

Iranian Blood Transfusion Organization (IBTO) Revealed a 12% Increase in the Number of Blood Donations During the First Two Months of the Current Iran Year (Starting March 21), Compared to the Same Period Last Year

# IRAN NEWS

Iran's Export of Fresh Fruits to India Doubled in the First Three Months of 2024 Compared to the Same Period Last Year, According to the Indian Ministry of Trade and Commerce

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### 30% Tehran-Beijing Trade Growth Expected to Continue

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### Hamas Says Israel Kills 210 Palestinians



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### IAEA's BoG Resolution Not to Affect Iran's Nuclear Progress



TEHRAN (MNA) - An Iranian parliament member stated that the anti-Iranian resolution of 3 European countries in the meeting of the Board of Governors is completely politically motivated, aiming to influence Iran's presidential elections. Abolfazl Zohrevand stated that the anti-Iranian resolution of three European countries in the meeting of the Board of Governors is completely politically motivated, and Western countries are trying to influence Iran's upcoming presidential election. The U.S. and European countries that are members of the JCPOA have not fulfilled their obligations, he said, adding that Russia and China emphasized this issue during the voting on this resolution, recommending that the three European countries should return to the JCPOA and fulfill their obligations. Unlike Western members, Iran has fulfilled its commitments to the JCPOA, he added. He said Western countries should clarify their expectation of Iran's cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency. He further noted that the JCPOA was nothing but damage for Iran which harmed Iran's national capacities, adding that the West did not keep its promise which was lifting sanctions. He emphasized that Russian President Vladimir Putin also defended Iran's activities in his three-hour speech in Kazan, stressing that the Obama administration signed a commitment but the Trump administration abandoned the same commitment. Putin emphasized that they should reconsider their behavior towards Iran, Zohrevand said. The Iranian lawmaker stressed that Western actions do not affect Iran's progress in the nuclear field. Despite sanctions and blocked access to global markets, Iran showed that sanctions do not affect its progress, Zohrevand stated. Meanwhile Iran's interim foreign minister said Iran's nuclear program corresponds to IAEA requirements. Iran is pursuing its nuclear program in accordance with requirements of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Islamic Republic's acting Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani told CNN Turk. "Iran is running its nuclear program in compliance with requirements of the IAEA, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and its own national programs," he said.

### Pro-Palestinian Protesters Stage Red Line Rally at White House



WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Thousands of pro-Palestinian protesters from across the United States have gathered to stage a mass rally near the White House in Washington, DC, lashing out at U.S. President Joe Biden for green-lighting Israel's genocidal war on Gaza. The protesters on Saturday voiced anger at Biden for ignoring the "red line", giving the Israeli regime forces the go-ahead to continue its eight-month war on the Gaza Strip, killing more than 36,800 Palestinians, most of them women and children. Almost all the protesters were wearing red clothing and held Palestinian flags or banners, and signs saying "Biden's red line was a lie." "From DC to Palestine, we are the red line," they chanted. The protesters, who demanded an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, said they would not vote for Biden in the upcoming 2024 US presidential election. They were also holding a symbolic 3-kilometer-long red banner with the names of the Palestinians killed on it. Biden has been criticized for ignoring the "red line" he seemingly set two months ago when he said he would not allow the Israeli forces to invade the southern Gaza city of Rafah where more than half of the Strip's 2.3 million population were seeking refuge. The protesters said they no longer trusted Biden, describing him as a "coward" and "hypocrite." "I no longer believe any of the words that Joe Biden says," said 25-year-old Zaid Mahdawi, a protester from Virginia, whose parents are Palestinian. "This 'red line' in his rhetoric is rubbish... it shows his hypocrisy and his cowardice," Mahdawi told AFP. "I think we all hope it's going to stop soon but clearly our president is not living up to the words he is speaking to our country. It's outrageous," said nursing assistant, Tala McKinney, 25. "It's very disappointing to have a president who doesn't follow through with their word... I will be voting for a third party."

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK



### Iran Among Loudest Voices Against Israeli Crimes in Gaza

TEHRAN - The interim foreign minister says Iran is one of the countries that have raised "the loudest voices" against Israel's genocidal war crimes in the Gaza Strip. Ali Bagheri Kani made the remarks in an opinion piece published in the Turkish Milliyet newspaper on Saturday, as more than eight months of the brutal Israeli onslaught has killed a shocking number of people in Gaza and led to famine in the besieged Palestinian territory. "Over the past eight months, the Islamic Republic of Iran has been one of the loudest voices against the Zionist regime's heinous atrocities, which are being perpetrated under the support of Western states, especially the United States. "We are aware of our responsibility as a member of the international community, the United Nations and the Islamic world, and we have used and will use every opportunity and way to help Gaza." He added: "I hope that the Istanbul meeting will be useful in reaching agreements in support of the cause of Palestine and the oppressed people of Gaza. It is necessary for the D-8 members to take practical and multilateral steps with the aim of alleviating the suffering of the defenseless people in Gaza, and with an Islamic multilateral economic cooperation

mechanism, they should also seriously reflect on how this organization can help stop the genocidal attacks and rebuild Gaza." He continued: "Stopping the Zionist attacks on civilians by exerting diplomatic, political, economic and legal pressures, immediate humanitarian aid deliveries to all the people of Gaza, opening of border crossings, preventing forced displacement, providing conditions for the return of displaced ones, rebuilding Gaza after the withdrawal of the occupying forces and dealing with gross violations of international law and international humanitarian law by the occupying forces are among the priorities." On Saturday, Bagheri Kani attended an extraordinary meeting of foreign ministers of the Developing Eight (D-8) Organization for Economic Cooperation on Israel's aggression against Gaza, in the Turkish city of Istanbul. In his opinion piece, the Iranian interim foreign minister underlined the need for the D-8 member states to take practical steps aimed at alleviating the suffering of the defenseless people of Gaza, and explore ways to stop Israeli attacks and rebuild Gaza. In an interview at the end of the D-8 meeting, Bagheri Kani said that all the participants believe that a more serious approach must be adopted against the Zionists and that their crimes "should not be tolerated anymore." Israel waged its bloody Gaza offensive on October 7 after the Palestinian Hamas resistance group carried out its historic operation against the usurping entity in retaliation for the regime's intensified atrocities against the Palestinian people.

### Foreign Customers Interested in Iranian Drones



TEHRAN (Tasnim) - Many foreign countries are eager to purchase Iran's unmanned aerial vehicles, Air Force Commander Brigadier General Hamid Vahedi said. During a visit to an airbase in Iran's southern port city of Bushehr, the Air Force commander highlighted Iran's great progress in military industries after the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979. Describing Iran as a front-runner in the drone industry, the commander said the Iranian Air Force has manufactured a broad spectrum of drones with various operational ranges. Many foreign countries are interested in buying Iranian drones, he stated. In 2023, the chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces said the country has developed such advanced defense products that the big military powers of the world are willing to acquire its achievements. Major General Mohammad Hossein Baqeri said the world has acknowledged that Iran has developed its military capabilities not through reverse engineering or reproduction of foreign products, noting that even the world's major military powers have become interested in Iran's defense capabilities and are seeking to obtain its achievements.

### Nuseirat Massacre Result of World Bodies' Inaction on Israeli Crimes in Gaza



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani has denounced the Israeli regime's "heinous and shocking crime" at al-Nuseirat camp in central Gaza. In a statement on Saturday, Kanaani said Israel's massacre of hundreds of Palestinian people, particularly women and children, at al-Nuseirat camp is the result of inaction by international bodies in the face of the regime's atrocities in Gaza over the past eight months. He added that global organizations, particularly the United Nations Security Council, have failed to take any action to counter the Israeli regime's war crimes and violations of all international humanitarian regulations in the Gaza Strip. "The continuation of this inaction is nothing but encouraging criminals to continue the genocide of Palestinians," the Iranian spokesperson emphasized. He lashed out at the U.S. and European states for supplying Israel's arsenals with bombs and missiles and supporting the regime's crimes, as evident in the slaughtered bodies of Palestinian citizens and children lying in blood at Nuseirat. Kanaani emphasized that innocent Palestinian people, especially the oppressed children of Gaza, are under the barbaric bombings and suffering from hunger, thirst, and the lack of medicine and medical equipment caused by the blockade on the Strip. He noted that the world is witnessing the absolute ineffectiveness of international organizations and assemblies in defending Palestinian people, particularly women and children.

### Iran Urges Muslim States to Cut All Ties With Israel, Force It to End Crimes

TEHRAN - Iran's Interim Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani says Muslim countries should sever all relations with Israel and take practical steps to force the regime to stop its crimes against the people of Palestine. Bagheri Kani made the announcement in an address to an extraordinary meeting of foreign ministers of the Developing Eight (D-8) Organization for Economic Cooperation on Israel's genocidal war on Gaza, in the Turkish city of Istanbul on Saturday. He said Israel will only accept the reality when encountered with force, citing Iran's retaliatory attack against the regime -- dubbed Operation True Promise -- on April 13 as a clear testimony in this regard. He warned that the Israeli regime is resorting to the policy of collective punishment to pursue the "sinister and dangerous goal of societal collapse in Gaza by making it uninhabitable -- an act that is regarded as a clear manifestation of war crimes and genocide." The Iranian interim foreign minister emphasized that solidarity among Muslim countries can forestall the continuance of Israel's crimes. He said Muslim countries and the D-8 member states alike "must marshal the entirety of their capacities to pivot all focus to that direction." "Severing the vital arteries of the Zionist regime, breaking off political and economic ties and

embargoing the oil, energy, and goods of the Zionist regime are among necessary measures against its butchery and annihilation in Gaza," Bagheri Kani pointed out. He criticized the international community's inaction regarding the Zionist regime's attacks on Gaza over the past eight months "which would have otherwise put an end to these unprecedented crimes." "The current situation in the Rafah Crossing has pushed the world to the cusp of yet another humanitarian disaster," the top Iranian diplomat said. He proposed the recognition of the acknowledged right of the Palestinian people and their legitimate resistance against aggression and occupation, based on principles of international law. He also called for the establishment of a special international mission to bring Israel's crimes before international courts, as among effective measures that the D-8 members can take at this critical juncture. The D-8 member countries are expected to adopt a firm joint declaration regarding the Tel Aviv regime's devastating war on Gaza. Meanwhile later Bagheri Kani said that all member states of the Developing Eight (D-8) Organization for Economic Cooperation have agreed that there should be no more tolerance for the Israeli regime's crimes against the Palestinian people.



# IRAN NEWS



## Turkey Stresses Iran's Right to Share Sarisu River

TEHRAN (IRNA) - A spokesman for Iran's Water Resources Management Company has said that Turkey has stressed Iran's right to continue to use water from the border river of Sarisu. Technical teams from Iran and Turkey paid a visit to Sarisu River, Firouz Ghasemzadeh said on Sunday without specifying the date. He added that the visit took place within an agreement the two countries signed in 1955 that set protocols for them to use the waters of the shared rivers of Sarisu and Karasu. The Iranian and Turkish teams, visiting Sarisu River along with their border guards of the two countries, carried out required measurements in points set under the joint protocol, the official said, adding that the Turkish side emphasized Iran's rights to the river. Ghasemzadeh said that Iran regularly conducts technical coordination with the neighboring countries on shared waters, based on joint protocols.

## Pakistan, the First Destination for Iran's Renewable Energy Export



TEHRAN - The Deputy of Technical and Engineering Affairs at the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization announced that Iran's first renewable energy electricity export will be to Pakistan. He stated, "Currently, the capacity to supply Pakistan through the southern province of Sistan and Baluchestan is ready, and the first electricity export will proceed from this direction. However, there is also capacity available in Turkey and Iraq." Alireza Parand-Motlagh discussed the renewable energy export program, explaining that there is a resolution for renewable energy exports. The Tavanir Company has determined that the export capacity is 300 megawatts for the entire country. This means that this amount of electricity will be sent to the markets of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, and Turkey. He added that the next plan is to develop the transmission and sub-transmission network, although this capacity has not yet been announced. However, the total export capacity is 300 megawatts for all neighboring countries. Regarding renewable electricity exports to Afghanistan, the Deputy said that Afghanistan does not currently have significant capacity through the existing network, and this capacity needs to be developed. Afghanistan needs to construct a 50-kilometer 230-kilovolt line and two 230-kilovolt substations to receive electricity from Iran. He emphasized that if Afghanistan's lines are developed, it will be possible to receive an equivalent of 120 megawatts of energy from the direction of Zaranj. Parand-Motlagh noted that if the Mil-Nader power plant is developed, wind energy will be exported to Afghanistan, thus replacing fossil fuel electricity with wind energy exports. He reiterated that Iran's first renewable electricity export will be to Pakistan, with capacity through the southern province of Sistan and Baluchestan ready for the first export. However, there is also capacity in Turkey and Iraq. The export of renewable electricity to these countries depends on a tender to be held soon and on which line investors prefer to invest in.

## 30% Tehran-Beijing Trade Growth Expected to Continue

TEHRAN - President of the Iran-China Joint Chamber of Commerce said: It is predicted that by the end of 2024, if no significant global events impact prices, the 30% growth in Iran-China trade will continue, and as previously stated, this growth will be realized in both oil and non-oil trade. Majid Reza Hainri, President of the Iran-China Joint Chamber of Commerce, in an interview with ILNA, announced the growth of Iran-China trade this year and said: Oil and non-oil trade between Iran and China in the first quarter of this year compared to the same period last year has grown by 30%; non-oil trade between Iran and China in this period of 2024 compared to 2023 has also seen approximately a 30% growth. He added: Without considering oil exports in the trade balance review, imports always surpass exports, and Iran-China trade is no exception. The only exceptions are Iraq and Afghanistan. However, it should be noted that in trade with China, there is not a significant gap between Iran's exports and imports, to the extent that it can be said that 40% of total non-oil trade includes Iran's exports to China. Hainri continued: It is predicted that by the end of 2024, if no significant global events impact prices, this 30% growth in trade between the two countries will continue, and as previously stated, this growth will be realized in both oil

and non-oil trade. In response to the question of how the agreements between Iran and India in the Chabahar region will affect the relations between the two countries, he stated: The agreement between India and Iran in Chabahar, which has recently been renewed, has a decade-long history and is not a new matter. However, in this decade, India has not made significant and meaningful investments or technological entries in Chabahar, and therefore, in my opinion, what has been done in the agreement with India has not been economically logical unless there are political achievements, of which I have no knowledge. He noted: Of course, activities that had started before are continuing. For example, next week Mr. Zarghami will go to China to visit the "Splendor of Iran" event in Beijing; this event has been ongoing for several months, and during Mr. Zarghami's trip, there will be a meeting with handicrafts and tourism industry activists in China at the Iran-China Chamber's office in Shanghai, and Iranian private sector activists will also use this opportunity to advance their programs. The President of the Iran-China Joint Chamber of Commerce, explaining the chamber's programs for this year, said: The private sector this year will increase its focus on exporting three new products to China.

## Iran-Georgia Trade Balance is Positive in Favor of Iran

TEHRAN - The head of the Iran-Georgia Joint Chamber of Commerce, emphasizing the potential for strengthening trade relations between the two countries, stated that currently, the trade balance between Iran and Georgia is positive in favor of Iran. The head of the Iran-Georgia Joint Chamber of Commerce, stating that Iran's exports to Georgia in terms of weight and value exceed imports, emphasized that Iran's imports from Georgia mainly include goods such as meat, wood, and cars, while Iran exports mostly agricultural products, foodstuffs, and building materials to Georgia. Seyedeh Fatemeh Moghimi, head of the Iran-Georgia Joint Chamber of Commerce, regarding the latest status of trade between the two countries, said: "Currently, a significant portion of trade goods between Iran and Georgia is carried out by Iranian vehicles because the transportation infrastructure in Georgia is not as developed as in Iran. Therefore, Iranian trucks have a good opportunity for freight transit on this route." She added: "A considerable portion of Iran's exports to Georgia consists of goods that form the raw materials or semi-finished products needed for the production of final goods. These goods are used in industrial units located in Georgia's free zones to produce final products that are marketed in Georgia." Regarding the import of cars from Georgia to Iran, this economic activist said: "The automotive industry in Georgia is growing, and Georgian cars are mostly imported to Iran temporarily.

Additionally, Georgian cars have a better final cost compared to other imported cars to Iran." The head of the Iran-Georgia Joint Chamber of Commerce also explained the quality of the transit of Iranian trucks between the two countries: "The economic agreement signed between Iran and Georgia, which is renewed annually, has defined the framework for truck transit, ensuring that the transit takes place with good quality. Although the transit of goods between Georgia and Iran occurs through Azerbaijan, the commercial relationship between Iran and Georgia maintains the quality of trade between two neighboring countries." Moghimi further discussed the advantages of trading with Georgia and noted: "This country is situated between the two continents of Asia and Europe, enjoying good access to international markets. Moreover, Georgia has signed free trade agreements with European countries and has recently joined the European Union, which can serve as a bridge connecting Iran to global markets." She added: "Of course, the country's membership in the European Union has made it more cautious in its trade with Iran, but there is still a conducive environment for trading Iranian goods in Georgia's free zones. Iranians can engage in joint ventures with Georgians for the production and trade of goods in this country. However, it is important to note that Iranians still face difficulties in transferring money from Georgia to Iran because Iran is not a member of FATF."

## Iran, Pakistan Discuss Gaza Crisis



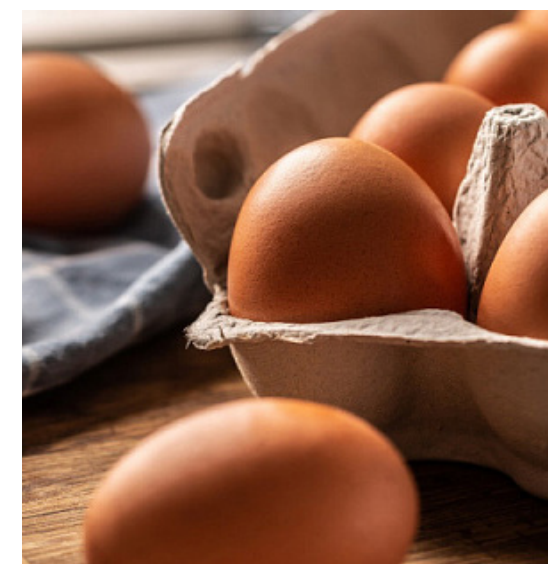
TEHRAN (Tasnim) - Senior diplomats from Iran and Pakistan discussed concerted efforts by the two neighbors in the regional and international arenas to assist the Palestinian people who are suffering from Israeli atrocities. In a meeting on the sidelines of a ministerial conference of the Developing Eight (D8) countries in Istanbul on Saturday, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan Ishaq Dar and the caretaker foreign minister of Iran stressed the need for constant and close consultations between Islamabad and Tehran.

Weighing plans for the expansion of relations between Pakistan and Iran, the two officials emphasized the necessity for bilateral consultations at the regional and international levels to support Gaza and protect the rights of Palestinian people in global organizations.

Iran on Saturday came up with nine "practical proposals" for the D8 countries' joint action in support of the Palestinian people and against the Israeli regime's onslaught on Gaza.

At least 36,801 people have been killed and 83,680 wounded in Israel's onslaught on Gaza since October 7, 2023.

## Start of Egg Exports to Russia



TEHRAN - The head of the Poultry Working Group of the Iranian Chamber of Commerce announced the export of 17,000 tons of chicken by the end of June and the start of egg exports to Russia from next week.

Hossein Mahdizadeh, head of the Poultry Working Group of the Iranian Chamber of Commerce, explained the latest status of the country's chicken and egg exports.

He stated that permission has been granted for the export of 17,000 tons of chicken to Iraq by the end of June. Of this amount, 12,000 tons are allocated to active poultry farmers under the supervision of the National Union of Broiler Poultry Farmers, and the remaining 5,000 tons are allocated to other chain operators.

He added that currently, Iranian chicken is only exported to Iraq, and Iraq has agreed to import this volume of chicken. Exporting this amount of chicken has restored the balance that was lost in the domestic chicken market.

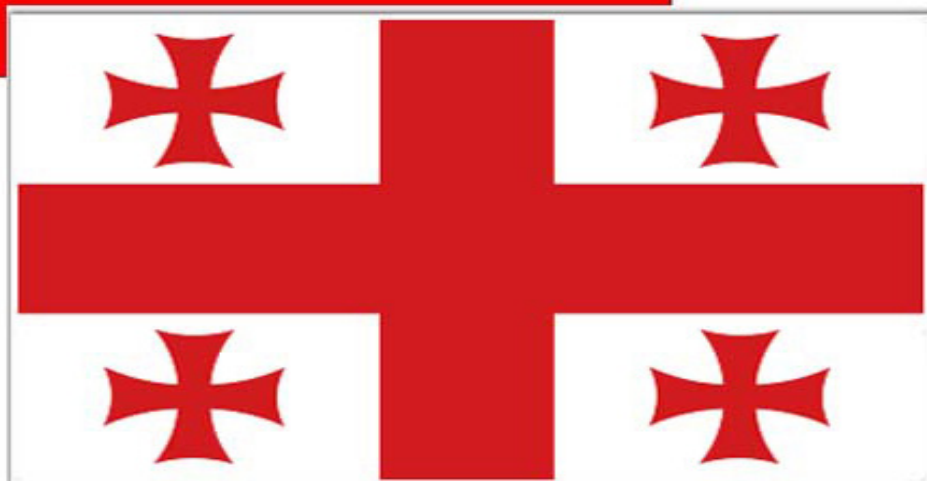
Regarding egg exports, Mahdizadeh said that since the beginning of this year, 40,000 tons of eggs have been exported from the country, representing a 10% growth compared to the same period last year. Half of these 40,000 tons were exported to Iraq, and the other half to Gulf countries and Afghanistan.

He announced that the conditions for exporting Iranian eggs to Russia have been met for the first time, and it is likely to start next week. This matter is currently under health and veterinary reviews.



## Iran's Advice to Taliban Shouldn't Be Considered as Intervention

TEHRAN (IP) - President's Special Representative in Afghanistan Affairs said if Iran and other countries provide Afghanistan with advice out of altruism, the Afghan interim ruling board should not take it as intervention. The regional contact group meeting for Afghanistan kicked off on Saturday morning in Tehran with the participation of special representatives of Iran, China, Russia, and Pakistan. Hassan Kazemi Qomi told reporters in a press conference on the sidelines of the meeting that it is natural that Afghanistan's neighboring countries be concerned about taking a collective initiative to interact with Kabul to ensure the stability and construction of the country. He referred to the US 20-year invasion of Afghanistan from 2000 to 2021 and said that the present sides in the meeting believed that the US must be held responsible for the problems it created for the Afghan nation and its security, the evil doing which is still continuous. He noted that what is going on in Afghanistan, including the issues of drugs and security, is a concern for the neighboring countries, therefore they should be looking for a collective initiative to interact with Kabul in the path of stabilization and construction. Kazemi Qomi pointed to the coming third Doha Meeting in Qatar and said that the participant countries in today's meeting all recommended Afghanistan's neighboring countries to take part in the regional initiative, noting that the first and second Qatar Meetings did not result in achievements beneficial to solve Afghanistan's problems. Reiterating the establishment of an inclusive government in Afghanistan, the Iranian top diplomat reiterated that if today Afghanistan wants to find a way out of the crises it is suffering from, it must form a government involving different ethnicities and political factions.



### Bulgaria Holds Another Snap Election

SOFIA (Dispatches) - Bulgarians head to the polls on Sunday for their sixth parliamentary election in three years, but analysts say the vote is unlikely to yield a stable government that can end prolonged political instability and unblock economic reforms. Bulgaria, the poorest member of the European Union, has been plagued by revolving-door governments since anti-corruption protests in 2020, with a series of elections producing shaky coalitions that swiftly crumbled. The latest opinion polls suggest no party will win a majority, setting the stage for a new round of coalition talks once the votes are in. Polls opened at 7 a.m. (0400 GMT) and closed at 8 p.m. (1700 GMT), with exit polls were due to be announced immediately after polling stations close. Bulgaria needs a period of stable, well-functioning government to accelerate the flow of EU funds into its creaking infrastructure and nudge it towards adopting the euro and fully participating in Europe's open-border Schengen Area.



### North Korea Resumes Sending Trash Balloons to South Korea



SEOUL (Dispatches) - North Korea has resumed sending balloons carrying trash over the border to South Korea, officials and news reports said on Sunday, a week after it vowed to continue if anti-North Korea leaflets are flown from the South. Dozens of balloons with trash attached have been found in Seoul and in areas near the border overnight and early on Sunday, after the South Korean military said late on Saturday the North was again launching them. South Korea's military said on Sunday it takes the balloons "very seriously" and was on alert to take action in response as necessary. It did not elaborate what actions it would take. South Korea has warned it would take "unendurable" measures against the North for sending the trash balloons, which could include blaring propaganda broadcasts from huge loudspeakers set up at the border directed at the North. The North Korean government has said the balloons were sent in retaliation to anti-North leaflets flown by South Korean activists as part of a propaganda campaign and launched hundreds of them starting late in May carrying trash and manure. On June 2, it said it would temporarily halt sending the balloons because 15 tons of trash it sent was probably enough to get the message across how "unpleasant" it was. However, it vowed to resume if leaflets are again flown from the South by sending hundred times the amount. A group of South Korean activists defied the warning and have since flown more balloons to the North with leaflets criticising its leader Kim Jong Un together with USB sticks containing K-pop videos and dramas, and U.S. dollar notes. North Korea has shown some of the angriest reaction towards the leaflet campaign and the loudspeaker broadcasts, in some cases firing weapons at the balloons and the speakers in the past. Experts have said the reaction was an indication Pyongyang considers the propaganda as a serious threat to controlling its public.



By: F. Taherpoor

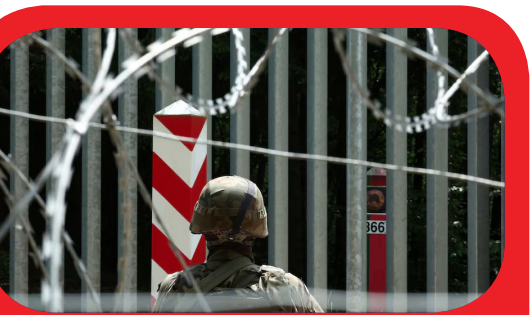
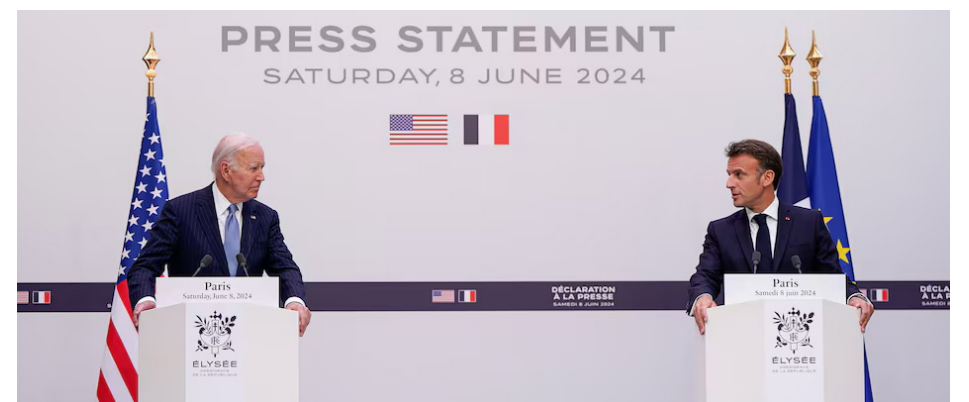
CAIRO (Dispatches) - Israeli forces rescued four hostages held by Hamas since October in a raid in Gaza on Saturday that Palestinian officials said killed more than 200 people, one of the single bloodiest Israeli assaults of the eight-month-old war. The hostage rescue operation and an intense accompanying air assault took place in central Gaza's al-Nuseirat, a densely built-up and often embattled area in the conflict between Israel and Hamas, the Palestinian territory's ruling Islamist group. An Israeli military spokesperson said the operation took place in the heart of a residential neighbourhood in Nuseirat where Hamas had kept the hostages in two separate apartment blocks. Israel's forces came under intense fire during the assault and responded by firing "from the air and from the street," the spokesperson, Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari, said. "We know about under 100 (Palestinian) casualties. I don't know how many from them are terrorists," he said in a briefing with journalists. An Israeli special forces commander was killed during the operation, a police statement said. Gazan paramedics and residents said the assault killed scores of people and left mangled bodies of men, women and children strewn around a marketplace and a mosque. Israel named the rescued hostages as Noa Argamani, 26, Almog Meir Jan, 22, Andrey Kozlov, 27, and Shlomi Ziv, 41. They were taken to hospital for medical checks and were in good health, the military said. The spokesperson for Hamas' armed al-Qassam Brigades, Abu Ubaida, said some hostages were killed during the rescue operation. "It's a blatant lie," Israeli military spokesperson Peter Lerner told CNN. Asked about news reports that U.S. intelligence supported the rescue operation, Lerner said Israel and the U.S. had a "close, intimate working

relationship" as relates to intelligence but declined to elaborate. Attempts by the United States and regional countries to forge a deal that would release all remaining hostages in return for a ceasefire have repeatedly failed as Israel presses its assault in Gaza. Fresh airstrikes in the southern city of Rafah hit homes later on Saturday, residents and Hamas officials said. Poland praised the rescue of the hostages and said that one was a dual Israeli-Polish citizen. U.S. President Joe Biden welcomed the return of the four Israeli hostages rescued in Gaza. "We won't stop working until all the hostages come home and a ceasefire is reached," Biden said at a news conference in Paris alongside French President Emmanuel Macron. Following the hostage rescue, Israel's centrist war cabinet minister, Benny Gantz, delayed a statement on Saturday in which he was widely expected to announce his resignation from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's emergency government. Gantz had presented the conservative premier a June 8 deadline to come up with a clear post-war strategy for Gaza. A different picture unfolded back in Gaza, where Palestinian health ministry officials and local medics said an Israeli military assault in Nuseirat had killed scores of people. The ministry did not say how many of the fatalities were combatants. The Hamas-run government media office in Gaza said later the death toll had risen to at least 210 Palestinians with many more wounded, after medics and health officials gave earlier tolls of up to 100 dead. There was no immediate confirmation of the highest figure from Gaza's health ministry. Social media footage that Reuters could not immediately verify showed bodies spilling entrails onto blood-stained streets.

## Biden, Macron Talk Middle East and Ukraine During Ceremonial State Visit

PARIS (Dispatches) - Fresh from commemorating the 80th anniversary of D-Day, French President Emmanuel Macron welcomed U.S. President Joe Biden in Paris on Saturday for a state visit that included talks about the Middle East, Ukraine and trade. The two countries will work harder to prevent a regional escalation from Israel's war with militant group Hamas in Gaza and focus on calming tensions between Israel and Hezbollah, Macron told reporters at the Elysee presidential palace, with Biden at his side. "We are redoubling efforts together to avoid a regional explosion, particularly in Lebanon," Macron said. Hezbollah is an Iran-backed political movement and militia in Lebanon. Both men welcomed the rescue by Israeli forces of four hostages held by Hamas since October. "We won't stop working until all the hostages come home and a ceasefire is reached," Biden said. Biden has been a staunch supporter of Israel, which is pursuing Hamas after it attacked the country in October. But tens of thousands of Palestinian deaths have soured Biden's left-leaning political base on Israel, hurting him as he runs against Republican Donald Trump for re-election in November. Biden and Macron, who spent the last few days celebrating D-Day veterans and extolling democratic values, did not take questions from reporters. The Saturday visit began with a ceremony at the iconic Arc de Triomphe, where the leaders paid their respects at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier while a massive French flag hanging from the arch fluttered in the breeze above their heads. Accompanied by their wives, Biden and Macron greeted army veterans. Then, escorted by French guards on horseback, they drove down the capital's renowned Avenue des Champs-Élysées, en route to the Elysee. The day concluded with a dinner at the French presidential palace, where celebrities including Pharrell Williams and John McEnroe joined political and business leaders. Macron also welcomed 100-year-old World War Two veteran Harold Terrens and his 96-year-old bride, Jeanne Swerlin, as guests. The couple married earlier on Saturday. Biden and Macron share a warm relationship despite past tensions over a submarine deal with Australia. Biden hosted Macron for a state visit at the White House in 2022. They are aligned in their countries' support for Ukraine and opposition to Russian President Vladimir Putin, and a joint "roadmap" released by the presidents included a commitment to back efforts to use frozen Russian assets to help Kyiv. Tapping profits from Russian assets has drawn concerns from some countries, but a U.S. Treasury official said on Tuesday that the United States and its G7 partners were making progress. Biden said if Putin succeeds in his war with Ukraine, he would not stop there. "It's about much more than Ukraine. All of Europe will be threatened,

but we're not going to let that happen," he said. "The United States is standing strong with Ukraine. We're standing with our allies. And we're standing with France." Biden met with Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Paris on Friday, apologizing for a months-long delay by the U.S. Congress in approving the latest military aid, and Zelenskyy addressed France's National Assembly. Beyond Ukraine, trade issues between the two sides of the Atlantic loomed large, especially over the U.S. Inflation Reduction Act, which Biden signed into law in August 2022. European officials see it as a protectionist move that siphons off investments from EU companies. Macron said he and Biden discussed the consequences of the IRA for the European economy again on Saturday. Despite his criticism of the IRA during his state visit to Washington in 2022, Macron and European allies have since won few concessions from Washington. "We really wish to move towards a resynchronisation of our economies, between the United States of America and European economies, in terms of regulation and in terms of investment levels," Macron said.

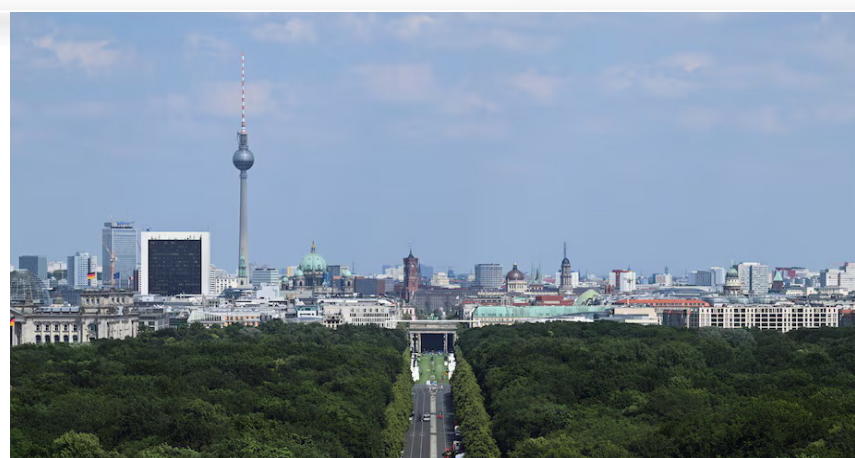


### Tensions Flare on Poland-Belarus Border as More Migrants Arrive

BIALOWIEZA (Dispatches) - Surrounded by lush forests, a dozen people huddled near a razor-tipped fence along the Belarus border, waiting for a chance to scale it or push aside its slats to head west into Poland. On the other side, armed Polish border guards and soldiers walked and drove back and forth, keeping a close eye on group, who were mostly young men from the Middle East, some of them marked with cuts from the sharp wire. Tensions over migration are high across Europe as far-right parties calling for tougher controls face off against centrist movements in European Parliament elections, which are taking place in Poland on Sunday. Here, that standoff has an extra geopolitical edge. Poland and the European Union have accused Belarus and Russia of trying to spread chaos since 2021, by pushing migrants over the frontier in what Warsaw calls a "hybrid war". Minsk and Moscow have dismissed the accusations. The numbers of people arriving have been rising recently, according to Polish government figures. And this week, what Poland sees as a war had a casualty when a soldier patrolling the border died after succumbing to his wounds from a confrontation with migrants on May 28.

## European Parliament Poised for Rightward Shift After Final Voting

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - Voters in 21 EU countries including France and Germany concluded a four-day election for the European Parliament on Sunday, which is expected to shift the assembly to the right and boost the numbers of eurosceptic nationalists. The election will shape how the European Union, a bloc of 450 million citizens, confronts challenges including a hostile Russia, increased industrial rivalry from China and the United States, climate change and immigration. The election began on Thursday in the Netherlands and in other countries on Friday and Saturday, but the bulk of EU votes will be cast on Sunday, with France, Germany, Poland and Spain opening the polls and Italy holding a second day of voting. The European Parliament has said it was to issue an EU-wide exit poll at around 2030 CET and then a first provisional result after 2300 CET when the final EU votes, in Italy, have been cast. Opinion polls predict the pro-European liberals and Greens will lose seats, reducing the majority of the centre-right and centre-left and complicating efforts to push through new EU laws or increase European integration. Many voters have been hit by the cost of living crisis, have concerns about migration and the cost of the green transition and are disturbed by rising geopolitical tensions, including the war in Ukraine. Hard and



far-right parties have seized on this disquiet and offered the electorate an alternative to the mainstream. European Greens, facing a backlash from hard-pressed households, farmers and industry over costly EU policies limiting CO2 emissions, look set to be among the big losers. Forecasts for the liberal group Renew Europe are also grim, given the expectation that Marine Le Pen's far-right Rassemblement National will trounce French President Emmanuel Macron's centrist Renaissance in France. In the Netherlands, exit polls from Thursday already showed nationalist Geert Wilders' anti-immigration party was set to win seven of the 29 Dutch seats in the EU assembly, from zero in 2019, following up on his large win in last year's national election. His Freedom Party will be just one short of the combined seats of a Socialist Democrat-Greens alliance. In Belgium, voters will also get to elect federal and regional chambers and are forecast to back the far-right Flemish separatist party Vlaams Belang in record numbers, although it could still be kept from office by other parties. The government of Prime Minister Alexander De Croo will likely stay in office in a caretaker capacity for many months until a new multi-party coalition is formed.

## Swiatek Crushes Paolini to Win Third French Open Title in Row



PARIS (Dispatches) - Poland's Iga Swiatek extended her French Open reign as she thrashed Jasmine Paolini 6-2, 6-1 in the final to win a third successive Roland Garros title. World number one Swiatek dominated Italian 12th seed Paolini, a first-time Grand Slam finalist, needing just 68 minutes to capture a fourth crown in five years in Paris. Swiatek has now won all five Grand Slam finals she has contested. Her other victory came at the 2022 US Open. She is the fourth woman in the Open era to lift the Coupe Suzanne Lenglen four times -- after Justine Henin, Chris Evert and Steffi Graf. "It's amazing to be here. I love this place. I wait every year to come back," said Swiatek, who clicked into gear after saving a match point against Naomi Osaka in the second round. "I was almost out of the tournament," she said. "I also needed to believe this one is going to be possible, it's been a really emotional tournament." Swiatek becomes only the third woman to win the tournament three years running. Henin, in 2005-07, was the last to do so. Monica Seles also achieved the feat as a teenager at the start of the 1990s. At 23, her four Roland Garros titles is the same number Rafael Nadal, the record 14-time men's champion, had at the same age. For the 28-year-old Paolini it was a sorry conclusion, at least in singles, to an otherwise brilliant fortnight

in the French capital. The world number 15 had won a total of four matches in 16 Grand Slam appearances before advancing to the fourth round of the Australian Open in January. While she fell short of emulating compatriot Francesca Schiavone, who won the 2010 French Open, Paolini could yet finish on a winning note with her and doubles partner Sara Errani through to Sunday's final. "I have to say congratulations to you, Iga," said Paolini. "I think to play you here is the toughest challenge in this sport." "It was tough, but it was lots of fun," she added. Paolini's transformation this season into a player capable of challenging for the biggest prizes stemmed in part from quashing the mindset she needed "a miracle" to beat the best in the sport. Yet the odds were heavily stacked against her going into the final, with Swiatek unbeaten at Roland Garros since a 2021 quarter-final loss to Maria Sakkari. Swiatek had difficulty putting away Karolina Muchova last year when heavily fancied, but there was no such trouble 12 months on as the Pole dismantled Paolini to underline her burgeoning status as the 'Queen of Clay'. The three games won by Paolini were the fewest in the final here since Henin obliterated Ana Ivanovic 6-1, 6-2 in 2007, which also coincided with the Belgian's fourth Roland Garros title in five years.

## Arevalo, Pavic Win French Open Men's Doubles Title



PARIS (Dispatches) - El Salvador's Marcelo Arevalo and Croatian Mate Pavic beat Italian pair Simone Bolelli and Andrea Vavassori 7-5 6-3 to win the French Open men's doubles title. It was the ninth seeds' first Grand Slam crown as a pair. Arevalo, 33, won the French Open men's doubles in 2022 with Dutchman Jean-Julien Rojer and the 30-year-old Pavic has now won the men's doubles titles at all four Grand Slams. "It feels special," said Pavic, who has won seven Grand Slams, including three mixed doubles titles. "I want to thank Marcelo for bringing me to the top. He knows how it is to be done." "Two crazy weeks, a lot of tough matches... we did it together. I am really happy," Arevalo said. The first set was poised at 5-5 when Arevalo and Pavic saved four break points to win the game and broke their opponents to clinch the set. "Of course, I had it in the back of my mind, (that) I lost here twice (in) the finals," Pavic, who lost the men's doubles finals in 2018 and 2020, told reporters. "I was pretty close even before... you have it there in your mind, you want to win." Bolelli and Vavassori, who reached this year's Australian Open final, broke to go 2-1 up in the second set, but Arevalo and Pavic broke back immediately and did so again to take a decisive 5-3 lead. "You played an unbelievable match," Vavassori told the winners. "I hope maybe one day we can beat you," Bolelli said. "Good luck for the rest of the season."

## Croatia Beat Portugal in Euro 2024 Warm-Up Friendly

OEIRAS (Dispatches) - Croatia finished their Euro 2024 preparations with an impressive 2-1 friendly win over Portugal on Saturday. Zlatko Dalic's side beat the Euro 2016 winners in the Lisbon suburb of Oeiras to send Group B rivals Spain and Italy a warning. Roberto Martinez's Portugal, among the contenders to win the tournament, fell to only their second defeat in 13 matches under the Spaniard. Talisman Cristiano Ronaldo was left on the bench by Martinez, whose side spurned chances to equalise in the second half. "Today's game had a negative result... we want to win, it's the best way to grow, but today there are also positives to take," said Martinez. Portugal won all of their qualifying games but have lost in friendlies against Slovenia in March, and now Croatia. "Winning against Croatia doesn't make us good enough to win the tournament, losing doesn't mean we will not qualify for the last 16," continued Martinez. "A friendly game is about preparation. Now we are stronger than before the game... this is international football." "We lost, Croatia deserved it, but for us it was a test we needed." Croatia had the better of the opening period against the subdued hosts and veteran Luka Modric netted his 25th international goal from the penalty spot after Vitinha felled



Mateo Kovacic. Real Madrid midfielder Modric, 38, is hoping to finish on a high in what is likely to be the last major international tournament of his career. Manchester City defender Josko Gvardiol twice came close, while Porto goalkeeper Diogo Costa denied Andrej Kramaric and Ante Budimir headed off target. Substitute Diogo Jota, on at the break, pulled Portugal level early in the second half but Budimir soon restored Croatia's advantage with a header after Mario Pasalic hit the crossbar. Portugal upped their game with Rafael Leao and Joao Cancelo creating danger in search of a leveller but the visitors held on for a second friendly victory after beating North Macedonia. "It's a great victory, it will give us confidence for the Euros," Modric told Nova TV. "Expectations are high, we have a very good team, a great atmosphere, desire, and enthusiasm." "I hope we will play like this... only with this kind of game can we expect something big." Croatia start the tournament by facing three-time winners Spain in Berlin in a week's time. Martinez's side have one final tune-up friendly, against Ireland on Tuesday in Aveiro. Portugal are favourites to progress from Group F which also contains the Czech Republic, Turkey and Georgia.

## Russell on Canadian Pole After Dead Heat With Verstappen



MONTREAL (Dispatches) - George Russell beat Max Verstappen to pole position for the Canadian Grand Prix when the pair shared a best lap time of one minute and 12.000 seconds. The Briton took the prime starting spot because he set his lap time earlier in the session. In a dramatic conclusion to a closely-contested qualifying session, Mercedes' Russell was unable to improve on his Q2 time while Red Bull's series leader and three-time world champion shaved more than a second off his lap. It was enough to lift the Dutchman to the front row of the grid alongside the Briton, who secured his second career pole to give a boost to Mercedes as they emerge from a long period in the doldrums thanks to successive upgrades packages. "Amazing, amazing!" said a delighted Russell on Mercedes team radio. "Right, now we've got a race to win!" "I've missed this feeling," he added. "So much hard work back at the factory has gone into this." Verstappen, who was chasing a third successive Montreal pole, was philosophical. "It is what it is," he said. "Going into qualifying, I would have taken that." Lando Norris was third just 0.021 seconds off their pace ahead of McLaren team-mate Oscar Piastri, RB's Daniel Ricciardo, two-time champion Fernando Alonso of Aston Martin and seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton in the second Mercedes. "Congrats to Mr Russell," said his friend Norris. "I am happy with third. A good job by us so I am happy and excited." Yuki Tsunoda was eighth in the second RB ahead of Lance Stroll in the second Aston Martin and Williams Alex Albon with the two Ferraris failing to make the top ten shootout. Charles Leclerc, an emotional home winner of the Monaco Grand Prix two weeks earlier, qualified 11th and team-mate Carlos Sainz 12th. It was the first time since the 2021 Belgian Grand Prix that Ferrari had both cars eliminated without reaching Q3.

## Olympic Champion Jacobs Retains European 100m Crown

ROME (AFP) - Italy's Olympic champion Marcell Jacobs retained his European 100m crown in Rome on Saturday in the perfect tonic for the upcoming Paris Games. Jacobs timed a season's best of 10.02 seconds to claim gold. Italian teammate Chituru Ali took silver in 10.05sec, with Briton Romel Glave claiming bronze in 10.06sec. After three poorly-attended sessions, there was a sizeable, noisy crowd at the Stadio Olimpico to see the homecoming of Rome local Jacobs, born in the United States to an American soldier father and Italian mother, but raised by the latter in the eternal city. He received a vociferous welcome from the baying crowd, acclaiming the applause like a Roman emperor. With a smile, Jacobs turned his focus to the track. A false start shattered the stillness at the Stadio Olimpico, Ali shown a yellow card as the sprinters moved back to their blocks and got set for the second time of asking. This time there was no mistake and Jacobs led from gun to tape, although pushed by Ali and Glave. A vicious dip at the line ensured Jacobs back-to-back European golds, to the delight of the large crowd. "I had three goals: health, defending the European title and then the Olympic one," said Jacobs. "I won again and I am very glad of it. It was the first time in this season that I ran two races



closely. In the final I felt a cramp on the right calf but I went on, I gritted my teeth because I wanted to win, ahead of this amazing audience." Jacobs caused an upset when he won Olympic gold at the Covid-delayed Tokyo Games in 2021. The Italian set a European record of 9.80sec to seal that victory, quickly bagging a second gold as part of the 4x100m relay. He followed that success up by winning the 2022 world indoor 60m title in Belgrade and the European 100m gold later the same year in Munich. A series of injuries ensued, but Jacobs has shown his resolve and tellingly changed coach in Olympic year, moving to the United States to work under Rana Reider. "I changed almost everything in my life and I promised myself that I would want to give Italy more emotions," Jacobs said. "I am very happy because everything is getting better race after race. I know I made a big bet on myself, I knew that I came in Rome not in the best shape but I won and it is one of the goals of the season." "We are on the right way, for sure." Jacobs said his victory at the Tokyo Olympics, allied with the relay gold, had had an impact on the Italian team.