

Iran Has Further Increased Its Stockpile of Uranium Enriched, According to a Confidential Report on Monday by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as It Has Increased 675.8 kilograms (1489.8 pounds) Since the Last Report by IAEA

# IRAN NEWS

A Report Released by State TV on Sunday Revealed That Ayatollah Mohammad Ali Al-e-Hashem, a Cleric on Board the Iranian President's Doomed Helicopter, Had Outlived the Other Passengers After the Fatal Crash on May 19

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### Strong Bonds Among Neighbors Will Lead to Expulsion of Outsiders From West Asia



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's Interim Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani says stronger bonds and ties among the neighboring states are the only way to expel foreigners from the West Asia region. Bagheri Kani made the remarks in a joint press conference with Omani Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr al-Busaidi, who arrived in Tehran on Monday to express his country's solidarity with Iran following the death of President Ebrahim Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian in a helicopter crash last week. "Today, we are consolidating friendly and fraternal relations and promoting multilateral ties with our neighbors," Bagheri Kani said. He added that the Islamic Republic is determined to prevent any gap in its cordial relations with the neighboring states. Bagheri Kani noted that he and the visiting Omani foreign minister discussed the Israeli regime's ongoing genocide in the Gaza Strip and stressed the need to make more serious efforts to end the crimes and send humanitarian aid to the war-stricken people of Palestine. Iran and Oman will promote cooperation in this regard, he said. The interim foreign minister thanked Omani authorities for their messages of condolences over the tragic incident in Iran and the participation of an Omani delegation in the memorial ceremonies. He noted that foreign policy had a special position in the doctrine of Raisi's administration which included the expansion of political ties with the neighboring countries and enhanced trade cooperation. Raisi, Amir-Abdollahian and six others were killed on May 19, when their helicopter crashed in foggy weather in the mountains near the northwestern border with Azerbaijan. Their bodies were found the following day after a massive search operation.



### Leader Says Majlis Manifestation of Religious Democracy Continuity in Iran

TEHRAN - Iran's 12th parliament has been inaugurated with a message from Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei. In his Monday message, the Leader stressed the importance of continuing and strengthening "religious democracy", describing it as a "big divine gift" to the Iranian nation. Ayatollah Khamenei said each member of the parliament is a representative of the entire nation which means that the main work of the lawmakers is to secure the country's national interests. The Leader also stressed that development plans should not be approved in an "extreme" way that surpasses the allocated budget. Ayatollah Khamenei called on the lawmakers to boost interaction with other branches of the government and pursue a correct collective attitude based on patience. He cautioned the lawmakers that their oath is not just a show but is real and will bring responsibility. Islamic lifestyle was another thing Ayatollah

Khamenei stressed which would get more significance in the arena of political challenges and legitimate competitions. He referred to the recent Iranian officials martyred as an example of those who observed the moral codes. The Leader of the Islamic Revolution described each lawmaker as a representative of the whole of Iran who must work for the interest of the whole country at a macrolevel approach and abandon those extravagant plans that are out of the country's construction capacity. The Leader also thanked the members of the previous legislature. In the inaugural session, which was attended by top Iranian officials and foreign guests, 290 lawmakers took oath. Elected members will serve for four years in the country's legislative body. New lawmakers were elected during two rounds of elections held on March 1 and May 10. The 11th parliament held its last session on May 21.

### Countering Israel Core of Foreign Policy; No Change in Palestine Support



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran says it will make no changes in its foreign policy regarding its unwavering support for Palestine and confronting the Israeli regime. Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani made the remarks at his weekly press conference in Tehran on Monday, as he once again expressed his condolences over the martyrdom of President Ebrahim Raisi, Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, and six of their companions in a helicopter crash on May 19. "Supporting Palestine and confronting the Zionist regime are among the main principles of Iran's foreign policy, derived from the Constitution and the guidelines of Leader [of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei]," he said. Despite the tragic incident of the death of President Raisi and his entourage, Iran's support for Palestine will not be stopped or disrupted, he added. He emphasized that Iran will continue its legal, diplomatic and international support for Palestine as a moral responsibility. Raisi, Amir-Abdollahian and six others were killed on May 19, when their helicopter crashed in foggy weather in the mountains near the northwestern border with Azerbaijan. Their bodies were found the following day after a massive search operation. The pair had defended the Palestinians' rights in regional and international meetings and appreciated their resilience against the Israeli occupation and its criminal war in the Gaza Strip over the past seven months. Kanaani renewed the international community's "legal and moral" responsibility vis-à-vis the Israeli regime's crimes in Gaza. He said the Zionist regime is violating international conventions, and the International Court of Justice has ordered an immediate end to the regime's military aggression on Gaza's southern city of Rafah. "There are all the necessary legal and international grounds to end the war, but it is obvious that what has happened [in Gaza] over the recent months was the outcome of the support of certain countries, especially the United States for the Zionist regime," he added.

### Yemen's Houthis Say They Attack Three Ships, Two U.S. Destroyers



SANAA (Dispatches) - Yemen's Houthis said on Monday they launched attacks on three ships in the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea, and two U.S. destroyers in the Red Sea. The group, which describes its attacks as acts of solidarity with Palestinians in Israel's war in Gaza, said the ships were the *Larego Desert* and the *MSC Mechela* in the Indian Ocean, and the *Minerva Lisa* in the Red Sea. It did not name the destroyers. There was no immediate confirmation from shipping companies or the U.S. military of any attacks in those areas. The Houthis' military spokesperson, Yahya Saree, did not specify when the attacks took place, but said in a televised speech the group had used missiles against the ships and drones against the U.S. destroyers. The group has launched repeated drone and missile strikes in the Red Sea region since November, later expanding to the Indian Ocean. It has said it will attack any ships sailing towards Israeli ports, even in the Mediterranean Sea. Its attacks have forced shippers to re-route cargo to longer and more expensive journeys around southern Africa and stoked fears of the Israel-Hamas war spreading and destabilising the Middle East. The United States and Britain have carried out strikes against Houthi targets in retaliation for their attacks on vessels. Meanwhile Houthi group on Sunday unilaterally released 113 detainees in Sanaa, the Houthi-held capital, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). "We are pleased to see that humanitarian considerations are being prioritized, particularly for the families eagerly awaiting the return of their loved ones, especially with the approach of the Eid al-Adha celebrations in a few weeks," said Daphnee Maret, the ICRC's head of delegation in Yemen. "We hope this paves the way for further releases," Maret added.

### World Horrified by Israel's Attack That Set Ablaze Rafah Tent Camp

GAZA (Dispatches) - The Israeli military has carried out yet another heinous attack on the Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip. In an overnight airstrike on a tent camp in a designated safe zone in Rafah, the military killed dozens of people. The Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) said the dead included women and children, with many "burned alive" inside their tents. Gaza's civil defense agency said the airstrike set off a fire that tore through a displacement center in northwestern Rafah. "We saw charred bodies and dismembered limbs ... We also saw cases of amputations, wounded children, women and the elderly," said agency official Mohammad al-Mughayyir. The horrifying news sent shock waves through the globe, prompting world leaders to call for the immediate implementation of a World Court ruling to halt the regime's invasion of the last refuge of Palestinians in Gaza. Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani condemned the brutal massacre of the displaced Palestinians, calling for a practical response and strong condemnation from the international community. "It is not surprising that the terrorist regime of Israel, which one day bombs the lines of refugees waiting for humanitarian aid and another day turns hospitals into blood and dust, has this time carried out a massive massacre of civilians, mostly women and children, by attacking the tents of Palestinian refugees in Rafah," he said in a message on X. The United Nations Palestinian refugee agency (UNRWA) said in a message on X that the images from Rafah are yet another testament that Gaza is "hell on earth." The Palestinian Authority condemned the regime's military for "deliberately targeting civilians." "The perpetration of this heinous massacre by the Israeli occupation forces is a challenge to all international legitimacy resolutions," the presidency said in a Monday statement. Senior Hamas official Sami Abu Zuhri called the attack a "massacre" saying the United States is responsible for aiding the regime. Qatar said the attack is a grave violation of international laws that will aggravate the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. The attack

could hinder mediation efforts to reach a ceasefire in Gaza, according to a foreign ministry statement. Qatar, alongside the US and Egypt, has been engaged in months of talks aimed at securing a ceasefire in Gaza. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said his country would do "everything possible" to hold "barbaric" head of the regime, Benjamin Netanyahu, to account over the deadly strikes. "We will do everything possible to hold these barbarians and murderers accountable who have nothing to do with humanity." Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates joined the chorus of condemnations, calling on the international community to intervene immediately. Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan warned that the humanitarian situation in Gaza is completely unacceptable. Jordan also condemned the "ongoing war crimes committed by Israeli occupation forces in Gaza." "This act defies the rulings of the International Court of Justice and constitutes a severe violation of international law and international humanitarian law," the foreign ministry said. French President Emmanuel Macron said he was outraged over the regime's strikes against displaced Palestinians. "These operations must stop. There are no safe areas in Rafah for Palestinian civilians," Macron said on X in English. He called "for full respect for international law and an immediate ceasefire." "The European Union's foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said he was "horrified" by deadly strikes on the tented camp. "Horrified by news coming out of Rafah on Israeli strikes killing dozens of displaced persons, including small children. I condemn this in the strongest terms." He said Tel Aviv must abide by the ICJ ruling to stop its offensive in Rafah. Egypt also condemned the "deliberate bombardment" of the camp, calling on Israel to "implement the measures ordered by the International Court of Justice (ICJ)." Spain's Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares said the bombing of Rafah was "one more day with innocent Palestinian civilians being killed."



### Enhancing Iran-Cuba Ties Beneficial for Independent States



TEHRAN (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 Raisi 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



## Raisi Determined to Boost Oil Exports, Economic Growth

TEHRAN (Shana) – Oil Minister Javad Owji has said that rising oil production and exports, higher investments in oil industry projects, completing half-finished projects, helping to achieve economic growth and paying attention to environmental issues were among the main demands of the late president, Ibrahim Raisi. Speaking at a ceremony to commemorate the memory of Ayatollah Raisi; the minister of petroleum said that over less than three years that Raisi headed the 13th administration many efforts were made by the oil industry to achieve the status it deserves. As far as environmental issues are concerned, the late president insisted that the petroleum ministry should do its best to gather associated gases, halting gas flares, Owji said. According to him, Raisi visited oil industry installations at least 10 times during his nearly 3 years in office and visited the petroleum ministry headquarters 4 times, pursuing the oil industry projects on a weekly basis, being fully aware of oil industry developments. During his visits to the oil-rich southern provinces of Bushehr and Khuzestan, the late president got worried when he saw burning gases of flares, insisting on accelerating gathering gases so that their damage to environment comes to a halt, the minister of petroleum said, adding based on an ongoing plan, nearly all gas flares will be removed in the next two years.

## Robust Foundation Shielding Islamic Republic



TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Foreign Minister of Sudan Hosein Awad lauded the Islamic Republic of Iran's sturdy and effective structure, which he said is protecting Iran against serious and major upheavals. In a meeting with Acting President of Iran Mohammad Mokhber, held in Tehran on Sunday, the Sudanese foreign minister conveyed the condolences and solidarity of the president, government and people of Sudan with the nation and government of Iran over the loss of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and his entourage in a recent helicopter crash. Awad stated that the relations between Iran and Sudan are based on Islamic and humanitarian principles and friendship between the two nations. He also described the strong and efficient structure of the Islamic Republic of Iran system as a shield that protects this system against big and heavy events, the president's website reported. For his part, Mokhber appreciated the expression of sympathy and solidarity of the government and people of Sudan with Iran. Highlighting the effective role of the late Iranian president and foreign minister in promoting relations with the Islamic and aligned countries, Mokhber said, "This approach will continue as the basic strategy of the Islamic Republic of Iran." The acting president also described attention to the concerns of Muslims and Islamic countries as a strategy of Iran, adding, "We will not hesitate to provide any help for the independence, progress and peace of the people of Sudan."

## Iran-EU Trade Soars 8% in Q1 2024

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The trade between Iran and the European Union (EU)'s member states reached €1.276 billion in the first three months of 2024, registering an eight percent growth year on year, according to the data released by the European Union's statistics office Eurostat. Based on the Eurostat data, the trade between the two sides stood at €1.18 billion in the previous year's first three months. As reported, the EU's exports to Iran from January to March 2024 stood at €1.06 billion, registering an increase of 10 percent compared to the same period of the previous year when the EU exports to Iran were reported to be €958 million. The European Union's imports from Iran also reached €216 million in the first quarter of 2024 with a three percent decrease compared to the same period last year. In the same quarter of the previous year, €220 million of goods were imported from Iran. As previously announced by Eurostat, the value of trade between Iran and the European Union (EU)'s member states reached €4.732 billion in 2023. The trade between the two sides fell nine percent in 2023 in comparison to the preceding

year when the figure stood at €5.244 billion. As reported, the EU's exports to Iran from January to December 2023 stood at €3.993 billion, registering a decrease of six percent compared to the same period of 2022 when the EU's exports to Iran were reported to be €4.187 billion. The European Union's imports from Iran also reached €799 million in 2023 with a 24 percent decrease compared to 2022. EU imported €1.057 billion of goods from Iran in January-December 2022. According to Eurostat, Germany was Iran's top trade partner in Europe in 2023. The country accounted for 36 percent of the Iran-EU total trade in 2023. The total trade between Iran and Germany reached €1.432 billion last year. Germany exported €1.199 billion of goods to Iran and imported €233 million from Iran. German exports to Iran decreased by 24 percent and imports by 16 percent, year on year. Italy and the Netherlands were the second and third biggest European trade partners of the Islamic Republic in the previous year.

## Transit of Goods Up by 56%

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - The transit of foreign goods through Iran has increased by 56.5 percent in the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-May 20) compared to the same period last year, according to the latest report by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA). The IRICA reported on Sunday that over 3.6 million metric tons (mt) of goods were transited through Iran in the mentioned two months. Parvizkhan customs on Iran's western borders with the Iraqi Kurdistan Region ranked first by registering 1.07 mt of commodities in the two-month period, which accounted for 29.5 percent of the foreign transit. Shahid Rajaei customs in the southern country recorded the second-largest foreign transit in the period, registering 893,000 mt of goods. Also, 474,000 mt of the commodities went through Bashmaq customs which connects Iran to Iraq, coming third in this regard. During this period, the largest increase in foreign transit went to the customs of Piranshahr, Sarakhs, and Parvizkhan, marking a rise of 726 percent, 294 percent, and 238 percent, respectively. As previously announced by IRICA, 17.79 million tons of commodities were transited through the country in the past

Iranian calendar year 1402. Transit of commodities through Iran increased by 36.52 percent during the previous year compared to the preceding year. As stated by Transport and Urban Development Minister Mehرداد Bazrpash, the "Iran Way" initiative offered by the current Iranian government, lets the neighboring countries use Iran as a route or a solution that facilitates their access to international waters. Iran Way initiative is the gateway to Iran's land of transit opportunities, the minister has underlined. The policy of paying attention to neighbors and developing political and economic relations with neighboring countries in the current government, increasing attention to road and rail routes in the world, and the efforts and cooperation of transportation and trade-related organizations in establishing or activating corridors through the country has led to significant growth in transit of goods through Iran. Iran is one of the countries with a special status in trade and transit relations due to its strategic location and special geography, as the country is the passage of several important international corridors.



## Iran Sticks to Policy of Friendship With Pakistan



TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Reaffirming Iran's commitment to the promotion of ties with Pakistan, Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Hossein Baqeri 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 Amirabdollahian. 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.

## Mashhad, Kuwait Ready to Bolster Ties



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Ambassador of the Kuwait to Tehran Badr Abdullah al-Munikh has said that Mashhad has much potential to bolster ties, and Kuwait and Tehran should provide grounds for wider cooperation.

Al-Munikh made the remarks on Sunday in his visit with Khorasan Razavi Governor General Yaqub Ali Nazari.

He expressed his condolences over the martyrdom of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, and their companions.

Al-Munikh added that there are several commonalities between Kuwait and Iran that can be used to expand ties between the two neighboring countries.

Nazari for his part said that Iran's policy is to expand relations with the neighboring countries in all fields.

Iran and Kuwait have many common interests due to their proximity and religious commonalities, he added, as saying that both countries must provide grounds to expand and strengthen relationships.

Nazari termed pilgrimage, tourism, and medical tourism as Mashhad potential among the fields to expand relations between Iran and Kuwait, adding that Khorasan Razavi province is ready to provide the field for expanding relations in various fields.

He continued that industrial pharmaceutical production, medical equipment, mineral industries, and saffron and pistachio products are important sectors in which Razavi Khorasan has good potential.

## Iraq to Open Sea Border Crossing for Arbaeen Pilgrims

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iraqi Interior Minister Abdul Amir Al-Shammari says his country is planning to add a new sea border crossing from Abu Flous Port in Basra to Iran's Khorramshahr to facilitate Arbaeen pilgrims. Al-Shammari said on Sunday night that Iraqi prime minister and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces have agreed to the plan while holding an Arbaeen security meeting with the presence of a number of commanders and members of the service and security committees. He also said that the number of foreign pilgrims who entered the country last year reached about five million, and is expected to increase further, which requires more preparation in order to successfully hold this eternal occasion and efforts for all security, service and land crossings requirements. Al-Shammari emphasized that Arbaeen is one of the most important religious ceremonies the world pays special attention to. Every year, millions of people from across the world flock to the Iraqi city of Karbala for Arbaeen that marks the 40th day since the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein (AS), the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad, who along with 72 of his companions was martyred by a tyrant ruler in 680 AD.

## Milei Swaps Cabinet Chief in Major Gov't Shakeup

BUENOS AIRES (Dispatches) - In the first cabinet shakeup of his five-month-old administration, Argentine President Javier Milei accepted the resignation of cabinet chief Nicolas Posse amid strains over major economic reforms pitched by the government. Posse will be replaced by current Interior Minister Guillermo Franco, according to a government statement. The cabinet shuffle comes at an especially delicate moment for Milei, a far-right libertarian economist, as his signature reform bill is facing fresh obstacles in Congress and a market rally for government bonds and the local currency appears to be stalling. The next government role for the outgoing cabinet chief will be announced in the coming days, the statement added. Posse was a key part of the team involved in debt talks with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), along with Economy Minister Luis Caputo. The economic reforms pushed by Milei include plans to privatize state companies, along with other austerity measures aimed at reversing a prolonged economic crisis marked by inflation running at close to 300%.



# IRAN NEWS

## Kremlin Condemns NATO Boss's Appeal for Ukraine to Use Western Arms in Russia



MOSCOW (Dispatches) - The Kremlin scolded NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg for suggesting alliance members should let Ukraine strike deep into Russia with Western weapons, and said it was clear that NATO was in a direct confrontation with Russia. Stoltenberg told The Economist that NATO members supplying weapons to Ukraine should end their prohibition on using them to strike military targets in Russia. "NATO is increasing the degree of escalation," Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov told Russian daily Izvestia when asked about Stoltenberg's remarks. "NATO is flirting with military rhetoric and falling into military escalation," Peskov said, adding that the Russian military knew what to do. When asked if NATO was approaching a direct confrontation with Russia, Peskov said: "They are not getting close; they are in it." Russian President Vladimir Putin has repeatedly warned the West that it is risking a global war over Ukraine and that a direct conflict between Russia and NATO would mean the planet was one step away from World War Three. Russian officials say Ukrainian attacks deep inside Russia, including on civilian areas and even parts of Russia's nuclear defences, are directly escalatory. Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 touched off the worst breakdown in relations between Russia and the West since the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. Russia is now advancing along the front line in Ukraine. The United States has repeatedly said that it does not encourage Ukraine to strike inside Russia, though Ukraine has been lobbying hard to do so. The Economist said that Stoltenberg's remarks were clearly aimed at U.S. President Joe Biden, who has resisted allowing Ukraine to strike with U.S. weapons inside Russia.

## Egypt Jails Former Presidential Hopeful for One Year With Labor



CAIRO (Dispatches) - An Egyptian court sentenced former presidential hopeful Ahmed Tantawy on Monday to one year in prison with labour on charges of forging election documents, and barred him from standing in elections for the next five years, his lawyer Khaled Ali said. Tantawy was the most prominent politician to challenge President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi as he sought a third term last year. Tantawy halted his campaign saying state-linked groups had impeded him from gathering the required number of public endorsements to register as a candidate, and that dozens of his family members and allies had been arrested. Authorities denied foul play, and charged him with violations linked to his campaign's move to distribute their own copies of endorsement forms. Tantawy was found guilty of the charges in a lower court in February and given a suspended sentence that was upheld by on Monday. He was detained in court and transferred to a correctional facility, joining more than 20 members of his campaign who were also sentenced in the case, Ali said. He was also ordered to pay a fine of 20,000 Egyptian pounds (\$424) and barred from running in local, parliamentary or presidential elections for five years. "This is a political liquidation and a targeting of the person of Ahmed Tantawy," Rasha Qandeel, Tantawy's wife and spokesperson for his political movement, told Reuters. Ali said Tantawy had the right to appeal but that it could take up to two months to launch the appeal process. Sisi was declared winner of the December election with just under 90% of votes cast, securing a third term that runs to 2030.

## Israeli Attack on Rafah Tent Camp Prompts Int'l Outcry

CAIRO (Dispatches) - An Israeli airstrike triggered a fire that killed 45 people in a tent camp in the Gaza city of Rafah, officials said on Monday, prompting an outcry from global leaders who urged the implementation of a World Court order to halt Israel's assault. Palestinian families rushed to hospitals to prepare their dead for burial after a strike late on Sunday night set tents and rickety metal shelters ablaze. Israel's military, which is trying to eliminate Hamas in Gaza, said it was investigating reports that a strike it carried out against commanders of the Islamist militant group in Rafah had caused the fire. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the strike had not been intended to cause civilian casualties. "In Rafah, we already evacuated about 1 million non-combatant residents and despite our utmost effort not to harm non-combatants, something unfortunately went tragically wrong," he said in a speech in parliament that was interrupted by shouting from opposition lawmakers. Survivors said families were preparing to sleep when the strike hit the Tel Al-Sultan neighbourhood where thousands were sheltering after Israeli forces began a ground offensive in the east of Rafah over two weeks ago. "We were praying... and we were getting our children's beds ready to sleep. There was nothing unusual, then we heard a very loud noise, and fire erupted around us," said Umm Mohamed Al-Attar, a Palestinian mother in a red headscarf. "All the children started screaming... The sound was terrifying; we felt like the metal was about to collapse on us, and shrapnel fell into the rooms." Video footage obtained by Reuters showed a fire raging in the darkness and people screaming in panic. A group of young men tried to haul away sheets of corrugated iron and a hose from a single fire truck began to douse the flames. More than half of the dead were women, children, and elderly people, health officials in Hamas-run Gaza said, adding that the death toll was likely to rise from people with severe burns. Medics later said an Israeli airstrike on Monday on a house in Rafah had killed seven

Palestinians, with several others wounded. Israel's military said Sunday's strike, based on "precise intelligence", had eliminated Hamas' chief of staff for the second and larger Palestinian territory, the West Bank, plus another official behind deadly attacks on Israelis. That followed the interception of eight rockets fired towards Israel from the Rafah area in Gaza's southern tip. Israel has kept up its offensive despite a ruling by the top U.N. court on Friday ordering it to stop, saying the court's ruling grants it some scope for military action there. The court also reiterated calls for the immediate and unconditional release of hostages held in Gaza by Hamas. The U.S. urged Israel to take more care to protect civilians, but stopped short of calling for a halt to the Rafah incursion. "Israel has a right to go after Hamas, and we understand this strike killed two senior Hamas terrorists who are responsible for attacks against Israeli civilians," a National Security Council spokesperson said. "But as we've been clear, Israel must take every precaution possible to protect civilians." French President Emmanuel Macron said he was "outraged" over Israel's latest attacks. "These operations must stop. There are no safe areas in Rafah for Palestinian civilians," he said on X. Several thousand demonstrators later gathered in Paris to protest against the offensive in Gaza. German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock and the EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said the International Court of Justice ruling must be respected. "International humanitarian law applies for all, also for Israel's conduct of the war," Baerbock said. Canada's government said it was "horrified" by the deadly airstrike in Rafah, and called for an immediate ceasefire. "Canada does not support an Israeli military operation in Rafah," Foreign Minister Melanie Joly said in a post on X. "This level of human suffering must come to an end." Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates also condemned the Israeli attack and Qatar said the Rafah strike could hinder efforts to mediate a ceasefire and hostage exchange.

## Macron Calls the Rise of Far-Right Parties an "Ill Wind" for Europe



PARIS (Dispatches) - France's President Emmanuel Macron on Monday raised the alarm over the "ill wind" of the rise of the far right in European politics, during a state visit to Germany ahead of key EU elections. Macron noted a "fascination with authoritarian regimes" in Europe, singling out Viktor Orban's government in Hungary for criticism. "Everywhere in our democracies these ideas thrive, pushed by the extremes and in particular the far right," Macron said in a speech in the eastern city of Dresden, a bastion of support for Germany's far right. "This ill wind is blowing in Europe, so let us wake up," he said in front of the city's famous Frauenkirche church. Macron's trip comes two weeks ahead of European Union elections in which polls are indicating his centrist coalition is trailing the far right. It could even struggle to reach a third-place finish. Macron, undertaking the first state visit by a French president to Germany in a quarter of a century, made a plea for the defence of democracy against nationalist forces as he arrived on Sunday. In Germany too, all three parties in Chancellor Olaf Scholz's coalition are polling behind the far-right AfD in surveys, despite a series of scandals embroiling the anti-immigration party. "Europe is not just a place where we give ourselves common rules, it is a set of values," Macron said. "We must find the strength and commitment to defend it everywhere," he added. Macron also underlined the threat posed by Russian aggression since the invasion of Ukraine, saying Europeans had a "new responsibility" to guarantee peace. Without supporting Ukraine and stopping Russia from imposing the "law of

the strongest" on the battlefield, there would be no peace in Europe, Macron said. "In Ukraine, it is your security, our peace that is at stake," Macron told the Dresden audience. And Europe, he said, must think about "its own defence and security". The French president repeated a warning that "our Europe could die". Earlier, Macron and his wife Brigitte Macron together with the German presidential couple visited the Holocaust memorial in Berlin that commemorates the six million Jews murdered by the Nazis. Accompanying them was Nazi hunter Serge Klarsfeld and his German wife Beate, who underlined a resurgence of anti-Semitism, fuelled by Israel's offensive in Gaza following Hamas' attack on its territory. "It's very good that the French president is meeting the German president before this monument, especially at a tragic time for the global Jewish community," said Klarsfeld. The Klarsfelds have faced controversy lately over comments in favour of far-right leader Marine Le Pen, whom they praise for her engagement against anti-Semitism as opposed to her father Jean-Marie Le Pen. Macron on Sunday labelled Le Pen's National Rally a "threat to Europe", stressing that he does not see them as "just another party". The French president however skirted the issue as he presented the Klarsfelds with honours at the French embassy in Berlin to acknowledge their work "opening eyes" to the past and confronting crimes committed under the Nazis. Macron was on Tuesday travel to Muenster in western Germany, where he would be presented with the Westphalian Peace Prize.

## North Korea Condemns Denuclearization Call at Neighbors' Summit in Seoul

SEOUL (Dispatches) - North Korea condemned China, Japan and South Korea for committing to denuclearize the Korean peninsula, describing their joint declaration after a rare summit in Seoul as a "grave political provocation" that violates its sovereignty. The North has given notice of its plans to launch a rocket by June 4 to deploy a satellite, prompting the three countries to urge a halt to the move that would aid the isolated nation's ability to deliver a nuclear strike. At their first three-way summit in Seoul since 2019, the three countries sought to co-operate on security, reiterating positions on regional peace and stability and denuclearization of the peninsula, they said in a joint statement. Such discussion is an "insult never to be pardoned and a declaration of war against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)," however, a spokesman for North Korea's foreign ministry said in a swift riposte. "To discuss the denuclearization ... today constitutes a grave political provocation and sovereignty violation," the unidentified spokesman said in the statement reported by the North's state media. Such a move denies the North's inviolable sovereignty and constitution reflecting the unanimous will of all the Korean people, he added. Chinese Premier Li Qiang did not single out North Korea for criticism, but rather called on all parties to reduce tension. While South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida urged Pyongyang to scrap its plans to launch a second spy satellite into orbit, Li made no mention of the expected launch. China angered North Korea when it signed on to UN Security Council resolutions sanctioning Pyongyang's nuclear weapons and missile program from 2006 to 2017, but in recent years Beijing has joined Russia in blocking new sanctions and calling for existing measures to be eased.

## Russia to Build Central Asia's First Nuclear Power Plant in Uzbekistan

TASHKENT (Dispatches) - Russia will build a small nuclear power plant in Uzbekistan, the first such project in post-Soviet Central Asia, Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev said at a meeting with visiting Russian President Vladimir Putin. The nuclear deal, if implemented, will showcase Russia's ability to export not only energy, but also high-tech products to new Asian markets, at a time when the West is increasing pressure on it through sanctions. Putin said Russia would put \$400 million into a joint investment fund of \$500 million to finance projects in Uzbekistan. Mirziyoyev also said Tashkent was interested in buying more oil and gas from Russia, a reversal of decades-long practice where Moscow imported hydrocarbons from Central Asia. The Uzbek president described Putin's visit as "historic". "It heralds the beginning of a new age in the comprehensive strategic partnership and alliance relations between our countries," he said. Putin also called Tashkent Moscow's "strategic partner and reliable ally". According to documents published by the Kremlin, Russian state nuclear firm Rosatom will build up to six nuclear reactors with a capacity of 55 megawatts each in Uzbekistan, a much smaller-scale project than the 2.4 gigawatts one agreed in 2018 which remains to be finalised. There are no nuclear power plants in



any of the five ex-Soviet Central Asian republics, although Uzbekistan and its neighbour Kazakhstan, both uranium producers, have long said their growing economies needed them. The Kazakh project, however, can only move ahead after a national referendum which has not yet been scheduled. "Nearly all the leading countries of the world ensure their energy security and sustainable development with the help of nuclear energy," Mirziyoyev said. Taking advantage of Russia's campaign to redirect its gas exports to Asia amid a rift with the West over Ukraine, Uzbekistan last October started importing Russian natural gas via the same pipeline which had previously pumped it in the reverse direction. Although its own gas production remains substantial at about 50 billion cubic metres a year, Uzbekistan struggles to fully meet domestic demand, and Russian supplies have allowed it to avert an energy crisis. "Gas exports are running well ahead of schedule and we are ready to increase their volume if needed," Putin said. According to Mirziyoyev, Tashkent is also keen to increase imports of Russian oil. The two leaders also said their governments were working on large projects in mining, metals, and chemicals. Uzbekistan, whose economy depends heavily on remittances from migrant labourers working in Russia, has maintained close ties with Moscow after it invaded Ukraine in 2022.



## Paris Darling Nadal Exits French Open in Farewell-Like Defeat

PARIS (Dispatches) - Rafael Nadal exited what could be his last French Open to an outpouring of love and support with a first-round defeat by Alexander Zverev, wishing to be back at Roland Garros for the Paris 2024 Olympics. "I hope to see you again, but I don't know," Nadal told an ecstatic crowd after his straight-sets loss on Monday. "There's a big percentage I will not be back here but I am not 100% sure. I hope to be back on this court for the Olympics, that motivates me." It will be the third time since his debut at Roland Garros in 2005, that Nadal, whose body has been martyred by 23 years of professional tennis and who left the tournament with a crushed foot after his record-improving 14th title two years ago, does not get to celebrate his June 3 birthday in Paris. The French, who tend to arrive on court Philippe Chatrier fashionably late on the back of a long lunch, skipped coffee and digestif to fill the arena before the king, racket in hand as usual, stepped onto the court to

deafening roars. Spain's Nadal stuck to his routine, avoiding the lines and crossing them with his right foot, sprinting to the baseline during warm-up and positioning his two bottles diagonally aimed at the court. On a rainy day in Paris, organisers closed the roof, adding to the intimacy of the moment. On a court he knows like no one else, Nadal struggled to find his mark early on, netting a routine drop shot and serving a double fault to give Zverev the opening game. The German, who after winning the Rome Masters was the worst possible draw for Nadal, kept his foot on the gas pedal to take the first set even if the Mallorcan showed glimpses of his best with a couple of spinning forehand winners down the line. As soon as Zverev eased the pressure, however, Nadal converted his first break point to take a 3-2 lead in the second set. "Rafa! Rafa!" went the crowd, again, as world number ones Iga Swiatek and Novak Djokovic, as well as fellow Spaniard Carlos Alcaraz, joined the party.

## Emery Signs New Five-Year Contract at Aston Villa



LONDON (AFP) - Aston Villa manager Unai Emery has signed a new five-year contract, the Premier League club announced Monday. The Spaniard has been rewarded after guiding the Birmingham club to a fourth-placed finish and Champions League qualification last season. Emery, 52, has transformed Villa's fortunes since arriving in October 2022 with the team just three points above the relegation zone. "I am very happy to take this step (signing a new contract) and the responsibility of leading this club," Emery told Villa's website. "Since I came to Villa with (co-owner) Wes (Edens) and (chairman) Nassef (Sawiris) we found always the best environment and structure to develop a project with the highest ambition. "There's a great chemistry in Aston Villa and the element of the fans' support also makes the difference to feel like home. We are really excited to continue this journey with no limits to our dreams." Villa chairman Sawiris added: "We are building something special here at Aston Villa with Unai at its core and we are delighted that he has signed a new deal with the club until 2029. "As we move into our historic, 150th anniversary year, there is a lot to look forward to with Unai at the helm." Emery, is a four-time Europa League winner following spells with Spanish clubs Sevilla and Villarreal. He lifted the Ligue 1 trophy at Paris Saint-Germain and also spent a year in charge of Arsenal from 2018-19.

## Celtics Complete Sweep of Pacers, Punch Ticket to Finals

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Derrick White drained a tiebreaking corner 3-pointer with 45 seconds left in regulation and the Boston Celtics finished off a four-game sweep of the Indiana Pacers in the Eastern Conference finals with a 105-102 victory at Indianapolis. Jaylen Brown scored 29 points and Jayson Tatum added 26 points, 13 rebounds and eight assists as the top-seeded Celtics landed a spot in the NBA Finals for the second time in the past three seasons. Andrew Nembhard had 24 points and a playoff career-high 10 assists for the sixth-seeded Pacers. Boston overcame a nine-point deficit in the fourth-quarter while once again playing better basketball down the stretch. A defensive breakdown by the Pacers left White standing alone in the right corner on the decisive shot. Brown, who was named the MVP of the series, spotted him and got him the ball, and White's shot swished through the net. Nembhard missed a 3-pointer with 33.6 seconds left and Tatum got the rebound. Indiana decided not to foul, and Tatum missed a 3-pointer with 8.3 seconds



remaining. But Jrue Holiday collected the offensive rebound with 4.7 seconds left, and the Celtics ran out the clock. It was Boston's second straight comeback win in Indianapolis. The Celtics overcame an eight-point deficit with 2:38 left in Game 3 to post a 114-111 victory. Holiday had 17 points and nine rebounds on Monday and White added 16 points, five steals and three blocked shots for the Celtics, who will face either the Dallas Mavericks or Minnesota Timberwolves in the Finals. Pascal Siakam had 19 points and 10 rebounds and T.J. McConnell added 15 points for Indiana. Aaron Nesmith scored 14 points and Obi Toppin added 12. Pacers star Tyrese Haliburton (hamstring) missed his second straight game. The Celtics shot 44.9 percent from the field, including 14 of 44 from 3-point range. Indiana made 46 percent of its shot attempts and was 10 of 29 from behind the arc. McConnell scored six points in 64 seconds early in the fourth quarter to give the Pacers an 89-82 lead. A three-point play by Nembhard made it 94-85 with 8:57 remaining.

## Spanish Court Orders FIFA, UEFA to Halt Opposition to Super League



MADRID (Dispatches) - A Spanish judge ordered soccer ruling bodies FIFA and UEFA to halt their opposition to a parallel European competition known as the European Super League (ESL), ruling they were practicing anticompetitive behavior and abusing their dominant position. Judge Sofia Gil Garcia ruled that the governing bodies violated European Union law by banning clubs from participating in a proposed new professional soccer championship, a court statement said on Monday. In the ruling, Gil Garcia also ordered FIFA and UEFA to immediately reverse any anticompetitive actions committed in the past. The case was brought by A22 Sports Management, the sports development company behind the plan to create the ESL, against the Spanish Soccer Federation, Spain's La Liga, UEFA and FIFA, who had blocked the ESL. "The era of the monopoly is now definitively over," A22 CEO Bernd Reichart said in a statement after the ruling, calling it "an important step towards a truly competitive and sustainable club football landscape in Europe". Reichart added that UEFA had stifled innovation for decades and clubs "should not have to fear threats of sanctions simply for having ideas and conversations". Gil Garcia's ruling followed a similar decision by the European Court of Justice in December. Both La Liga and UEFA insisted the ruling did not explicitly support the creation of the Super League. "The judgment does not give third parties the right to develop competitions without authorisation and does not concern any future project or indeed any modified version of an existing project," UEFA said in a statement.

## Germany Confident They Are Euro 2024 Title Contenders

BLANKENHAIN (Dispatches) - Germany's victories over France and Netherlands in March showed the Euro 2024 hosts have every right to consider themselves among the title favorites, Germany sports director Rudi Voller said on Monday. At the start of a short training camp in Thuringia before moving to their tournament base camp in Bavaria next week, Voller told a news conference the Germans had shown signs of real improvement. "A key moment in our development was the last two (friendly) matches in March. We realised that after three and half months (under Nagelsmann) we had two convincing wins and in the inner circle there was more optimism," Voller said. "Unbelievable optimism. We don't need to go crazy that now everything works but we should have a measure of optimism," he said, sitting next to the Germany coach. The three-times European champions have failed to make any impact in international tournaments since their 2014 World Cup win and are desperate for a strong showing in front of their own fans. They crashed out in the first round of the last two World Cups and did not make it past the round of 16 in the last European Championship held in 2021. "Through those two international matches we want to be part of the group that are there until the end. We have a home tournament. We should have the optimism to go very far and if it is Berlin (for the final) in the end even better," Voller said. Germany's preliminary squad is far from complete for their first training camp with players from domestic double winners Bayer Leverkusen arriving in a few

days. Germany internationals competing in the Champions League final for Real Madrid and Borussia Dortmund will join them next week. While Voller and German FA President Bernd Neundorff are eyeing the title, coach Julian Nagelsmann said the team also wanted to pay back fans with exciting football. The Germans, who open the June 14-July 14 tournament against Scotland, also face Hungary and

Switzerland in Group A. They have two friendlies before the tournament, against Ukraine on June 3 and Greece on June 7. "We want to show football that's fun," Nagelsmann said. "Tickets cost money. You have to pay back with a football that is fun, that is entertaining. If we are excited we will excite the fans." More than 15,000 watched their first open training later on Monday.

