


Iranian Foreign Ministry Summoned China's Ambassador to Tehran Cong Peiwu to Protest Beijing's Support for "Baseless Claims" About Three Iranian Islands in the Persian Gulf

# IRAN NEWS

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### Iran an Invincible Power, Any Military Option Against It Off the Table



TEHRAN (PressTV) - The chief commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) says Iran is now an invincible power, and that any possible military option against the country is null and off the table. "Today, the hypothesis about the possibility of war against the Islamic Republic of Iran and the (military) options on the table have been disproved," Major General Hossein Salami said in a meeting with the representatives of Basij (voluntary forces) in the Iranian universities. He said the proof of the impossibility of war is that Iran is proceeding with economic developments regardless of the political and military issues, and enthusiasm for investment in the country has grown to the highest level. He added that Iran has turned into an invincible power in the world which is determined to achieve its goals. The IRGC chief commander said the enemies have resorted to various policies and strategies to make Iran surrender and compromise, however, the Islamic Republic's independence has disrupted the global balance of power. After Iran achieved a final victory in the eight-year imposed war in 1980-88, the enemies hatched various plots in different forms and models, he noted. Salami emphasized that enemies' sanctions, cultural invasion, seditions and psychological media warfare against Iran continued but the country has managed to proceed down the path of progress. Elsewhere in his remarks, Salami said Iran carried out its "honorable" retaliatory operation against Israel - dubbed Operation True Promise - in April knowing that it was countering "a political power beyond just the Israeli regime." "Many countries, including Britain, sought to dissuade Iran from carrying out the missile attack against Israel as they were all concerned about the regime, he added. "However, we were prepared for all the enemy's possible scenarios and [ways] to overcome them. This is a sign of our power," the IRGC chief commander pointed out. By conducting the military operation, he said, Iran managed to bring the war into the enemy's territory and overcome it. On April 1, the Israeli regime carried out terrorist airstrikes on the consular section of Iran's embassy in the Syrian capital Damascus, which killed two IRGC generals, Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Zahedi and General Mohammad Hadi Haji Rahimi, as well as five of their accompanying officers.

### Russia Envoy Warns Any IAEA's Anti-Iran Resolution Can Deteriorate Situation



TEHRAN (PressTV) - A senior Russian diplomat says any resolution by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) against Iran can seriously deteriorate the situation. In a post on his X account on Sunday, Mikhail Ulyanov, Russia's permanent representative to Vienna-based international organizations, warned against the repercussions of a resolution against Iran ahead of the regular meeting of the IAEA's Board of Governors. "The June session of the IAEA Board of Governors will start tomorrow. It doesn't promise to be quiet," Ulyanov wrote. He expressed hope that no resolution against Iran will be approved during the session. "Such a resolution by definition can't bring positive results but can seriously deteriorate the situation," the Russian envoy emphasized. The June session of the #IAEA Board of Governors will start tomorrow. It doesn't promise to be quiet. An anti-Iranian resolution can be tabled. Hopefully it will not happen. Such a resolution by definition can't bring positive results but can seriously deteriorate the situation. Board discussions are expected to include, among other issues: verification and monitoring in the Islamic Republic of Iran in light of United Nations Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) and Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Safeguards Agreement with the country. Three diplomats said on Wednesday that the European parties to the 2015 nuclear deal - Britain, France and Germany - have circulated a draft resolution against Iran ahead of the UN nuclear watchdog's board meeting and appear determined to push it.

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK



## Al-Aqsa Storm Put Israeli Regime on Path to Destruction

TEHRAN - Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei says Palestine is the first and foremost issue of the Muslim world. The Leader made the remarks in an address to a huge crowd of people gathered at the mausoleum of founder of the Islamic Republic Imam Khomeini in southern Tehran on Monday to mark the 35th anniversary of the late Imam's passing. Ayatollah Khamenei said Operation Al-Aqsa Storm against Israel was carried out at the right time and put the Zionist regime on a path that will lead to its destruction and elimination. During Operation Al-Aqsa Storm, the Palestinians pushed the enemy to a corner where it had no way to escape, he noted. The Palestinian resistance movement Hamas launched Operation Al-Aqsa Storm on October 7, 2023, penetrating deep into the territories occupied by the Israeli regime, by carrying out large-scale air, land, and sea strikes. The group said the operation was a reaction to the recurring desecration of al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied al-Quds as well as intensified Israeli atrocities against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank. Ayatollah Khamenei further stated that Imam Khomeini emphasized that the people of Palestine themselves would have to restore their own rights and force the Israeli regime to retreat. The Leader noted that everything that the late Imam predicted regarding the issue of Palestine has come true. He said Imam Khomeini believed that the people of Palestine should not trust the so-called peace talks, play an active role and restore their rights to achieve a final victory in the face of the Israeli enemy. The late Imam also urged all nations, particularly Muslims, to support the Palestinian people to help them defeat the Zionist regime, Ayatollah Khamenei added. "These big developments are being realized now," he emphasized. "Although the US and many Western countries continue to support this regime, they also know that there is no way out for the occupying regime," Ayatollah he stated. The Leader warned that the US, elements of the global Zionism and some regional states have hatched a comprehensive plan to change relations and equations in the region. They sought to establish links between the Israeli regime and some countries in the region in an attempt to prepare the ground for the Tel Aviv regime's dominance over the political and economic developments in the West Asia region and the entire Muslim world, he explained. They were very close to implement the ominous plot but the start of Operation Al-Aqsa Storm thwarted all schemes of the US, Zionism and their stooges, Ayatollah

Khamenei said. He emphasized that the incidents in Palestine over the past eight months destroyed hope for any revival of the plot. He added that the unprecedented crimes and boundless cruelty of the Israeli regime and the American government's support for such atrocities were nervous reactions to failure of the international conspiracy to dominate the Zionist regime in the region. The Leader pointed to the US inaction in the face of consensus among world nations and emphasized that Washington will have no option but to end its support for the Zionist regime sooner or later. Western analysts believe that Israel has suffered a heavy blow from the resistance groups during Operation Al-Aqsa Storm and that the regime will not be able to recover from it, he emphasized. He said Palestine has turned into the number one issue of the world as students in American universities are chanting slogans to express their support for Palestine. Elsewhere in his remarks, Ayatollah Khamenei pointed to the martyrdom of former Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and six of their companions in a helicopter crash last month and said they are "martyrs of service" as they lost their lives while serving the people. He described "dear" President Raisi as a hard-working and honest man who made his utmost efforts to serve the Iranian nation. He also hailed Amir-Abdollahian as a skilled and intelligent negotiator who adhered to the principles of the Islamic Republic. Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei says at the ceremony marking the 35th anniversary of the late Imam Khomeini's passing that the Palestinians pushed the enemy to a corner where it had no way to escape. Ayatollah Khamenei noted that the passing of President Raisi and his entourage was a great loss and stated that Iranians created an epic by taking part in their funeral ceremonies. Despite the president's demise, Iranian authorities managed to maintain the country's full tranquility and security, the Leader added. Raisi, Amir-Abdollahian and six others died 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. Ayatollah Khamenei also pointed to the June 28 presidential election in Iran, organized after President Raisi's death, and said the "epic of election" will complete the epic of saying farewell to the martyrs. The Leader, however, warned that the "election scene is the scene of dignity and epic and not a [field] of struggle to gain power."

## Over 3,500 Kids at Risk of Death Amid Israel's Starvation Policy

GAZA (Dispatches) - Israel's policy of starvation threatens the lives of more than 3,500 Palestinian children in the Gaza Strip amid "deafening international silence," the Gaza media office has warned. The government's media office said in a Monday statement that "more than 3,500 children under the age of five are at risk of death in Gaza due to Israeli policies of starving children." It also warned about "a severe shortage of milk and food, a lack of nutritional supplements, and the denial of vaccinations." Since Israel's military forces launched the incursion in Rafah in early May, access to healthcare has been even more devastated. The regime's forces have closed the border to outgoing wounded people seeking treatment and blocked already scarce humanitarian aid. This is all happening "amid deafening international silence," the media

office added. Many of those children are now malnourished or disabled, according to UNICEF's director of private fundraising and partnerships. UNICEF warned that the ongoing situation in Rafah "is a disaster for children." "If nutrition supplies, especially ready-to-use therapeutic food, used to address malnutrition among children, cannot be distributed, the treatment of more than 3,000 children with acute malnutrition will be interrupted," said Jonathan Crickx, chief of communication for UNICEF in Palestine. Around 1.7 million people in the Gaza Strip are estimated to have been internally displaced - half of them children, who do not have enough access to water, food, fuel and medicine. Earlier on Saturday, a Palestinian child starved to death in central Gaza, according to the Palestinian official news agency Wafa.



### Israel Should Not Think About Any Attack on Lebanon, Its Resistance Movement



TEHRAN - Iran's Interim Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani says the Israeli regime, which is stuck in the Gaza quagmire, should not even think about attacking Lebanon and its resistance movement. Bagheri Kani, who is in Beirut on the first leg of his regional tour, made the announcement in a press conference at Iran's embassy on Monday following meetings with top Lebanese officials. He is slated to travel to Syria after his visit to Lebanon. He said that after eight months of war the Israeli regime has reached a dead end in the besieged Gaza Strip and is now seeking a way out even though it was fully supported by the United States. If the Israeli officials were wise enough, they would not get involved in a confrontation with the Lebanese resistance while the regime is still stuck in the Gaza quagmire, he added. The top Iranian diplomat emphasized that the Israeli regime's criminal acts against the people of Palestine in Gaza have resulted in the formation of an "integrated resistance" force. At least 36,479 Palestinians, mostly children and women, have been killed and 82,777 people wounded in the war that Israel began on October 7, 2023 following a retaliatory operation by the Palestinian territory's resistance movements. The brutal military onslaught is backed by unreserved military and political support on the part of the Israeli regime's Western allies, including the United States. In his remarks, Bagheri Kani once again reaffirmed Iran's "fixed and lasting" stance on its support for the Lebanese army, government and resistance against the Israeli regime's aggression. He said Israel and the US have failed to prevent international courts from issuing rulings against the regime's criminal officials as the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) has issued requests for international arrest warrants against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his minister of military affairs, Yoav Gallant, for their penal responsibility in committing war crimes and crimes against humanity.

### IAEA Chief Reiterates Willingness for High-Level Dialogue With Iran's Next Gov't



GENEVA (Dispatches) - The director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) says he is willing to continue to work with the next government in Iran. In an address to the IAEA Board of Governors on Monday, Rafael Grossi expressed hope that high-level dialogue and ensuing technical exchanges that were agreed during his trip to Iran in early May could continue under the country's new government. Grossi reiterated that late Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and Iran's top nuclear official Mohamad Eslami had agreed to his proposals for implementing a joint statement announced on March 4, 2023 to address the outstanding issues between the IAEA and Tehran. Iranians are scheduled to go to polls for snap presidential vote on June 28. The election's winner will replace the late Ebrahim Raisi, who lost his life in a helicopter crash with seven others, including his foreign minister, earlier this month. In his Monday remarks, Grossi repeated his previous claims about lack of cooperation on Iran's side on certain issues, including its refusal to allow several Agency inspectors to continue to carry out missions in Iranian nuclear sites. He also claimed that Iran has yet to provide the IAEA with "technically credible explanations" about the presence of uranium particles at two of its nuclear sites. Iran and world powers reached a landmark nuclear agreement in 2015 under which Tehran curbed parts of its nuclear program in exchange for removal of sanctions imposed on the country's economy. Tehran started to suspend some of its obligations under the agreement in 2019 a year after a former government in the United States abandoned the deal and reinstated sanctions on Iran. Iran then agreed to some additional IAEA inspections under the Joint Statement and resolved issues related to one of the three sites and the alleged presence of uranium particles there.

# IRAN NEWS



## Iran's Non-Oil Trade Exceeds \$25b in 2 Months

TEHRAN (MNA) - The value of Iran's non-oil trade reached \$25.2 billion in the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-May 21), according to the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA). Iran exported 23.5 million tons of non-oil commodities worth \$8.0 billion in the mentioned two months, registering 3.77 percent and 8.54 percent increase in terms of value and weight, respectively. Meanwhile, some 5.8 million tons of goods valued at \$9.1 billion were imported into the country in the said period, indicating a 9.19 percent rise in terms of value, and a 13.29 percent increase in terms of weight, year on year. Iran's top export destination during this period was China with \$2.193 billion worth of imports from the Islamic Republic, followed by Iraq with \$1.584 billion, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with over \$1.08 billion, Turkey with \$729 million, and Pakistan with \$383 million. Liquefied natural gas, liquid propane, and liquid butane were the top exported items in the said six months.

## Iran Presidential Race Gets Heated As Ahmadinejad Applies for Candidacy

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK



TEHRAN - Former Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad decided to test his luck with voters again by applying for candidacy for the highest executive post. Ahmadinejad jumped into the presidential contest on Sunday after submitting his application. The controversial figure's presence in the Interior Ministry attracted a large number of photographers and journalists. Ahmadinejad, who held office as president for two successive terms from 2005 to 2013, delivered a speech after registering as a candidate. The registration process for the 14th round of Iran's presidential election got underway at the Interior Ministry headquarters in Tehran on May 30 and will end on June 3. Majlis Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, former First Vice-President Eshaq Jahangiri and Roads and Urban Development Minister Bazrpush were the other last minute candidates who entered the first state of the competition. Around 80 individuals have put in requests for candidacy during the past four days, while less than 20, including a woman, have met the eligibility criteria to register. All applicants are carefully vetted by the Constitutional Council, which will announce the list of final candidates on June 11. The election campaign period is set for June 12-26, while the nationwide presidential election will be held on Friday, June 28. The new administration, the 14th one after the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979, will assume power in late June or early July and hold office for four years. A helicopter carrying Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and his entourage crashed in northwestern mountainous forests on May 19, killing the president, Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian, and six others.

## Italians in Tehran Mark National Day

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK



TEHRAN - Italian Embassy in Tehran by launching a ceremony on Sunday at its ambassador's residence marked the National Day. Ambassador Paula Amadei, who began her mission in Iran last March, inaugurated the event with the title of Creativity and Made in Italy with the presence of over 500 guests, including members of the small but dynamic Italian community such as the Italian school "Pietro della Valle" in Tehran, as well as Iranian officials, civil society representatives, media personnel, business owners, representatives of the cultural and art world, diplomatic corps, and representatives of selected international organizations. After broadcasting a video message from Mr. Antonio Tajani, Deputy President of the European Commission and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy, to Italian compatriots, Ambassador Amadei delivered her speech focusing on the fundamental values of the Italian Constitution, especially principles emphasizing freedom and equality without gender, race, language, religion, political beliefs, and individual and social conditions, which still serve as a beacon in the world towards the negation of war. Italy, within the framework of the European Union and NATO, and this year also as the rotating presidency of the G7, supports multilateralism as a fundamental tool for pursuing peace in the Middle East and elsewhere. The ambassador invited dialogue within the framework of bilateral

relations with Iran, even on the most controversial topics. During the ceremony, guests were able to watch a series of video clips about Italy's excellence in the world prepared by the local ICE office, as well as an exhibition of some of the most special examples of contemporary Italian design objects by artists including Gianfranco Frattini, Michele De Lucchi, and Enzo Mari, specially arranged in the historical garden of the Iranian Residence in collaboration with the Ravagh Group and under the supervision of Mohammadreza Movahedi. Festa della Repubblica is the Italian National Day and Republic Day, which is celebrated on 2 June each year, with the main celebration taking place in Rome. The Festa della Repubblica is one of the national symbols of Italy. The day commemorates the 1946 Italian institutional referendum held by universal suffrage, in which the Italian people were called to decide on the form of government following the Second World War and the fall of Fascism. On 2 and 3 June 1946, an institutional referendum was held with which the Italians were called to the polls to decide which form of state - monarchy or republic - to give to the country. The referendum was announced at the end of World War II, a few years after the fall of the Fascist regime in Italy, the dictatorial regime that had been supported by the Italian royal family, the House of Savoy, for more than 20 years.



## OPEC+ to Continue Collective Oil Production Cuts In 2025, Owji

TEHRAN (Shana) - Oil Minister Javad Owji says OPEC+ has decided to continue its collective oil production cuts up to the end of 2025. Speaking with Shana, he added the decision has been made after the group examined the oil market developments report by its monitoring arm today, June 2. The 188th Meeting of the OPEC Conference, the 54th Meeting of the Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee (JMMC) and the 37th OPEC and non-OPEC Ministerial Meeting (ONOMM) were held today to discuss oil market situation and make appropriate decisions to the benefit of its stability. According to Owji, all the oil and energy minister of OPEC+ emphasized on the necessity of maintaining stability in the oil market amid close monitoring of demand and supply developments in the oil market. He continued that the group of oil producing countries also expressed its readiness to take swift actions in the future in case of the market conditions make it necessary. Owji continued that OPEC+ agreement and the decisions of the ministerial meeting have led to significant achievements in line with the common interests of OPEC and non-OPEC member countries which should be maintained in the future amid its vitality for the

stability of the oil market. He said: "Based on the published reports and analysis, there are serious doubts on both sides of global oil supply and demand, each of which can have its own consequences for the prospects of future developments." Owji added: at the same time, the increase in the activities of traders in paper markets has also added to the concerns; therefore, it is not possible to speak with certainty about the outlook of the trends governing the global oil market. The minister stated: What can be stated for sure is that OPEC+ carefully and regularly monitors the developments of the world oil market and the factors affecting it, and as in the past experiences, when necessary, appropriate decisions are made to establish and maintain stability in the world oil market. Owji noted that OPEC+ agreement and its decisions are an important factor in eliminating fluctuations in the oil market, helping to improve the world's economic conditions, and encouraging new investments in the oil industry and ensuring energy security. He concluded: We believe that the OPEC+ agreement and cooperation between major oil producers is the only way to achieve world energy security in the short and long term.



## Swedish Diplomat Summoned Over Official's Baseless, Malicious Remarks



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has summoned Sweden's acting charge d'affaires in Tehran to communicate the country's protest over "baseless and malicious" remarks that were made earlier by a Swedish official concerning the Islamic Republic. The Swedish diplomat was summoned by the Foreign Ministry's assistant director-general for Western Europe on Saturday, and was notified of Tehran's protest at the remarks that had been made "based on wrong information," the ministry said in a statement. "Propagation of [such] baseless claims points to some parties' intention to afflict damage on the countries' time-honored relations," the Iranian official told the diplomat. "Accordingly, the Swedish authorities are expected to be vigilant about suspicious developments more than before," the former added. For his part, the Swedish official said he would immediately notify relevant authorities about Tehran's protest. The developments came a day after some Western news agencies said Daniel Stenling, head of counter-espionage for the Swedish intelligence, had alleged that Iran was "recruiting members of Swedish gangs to target the Israeli regime's interests" in the European country. Last year, the Foreign Ministry had similarly summoned Sweden's chargé d'affaires in Tehran in protest at desecration of the Holy Qur'an in the European country, a development that had taken place amid the approval of Swedish authorities and in the name of "freedom of speech."

## Islamic Countries Urged to Cooperate on Tourism



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - In a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Islamic Chamber Research and Information Center (ICRIC), the participants discussed further tourism cooperation between member countries. It was held on the sidelines of the 36th Board of Directors meeting of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Development (ICCD) in the Jordanian capital on May 26. Chairman of the Board of ICRIC Samad Hassanzadeh, ICCD Secretary General Yousef Khalawi and Director General of ICRIC Mohammadreza Karbasi and other members of the board of directors from Iran, Egypt and Turkey were among the participants. Addressing the meeting, the chairman of the board of directors said that such events are a confirmation of the increase and strength of the international cooperation in line with the benefits of the Islamic countries. Coordination and joint cooperation within the OIC group and the creation of dialogue between experts create a link between members in order to define joint projects, he added. Hassanzadeh, who also heads the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (ICCIMA), vowed the ICCIMA's full support for ICRIC. ICCD Secretary General Yousef Khalawi, in the meantime, emphasized the role of ICRIC as the research arm of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Development in the Islamic Republic of Iran. He suggested conducting research in the field of halal industry, which was approved by other participants. Launching the tourism portal of Islamic countries and holding the 5th health tourism conference of Islamic countries in Tehran, rating the companies of Islamic countries and conducting research were among the topics raised in this meeting. The next meeting of the Board of Directors of ICRIC will be held on the sidelines of the 40th General Assembly of the Islamic Chamber in Tehran in fall 2024.

## Iran Pivotal for Transit of Goods Between China, Europe

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iran's Deputy Minister of Roads and Urban Development has explained the advantages of Iran for the transit of goods between China and Europe at the international summit "Road to Tian Shan" held in Tajikistan. Seyyed Kamal Hadianfar who attended the event this week at the official invitation of the Ministry of Transport of Tajikistan, while emphasizing the importance of China, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Iran, Turkey to Europe, explained the geographical advantages of his own country for transportation within the framework of the North-South and East-West corridors. He said that with more than 14,000 kilometers of railways and 250,000 kilometers of roads, the conclusion of the Chabahar contract with India in order to equip the container and general goods terminals of the Shahid Beheshti Port makes Iran important, especially in terms of international transportation corridor. In his speech, the Iranian minister also discussed Iran's role in the development of transportation in landlocked regional countries. Hadianfar pointed to the 59% growth in transit that reached 14.5 million tons last year and said the volume will increase as Iran is providing facilities to landlocked countries in the region, especially Central Asia, to access international water. He said that signing MOUs with some countries, including Tajikistan, to benefit them from the logistics capacities of Chabahar port, and starting negotiations with other countries, are on Iran's agenda. The "Road to Tian Shan" summit aims to promote collaboration and cooperation in the Tian Shan region which spans across multiple countries including China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. The summit focuses on economic development, infrastructure, and cultural exchange.

## Pakistan's Imran Khan Acquitted of Leaking State Secrets Charges

ISLAMABAD (Reuters) - A high court in Pakistan overturned jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan's conviction on charges of leaking state secrets, his lawyer and his party said on Monday, but Khan will remain in prison for now due to a conviction in another case. Khan, 71, had been sentenced to 10 years in prison by a lower court on charges of making public a classified cable sent to Islamabad by Pakistan's ambassador in Washington in 2022. He has been in jail since August last year. He had challenged the conviction in Islamabad High Court, which said in an order on Monday that, an "instant appeal is allowed", adding Imran Khan was acquitted of the charges. Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Khan's foreign minister during his tenure from 2018-2022, was also acquitted of the charges, in what is a major victory for the jailed leader. "Thank God, the sentence is overturned," a spokesman for legal affairs from Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party, Naeem Panjutha, said in a post on the X social media platform shortly after the Islamabad High Court announced its decision. Khan has said the classified cable was proof of a conspiracy by the Pakistan military and U.S. government to topple his government in 2022 after he visited Moscow just before Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Washington and Pakistan's military deny that accusation.



## Spanish and French Farmers Block Border Days Before EU Election



LA JUNQUERA (Dispatches) - Spanish and French farmers blocked roads along the border through the Pyrenees mountains ahead of European Parliament elections to protest against what they say is unfair competition from outside the European Union. Earlier this year, farmers obstructed roads for weeks in countries across the EU, saying they faced rising costs and taxes, red tape, excessive environmental regulations and unfair competition from cheap food imports. With EU elections looming on June 6-9, French and Spanish farmers used dozens of tractors to block both sides of the border on the AP-8 highway in the Basque Country and the AP-7 highway in Catalonia. "Since we have European elections, let's see if our politicians take the sector seriously and listen to our demands," Spanish farmer Josep Juscafrase, 54, told Reuters. Weeks of farmer protests compelled the EU in May to extend subsidy allowances by six months to support the 27-nation bloc's agricultural sector. The EU also watered down parts of its flagship Green Deal environmental policies, removing a goal to cut farming emissions from its 2040 climate roadmap. "It's important (to hold the protest) because in France, agriculture is hard. It's been neglected for around 20 years or even longer. And we feed the people, you know," French farmer Sylvain Fourriques, 39, said. At the Catalan border with France, farmers played soccer and cooked paellas while blocking crossings, creating long queues of cars and trucks. "While thousands of truck drivers remain blocked on many roads without being able to get out or even eat... farmers calmly prepare to eat a good paella. And where are the police?" Spanish transport association Fenadismar, which estimates 20,000 trucks cross the border with France each day, said on X. The European Parliament election begins on Thursday, although most countries will cast their ballots on Sunday.

## Modi's Alliance Leads in Majority of Seats in Early Counting Trends



NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led alliance raced to a clear majority in the 543-member lower house of parliament in early vote-counting trends on Tuesday, TV channels showed. The channels showed the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA) was ahead in more than 300 seats, with BJP alone ahead in 255. The opposition INDIA alliance led by Rahul Gandhi's Congress party was ahead in 172 seats, with Congress alone ahead in 71. Based on the early trends, the Republic TV channel called the vote in favour of Modi, the first to do so. The first votes counted are postal ballots, which are paper ballots, mostly cast by troops serving outside their home constituencies or officials away from home on election duty. This year, postal votes were also offered to voters over 85 years of age and people with disabilities to allow them to vote from home. Counting is expected to last several hours as the large majority of votes polled in electronic voting machines or EVMs are taken up after the first 30 minutes of counting postal ballots. "These are very early trends, we are going to see better results as the day progresses," Congress spokesperson Pawan Khera said. TV exit polls broadcast after voting ended on June 1 projected a big win for Modi, but exit polls have often got election outcomes wrong in India. Nearly one billion people were registered to vote, of which 642 million turned out. However, if Modi's victory is confirmed, his BJP will have triumphed in a vitriolic campaign in which parties accused each other of religious bias and of posing a threat to sections of the population. Investors have already cheered the prospects of another Modi term, expecting it to deliver further years of strong economic growth and pro-business reforms, while a possible two-thirds majority in parliament could allow major changes to the constitution, rivals and critics fear. "The next government's main task will be to set India on the path of getting rich before it ages," the Times of India newspaper said in an editorial on Tuesday, referring to the young, working age population in the world's most populous nation. "The clock's ticking." India stocks fell at the open after Monday's sharp surge as

traders said there was some nervousness on the margin of victory. TV exit polls released on Saturday after voting ended projected the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance could win a two-thirds majority in the 543-member lower house of parliament. Several major polls projected the BJP alone could win more than the 303 it won in 2019. The projections pushed Indian shares to lifetime highs on Monday while the rupee gained and bond yields dropped. Nearly one billion people were eligible to vote in the seven-phase, seven-week poll which began on April 19 and held in searing summer heat with temperatures touching nearly 50° Celsius (122° Fahrenheit) in some parts. More than 66% of registered voters turned out, just one percentage point lower than the previous election in 2019, squashing pre-poll concerns that voters might shun a contest thought to be a foregone conclusion in Modi's favour. Modi, 73, who first swept to power in 2014 by promising growth and change, is seeking to be only the second prime minister after India's independence leader Jawaharlal Nehru to win three straight terms. He began his campaign by showcasing his record in office including economic growth, welfare policies, national pride, Hindu nationalism and his own personal commitment to fulfilling promises which he called "Modi's Guarantee". However, he changed tack after low voter turnout in the first phase and accused the opposition, especially the Congress party which leads an alliance of two dozen groups, of favouring India's 200 million Muslims - a shift analysts said made the campaign coarse and divisive. They said the pivot may have been aimed at firing up the Hindu nationalist base of Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to draw them to vote. Modi defended himself against criticism that he was stoking divisions between Hindus and Muslims to win votes and said that he was only faulting the opposition campaign. The opposition INDIA alliance, led by Rahul Gandhi's Congress party, denied it favoured Muslims in the Hindu-majority country and said Modi would destroy the constitution if he returned to power and end affirmative action enjoyed by the so-called backward castes. The BJP rejects this.



## Historic Win Gives Mexico's Sheinbaum a Landslide, Spooks Markets



MEXICO CITY (Dispatches) - Claudia Sheinbaum, a climate scientist and protege of Mexico's popular outgoing president Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, won a landslide to become the country's first female leader, though the scale of her victory sparked jitters in the markets. Former Mexico City mayor Sheinbaum, 61, won the highest vote percentage in the history of Mexico's democracy, according to preliminary results from the electoral authority. She secured 58.8% of the votes with 82% of the ballots counted. In her victory speech on Sunday night, Sheinbaum, a physicist who was part of a United Nations panel of climate scientists that received a Nobel Peace Prize in 2007, thanked Lopez Obrador, calling him "an exceptional, unique man who has transformed Mexico for the better." The victory is seen as a major step for Mexico, a country known for its macho culture and home to the world's second-biggest Roman Catholic population. She is the first woman to win a general election in North America, comprising the United States, Mexico and Canada. But her party's win was so large that markets fell on concerns that the ruling coalition could secure a congressional super-majority, allowing them to pass controversial constitutional reforms such as in the energy sector unchecked. "It was precisely one of the scenarios that investors do not like," Jacobo

Rodriguez, an analyst at Roga Capital. By 11.30am local time (1330 ET) on Monday, Mexico's peso had lost about 3.4% against the dollar while the stock market was down 5%. Luis Maria Alcalde, interior minister in Lopez Obrador's cabinet, said the Morena party's ruling coalition won a super-majority in the lower house of Congress but will be a few seats short in the Senate. Though if the coalition needs only a few opposition senators to bring about constitutional changes, such reforms are not unfeasible. Part of the concerns are related to Lopez Obrador, a popular and polarizing titan of Mexican politics who has reshaped the country's political landscape over the past six years. He loomed large over the vote, casting the poll as a referendum on his national project to "transform" Mexico. More specifically, Lopez Obrador proposed in February a set of constitutional reforms including hiking pensions, obligatory minimum wage increases, and the abolishing of some regulatory bodies, which investors saw as radical and unsustainable. Lawmakers rejected the plans but investors fear Sheinbaum may pursue those reforms, which include above-inflation minimum wage hikes and election of judges by popular vote, analysts said. Lopez Obrador on Monday said he would talk to Sheinbaum about pushing through some reforms in the month of September, a short period when he will remain as president even as new lawmakers join Congress. Sheinbaum takes office on Oct. 1 for a six year term. "We have to get on the same page to discuss these initiatives with Claudia, as well as other things we need to work on together," Lopez Obrador said. "I don't want to impose anything." Lopez Obrador doubled the minimum wage, reduced poverty and oversaw a strengthening peso and low levels of unemployment - successes that made him popular and helped Sheinbaum to victory. But analysts believe Sheinbaum will find it difficult to follow in the veteran leftist's footsteps. Sheinbaum has rejected opposition claims that she would be a "puppet" of Lopez Obrador, though she has pledged to advance many of his policies including those that have helped Mexico's poorest. "There is an expectation that she will continue the policies of Lopez Obrador, but also become her own president at the same time," said Jason Marczak, senior director of the Atlantic Council's Adrienne Arsht Latin America Center. Main opposition rival, Xochitl Galvez, conceded defeat after mustering just 28.1% of votes with 82% of the ballots counted, according to preliminary results.

## Sunak Pledges Immigration Visa Caps

LONDON (Dispatches) - The ruling Conservative party announced plans for new annual caps on work and family visas to cut immigration after the opposition laid out its plans for the key election issue. The plan laid out by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, who is predicted to lose to Labour's Keir Starmer in the July election, would involve a new cap on the number of visas that would be set by parliament each year. Immigration is a highly contentious topic this election with net migration levels soaring to 685,000 last year, a figure that both main political parties have said is too high. While lower than the figure in 2022, the level of net migration last year was still around three times higher than in 2019, when the Tories won the last election with a promise to slash migrant numbers. Over the weekend, Starmer set out Labour's plans to cut regular migration by banning "bad bosses" who violate labour laws from bringing foreign workers to the country, and by requiring employers to prioritise training Britons first. With a head-to-head debate due on Tuesday where Starmer and Sunak will face off on key issues for the first time during their campaigns, the prime minister's new policy seeks to set his party apart from Labour.

## UN Experts Urge All Countries to Recognize Palestinian Statehood

GENEVA (Dispatches) - A group of United Nations experts called for all countries to recognise a Palestinian state to ensure peace in the Middle East. The call came less than a week after Spain, Ireland and Norway officially recognised a Palestinian state, prompting anger from Israel, which has found itself increasingly isolated after nearly eight months of war in Gaza. The experts, including the U.N. Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in the Palestinian territories, said recognition of a Palestinian state was an important acknowledgement of the rights of the Palestinian people and their struggle towards freedom and independence. "This is a pre-condition for lasting peace in Palestine and the entire Middle East - beginning with the immediate declaration of a ceasefire in Gaza and no further military incursions into Rafah," they said. "A two-state solution remains the only internationally agreed path to peace and security for both Palestine and Israel



and a way out of generational cycles of violence and resentment." Israel's Foreign Ministry did not respond immediately to a request for comment. With their recognition of a Palestinian state, Spain, Ireland and Norway said they sought to accelerate efforts to secure a ceasefire in Israel's war with Hamas in Gaza. The three countries say they hope their decision will spur other European Union states to follow suit. Denmark's parliament later rejected a proposal to recognise a Palestinian state. Israel has repeatedly condemned moves to recognise a Palestinian state, saying they bolster Hamas, the militant Islamist group that led the deadly Oct. 7 attack on Israel which sparked the Israeli offensive in the Gaza Strip. The conflict has killed more than 36,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's health ministry. Israel says the Oct. 7 attack, the worst in its 75-year history, killed 1,200 people, with more than 250 hostages taken.

## Djokovic Eyes 15th Successive French Open Quarters



PARIS (Dispatches) - Novak Djokovic will aim to reach his 15th successive French Open quarter-final after setting an unwanted Roland Garros record, while Aryna Sabalenka and Elena Rybakina eased through in the women's draw. Defending champion and 24-time Grand Slam title winner Djokovic made the last 16 by defeating Italy's Lorenzo Musetti in a bruising five-set epic which concluded at 3:07 a.m. Sunday. It was the latest ever finish at Roland Garros. "I think certain things could have been handled differently," said the 37-year-old Djokovic. "There is a certain beauty in winning the match at three in the morning if it is the last of the tournament, but this wasn't the case." The three-time French Open champion Djokovic faces Argentine 23rd seed Francisco Cerundolo for a place in the last eight. Victory would give him a record 370th Grand Slam match win. Cerundolo and Djokovic have never met before but the Argentine stunned world number four Alexander Zverev on clay in Madrid earlier this season on his way to the quarter-finals. The 25-year-old also made the last 16 in Paris in 2023 where he lost in five sets to Denmark's Holger Rune. In the women's tournament, world number two Sabalenka, who was a semi-finalist in 2023 and has made at least the last four at her past six Grand Slams, proved far too strong for American 22nd seed Emma Navarro. The Belarusian raced into the quarters, hammering 36 winners during a 6-2, 6-3 success in only 69 minutes. The 23-year-old Navarro was playing in the last 16 of a Grand Slam for the first time and could not deal with Sabalenka's

power. Sabalenka, who lost to Iga Swiatek in the Madrid and Rome Open finals this clay-court season, will play either Moscow-born French player Varvara Gracheva or 17-year-old Russian Mirra Andreeva in the last eight. Former Wimbledon champion Rybakina, the fourth seed and the only woman to defeat world number one Swiatek on clay this year, saw off experienced Ukrainian 15th seed Elina Svitolina 6-4, 6-3, also in just 69 minutes. The Kazakh fourth seed is into the last eight for only the second time and first since 2021, after withdrawing following the second round last year through illness. She will next face Italian Jasmine Paolini after the 12th seed fought back to defeat Russian Elina Avanesyan 4-6, 6-0, 6-1. "On clay, it's a bit more complicated with the movements but overall we are doing a good job and I'm proud with how I improved in the last few years," said Rybakina. Gracheva later plays Andreeva, who is the youngest woman to reach the last 16 on all three Slam surfaces since Anna Kournikova in 1998. "I know Varvara pretty well. We've been practising together for almost two years, so I know what to expect. She's at a great level right now," said Andreeva of her 88th-ranked opponent. In the other men's ties, Zverev continues his bid for a first Grand Slam title against Rune in the night-session match. Zverev, who knocked out 14-time champion Rafael Nadal in the first round, was pushed to the brink by Tallon Griekspoor in the third round where he battled back from 4-1 down in the final set.

## Real's 15th European Title Tougher Than Expected



LONDON (Dispatches) - Real Madrid manager Carlo Ancelotti said winning the European Cup for a record-extending 15th time on Saturday had been much harder than expected for the Spanish champions. Real needed two late goals to beat Borussia Dortmund 2-0 at Wembley after the German side had dominated the first half. "I never get used to it, because it was difficult, very difficult, more than expected. In the second half we were better, more balanced, fewer losses... This is a dream that continues," Ancelotti told Spanish TV station Movistar Plus+. "In the first half we were a bit lazy, we had losses and they played what they wanted," the Italian added. "After the first half we had, we didn't even deserve to go to the changing room with a level score... but this is football and we're very, very happy," said Real defender Dani Carvajal, who scored the first goal. Real's England midfielder Jude Bellingham described it as the best night of his life. "I have always dreamed of playing in these games," Bellingham said. "You go through life and there are so many people who say you cannot do things. I was alright until I saw my mum and dad's face. My little brother is there and I'm trying to be a role model for him. I cannot put it into words. The best night of my life." For Dortmund, it was another Champions League final loss at Wembley, which also hosted their 2013 defeat by Bayern Munich. Dortmund defender Mats Hummels said his team had played with courage but lost to more ruthless opponents. "They have been doing it for what feels 100 years like that," Hummels said. Dortmund coach Edin Terzic said his side had lacked killer instinct.

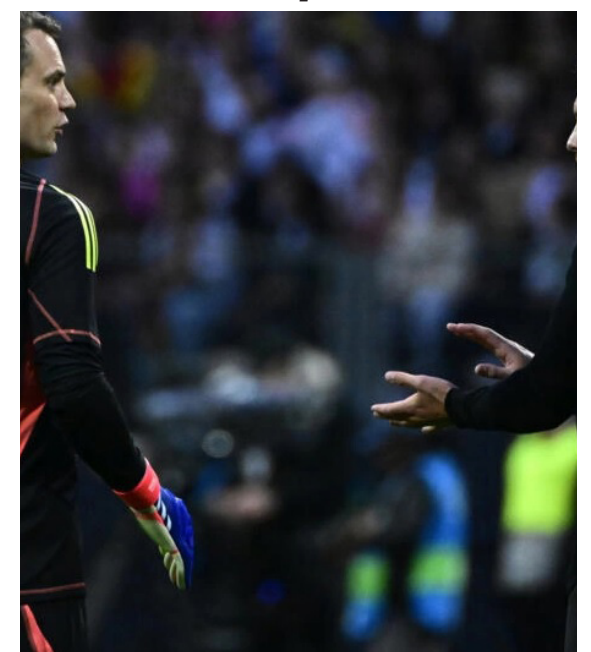
## Mourinho Says His Move to Fenerbahce to Increase Attention on Turkish League

ISTANBUL (Dispatches) - Newly announced Fenerbahce manager Jose Mourinho said that his signing and reputation would bring more attention to the Turkish league, adding that his aim was to win the Super Lig and make it to the Champions League group stage next season. Mourinho, 61, was unveiled as Fenerbahce manager in front of thousands of enthusiastic fans on Sunday. The Portuguese manager had been out of a job since being sacked by Italian Serie A side AS Roma in January. Speaking at a press conference at Fenerbahce's facilities in Istanbul, Mourinho said he was making "zero promises" apart from "huge commitment and passion, and work and empathy", adding that his ambition in coming to Turkey was "to feel the heat". "One of the things is, I bring attention in with me. More people in Europe will follow the Turkish league," Mourinho said. "I'm coming to work for Turkish football, for Turkish Super Lig. But fundamentally I come for Fenerbahce. My wish is that Turkish football improves at every level. But if I have to raise my voice to defend Fenerbahce I will not think twice," he added, in an apparent reference to the club's complaints over what it calls



unfairness. The Super Lig was marred by controversies last season, with a spate of violence and disputes overshadowing the narrow title fight between Fenerbahce and bitter rivals Galatasaray. Galatasaray clinched the championship by three points last month on the final matchday of the season. Mourinho said he hoped there would be a more balanced fight for the league title next season, after the two Istanbul rivals finished dozens of points clear of the remaining teams. Mourinho said the upcoming European Championship would limit training and that he would be able to make squad changes only at the start of next season, adding that his main goals were winning the league and making the Champions League group stages, for which Fenerbahce will play playoffs. He said he had zero interest in transferring players from his former clubs, including Argentinian midfielder Paulo Dybala and Belgian forward Romelu Lukaku from AS Roma. "When people look at me — I did six finals, I won five of them — people think immediately big but I think we have to go step by step, and of course the qualifications and playoffs are going to be hard simply because we have no time to prepare," he said.

## Germany Held by Ukraine in Euro Warm-Up



NUREMBERG (Dispatches) - Germany were held to a 0-0 draw by Ukraine as the European Championship hosts lacked a cutting edge at a sold out Max-Morlock stadium in Nuremberg. More than 44,000 fans were in jovial mood at kick-off, expecting a Germany that have rediscovered their form under Julian Nagelsmann put on a show less than two weeks before they start Euro 2024 against Scotland in Munich on June 14. What Germany's supporters got was something quite different, as Nagelsmann's side dominated long periods and created many chances but failed to make the breakthrough against a resilient Ukraine. "I had the impression that the team wanted to win and we played very well for long stretches," Nagelsmann told German public broadcaster Das Erste. "The first 20 minutes of the game were very, very good. We had to take the lead then. I think we need to be even more aggressive." "We simply need to get more players into the box and put a bit more stress not their penalty area. The players we brought on didn't need any time to get into the game, they all did well," the 36-year-old added. Germany came into this game having turned a corner under Nagelsmann, winning their last two games against France and the Netherlands with an aggressive, high tempo style and sparking optimism that, with home advantage, this European Championship could be a successful one. Nagelsmann was without Real Madrid's Toni Kroos and Antonio Ruediger, both rested after winning the Champions League final as well as Borussia Dortmund pair Nico Schlotterbeck and Niclas Füllkrug.

## Real Madrid Sign Mbappe on Free Transfer

MADRID (Dispatches) - France forward Kylian Mbappe has joined Real Madrid as a free agent on a five-year contract, the LaLiga club said yesterday, ending a transfer saga that rumbled on for years before the European champions captured their newest "Galactico". Real Madrid C. F. and Kylian Mbappe have reached an agreement whereby he will be a Real Madrid player for the next five seasons," the Spanish champions said in a statement, fresh off their 15th European Cup triumph. Mbappe shared images of himself as a youngster in a Real Madrid kit as well as meeting Cristiano Ronaldo onto his social media profiles shortly after the club statement. "A dream come true," he wrote. "So happy and proud to join the club of my dream @realmadrid. Nobody can understand how excited I am right now. Can't wait to see you, Madridistas, and thanks for your unbelievable support. Hala Madrid!" The 25-year-old captain of the French national team had announced he was leaving Paris St Germain in a video posted on social media platform X on May 10. Mbappe will move to Real Madrid in July when his PSG contract expires on June 30 but the forward will be unveiled before joining up with the France squad for the European Championship in Germany. Mbappe joins a star-studded side in Madrid with the likes of Ballon d'Or favourites Vinicius Jr. and Jude Bellingham, led by Italian Carlo Ancelotti — the most successful coach in Champions League history with five titles. Although Mbappe won



several trophies at PSG, often completing domestic doubles and trebles, the Champions League has eluded him and remains the only major honour left to complete his sparkling resume. Mbappe leaves PSG after seven years at the club where he won six Ligue 1 titles and four French Cups, finishing his career in the capital city as the club's all-time top scorer with 256 goals. The 2018 World Cup winner surprised PSG last year when he sent a letter stating he would not take up the option of a one-year contract extension when it expires in June. The letter led to a standoff with the club and Mbappe was omitted from the first-team squad before being reinstated. Allowing Mbappe to run down the final year of his contract meant PSG were unable to recoup any of the 180 million euro (US\$195.95 million) transfer fee they paid in 2017 to sign him from AS Monaco. When the transfer was completed, Mbappe became the second-most expensive player of all time after his former PSG team mate Neymar, who was signed for 222 million euros from Barcelona in 2017. Real Madrid had courted Mbappe in the past but failed to land the player, who signed a contract extension with PSG in May 2022 when the Spanish club had a bid rejected. With Mbappe finally in their ranks, the club can look at consolidating their dominance in LaLiga where they lost only once last season to win the title by 10 points and they were unbeaten in the Champions League.