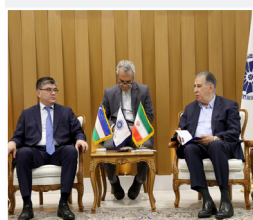


Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi Underscored the Integrity of the Country's Presidential Election as a Prerogative of the Public That Needs to Be Safeguarded Amid Foreign-Backed Attempts to Jeopardize the Security of the July 7 Runoff Vote

# IRAN NEWS

The Chief Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), Major General Hossein Salami, Praised the Foreign Policy Achievements of Martyred President Ebrahim Raisi, Saying His Vibrant Foreign Policy Shattered Evil Dreams of Iran's Enemies

## 2 DOMESTIC

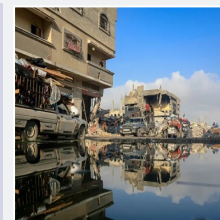


### Uzbekistan Seeks to Utilize Chabahar Port for Exports

> SEE PAGE 2

## 3 INTERNATIONAL

### 80% of Gazans Now Displaced



> SEE PAGE 3

### Iran Imposes Sanctions on 11 American Individuals



TEHRAN (MNA) - The Foreign Ministry of the Islamic Republic of Iran released a statement on sanctions imposed on some American individuals. The Foreign Ministry of the Islamic Republic of Iran in accordance with the Law on "Countering the Violation of Human Rights and Adventurous and Terrorist Activities of the United States in the Region", (2017) in particular Article 5 of the Law, designates the following American individuals for their involvement in violation of human rights by suppressing peaceful protest of university students and professors in the United States who were supporting the oppressed Palestinian nation against the Zionist regime's crimes in Gaza:1. William Billy Hitchens, Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety of Georgia,2. Eddie Grier, Commanding Officer over Field Operations of Georgia,3. Linda J. Stump-Kurnick, Chief of the University of Florida Police Department,4. Pamela A. Smith, Chief of the Metropolitan Police Department of the District of Columbia,5. Jeffery Carroll, Executive Assistant Chief, Metropolitan Police Department,6. Karl Jacobson, Chief of New Haven Police Department,7. Shane Streepy, Assistant Chief of University of Texas Police Department (UTPD),8. Michael Cox, Commissioner of the Boston Police Department,9. Scott Dunning, the Indiana University Police Department Central Division Chief, 10. Michael Thompson, the Arizona State University Police Chief, 11. John Brockie, Chief of Police at CAL State Long Beach Police Department. The above-mentioned persons, pursuant to Articles 6, 7 and 8 of the sixth Section of the Law, will be subject to sanctions stipulated in the Law which are blocking of accounts and transactions in the Iranian financial and banking systems, blocking of assets within the jurisdiction of the Islamic Republic of Iran as well as prohibition of visa issuance and entry to the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran. All relevant national organizations and institutions of the Islamic Republic of Iran, consistent with the regulations adopted by the related authorities, will take necessary measures for effective implementation of the above-mentioned sanctions.

### Lebanon Will Be a Hell With No Return for Zionists



TEHRAN - The Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs said: Lebanon will definitely be a hell with no return for Zionists. Ali Bagheri Kani, the Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, speaking on the sidelines of today's Wednesday Cabinet meeting in the presence of reporters, said: In countries where disturbances have been caused for Iranian citizens and compatriots during or after voting, our country's representatives there have been tasked with providing legal and consular support to them. He added: Judicial and legal mechanisms will be implemented in these countries to realize the rights of these citizens, and necessary actions will be taken. This directive has been communicated to all our country's representatives in the relevant countries. In response to reporters' questions about the possibility of war, he noted: In the Lebanon arena, the resistance, as an active player, has had roles both operationally and on the ground, as well as in diplomacy, which has created the necessary deterrence. The Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, continuing on the topic of Bin Salman's trip to Iran, said: The visit of the Saudi King to Iran is on the agenda for both us and the Saudis, and the new government needs to be established for the discussions to continue. In reaction to the possibility of Donald Trump becoming president and the positions of the 14th government towards him, Bagheri said: The components of power and capacities in the Islamic Republic are such that the coming and going of an individual in the country, whether as president or any other person, cannot affect our strategic policies; however, we have made the necessary predictions for changes in the international arena, including the United States, and certainly, the new government will adopt serious measures.

## IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK



### Run-Off to Presidential Election Is Very Important for the Country

TEHRAN - Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has emphasized this afternoon that the run-off to the presidential election is very important, noting those who love Islam, the Islamic Republic, and the progress of the country should demonstrate this by their participation in the election, reiterating the notion that those who did not vote in the first round are against the system is a completely incorrect assumption. During the meeting with the new custodian, managers, and a group of scholars from the Shahid Motahari Higher School, the Leader said: are as follows: "The day after tomorrow, we have an election, and this election is very important. Of course, in the first round of the election, the people's participation was less than what we expected and what was anticipated. Various people made guesses about the participation, and all the guesses were higher than what actually happened." He added: "Well, [this participation] has reasons, and those who are into politics, sociological issues, etc., will examine these reasons. What is certain is that if anyone thinks that those who did not vote did so because they were against the system, they are greatly mistaken. This understanding, this interpretation, is 100% wrong." He went on to say: "There may be some people who dislike a certain official or someone who do not like the system as a whole; it's not that we don't have such people, we do have them in the country, they speak freely, we hear their words, we know what they say, meaning they are not hidden from sight."

Ayatollah Khamenei then said: "We know there are such people, we recognize them, they do not agree with the very essence of this system and the Islamic structure of governance. Yes, they exist, but to associate everyone who did not vote with them is a huge mistake. This mistake should not be made by anyone. No, they have problems, they have issues, they have work, they do not have the patience, they do not have the time, there are various obstacles for this action." The leader further said: "Now, we hope that, God willing, this second round will be an enthusiastic gathering of the people and a source of pride for the Islamic system. I have repeatedly stated: people's participation is a backing for the Islamic Republic system, it is a source of pride, it is a source of honor. If people participate more clearly, better, and more evidently, the Islamic Republic system will be able to achieve its statements, intentions, and goals both within the country and in its strategic extension, and this is a very great opportunity for the country." He concluded: "We hope, God willing, that the Almighty will guide all our hearts to what pleases Him, and that all those who love Islam, love the Islamic Republic, love the progress of the country, and love the improvement of the country's situation and filling the gaps, will demonstrate this through their votes on Friday, the day after tomorrow, and God will grant them the success to choose the best person; someone who can achieve these goals in the country."

## Iran-China Relations Are Unchangeable

TEHRAN - The Acting Head of the Presidential Office described the relations between Iran and China as strategic and based on unchangeable principles. He also emphasized the enhancement of Iran-Kazakhstan cooperation and the restoration of relations between Iran and South Korea. During the ceremony of receiving the credentials of the ambassadors from China, South Korea, and Kazakhstan, the Acting Head of the Presidential Office highlighted the importance of the comprehensive long-term cooperation agreement between Tehran and Beijing. He noted that the pursuit and implementation of this agreement, as well as further facilitating private sector activities in both countries, are the most important shared tasks for both sides.



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

During the ceremony of receiving the credentials from "Zong Pei Wu," the new Ambassador of the People's Republic of China, the Acting Head of the Presidential Office described the relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and China as strategic and based on unchangeable principles. Mokhber pointed out the significant strengthening of bilateral relations in recent years, especially in the energy and transportation sectors, as a symbol of the high-level officials' dedication and synergy in taking substantial steps for the benefit of both nations. He further emphasized the importance of the comprehensive long-term cooperation agreement between Tehran and Beijing, highlighting the pursuit and implementation of this agreement and the further facilitation of private sector activities in both countries as the most important shared tasks for both sides. The Acting Head of the Presidential Office also expressed gratitude for China's strategic positions against unilateralism and appreciated its support for the Islamic Republic of Iran in various international arenas, including membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. In this ceremony, the new Chinese Ambassador, "Zong Pei Wu," described the relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and China as dynamic and progressing. He stated that China has always viewed its relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran strategically and pursues the development of interactions with Iran unaffected by global changes. The Chinese Ambassador also mentioned the broad dimensions and specific

goals of the two countries' relations. He expressed his country's interest in expanding cooperation with Iran in new energy fields and increasing interactions within regional and international organizations and treaties, including the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. He highlighted his mission's main objective of achieving new successes in bilateral cooperation. During the ceremony of receiving the credentials from the Kazakh Ambassador, Mokhber noted the diverse mutual capacities, especially in agriculture, industry, and transportation, as a very suitable foundation for deepening Iran-Kazakhstan interactions. He emphasized the significant impact of establishing the North-South Corridor on enhancing the level of cooperation and interactions between the two countries and other regional countries.

The Kazakh Ambassador also stated that activating the private sectors of both countries is essential for realizing mutual capacities. Releasing Iran's Financial Resources in South Korea Provides a Suitable Basis for Restoring Bilateral Relations Mokhber, referring to the long-standing and friendly relations between Iran and South Korea, stated that releasing the Islamic Republic of Iran's financial resources in South Korea provides a suitable basis for restoring the bilateral relations. During the ceremony of receiving the credentials from "Kim Jong-pyo," the new Ambassador of the Republic of South Korea, the Acting Head of the Presidential Office, referring to the long-standing and friendly relations between the two countries, considered the release of Iran's financial resources in South Korea a suitable basis for restoring bilateral relations. Mokhber also wished the new South Korean Ambassador success in developing bilateral relations. The new South Korean Ambassador, "Kim Jong-pyo," also expressed his condolences for the martyrdom of Raisi and his companions. He stated that the relations between the two countries are built on deep trust and long-standing friendship and hoped to effectively contribute to the progress of bilateral cooperation as the South Korean Ambassador.

### Iran Slams U.S. Human Rights Violations 36 Years After Downing of Passenger Plane



TEHRAN (PresTV) - Iran's Foreign Ministry has strongly condemned the United States' serious and gross violations of human rights on the 36th anniversary of the downing of its passenger aircraft by a US Navy guided-missile cruiser over the Persian Gulf, which killed 290 people on board. "On July 3, 1988, the USS Vincennes shot down Iran Air Flight 655, which was carrying 290 passengers and crew members, including 46 non-Iranian passengers and 66 minors under the age of 13. Not only the United States failed to apologize to Iran, but it also awarded the USS Vincennes' commander a medal," the ministry said in a statement posted on its official X account on Tuesday. Following the attack, the plane disintegrated and crashed into the Persian Gulf waters, killing all 290 on board, among them 66 children. US officials claimed the USS Vincennes had mistaken Iran Air Flight 655 for a warplane. This is while the warship was equipped with highly sophisticated radar systems and electronic battle gear at the time of the attack. In 1990, the captain of the cruiser, William C. Rogers, was cleared of any wrongdoing, and was even awarded America's Legion of Merit medal by then President George Bush for his "outstanding service" during operations in the Persian Gulf. Separately, the Iranian Foreign Ministry condemned gross violations of human rights by the United States. Tehran said the White House officials are among the most dishonorable violators of human rights in the world. "The US has committed gross and organized violations of human rights through unilateralism and intensification of economic sanctions without authorization from the United Nations, and with intent to force governments to change their policies." The statement also condemned Washington's decades-long exploitation of economic sanctions as a tool of pressure on countries that are politically independent and opposed to its international practices. Sanctions have had a significant negative impact on world nations, and deprived citizens in various countries of their natural and legal rights, it noted.

### Exports Up by \$18b During the 13th Gov't



TEHRAN - A section of the book on the achievements of the Thirteenth Government highlights notable actions in the area of foreign trade: There is a significant relationship between foreign trade and economic growth, to the extent that many economists view trade as the engine of development. Access to foreign markets, technology, and resources has a direct impact on economic growth. Thus, foreign trade has always been a focus for governments. Under the Thirteenth Government, foreign trade witnessed a fundamental transformation in the government's approach and strategy, resulting in significant changes in Iran's trading partners. This shift in perspective included greater emphasis on economic diplomacy beyond Western countries, improving trade relations, and signing economic and trade agreements with neighboring countries, Central Asian and Caucasian countries, and especially with China and India. Therefore, economic diplomacy, particularly expanding exchanges with neighboring countries, became a priority for the Thirteenth Government. The President's visits to neighboring countries, Iran's formal membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and economic dialogues with neighboring countries were part of this approach. Consequently, changes in policies, including facilitating customs procedures and removing some export barriers, especially regarding the return of export currency, had positive impacts on increasing the country's foreign trade. In the context of sanctions and a deadlock in economic diplomacy with the West, allocating a significant portion of trade to developing relations with neighboring countries was a correct decision to mitigate the effects of oppressive sanctions, with tangible results.

# IRAN NEWS



## Iranian Inventor Students Shine in UK Science Olympiad 2024

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - The head of scientific teams of Iranian students announced the success of the Iranian team in the UK Science Olympiad 2024 and stated that in this competition, 114 teams from 48 countries competed by presenting 310 scientific projects.

Mehdi Rashidi Jahan, head of scientific teams of Iranian students, referring to the 2024 British Science Olympiad, said: "These competitions are held annually between the ages of 12 and 18 years, and in this period of the competition, 114 teams from 48 countries presented 310 scientific projects."

He added: "This Olympiad was held with the support of Oxford University in the technical fields of engineering, computer science, energy, biological science, social science, art and robotics and in two stages."

Rashidi Jahan stated: "In the first stage of this Olympiad and after evaluating the documentation of student projects, 4 Iranian teams consisting of Sina Moghadam Nodahi, Paniz Karimi, Ilya Nusrat Panah, Mahan Padi and Mohammad Sam Nemati Moin were among the teams that made it to the second stage."

## Iran Has the Strongest Healthcare System



TEHRAN - The World Health Organization (WHO) representative in Iran emphasized the unique nature of the Group of Five within the WHO during the 29th meeting of its members, highlighting the group's special role in strengthening regional cooperation and ensuring the health of people in the member countries.

Jaffar Hussain announced at this meeting, held on Tuesday, at the headquarters of the Ministry of Health, that the WHO is particularly focused on strengthening primary health care and improving health systems. He stated, "Fortunately, the Islamic Republic of Iran has a strong healthcare system, universities with high capacities, numerous hospitals, and advanced medical equipment." Emphasizing that the Group of Five serves as an excellent model for regional cooperation in health, he added that integrating medical education with health services, having a comprehensive health network system across Iran, and the government's efforts to develop services and infrastructure are the main reasons for Iran's progress in the health sector, even under tough sanctions.

The WHO representative also mentioned the organization's readiness to enhance health services in member countries, noting, "Recently, we have seen the inauguration of over 800 health infrastructure projects and 1,800 hospital beds across Iran, including in deprived and border areas, to improve public access to healthcare services, which is a valuable initiative."

The Deputy Minister of Health emphasized the impact of skilled human resources on the advancement of the health sector, stating that improved health and treatment indicators are crucial for increasing life expectancy.

Dr. Saeed Karimi also highlighted the importance of capable human resources, noting, "The population of the Group of Five countries is estimated to be over 300 to 400 million, sharing many cultural and religious commonalities. Among this large population are many scientists, elites, specialized doctors, and skilled professionals. Enhanced coordination and synergy between these countries can elevate health and treatment standards."



## Iran's Oil Sector Maintains Positive Growth in Q3

TEHRAN (IP) — According to reports presented at a meeting of the Economic Coordination Headquarters, presided over by Acting President Mohammad Mokhber, Iran's oil sector has continued to experience growth in the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year, which began on March 21.

The Central Bank of Iran (CBI) and the Planning and Budget Organization (PBO) provided updates on inflation and economic growth during the meeting. The CBI report indicated that the service sector grew by 2.7% and 3.8% over the past two years.

Notably, the oil sector saw significant growth, reaching 10% and 14.7% during the corresponding period. This was primarily attributed to an increase in crude and condensate production and exports.

The PBO report also confirmed the continuation of economic growth in the first three months of the current Iranian year, although specific figures were not provided.

The positive performance of the oil sector is a welcome development for Iran's economy, which has faced significant challenges due to the impact of U.S. sanctions and the COVID-19 pandemic. The growth in oil production and exports is likely to provide a much-needed boost to government revenues and overall economic activity.



## Uzbekistan Seeks to Utilize Chabahar Port for Exports

TEHRAN - The head of the Iranian Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture, (ICCIMA), emphasizing the industrial capacities in Iran, said: Iran has significant capacities in electricity production, dam construction, electronics, pharmaceuticals, and medical and health equipment. The Iranian Chamber can facilitate the interaction and cooperation of these companies with their Uzbek counterparts.

Head of ICCIMA Mr. Samad Hasanzadeh in a meeting with Fariddin Nasriev, the Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Iran, pointed out the historical, ethnic, religious, and cultural commonalities between the two countries as a suitable ground for increasing economic cooperation. He added that the economic relations between the two countries should grow alongside political and cultural relations. Iran's economic potential was evident at the Expo where the Uzbek trade delegation participated.

Hasanzadeh emphasized the statistics, stating: Given Uzbekistan's need for infrastructure development, Iran can invest in technical and engineering services across all provinces of Uzbekistan. He emphasized the private sector's interest in joint investments in Uzbekistan, continuing: We have substantial facilities in the pharmaceutical industry, producing the best drugs with international standards. We are ready to not only export medicines but also engage in joint ventures to transfer technology and production to Uzbekistan. Regarding the Iranian Innovation and Technology House in Tashkent, Hasanzadeh mentioned that it was established in recent years but hasn't been well-received by Uzbekistan. The Innovation and Technology House in Tashkent has high potential for cooperation. Additionally, there have been previous agreements in the knowledge-based sector, which have not been pursued following changes at the ministry level.

He further pointed out the significant capacities of major Iranian industrial companies in electricity production, dam construction, electronics, pharmaceuticals, and medical and health equipment, stating that the Iranian Chamber can facilitate the introduction, interaction, and cooperation of these companies with their Uzbek counterparts. Hasanzadeh emphasized the numerous areas for joint investment, stating: Technical and engineering services, production of various building materials, pharmaceuticals, petrochemicals, construction and road building, food industries, leather, and apparel are among the areas of interest for Iranian companies for cooperation and joint investment with Uzbekistan. He also highlighted Iran's transit advantage for Uzbekistan in accessing Europe. One of the key areas of cooperation is the construction industry, Hasanzadeh said. There are significant opportunities in

Iran's construction industry, producing products with global standards and low prices. Iran also has a significant capacity in tiles and ceramics, utilizing high global technology in this industry. He also noted: There have been good advancements in the production of agricultural products and greenhouse production in Iran; Iran can cooperate with Uzbekistan in this field.

Uzbek Ambassador Fariddin Nasriev, for his part, pointed to the Iran Expo last year, saying 10 companies from Uzbekistan participated, and this year, the list had increased significantly. He added: "We are preparing for the next Iran Expo, aiming for about 200 Uzbek companies to participate."

Nasriev added: Due to the importance and high interest of Uzbek economic activists in the Iranian market, an 80-member delegation led by the First Deputy Minister of Energy traveled to Tehran to witness Iran's production and export capabilities firsthand.

He also announced an upcoming investment conference in Uzbekistan, inviting all Iranian economic activists to attend on September 10th to familiarize themselves with Uzbekistan's capabilities. Ministers and deputy ministers from Uzbekistan will participate, and Iranian companies are invited to attend this trade forum. He continued: We are transparent about the capacity of the Uzbek market. Annually, about 900 million dollars' worth of medicines are imported to Uzbekistan; the volume of medicine imports is high, and we are interested in Iranian companies setting up quality drug production lines in Uzbekistan. We have also met with a medical equipment manufacturing company.

The Uzbek ambassador in Tehran mentioned that a contract has been signed with a major Iranian pharmaceutical company, and efforts are being made to expand these collaborations. To further develop relations, we want a trade delegation from Iran to visit Uzbekistan and meet with our Minister of Health.

The ambassador highlighted the pharmaceutical needs in his country, noting that there is potential for exporting pharmaceutical products from Iran and even establishing drug production lines in Uzbekistan. With a population of 36 million and a large Central Asian market accessible through Uzbekistan, this collaboration is promising.

He continued: We pursue a balanced policy in transportation and logistics. The China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway is under construction, and we are interested in utilizing the Chabahar port to enable Uzbek companies to export through it. We are in talks with Indian officials, who have leased land in Chabahar for ten years. We hope to enhance cooperation with Tehran further.

## Expansion of Iran's Overseas Agricultural Industry Opportunities in Africa



TEHRAN - Iranian knowledge-based companies, by participating in three specialized exhibitions in the fields of agriculture, grains, and livestock in Kenya, explored business opportunities with trade partners from Kenya and the African continent.

The Vice Presidency for Science, Technology, and Knowledge-Based Economy has stated that one of the country's strategic policies is to establish economic ties with African countries, leveraging overseas agricultural opportunities in that continent, and creating avenues for the entry of knowledge-based products into the international arena.

In this regard, with the support of the Vice Presidency for Science, Technology, and Knowledge-Based Economy, the Food and Agriculture, the Organization for the Development of Scientific and Technological International Cooperation, the Export Development and Technology Exchange Fund, and the Iranian House of Innovation and Technology in Kenya, a delegation comprising 16 knowledge-based and tech companies active in the food and agriculture sectors was dispatched to the Republic of Kenya to participate in the 9th

African Agricultural Technology Exhibition, the 7th Dairy and Poultry Exhibition, and the 4th African Grain Technology Exhibition.

In these exhibitions, 16 companies showcased their achievements in the fields of seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, food industries, drones, machinery, tea, and animal husbandry within the pavilion of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Visitors to the exhibition were mainly from African countries, India, and China, who showed great interest in Iranian knowledge-based products.

Items such as drones, agricultural machinery, corn seeds, livestock embryo transfer technology, and tea processing received the most attention in terms of the number of visitors throughout the exhibition.

In this context, more than 10 meetings were held with the presence of the representative of the Food and Agriculture Knowledge-Based Economy Development Headquarters, Iranian companies, and Kenyan parties outside the exhibition space. These meetings aimed to visit related infrastructures in Kenya, conduct field studies for joint investment feasibility, technology transfer, and commercial negotiations to draft a cooperation roadmap.

## NITC Needs 50 Ocean-going Vessels



TEHRAN - The CEO of the National Iranian Tanker Company stated that the company needs 50 ocean-going vessels, which are included in the company's five-year fleet development plan.

Ali Ahmadi, CEO of the National Iranian Tanker Company, during a ceremony commemorating World Maritime Day, said that 90% of global trade is conducted by sea. He emphasized that the main contributors are the seafarers, who work around the clock under low safety and security conditions, away from their families, to ensure the country's business operations run smoothly.

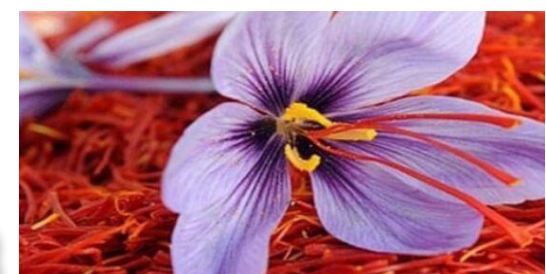
He added that the country's oil exports are handled by seafarers, and their efforts, along with those of their families, should be appreciated. The industry faces many challenges, one of which is the demand for human resources in certain job categories. Although the country has good facilities, without a comprehensive outlook and strategic plan to strengthen the workforce, we face challenges in securing labor and lack a plan for future workforce predictions, which requires a strategic and long-term approach.

The CEO highlighted another challenge in this sector: the livelihood of seafarers. There are limitations in this area, but they can be addressed with coordination among the relevant authorities. Another challenge is the payment and transfer of currency to seafarers, which is also problematic.

Ahmadi stressed the need to reduce the time seafarers spend away from their families, suggesting that the four-month separation period could be shortened. This matter is being discussed with relevant authorities.

He mentioned that in fleet renewal, maximum use of domestic capacity should be made. He stated that the tanker company needs 50 ocean-going vessels, which are included in the company's five-year fleet development plan. However, this capacity does not exist within the country, and there is a need for planning to boost the shipbuilding industry so that it flourishes over the next 1

## 25 Tons of Saffron Exported in 2 Months



TEHRAN - The director of the National Medicinal Plants Project of the Ministry of Agriculture Jihad announced that in the first two months of this year, more than 25 tons of saffron worth over \$22 million were exported through the legal channels of the country to 37 countries worldwide.

Hossein Zeinali emphasized the importance of production and the completion of the numerous value chain links for medicinal plants, particularly saffron, as a significant source of foreign exchange. Currently, China, the United Arab Emirates, Spain, Afghanistan, and Italy rank first to fifth in saffron exports.

The director of the National Medicinal Plants Project of the Ministry of Agriculture Jihad stated that more than 238,000 kilograms of saffron were produced and marketed domestically and internationally in the year 1402 (2023/2024). He noted that in 1402, the total saffron cultivation area in the country was 127,370 hectares, of which 125,156 hectares were fertile and 2,211 hectares were non-fertile. In this context, Khorasan Razavi and South Khorasan provinces ranked first and second, respectively, in both cultivation area and saffron production. The director of the National Medicinal Plants Project highlighted that over 238,000 kilograms of saffron were produced and marketed domestically and internationally last year. He emphasized the importance of enhancing performance and supporting producers with fundamental and strategic measures in the saffron sector. He added that education, the transfer of modern findings, and diverse promotional programs are appropriate and practical solutions for improving performance, always emphasized by this office. The advisor to the Minister of Agriculture Jihad continued that expert reviews indicate that the average saffron yield in some provinces was low in 1402 due to frost. The Ministry of Agriculture Jihad's policies are to not support areas with yields below the average of 5 kilograms per hectare and lacking precise and strategic plans to improve performance, as saffron production in those areas would be uneconomical.

### Tunisia to Hold Presidential Election on October 6

TUNIS (Dispatches) - Tunisia will hold a presidential election on October 6, the office of President Kais Saied announced Tuesday, though he has not indicated if he will seek a new five-year term after his 2019 election. Saied, a constitutional specialist, took full control of the country in 2021, ruling by decree after dismissing his prime minister and parliament, with many of his opponents now behind bars. He had a new constitution approved by referendum in 2022 that created a presidential system with a parliament that has only limited powers. "The president of the republic issued a decree today, July 2, 2024, summoning voters for a presidential election on Sunday, October 6, 2024," Saied's office said in a statement. The political crisis sparked by his power grab has weighed heavily on Tunisia's economy, with unemployment standing at 15 percent and around four million of the country's 12 million people living in poverty.

A media crackdown has also seen more than 60 journalists, lawyers and political opponents prosecuted, according to the National Union of Tunisian Journalists.



### Poland's Tusk Issues Rallying Cry to Pro-European Forces



WARSAW (Dispatches) - Pro-European politicians must act decisively in tackling issues of concern to ordinary voters like illegal migration to counter rising nationalism, Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk said on Tuesday, after far-right gains in French and EU elections.

Tusk was speaking alongside Chancellor Olaf Scholz after intergovernmental consultations between the Polish and German cabinets as they look to deepen ties.

France, the third member of the 'Weimar Triangle' grouping, is reeling from the far-right's victory in Sunday's first round of its parliamentary election. "The French election is not the only quite critical moment, in many places we can see the growth of forces that do not hide their eurosceptic attitude," Tusk told a joint news conference with Scholz in Warsaw. "That is why it is so important that moderate, reasonable, pro-European forces... find convincing answers to what has become important for ordinary people - the effective fight against illegal migration, security, greater economic sustainability, increased industrial coordination." Scholz said he was sure that relations between Paris, Berlin and Warsaw would remain strong despite Marine Le Pen's far-right National Rally (RN) party making historic gains in France, which will hold a second round of voting next Sunday.

"We are of course two very pro-European nations and two very pro-European governments," Scholz said of Poland and Germany. "We know that our future can only succeed together with Europe and that is also the basis for why, in my view, we have reached very concrete agreements on what we will do next."

Following Tuesday's intergovernmental talks, the first since 2018, Germany and Poland presented a joint action plan in which they agreed to discuss boosting defence cooperation, including a stronger NATO presence on the alliance's eastern border, and the coordination of Ukraine aid.



GENEVA (Dispatches) - The UN humanitarian coordinator for Gaza said Tuesday that 1.9 million people -- 80 percent of the territory's population -- were now displaced, adding she was "deeply concerned" by reports of new evacuation orders for Khan Yunis.

The United Nations has estimated that up to 250,000 people are impacted by the Israeli military order for civilians to leave parts of Khan Yunis and Rafah in Gaza, which has a total population of 2.4 million.

"Palestinian civilians in Gaza have been plunged into an abyss of suffering -- their home lives shattered, their lives upended," the UN coordinator for Gaza, Sigrid Kaag, told the Security Council.

"Over one million people have been displaced once again, desperately seeking shelter and safety, (and) 1.9 million people are now displaced across Gaza," she said.

"I'm deeply concerned about reports of new evacuation orders issued in the area of Khan Yunis," Kaag added.

"The war has not merely created the most profound of humanitarian crises. It has unleashed a maelstrom of human misery."

She said that not enough aid was reaching the war-torn strip, and that the opening of new crossings, particularly to southern Gaza, was necessary to avert a humanitarian disaster.

Kaag said the Rafah crossing between Gaza and Egypt should be reopened, and also pleaded with the international community to do more to fund relief efforts.

Aid volumes entering Gaza had "dropped significantly" since the start of the Israeli operation in Rafah, she added.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres's spokesman said "yesterday's orders for the evacuations of 117 square kilometers in Khan Yunis and Rafah governorates apply to about a third of the Gaza Strip, making it the largest such order since October."

"An evacuation of such a massive scale will only heighten the suffering of civilians," said the spokesman, Stephane Dujarric.

Hamas's October 7 attack on southern Israel -- which triggered the Israeli offensive -- resulted in the deaths of 1,195 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on Israeli figures.

The militants also seized 251 hostages, 116 of whom remain in Gaza, including 42 the army says are dead. Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed at least 37,925 people, also mostly civilians, according to data from the health ministry in the Hamas-run territory.

Israel has not specifically said there will be a military operation in southern Gaza, but so far nearly every evacuation order has heralded major battles.

Looking beyond the conflict, the UN ambassador for Security Council member Slovenia questioned whether a ceasefire would significantly ease the humanitarian crisis.

"What's the guarantee that it will be easier to deliver aid? Because there will be still checkpoints there... there will be still no trucks," said the envoy, Samuel Zbogar.

"There might be still problems, and big expectations, after a ceasefire."

### Ukraine Not Ready to Compromise With Russia



WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Ukraine is not ready to compromise with Russia and give up any territory to end the war, a senior Ukrainian official said when asked about U.S. presidential candidate Donald Trump's declaration that he could quickly end the conflict.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's chief of staff, Andriy Yermak, told reporters during a visit to Washington that Kyiv would listen to any advice on how to achieve a "just peace" in the war. Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

"But we (are) not ready to go to the compromise for the very important things and values ... independence, freedom, democracy, territorial integrity, sovereignty," he said.

Yermak's visit came ahead of next week's NATO summit in the U.S. capital, where Ukraine is expected to be the main topic of discussion.

Trump, the Republican nominee challenging President Joe Biden, said during a debate between the pair last week that if he is re-elected in November he would quickly solve the war in Ukraine before taking office in January.

He has not offered details of how he would do that, but Reuters reported last week that two key advisers to Trump had presented him with a plan that would involve threatening to cut U.S.

assistance if Kyiv did not enter negotiations with Moscow.

Trump said during the debate, however, that he does not accept Russian President Vladimir Putin's terms. Putin has said Russia would end the war if Kyiv agreed to hand over the four regions in the east and south of the country claimed by Moscow.

Asked how Ukraine assesses that Trump would handle the war, Yermak said: "Honest answer: I don't know. Let's see."

Ukraine would lobby a new U.S. administration to continue providing it support, he said, adding that Ukraine had received bipartisan support in Washington and polling showed most Americans still support Ukraine after two years of war.

"It will be ... a decision of the American people. We will respect this choice," Yermak said of the Nov. 5 presidential election.

The United States has provided Ukraine with more than \$50 billion worth of military aid since 2022. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said on Tuesday the U.S. will soon announce more than \$2.3 billion in new security assistance for Ukraine.



### Haiti PM Vows Transparency to Population Traumatized by Gangs

PORT-AU-PRINCE (Dispatches) - Garry Conille, a medical doctor by training who once briefly served as Haiti's prime minister, says he never hesitated to return home to take up the post once again.

Despite what he called an "extremely complicated" situation in the gang-plagued Caribbean nation, the leader of Haiti's transitional government pledged on Tuesday to offer "transparency" to his countrymen as he takes on the challenge of restoring order.

Conille -- who has had an extensive career within the United Nations, including a stint as UNICEF's regional director for Latin America and the Caribbean -- sat down for an interview with AFP during a visit to Washington.

He also met with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken to discuss the deployment in June of the first members of a Kenyan-led international force tasked with helping the overwhelmed Haitian police in their battle against powerful armed gangs.

The 58-year-old Conille said his transitional government inherited an "excessively difficult situation." Gangs control 80 percent of the capital Port-au-Prince and nearly 600,000 people are displaced, he said. "Infrastructure practically is non-existent, ministries no longer even have offices, staff are very unmotivated and the police need help," he told AFP. But Conille also sees glimmers of hope -- he hailed the spirit of cooperation that allowed for the formation of a transitional council after controversial prime minister Ariel Henry stepped down.

## Biden Faces Growing Doubts From Democrats About His 2024 Re-Election



WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Some elected Democrats loyal to President Joe Biden raised fresh questions about his 2024 re-election bid, with one calling for him to step aside, a shift after many defended him in the wake of last week's shaky debate performance. Whether Biden continues his 2024 bid for president after his halting debate performance against Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump is largely his decision, Democrats and political strategists have said. But Biden is under pressure. Some donors have called for him to step aside, and other Democrats are worrying openly that he is not equipped to beat Trump in November. There are 25 Democratic members of the House of Representatives preparing to call for Biden to step aside if he seems shaky in coming days, according to one House Democratic aide. A second House Democratic aide said moderate House Democrats in competitive districts - often called "frontliners" - were getting hammered with questions in their districts this week. A Reuters/Ipsos poll taken after the debate showed one in three Democrats think Biden should end his re-election bid. U.S. Representative Lloyd Doggett became the first congressional Democrat to call for Biden to withdraw from the presidential race

on Tuesday. He told NBC News in an interview that he hoped other Democratic lawmakers would follow his lead. "It looks like the dam has broken," the second aide said. Former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi emphasized Biden's multiple legislative accomplishments during an interview with MSNBC Tuesday but said it was legitimate to ask whether his debate performance was a one-night thing or a broader health problem. She said Trump should be given the same scrutiny. "I think it's a legitimate question to say, 'Is this an episode or is this a condition?' And so when people ask that question, it's legitimate, of both candidates," Pelosi said. Immediately after the debate, Pelosi had shown strong support. "Joe Biden's decision to go forward is a decision that we will all embrace because of the record he has and the performance that will come with it," she said then. White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said on Tuesday that Biden did not have an "episode," just a bad night.

Vice President Kamala Harris, asked in a CBS News interview about Doggett's demand, said: "Look, Joe Biden is our nominee. We beat Trump once and we're gonna beat him. Period."



## Turkey Set Up Euros Quarterfinal With Dutch

LEIPZIG (Dispatches) - Turkey will face the Netherlands in the quarter-finals of Euro 2024 after winning a thriller with Austria 2-1 as both countries reached the last eight of a European Championship for the first time since 2008.

Merih Demiral was the unlikely hero for Turkey, in soaking Leipzig, after bundling his team ahead with less than a minute on the clock and then thumping in the decisive header just before the hour mark.

Vincenzo Montella's side, who were missing suspended captain Hakan Calhanoglu but once again backed by massive support at the Zentralstadion, will take on the Dutch in Berlin on Saturday after their comfortable 3-0 win over Romania earlier on Tuesday.

Turkey were beaten 6-1 by Austria in March and Montella admitted he was hoping to get his own back for that embarrassing defeat.

"I denied it yesterday but today I can admit that Austria was the team I wanted so that I could get rid of that stain that as a coach I had on me," said Montella.

Turkey will again be able to count on their raucous fans in the German capital as they aim to replicate their run to the last four from 16 years ago.

That tournament was co-hosted by Austria, who played a full part in an engrossing match and on another day may have run out winners.

Ralf Rangnick's side were on top for most of the match and in particular in the second half,

when they pinned Turkey back and conceded the second goal completely against the run of play.

Al-Ahli centre-back Demiral became the first European defender to score twice in the knockout stages of a major tournament since Lilian Thuram for France at the 1998 World Cup.

Michael Gregoritsch halved the deficit by forcing home Stefan Posch's flick on at another corner shortly after Demiral took his international goal tally to four in 48 caps.

But Austria couldn't capitalise on their dominance and went out after Christoph Baumgartner was denied a leveller in the final seconds of added time by an incredible Mert Gunok save.

"I believe if the game had gone into extra-time we would have won the game because the Turkish team were exhausted and we had a physical advantage," Rangnick told reporters.

Cody Gakpo and Donyell Malen, with a brace in the second half, eased the Dutch through to the last eight.

Ronald Koeman's side were heavily criticised after the 3-2 defeat to Austria which led the Oranje to finish third in Group D.

But they were impressive on Tuesday, creating a hatful of chances and running out deserved winners in at the Allianz Arena.

## Georgia Fans Greet Returning Players With Rally



TBILISI (Dispatches) - Thousands of jubilant Georgia fans packed into the central square of the country's capital Tbilisi on Tuesday to welcome the national soccer team home from Euro 2024 after a thrilling campaign on their major tournament debut.

The Georgia players won Europe-wide praise for a series of thrilling performances, including a shock 2-0 victory over Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal, before going out to Spain 4-1 in the round of 16 on Sunday.

Fan Giorgi Bendeliani had brought his young daughter in his arms to the late night celebration. "The nation is full of joy. I'm really glad too, as an ordinary Georgian citizen," he said.

The players drove through Tbilisi in an open-top bus to cheers and applause before mounting a stage alongside the country's president and prime minister in front of thousands in Tbilisi's Freedom Square.

President Salome Zourabichvili, who attended all four of the country's matches in Germany, presented each player with the Order of Honour, one of Georgia's highest civilian awards.

Zourabichvili said to cheers from the crowd: "Today is a miracle. This is the kind of Georgia I want."

During a speech pledging continued government support for the national team, Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze was booed by some attendees in a reminder of Georgia's bitter domestic politics that had been temporarily eclipsed by the tournament.

Georgia's brief but high-octane Euros campaign electrified the South Caucasus nation of 3.7 million.

## Djokovic Eases Past Kopriva Into Wimbledon Round Two

LONDON (Dispatches) - Seven-times Wimbledon champion Novak Djokovic eased concerns about his knee with a clinical performance to dismantle Czech qualifier Vit Kopriva 6-1 6-2 6-2 and reach the second round.

Playing with a support on his right leg following a minor operation less than four weeks ago after a meniscus tear ended his French Open, the 37-year-old never faced a break point and needed a little less than two hours to prevail.

"I tried to really focus on the game and not think about the knee too much. Everything that I could do, I have done over the last three weeks along with my team to be able to play here for you today," Djokovic said. "If it was for any other tournament I probably would not have risked it, would not have rushed as much, but I just love Wimbledon, love coming back here. I want to thank my surgeon again for doing a great job. Things would be a bit complicated (without successful surgery) to be able to play on the highest level and avoid major injuries has been good. I've been fortunate to not be away from the tennis for so long." The Serb, searching for a record 25th Grand Slam title to



end his title drought this year, broke on his sixth attempt in a marathon fourth game and breezed through the opening set under the Centre Court roof before heaping more pressure on Kopriva. He let out a big roar having grabbed another break in the second set after a 21-shot rally and used it as a springboard to double his advantage in the match, as the 123rd-ranked Kopriva struggled to keep pace with last year's runner-up. The Wimbledon main draw debutant offered resistance early in the third set but was unable to subdue second seed Djokovic, who shifted up another gear to run away with the match. Meanwhile Ons Jabeur blasted her way into the second round at Wimbledon with a 55-minute, 6-3 6-1 demolition of Japan's Moyuka Uchijima. The Tunisian 10th seed, runner-up for the last two years, made light work of her world 68th-ranked opponent, breaking her immediately to take a 3-0 lead before each held their serve for the rest of the first set.

## Cavs Keep Donovan Mitchell With 3-Year, \$150.3m Deal

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Donovan Mitchell plans to sign a three-year, \$150.3 maximum-level contract with the Cleveland Cavaliers, according to multiple reports Tuesday.

Mitchell's deal includes a player option for the third year (2027-28), providing the All-Star guard the potential to return to free agency when he's eligible for a five-year, \$380 million extension.

Either way, Mitchell has the framework of a four-year contract -- including the final year of his previous deal -- worth \$185 million. He confirmed he's staying with the Cavs in a social media post early Tuesday.

Mitchell, 27, carried the Cavaliers into the second round of the 2024 playoffs with a heroic performance in the final two games of the series with the Orlando Magic.

He averaged 26.6 points and a career-best 6.1 assists per game in 2023-24 but was limited to 55 regular-season games. Mitchell was forced out of the lineup in the second-round series against the Boston Celtics because of a groin injury. He did not play in the final two games of the series.

Entering his eighth NBA season, Mitchell played his first five seasons with the Utah Jazz. In 468 career regular-season games, he has averaged 24.8 points, 4.6 rebounds and 4.3 assists per game.

Meanwhile Bronny James knows there are people who believe he was only drafted to the Los Angeles Lakers because of his father, all-time great LeBron James, but said on Tuesday he can deal with the added pressure.

Bronny, 19, was selected 55th overall at last week's NBA Draft after one season at the University of Southern California (USC) and will now team up with his dad, the



league's all-time leading scorer and a four-time champion. "For sure there's an amplified amount of pressure," Bronny said at his introductory press conference on Tuesday ahead of his first practice with the team.

"I've already seen it on social media and the Internet, talk about how I might not deserve an opportunity.

"But I've been dealing with stuff like this my whole life so it's nothing different. It's more amplified for sure, but I'll get through it."

He said he was eager to write his own story and prove he is more than just the eldest son of one of the greatest players ever.

"I'm just living by the days and trying not to care about what other people think about me because there are a lot of people who have something to say," he said.

"I'm just taking it by the day and staying sane while doing it."

Bronny thanked new Lakers head coach JJ Redick and general manager Rob Pelinka for "everything they have given to me," but Redick pushed back on that remark.

"Rob and I did not give Bronny anything. Bronny has earned this through hard work," he said as LeBron looked on attentively.

Redick said Bronny, whose season at USC was cut short because of a cardiac arrest he suffered last summer, has huge potential for growth.

"His base level of feel, athleticism, point of attack, defending, shooting, passing - there's a lot to like about his game," he said.

"As we build out our player development program holistically, he's going to have a great opportunity to become an excellent NBA player."

## Rose Qualifies for British Open as Garcia Misses Out



LONDON (Dispatches) - McLaren's Lando Norris said he would lose respect for Max Verstappen if the Red Bull driver did not apologise for a collision that wrecked their Austrian Grand Prix. The pair are friends off-track but fierce rivals on Formula One race weekends and that boiled over at Spielberg's Red Bull Ring as they fought for the lead. Stewards ruled triple world champion Verstappen was predominantly at fault for causing the collision and handed him a 10 second penalty, which had no impact on his result, as well as two penalty points. Verstappen, who dropped from first to fifth but now leads Norris by 81 points after 11 races, declared the penalty ridiculous and was backed up by Red Bull team boss Christian Horner. "He (Norris) didn't behave correctly there Max. Desperately unlucky, especially here, but you did your very best," he said over the team radio. A disappointed Norris, who retired with a puncture and car damage, said it was a tough one to take and accused Verstappen of being reckless and desperate in his driving. "It depends what he says. If he says he did nothing wrong, then I lose a lot of respect for that," he told Sky Sports television when asked if their relationship would change. McLaren boss Andrea Stella suggested Verstappen's behaviour, and moving while braking, was the result of the sport's rules being inadequately enforced years ago. "The problem behind it is that if you don't address these things honestly, they will come back," the Italian said. "They have come back today because they were not addressed properly in the past when there was some fights with Lewis (Hamilton in 2021) that needed to be punished in a harsher way."

"We have so much respect for Red Bull, so much respect for Max, they don't need to do this. It's a way to almost compromise your reputation. Why would you do that?" added Stella.

"The regulations must be enforced in a way that is effective, because when a car is out of the race as a consequence of this accident the punishment needs to be proportionate to the outcome."