

Iran's Judiciary Spokesman Has Called on International Organizations to Make Use of the World Opportunities and the Cooperation Among World Countries to Give a Proper Response to the Israeli Regime's Crimes in Gaza

IRAN NEWS

Iran's Acting Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani in a Message Has Offered Congratulations to the External Affairs Minister of India Subrahmanyam Jaishankar on His Reappointment and Called for Expansion of Ties Between Iran and India in All Fields

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Envoy Rejects Report on Suspension of Iran-Russia Cooperation Agreement

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK



TEHRAN (IRNA) - The Iranian ambassador to Russia stated that the recent claim about the suspension of the cooperation agreement between Iran and Russia by the Iranian side is false. He added that just on Monday, Messrs. Lavrov and Bagheri Kani were pursuing the swift signing of this agreement.

Kazem Jalali, the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Russia, responded to a question from the IRNA correspondent regarding certain domestic media claims quoting a Russian Foreign Ministry official that the comprehensive agreement has been suspended by the Iranians. He said, "I gave the text of this news, which was in Russian, to translator friends; we realized the Russian text differs from the Persian text."

He stated, "The Persian text mentions that Mr. Zamir Kabulov said that the comprehensive agreement, which was supposed to be concluded between Iran and Russia, was suspended by the Iranians, whereas this is not the case in the Russian text."

Our country's ambassador to Russia, noting that this is a recurring issue, emphasized, "Some friends within Iran hastily publish inaccurate news. The reality is that we have been working on the comprehensive cooperation agreement between the two countries for two years."

Jalali added, "It is natural that many expert discussions have taken place, and the latest versions of the texts are regularly exchanged. The last time, the Russians gave the text to the Iranian side. Yesterday, in the meeting between Lavrov and Ali Bagheri-Kani, it was discussed to finalize this text as soon as possible."

He continued, "Coordination and arrangement with various institutions within the country are necessary, which certainly takes time. Our effort has been and continues to be to have this signed by the officials of the two countries in 2024."

He said, "Martyr Ayatollah Ebrahim Raisi and Martyr Hossein Amir-Abdollahian were very keen on this matter, and in our last conversations with Mr. Amir-Abdollahian, it was discussed to bring this issue to the signing stage as soon as possible."

Our country's ambassador to Russia concluded, "We hope our officials and institutions respond as quickly as possible to prepare this for signing."

BRICS Should Be Voice of People Who Seek Fairer, More Multilateral World



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran's acting Foreign Minister, Ali Bagheri Kani, has said that BRICS ought to represent the voice of the global majority seeking their rightful position and favoring a fairer, more democratic, and multilateral world over the present tumultuous one.

Ali Bagheri Kani made the remarks at the BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting in the Russian city of Nizhny Novgorod on Monday.

He emphasized the significance of BRICS in creating a fair, multilateral, and democratic world and highlighted the destructive impact of the Zionist regime's actions against the people of Gaza.

The top Iranian diplomat stressed the need to establish and strengthen new institutions and structures alongside the current dysfunctional systems due to unilateralism, nationalist supremacy, genocide, sanctions, blockades, and other illegal coercive measures.

Referring to the importance of BRICS in reshaping the world for the better, he underscored that the existing unjust and undemocratic structures governing the world are incapable of solving problems and improving the disorderly world situation.

Bagheri Kani also underlined the need for BRICS to prioritize and implement the reform of the financial systems based on Bretton Woods, which often hinder the development and progress of independent and developing countries.

He highlighted the necessity for BRICS members to collaborate in various areas, especially in finance, trade, investment, transportation, energy, technology, and innovation, to neutralize illegal, unilateral, and oppressive sanctions and establish sustainable international security.

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK



Iran Urges World Body to Pressure Israel Into Honoring ICJ Rulings

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has called on the United Nations to ratchet up pressure on Israel to make it abide by the rulings issued by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) against the regime's genocidal war on the Gaza Strip.

In a letter sent to UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres on Monday, Iran's interim Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani said the UN has a duty to urge all member states to refrain from collaborating with the aggressor regime as such a move could constitute complicity in the most serious crimes.

"Once again, I deem it necessary to underline the crucial role and inevitable responsibility of the United Nations with respect to the ongoing massacre in the occupied Palestinian territories by the Israeli regime," he said.

"In this context, it is highly expected that your Excellency utilize all means available ... to put pressure on the Israeli regime in order to compel it to abide by the binding provisional measure of the International Court of Justice and stop genocide of the Palestinian people."

In a case brought by South Africa against Israel, the ICJ, the UN's top court, issued three provisional measures on January 26, March 28 and May 24.

They respectively ordered Israel to take all measures within its power to prevent genocide in Gaza, allow unimpeded access of food aid into the besieged Palestinian territory, and immediately halt its military

invasion of the southern city of Rafah.

Also in his letter, Ali Bagheri Kani said the international community should urgently put an end to the ongoing atrocities perpetrated by the usurping entity in the occupied Palestinian territories and protect innocent civilians.

"I wish to reiterate that the international community is legally and morally duty-bound to stop and prevent the genocide of the Palestinian nation. It is imperative to ensure the immediate and unhindered fulfillment of all their humanitarian needs," he noted.

Under the UN Charter, Bagheri Kani said, all states, specifically those who provide support to Israel, have legal responsibility to prevent genocide by ceasing aid to the genocidal regime.

Israel waged its brutal Gaza onslaught on October 7 after the Palestinian Hamas resistance group carried out its historic operation against the occupying entity in retaliation for the regime's intensified atrocities against the Palestinian people.

So far, the Tel Aviv regime has killed at least 37,124 Palestinians, mostly women and children, and injured 84,712 others in the Gaza Strip.

Israel is deliberately blocking and delaying the flow of food and basic supplies into Gaza and using starvation of civilians as a method of warfare.

IAEA's Political Resolution Not to Hinder Iran's Nuclear Development



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's interim foreign minister says a politically-motivated resolution issued by the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will fail to impede efforts by the Islamic Republic to implement its nuclear development plans.

Ali Bagheri Kani made the remarks in an address to the foreign ministerial meeting of the member states of the BRICS group of countries in the Russian city of Nizhny Novgorod on Monday.

He said the move by the three European parties to the 2015 nuclear deal - Britain, France and Germany - to spearhead the IAEA resolution against Tehran was in line with their failed policies to abuse international mechanisms to obtain their own political goals against independent countries.

The E3 move against Iran will cause more tension, Bagheri Kani said.

The interim foreign minister said Tehran will continue to cooperate with the IAEA based on its rights and commitments stipulated in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Safeguards Agreement.

The 35-member Board of Governors passed a resolution on June 5, accusing Iran of withholding sufficient cooperation with the IAEA.

Ratified by 20 votes in favor, two against and 12 abstentions, the resolution proposed by the E3 demands that the Islamic Republic step up its cooperation with the IAEA and provide "technically credible explanations which satisfy the Agency's questions."

The resolution also supports the IAEA to pursue its dialogue with Iran to clarify all outstanding safeguards issues.

Bagheri Kani said the current unjust and undemocratic structures in the world are incapable of solving problems and changing the global chaotic situation. However, BRICS has drawn up major plans to rectify the unfair systems and turn into a driving force to build a better world, he added.

French-U.S. Roadmap Politically-Motivated



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has dismissed a "joint roadmap" released by France and the United States that leveled "baseless and unacceptable" allegations against the Islamic Republic.

In a statement, the Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani said U.S. President Joe Biden and his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron released the "unfounded and politically-motivated" roadmap in continuation of their failed policies.

"As we have repeatedly announced, the Islamic Republic of Iran is committed to technical cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) within the framework of international rights and obligations and based on the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Safeguards Agreement," he said.

The official reiterated Iran's "undeniable" role in establishing and strengthening regional and international stability and security and fighting terrorist groups.

The spokesman also reaffirmed Iran's principled stance on the need to solve disputes between the two sides involved in the Ukrainian conflict through political channels.

Kanaani said it is ridiculous that the supporters of the child-killing Israeli regime and those who repressed university students protesting its war crimes against the people of Palestine allow themselves to lecture others on morals and human rights.

He recommended the French president not pursue the hostile policies of the U.S. government against Iran.

In their joint roadmap released on Saturday, Biden and Macron claimed Iran is transferring military materials and components to Russia to be used against Ukraine. The two presidents accused Iran of destabilizing role in the region.

Iran, Tajikistan Signed 44 Cooperation Documents in 3 Years

TEHRAN - Ambassador of Tajikistan to Iran, referring to the expansion of relations between Tehran and Dushanbe in recent years, stated that with the visits of the Presidents of Iran and Tajikistan, 44 cooperation documents have been signed between the two countries in the past three years.

"Nizomuddin Zahidov" today (Monday) in a meeting with the head of the Iranian Mapping Organization to follow up on agreements made between the two countries, said: In recent years, we have witnessed the expansion of political, economic, and cultural relations between the two countries.

He evaluated the meetings of the Presidents of the two countries in recent years as constructive and added: In 2021, the first visit of the late Ayatollah Raisi to Tajikistan took place, and then in 2022, "Emomali Rahmon," the leader and President of Tajikistan, visited Iran. Also, last year, the late Raisi again visited Tajikistan; meaning, in the past three years, there have been three high-level visits during which very good agreements for cooperation between the two countries were reached.

The Ambassador of Tajikistan in Iran continued: In these three visits, 44 bilateral cooperation documents were signed between the two countries; additionally, in February of last year, the Chairman of the National Assembly

of Tajikistan also visited Tehran to strengthen bilateral cooperation.

Zahidov said: Constructive political communications at a high and purposeful level continue, and I am confident that after the election of the new President of Iran, the cooperation will continue; also, Emomali Rahmon, the President of Tajikistan, and "Mohammad Mokhber," the Acting President of Iran, recently held discussions to strengthen relations.

He pointed to the expansion of economic relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Tajikistan in recent years and stated: The trade volume between the two countries was about \$57 million in 2020, which increased to \$270 million last year. The Presidents of the two countries had agreed that in the coming years, the trade volume would reach \$500 million, indicating the growing trend of cooperation between the two countries.

The Ambassador said: The agreement that the Presidents of the two countries had to increase trade volume can be realized in the coming years.

Zahidov emphasized the cultural commonalities between the two countries and said: Cultural cooperation paves the way for growth in all areas, and in 2022, cultural weeks were held in both countries.



IRAN NEWS



Russia Plans to Involve Iran in Major Transport Projects

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – A Russian presidential aide expressed his country's willingness to carry out strategic projects with Iran and promote cooperation in major transportation projects.

In a meeting with the caretaker foreign minister of Iran, held on the sidelines of a ministerial meeting of the BRICS countries in the Russian city of Nizhny Novgorod on Monday, Igor Levitin said Moscow is determined to implement the previous agreements with Tehran.

The aide to the Russian president said he will soon pay a visit to Iran to assess the implementation and completion of the joint strategic projects, including the North-South Transport Corridor.

Russia intends to connect the North-South corridor to the other corridors and prepare the ground for closer cooperation between Moscow and Tehran in the transportation sector, Levitin stated. Chaired by Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, the two-day ministerial meeting of BRICS is also attended by senior diplomats from the Friends of BRICS nations.

Smuggling of Low-Quality Afghan Carpets into Iran



TEHRAN - Masoud Sepehrzad, the head of the Tehran Hand-woven Carpet Manufacturers and Sellers Union, touched upon the sale of Afghan carpets in the Iranian carpet market. He mentioned that unfortunately, this is no longer a new issue, as these carpets have been appearing in the Iranian market in sizes ranging from 3 to 12 square meters for the past four years.

He added that the quality of Afghan hand-woven carpets is significantly lower compared to similar Iranian products, which is why they are sold at lower prices. Therefore, carpet buyers should be aware that this price difference is due to lower quality.

Sepehrzad also discussed the smuggling of these carpets through the shared borders of Afghanistan and Iran. He noted that the Tehran Hand-woven Carpet Manufacturers and Sellers Union has communicated with the Economic Security Police to address the issue of these carpets being offered in the market and the necessity of preventing their entry from the eastern borders. However, he believes that no success has been achieved in this regard so far, and these carpets continue to be available in the Iranian market.

He added that the smuggling of hand-woven carpets into Iran only occurs from Afghanistan, as it is not economically viable for other carpet-producing countries to smuggle to Iran. Countries like Turkey have their own markets around the world.

Tehran, Moscow Exploring Ways to Boost Bilateral Trade

TEHRAN - A Russian trade delegation, including representatives from 8 companies active in the agriculture and industry sectors, visited Iran and met with economic activists and traders in the Iranian Chamber of Commerce.

The Russian trade delegation, including representatives from 8 companies active in agriculture and industry, visited Iran and met with economic activists and traders in the Iranian Chamber of Commerce. During this meeting, discussions were held about communication channels for strengthening Iran-Russia trade relations that remain untapped.

The delegation traveled with the cooperation of the Iranian Chamber of Commerce, the Iran-Russia Joint Chamber of Commerce, and the Russian Trade Representation in Iran, aiming to boost trade volume between the two countries to reach 40 billion dollars.

Before the face-to-face meetings between the delegation members and Iranian economic activists, Niloufar Asadi, Director of Asia and Oceania at the Iranian Chamber of Commerce, emphasized the high capacities of Iran and Russia in trade. She stressed that a more precise and organized plan is needed to increase the trade volume between Iran and Russia.

She pointed out that the main issues in commercial cooperation between the two countries are related to customs, transportation, and money transfers. Asadi highlighted that while these challenges are well-known, reaching a trade volume of 40 billion dollars annually between Iran and Russia is feasible given the existing capacities, facilities, and capabilities on both sides.

Asadi expressed hope that with the finalization of the free trade agreement between Iran and Eurasia, achieving the set goals in Iran-Russia relations would be easier.

Maxim Petrochenkov, head of the Russian trade delegation, emphasized that Iran-Russia relations are not limited to trade and economy. He noted that the level of mutual relations and cooperation has significantly grown over the past years, and Russian economic activists are keen to expand these relations further. The current visit by the trade delegation to Iran reflects this approach.

He continued that the trade volume between Iran and Russia has exceeded 4 billion dollars. Although this is not entirely satisfactory, it is promising because the potential for trade relations between the two countries is much greater.

Petrochenkov believes that there are many technical problems facing economic activists from both sides in the path of trade and joint investment, but solutions exist for overcoming these issues.

In another part of the meeting, Roshnaali Yekta, Vice President of the Iran-Russia Joint Chamber of Commerce, mentioned the presence of a young team at the Russian Trade Representation in Iran. He asserted that this group's presence could initiate a new phase of joint commercial activities between Iran and Russia.

This economic activist noted that while everyone is aware of the challenges facing traders from both countries, there are new, untouched communication channels available. By accurately identifying problems, these new channels can be utilized, which can only be achieved through mutual cooperation.

The meeting concluded with direct talks between the Russian trade delegation members and Iranian economic activists.

Changoleh Oil Field Development Contract To Be Signed Soon



TEHRAN (Shana) - Managing director of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), Mohsen Khojastemehr, has said that the Changoleh oil field development contract will be signed soon.

NIOC's managing director added that it was estimated that 1.3 billion dollars will be invested in development of the oil field, with in situ oil reserves of 3.2 billion barrels, for production of 60 thousand barrels oil per day.

The deputy minister of petroleum added: executive operations in the field include drilling of 18 oil production wells, drilling of 2 appraisal wells, the drilling of 2 wastewater disposal wells and the repair of 2 wells plus the construction of wellhead facilities and related pipelines along with construction of processing and transmission of crude oil and associated gases facilities.

"The contract has considered 12.5 million dollars for enforcement of the social responsibility obligations as well", Khojastemehr said, adding the development plan of Changoleh oil field was ratified during the late president, Ibrahim Raisi's visit to Ilam Province and its implementation will play a great role in economic prosperity and creating jobs in the province.

It is predicted that the implementation of the development plan will create 6500 jobs either directly or indirectly, NIOC' CEO said.

The Changoleh oil field is located southwest of Ilam Province, 50 km away from Mehran city and near the border with Iraq.

Iran's Cartography Capabilities to Be Shared With Tajikistan

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The head of the National Cartography Organization announced that the capacities and capabilities of the organization will be made available to the State Committee for Land Management and Geodesy of the Republic of Tajikistan. Additionally, the use of private sector capacities has also been proposed.

Ali Javidan stated in a joint meeting between the National Cartography Organization and the State Committee for Land Management and Geodesy of the Republic of Tajikistan that this meeting is in line with the objectives of the memorandum of understanding signed between the Presidents of Iran and Tajikistan during the tenure of the martyred Ayatollah Raisi.

Referring to the capabilities of the National Cartography Organization of Iran, he added that these capacities will be made available to Tajikistan and that today's meeting can pave the way for further interactions.

Introducing the National Cartography Organization, Javidan continued: Permanent positioning systems and spatial information infrastructure will be presented to the Tajik delegation. Additionally, a permanent positioning station used for country coordinates will be utilized.

The head of the National Cartography Organization added: The

Tajik delegation will also visit the Iranian Space Agency and the Geological Survey of Iran. The Space Agency is involved in satellite launches, and the Geological Survey works on geophysics projects.

He noted that besides the governmental cooperation between the two countries, it was proposed, based on prior negotiations, to also utilize the capabilities of the private sector and companies active in cartography and aerial photography with drones and UAVs.

Javidan emphasized on cooperation in the field of education, stating that short-term training courses have been held for the employees of the State Committee for Land Management and Geodesy of Tajikistan. For long-term and postgraduate courses in cartography engineering, negotiations have been held with the Ministry of Science to establish educational scholarships, and a memorandum of understanding is being signed with the Ministry of Science of Tajikistan.

The head of the National Cartography Organization stated that alongside presenting the private sector's capabilities and academic discussions, invitations have been extended to the private sector active in cartography education and engineering to hold training and postgraduate courses in Tajikistan.



ICCIMA Eyes Enhancement of Food Exports

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Vice-President of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Qadir Qiafeh said that the exports of non-oil products is one of the main agendas of the chamber, with a high significance attached to the exports of food.

In an address to the International Food Commerce Conference in Tehran on Sunday, Qiafeh said that the global value of food industry exports stands at \$9.5 trillion.

He stressed that Iran's exports of food have registered a 5.3% increase over the past 12 years in terms of tonnage while the value of the country's food exports have decreased by an average 0.6% in the timespan.

Qiafeh noted that the Iran Chamber of Commerce supports holding food industry weeks in neighboring countries and main trade partners of Iran.

He also touched upon an upcoming presidential election on June 28, stressing that the private sector expects the next president to refrain from intervening in the pricing process.

The International Food Commerce Conference is being sponsored by the ICCIMA Commission of Food Industries.

40% Increase in Port Transit Performance



TEHRAN (ILNA) - Director General of the Ports and Maritime Organization, Ali Akbar Safaei, visited the newly established maritime and port infrastructure and development projects.

He stated: Based on the overall sea-oriented development policies issued by the Supreme Leader, the late President had a special focus on maritime transport issues. In line with these policies and the efforts of the Minister of Roads and Urban Development, the Ports and Maritime Organization has planned three sectors at the national, international, regional, and provincial levels.

He continued: In the international sector, the late President's efforts with neighboring countries significantly impacted maritime trade, leading to a 45% increase in the Ports and Maritime Organization's transit performance last year, and this year it has increased by 40%.

The Director General of the Ports and Maritime Organization said: In the international maritime trade sector, some northern ports have seen up to a 130% increase, and currently, all vessels are operational.

Safaei also mentioned the inauguration and operation of 150 projects with an investment of 400 trillion rials. He explained: Some of these projects, including more than 400 projects with an investment of 1.48 quadrillion rials, have achieved 90% physical progress.

He said: The statistics and figures in the international sea-oriented development sector are remarkable. For example, in the modernization of port and maritime equipment, 108 pieces of port equipment have been installed by the Ports and Maritime Organization and the private sector in the 13th government.

The Deputy Minister of Roads and Urban Development stated that currently, 188 pieces of maritime equipment are under construction and operation, of which 40 have been operationalized in the country's ports.

Regarding the improvement of local port indices, Safaei said: Many efforts have been made to boost the economy in this sector, with numerous valuable projects handed over to ports in Khuzestan, northern ports, and Sistan and Baluchestan provinces.

Jordan Hosts Emergency Aid Summit for War-Torn Gaza

AMMAN (Dispatches) - Jordan hosted a summit Tuesday on the urgent humanitarian response for Palestinians enduring more than eight months of devastating war in Gaza, where the United Nations has warned of looming famine.

With much of the territory's food, water and energy cut off, the vast majority of Gazans rely on sporadic aid deliveries by land, sea and air.

The summit seeks to bring together leaders and aid officials to "determine means for enhancing the international community's response to the humanitarian disaster in the Gaza Strip", according to the Jordanian royal court.

The conference is jointly organized by the UN, Jordan and Egypt on the Dead Sea coast and will be attended by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, as well as Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas. Blinken is on his eighth visit to the region since the war broke out, seeking to push a truce and hostage exchange deal put forward by US President Joe Biden at the end of May.



S. Korea Fires Warning Shots after N. Korea Soldiers Crossed Border



SEOUL (Dispatches) - Seoul's military said Tuesday it had fired warning shots after North Korean soldiers briefly crossed the border this week, with tensions high over Pyongyang's trash-carrying balloons and Seoul's loudspeaker propaganda campaigns.

"Some North Korean soldiers working within the DMZ on the central front briefly crossed the Military Demarcation Line," the JCS said in a statement, referring to the line of control in the heavily fortified border between the two Koreas.

"After our military issued warning broadcasts and warning shots, they retreated northward," it said, adding the incident happened June 9.

"Apart from the immediate retreat of the North Korean soldiers following our warning shots, there were no unusual movements observed," the JCS said, adding the military was closely monitoring troops near the border.

Tensions between the two Koreas -- which remain technically at war since the 1950-1953 conflict ended in an armistice rather than a peace treaty -- are at one of their lowest points in years.

In recent weeks, North Korea has sent hundreds of balloons laden with trash like cigarette butts and toilet paper southward, in what it calls retaliation for balloons carrying anti-Pyongyang propaganda sent north by activists.

The South Korean government this month fully suspended a 2018 tension-reducing military deal and restarted loudspeaker propaganda broadcasts along the border in response to the trash balloons, infuriating the North, which warned Seoul was creating "a new crisis".

South Korea's military said Monday it had detected signs the North was installing its own loudspeakers.

North Korea had used loudspeakers along the border since the 1960s, typically broadcasting praise of the Kim family, but suspended their use in 2018 as ties warmed.

Experts have warned that the decision to jettison the 2018 deal and restart loudspeaker broadcasts could have serious implications.

Previous propaganda tit-for-tat actions have had real-world consequences for inter-Korean relations.



UNSC Votes for U.S.-Drafted Gaza Ceasefire Resolution

UNITED NATIONS (Dispatches) - The United Nations Security Council on Monday adopted a U.S.-drafted resolution supporting a ceasefire plan in Gaza, as Washington leads an intense diplomatic campaign to push Hamas to accept the proposal.

The text -- passed with 14 votes in favor and Russia abstaining -- "welcomes" the truce and hostage release proposal announced on May 31 by President Joe Biden, and urges "parties to fully implement its terms without delay and without condition."

The resolution says Israel has accepted the truce plan, and "calls upon Hamas to also accept it."

Hamas said Monday that it "welcomes" the vote.

The United States, a staunch ally of Israel, has been widely criticized for having blocked several previous UN draft resolutions calling for a ceasefire in Gaza.

But Biden late last month launched a new U.S. effort to secure a truce and hostage release.

"Today we voted for peace," U.S. ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield said after the UN session.

"Today this Council sent a clear message to Hamas: accept the ceasefire deal on the table. Israel has already agreed to this deal and the fighting could stop today if Hamas would do the same."

However the deal remains uncertain as Hamas officials have insisted that any ceasefire agreement must guarantee a permanent end to the war -- a demand Israel has firmly rejected, vowing to destroy Hamas and free the remaining captives.

Under the proposal, Israel would withdraw from Gaza population centers and Hamas would free the hostages. The ceasefire would last an initial six weeks, with it extended as negotiators seek a permanent end to hostilities.

The "text is not perfect," said Algeria's UN Ambassador Amar Bendjama. "But it offers a glimmer of hope to the Palestinians, as the alternative is continued killing and suffering."

After the vote, Israeli diplomat Reut Shapir Ben Naftaly emphasized that the "war will end" only when Israeli "goals are met," including the release of hostages and the destruction of Hamas.

"Hamas' refusal to release the hostages through diplomacy has proven that the effort to bring our

hostages home must also include military means," she said.

The Palestinian envoy to the United Nations, Riyad Mansour, meanwhile welcomed the council's vote, stating that the "burden" of implementing the resolution and ceasefire "is on the Israeli side."

Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas added that he considered "the adoption of this resolution a step in the right direction to end the war of genocide against our people in the Gaza Strip."

Since the unprecedented attack by Palestinian Islamist movement Hamas on October 7 against Israel, and the subsequent Israeli counterattack, the UN Security Council has struggled to act.

Following two resolutions focused on humanitarian aid, the Security Council finally at the end of March demanded an "immediate ceasefire" for the duration of Ramadan, after the United States abstained from the vote.

The Gaza war was sparked by Hamas's attack on southern Israel, which resulted in the deaths of 1,194 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on Israeli official figures.

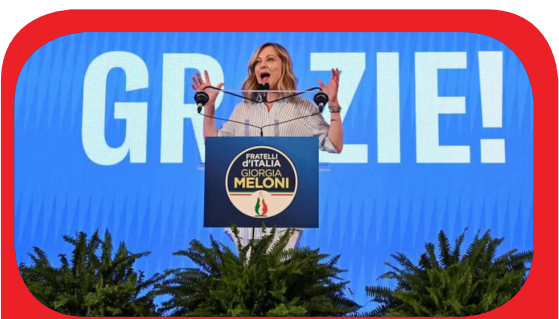
Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed at least 37,124 people in Gaza, mostly civilians, according to the Hamas-run territory's health ministry.

The first phase of the truce would see an "immediate, full and complete ceasefire," the release of hostages in exchange for Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails, and the "withdrawal of Israeli forces from the populated areas in Gaza."

This would also allow the "safe and effective distribution of humanitarian assistance at scale throughout the Gaza Strip to all Palestinian civilians who need it."

Russia's UN ambassador, Vasily Nebenzia, countered that the council was singing on to the plan without "details" and "giving a carte blanche."

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken held talks in Israel with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday, the latest effort to halt the eight months of war.



Italy's Meloni Comes out on Top in EU Vote

ROME (Dispatches) - Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's arch-conservative Brothers of Italy group won the most votes in the European parliamentary election over the weekend, boosting her standing both at home and abroad.

With almost all ballots counted, Brothers of Italy won 28.8% of the vote, more than four times what it took in the last European Union election in 2019, and exceeding the 26% it secured in the 2022 national ballot, when it rose to power.

"I am proud that Italy will present itself to the G7, to Europe with the strongest government of all. This is something that has not happened in the past but is happening today, it is a satisfaction and also a great responsibility," Meloni said early on Monday from the party's headquarters.

The opposition centre-left Democratic Party came in second with 24% of the vote, while another opposition group, the 5-Star Movement, was third with 9.9% - its worst showing at a countrywide level since its creation in 2009.

The EU ballot indicated that Meloni's ruling coalition, made up of parties that stretch from the centre-right to the far right of the political spectrum, saw its support climb to more than 47% from just under 43% in 2022.

Macron Urges French Voters to Make Right Choice in Snap Elections

PARIS (Dispatches) - President Emmanuel Macron said Monday that he was confident French voters would make the "right choice" in snap elections he called after the far right crushed his centrist alliance in Sunday's EU ballot.

His surprise move came after mainstream centrist parties kept an overall majority in the European Parliament in Sunday's elections, but the far right notched up a string of high-profile victories in Italy, Austria and France. Analysts say Macron has taken the risky gamble of dissolving the national parliament in a bid to keep the far-right National Rally (RN) out of power when his second term ends in 2027.

"I am confident in the capacity of the French people to make the right choice for themselves and for future generations," Macron wrote on X on Monday.

His announcement of elections for a new National Assembly on June 30, with a second round on July 7, has sparked widespread alarm, even from within the ranks of his party.

"By playing with fire, the head of state could end up by burning himself and dragging the entire country into the fire," Le Monde wrote in an editorial.

Despite the storm of criticism, Macron appeared unfazed on Monday as he visited the southwestern French village of Oradour-sur-Glane, site of a massacre by Nazi soldiers during World War II, together with German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier.

Steinmeier said: "Let us never forget the damage done in Europe by nationalism and hate."

Meanwhile, Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo, a Socialist, described the prospect of elections just weeks before the start of the Paris Olympics as "extremely unsettling".

But International Olympic Committee chief Thomas Bach played down any direct impact on the event.

Uncertainty around the election also sapped market confidence, with Paris's CAC 40 index closing 1.35 percent lower and the interest rate on French government debt gaining 10 basis points, to 3.22 percent.

In a televised address late Sunday, Macron warned of the danger of "the rise of nationalists and demagogues" for France and its place in Europe.

He noted that, including the RN, far-right parties in France had managed to take almost 40 percent of the EU Parliament vote.

Macron is hoping to win back the majority he lost in France's lower house in 2022 legislative elections after winning a second term.

But some fear the anti-immigration RN could instead win, forcing Macron to work in an uncomfortable



coalition with a far-right prime minister.

RN co-leader Marine Le Pen said the party's fellow leader and her protege, 28-year-old Jordan Bardella, would be its contender for prime minister.

Le Pen, who was runner-up in the last two presidential elections, is largely expected to tilt for the top job again in 2027.

However, it will not be plain sailing for the RN as the party still provokes widespread hostility.

Demonstrators took to the streets of Paris, Marseille, Rennes, Lyon and several other large cities on Monday evening to show their opposition to the far right.

Five labour unions also called for mass protests this weekend, warning that "our republic and our democracy are in danger" if the far right wins again at the end of the month.

The RN came in first in the French EU parliament voting with more than 31 percent, a score more than double that of Macron's list with 14 percent.

The Socialists and hard-left France Unbowed trailed behind with 13 and nine percent each.

The Socialists and three other left-wing parties -- France Unbowed, the Communists and the Ecologists -- announced late Monday that they would unite for the legislative elections as part of a "popular front... to fight the far-right's racist project".

Russia Reports Battlefield Gains in Donetsk Region

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia claimed the capture of another village in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region, the latest in a string of gains ahead of a major Ukraine summit in Switzerland.

Dozens of world leaders and top diplomats are to convene for a meeting at the weekend that President Volodymyr Zelensky hopes will rally global support behind Kyiv as it struggles more than two years into Russia's invasion.

Zelensky has ruled out direct talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin and is keen to win over more non-Western countries, including those who maintain close ties with Moscow.

After almost a year of stalemate, Ukraine has been forced to abandon dozens of front-line settlements this spring, with Russian troops holding a significant advantage in manpower and resources.

Russia's defense ministry said Monday that its forces "continued to advance into the depths of the enemy's defense and liberated the settlement of Staromaiorske", located southwest of the Russian-held city of Donetsk.

The loss of the village is a symbolic blow to Kyiv, as it is one of the few Ukraine



managed to recapture last year in a largely lackluster counter-offensive.

Staromaiorske is on the southern front of the Donetsk region, one of the four regions Moscow claimed to have annexed in 2022 and where some of the fiercest fighting is now taking place.

Putin told an economic forum last week that Russia had seized 47 Ukrainian towns and villages so far this year.

That includes gains in the northeastern Kharkiv region where Moscow launched a major ground assault last month, causing thousands of Ukrainians to evacuate and further stretching Kyiv's forces.

U.S. President Joe Biden's national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, said Sunday that Russia's advance on the Kharkiv border region had "stalled out" after Washington partially lifted restrictions on using US-donated weapons to strike inside Russia.

In a diplomatic setback for Kyiv, Biden confirmed last week that he would not be attending the June 15-16 summit at the Burgenstock Resort, which overlooks Lake Lucerne in central Switzerland.

Benin Stun Nigeria, Salah Rescues Egypt

JOHANNESBURG (Dispatches) - Benin came from behind to stun Nigeria 2-1 and Liverpool star Mohamed Salah scored to salvage a 1-1 draw for Egypt against Guinea-Bissau in World Cup qualifying on Monday.

Ghana were another side to stage a fightback, defeating the Central African Republic 4-3 after trailing at half-time with Crystal Palace forward Jordan Ayew claiming a hat-trick.

Success was particularly sweet for Benin coach Gernot Rohr, the 70-year-old German sacked by Nigeria in 2021 after five years in charge.

The victory lifted Benin, 67 places below Nigeria in the world rankings, to the top of Group C with seven points, two more than Lesotho.

Nigeria, six-time qualifiers for the World Cup and runners-up to hosts the Ivory Coast in the 2024 Africa Cup of Nations, were expected to dominate the six-team section with South Africa.

But after three draws and a loss they lie fifth with just three points. Only Zimbabwe are beneath the Super Eagles.

The defeat by Benin puts pressure on Nigeria coach Finidi George, who took over the reins when Portuguese boss Jose Pereira quit in February after the Cup of Nations.

Former Nigeria star George has won only one of four competitive and friendly matches, and losing to neighbours Benin is sure to trigger criticism.

Benin, disadvantaged by having to play in Ivorian commercial capital Abidjan because they do not have a FIFA-approved stadium, fell behind after 27 minutes.

A long pass was transferred by Samuel Chukwueze to Raphael Onyedika, who bagged his first

goal for Nigeria with a fierce shot.

Unperturbed, Benin hit back with goals from Jodel Dossou and captain Steve Mounie before half-time to take a lead they retained till the end.

Dossou burst forward to beat goalkeeper Stanley Nwabali and Mounie celebrated his 50th cap by slamming the ball into the net after a corner was not cleared.

Benin top the table with have seven points, Lesotho have five, Rwanda and South Africa four each, Nigeria three and Zimbabwe two.

Lesotho, forced to stage home matches in South Africa as they lack an international-standard stadium, host Rwanda and South Africa play Zimbabwe in Bloemfontein on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, Salah added to his four goals against Djibouti in matchday one by equalising on 70 minutes in Bissau after Mama Balde had put Guinea-Bissau ahead just before half-time.

Salah took the ball across several defenders inside the area before unleashing a shot past goalkeeper Manuel Balde in the top-of-table Group A clash.

Mama Balde had fired past Egypt goalkeeper Mohamed el Shenawy to raise hopes of a home victory in the first World Cup qualifier between the countries.

Guinea-Bissau recently hired former Fulham assistant manager Luis Boa Morte as coach after the failure of Baciro Cande to win a match in four Cup of Nations tournaments cost him his job.

Egypt retained a four-point advantage over Guinea-Bissau with Burkina Faso and Sierra Leone, who drew 2-2 in Bamako, a further point behind.

Vinicius Welcomes Jail Sentence for Racially Abusive Fans



MADRID (Dispatches) - Vinicius Junior welcomed the eight-month prison sentences handed down on Monday to three Valencia fans for racially abusing him during a La Liga match last year.

"This first criminal conviction in Spanish history is not for me. It's for all black people," the Real Madrid and Brazil attacker posted on social media.

"But, as I've always said, I'm not a victim of racism. I'm a destroyer of racists. Let the other racists be afraid, ashamed and hide in the shadows. Otherwise, I'll be here to collect the debt," he wrote.

"Thank you to La Liga and Real Madrid for helping to bring about this historic verdict. There's more to come..."

The defendants, who were not identified, were convicted of an offence against moral integrity with the aggravating factor of racially motivated discrimination, the Valencia court said.

They were also slapped with a two-year match ban. With no previous criminal record, none will serve jail time as judges habitually suspend prison sentences of less than two years for first-time offenders.

Spain's La Liga hailed the ruling as "the first sentence handed down for racist insults in a Spanish football stadium".

"This sentence is very good news for the fight against racism in Spain," said La Liga president Javier Tebas.

"It sends a clear message to anyone who goes to a football stadium to hurl insults that La Liga will find and prosecute them and that they will face criminal consequences."

Gianni Infantino, the president of world football's governing body FIFA, posted on Instagram the decision was "a positive step".

"Our message to people anywhere in the world who behave in a racist way when they are dealing with football is clear: we don't want you," Infantino wrote.

Real Madrid to Play in Club World Cup as Ancelotti Takes Back Comments

MADRID (Dispatches) - Real Madrid manager Carlo Ancelotti said his comments to an Italian daily that Real Madrid would decline Fifa's invitation to participate in the Club World Cup had not been interpreted the way he intended, as the La Liga side reiterated its desire to play in the tournament.

Ancelotti had been quoted by Il Giornale in an interview on Monday as saying that Fifa had undervalued the compensation the 15-times Champions League winners should receive in the revamped tournament with 32 teams.

"Fifa can forget it, footballers and clubs will not participate in that tournament," Ancelotti was quoted as saying.

However, the Italian distanced himself from those comments in a social media post on Monday.

"Nothing could be further from my interest than to reject the possibility of playing in a tournament that I consider to be a great opportunity to continue fighting for major titles with Real Madrid," he said.



Real Madrid said their participation in the tournament was never in question.

"Our club will take part, as planned, in this official competition which we face with pride and with the utmost enthusiasm to once again make our millions of fans all over the world dream of a new title," they said in a statement.

Ancelotti, one of the most successful football managers in Europe, has won the Club World Cup three times and the Champions League five times.

"A single Real Madrid match is worth 20 million and Fifa wants to give us that amount for the whole cup. Negative. Like us, other clubs will refuse the invitation," he had been quoted as saying in the interview.

Ancelotti, who led Real to a Champions League and La Liga double last season, also said there had been a lot of pressure on managers lately but he had managed to stay passionate about his job.

Dutch Thrash Iceland 4-0 in Warm-Up



ROTTERDAM (Dispatches) - Netherlands' delight with an emphatic 4-0 win over Iceland in their last warm-up match before heading to the Euros tumbled to despair when it was announced that playmaker Frenkie de Jong would not be going to the tournament in Germany.

De Jong has been battling to be fit in time after suffering several ankle injuries this season playing for Barcelona.

He tried training for the first time with his team mates on Sunday, after a week of individual work, but following examinations yesterday doctors said he would not be ready in time.

That put a damper on Dutch spirits despite the impressive scoreline at the Feijenoord Stadium.

De Jong's diagnosis was made public immediately after the game but coach Ronald Koeman said he knew about it some four hours before kickoff and had told the players.

"Tests have shown that he cannot yet do what he should be able to do. He gets a reaction from his ankle every time after training," Koeman told Dutch television.

"Then you have to conclude that he will not be 100 per cent fit for the next three weeks. I already thought that playing against Poland (in the Group D opener) would be difficult."

De Jong posted a reaction on social media. "I am sad and disappointed that I will not make it to the European Championship," said the 26-year-old.

"We have done everything we can in recent weeks, but unfortunately my ankle needs more time.

"It is a dream and the greatest honour to represent your country at a final tournament, to wear the orange shirt, sing the national anthem and feel the support of the entire country. But now I, like the entire Orange legion, will cheer our team on from the sidelines. Let's go boys."

Earlier the Dutch made sure of a good send off in their last warm-up game as Xavi Simons finally scored for his country, in his 14th international, to put the Dutch 1-0 up at halftime.

Virgil van Dijk got on the scoresheet for a second successive game before Donyell Malen added the third.

Wout Weghorst netted the fourth on the stroke of full time as the Dutch prepare to face Poland on Sunday in Hamburg followed by France and Austria in the group stage at the finals.

South Africa Edge Bangladesh by Four Runs at T20 World Cup

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - South Africa defeated Bangladesh by just four runs in another low-scoring game at the T20 World Cup on Monday, a result likely to spark fresh debate over the suitability of the pitch being used in New York.

South Africa were restricted to 113-6 in their 20 overs with Heinrich Klaasen top-scoring on 46 while fast bowler Tanzim Hasan Sakib returned a career-best 3-18.

However, Bangladesh could only manage 109-7 in reply as South Africa wrapped up a third win in three Group D games.

"It was not a nice one to watch, it was good that the boys got it over the line," said Klaasen.

"The wicket is not too great for strokeplay."

Chasing just 114 to win on the controversial drop-in strip at the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium, Bangladesh initially struggled in the face of the Proteas' pace battery.

They were 50-4 at the 10-over mark having lost Tanzid Hasan (nine) to Kagiso Rabada while Anrich Nortje accounted for skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto (14) and Shakib Al Hasan (three).

Spinner Keshav Maharaj sent back Liton Das for just nine.

However, Towhid Hridoy, who top-scored with 40 when Bangladesh defeated Sri Lanka in their opener, and 38-year-old Mahmudullah steadied the ship for the Tigers.

The pair put on 44 for the fifth wicket before Hridoy was lbw to Rabada for 37, an innings which took up 34 balls and featured two fours and two sixes.

Bangladesh took seven off the penultimate over but still



needed 11 off the last to be bowled by Maharaj.

That became seven off four balls. With the pressure building both Jaker Ali and Mahmudullah were caught by Aiden Markram going for big heaves over long on.

Needing six off the final ball, Taskin Ahmed could only produce a scrambled single.

"I think this is a match we should have won. In the last couple of overs they bowled well, but this can happen in cricket," said Shanto.

Earlier, Bangladesh restricted South Africa to 113-6 with Tanzim backed up by Taskin's 2-19 after Proteas skipper Markram won the toss and opted to bat.

South Africa were struggling at 23-4 at one stage before Klaasen and David Miller, celebrating his 35th birthday, came to their team's rescue with a partnership of 79 for the fifth wicket.

Klaasen's 46 came off 44 balls with two fours and three sixes before he was clean-bowled by Taskin, slogging across the line in the 18th over with the score on 102.

Miller, who made a match-winning undefeated 59 in the nervy win over the Netherlands, went four runs later, bowled by Rishad Hossain.

His innings of 29 came from 38 deliveries with a boundary and one six.

The Proteas had been 12-4 against the Dutch on the same pitch on Saturday.

On Monday, they were quickly four down for just 23 runs in the fifth over thanks to Tanzim and Taskin.