaster of torrential rains and deadly flooding. More than half a million people have fled their homes, and authorities have been unable to fully assess the extent of the damage.

## Leclerc Battles Tears to Secure Stirring Monaco Home Win

MONTE CARLO (Dispatches) - Charles Leclerc admitted he was fighting back tears and struggling to see as he raced to an emotional victory for Ferrari in his home Monaco Grand Prix on Sunday. His win prompted a standing ovation and unbridled celebrations from a huge crowd as he ended his run of wretched luck on home soil and a sequence of 39 races without a win since the 2022 Austrian Grand Prix. Leclerc won comfortably ahead of McLaren's Oscar Piastri and his Ferrari team-mate Carlos Sainz as Red Bull suffered another weekend of disappointment with series leader Max Verstappen finishing sixth and Sergio Perez crashed out on the opening lap. His flawless triumph in a dull and processionary race was the first by a Monegasque driver on the famous Mediterranean street circuit since the start of the Formula One world championship in 1950. The last Monegasque to win a Monaco Grand Prix in Monte Carlo was Louis Chiron in 1931. In six previous attempts, including two when he



started on pole, the luckless Leclerc had never managed a podium finish. "It's the race that made me dream of becoming a Formula One driver one day," he said. "And it was such a difficult race emotionally because already 15 laps to the end you are just hoping nothing happens, already the emotions were coming." "I was thinking of my dad a lot more than I thought usually while driving -- obviously he's given everything for me to be here. It was our dream for me to race here and to win and so it's unbelievable." He added that he had difficulty seeing clearly because of tears during the closing laps. "Not now, Charles, I said to myself. Not now. I could feel it when I came out of the tunnel near the end and I was struggling to see because I was crying a little bit," he revealed. His father Herve died in 2017. "No words can explain. It's such a difficult race, I think the fact that twice I've started in pole position and we couldn't quite make it makes it even better in a way, it means a lot obviously."

## Newgarden Wins Second Straight Indianapolis 500



WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Josef Newgarden of Team Penske denied a late challenge from Mexican Pato O'Ward to win a thrilling and incident-packed Indianapolis 500 on Sunday, becoming the first back-to-back winner in 22 years. New Zealand's Scott Dixon finished third in the race which had been delayed by four hours due to heavy rain and lightning in the area. The crowd were rewarded for their patience during the storm delay with a dramatic finale to the race. O'Ward, whose best finish in the race was runner-up in 2022, looked to have timed his push perfectly, grabbing the lead in turn one on the final lap. But Newgarden powered back to pass him going into turn three and claim a record-extending 20th victory in the Indy 500 for Penske. Newgarden finished 0.341 ahead of Arrow McLaren's O'Ward and celebrated by jumping into the crowd. "There is no better way to win a race than that. I've got to give it up to Pato as well," Newgarden told race broadcasters NBC. "He's an incredibly clean driver. He could have easily won this race, too, but it just fell our way and I am so proud of everybody, proud of the whole team," he said. The last driver to win back-to-back in the fabled race at Indianapolis Motor Speedway was Brazilian Helio Castroneves, who triumphed in 2001 and 2002. O'Ward was distraught after again getting so close to the prize he has sought for so long. "It's hard to put it in words. I'm proud of the work that we did today. We recovered, we went back, we went forward, we went back," he said. "Some people were just driving like maniacs. We had so many near race enders and just so close again, so close," he said. "I put that car through things I never thought he was going to be able to do. Oh man, it's just so painful when you put so much into it and then two laps short, or two corners short," he added. Alexander Rossi of Arrow McLaren, had jostled with Newgarden for the lead but finished fourth with Spaniard Alex Palou of Chip Ganassi Racing in fifth.

## Team Effort Pushes Mavericks to 3-0 Lead Over Timberwolves

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - P.J. Washington broke a late tie with a 3-pointer, Daniel Gafford made big plays at both ends of the court down the stretch and the Dallas Mavericks outdueled the visiting Minnesota Timberwolves for a 116-107 victory in Game 3 of the Western Conference finals Sunday night to go up 3-0 in the best-of-seven series. The Mavericks can advance to the NBA Finals for the first time since winning the 2011 title when the clubs meet again Tuesday in Dallas for Game 4. Luka Doncic and Kyrie Irving each scored 33 points as the Mavericks shot 55.9 percent from the floor and 50 percent (14 of 28) from 3-point range. Anthony Edwards finished with 26 points, nine rebounds and nine assists for the Timberwolves, who attempted 14 fewer free throws than Dallas in the loss. After trailing by as many as 12 points in the first half, the Timberwolves drew even at 77-all on Edwards' basket with 4:51 remaining in the third quarter, the first of 10 ties in the next 13 minutes. Washington broke the last deadlock with his 3-pointer with 3:38 remaining to give the Mavericks a 107-104 lead. Doncic made it 109-105 on a short jumper with 2:16 remaining and Irving connected from the right corner for a six-point advantage. Getting additional playing time after backup center Dereck Lively II had to leave the game in the third quarter with a strained neck, Gafford blocked Mike Conley's layup attempt with 56.7 seconds left. Gafford then dunked a lab pass from Doncic despite being fouled. Gafford's free throw increased the lead to 114-105 with 34.8 seconds

remaining, effectively closing the door on the third-seeded Timberwolves. Doncic finished with seven rebounds, five assists and five steals. Washington chipped in with 16 points and eight rebounds, while Derrick Jones Jr. added 11 points.

Karl-Anthony Towns had 14 points and 11 rebounds for the Timberwolves. Conley had 16 points, Jaden McDaniels chipped in 15, Naz Reid scored 14 and Kyle Anderson finished with 10.

