

Washington Post Claimed Iran Is Pursuing Partnerships With Two Chinese Satellite Companies, Western Security Officials Say, as It Seeks to Expand Its Capability for Remote Surveillance and Intelligence Gathering

IRAN NEWS

The Islamic Republic of Iran Railways In a Statement Announced That It Does Not Allow Encroachment on the Railway Territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran Following the Encroachment of the Private Railway Company Known as "Afghanistan Railway Consortium" Into Iran's Railway Territory

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DOMESTIC



Negotiations for Chicken Exports to Russia

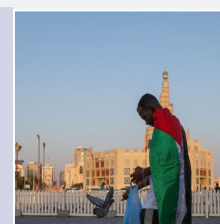
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INTERNATIONAL

Biden Claims Gaza Ceasefire Deal Much, Much Closer

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Doha Talks Just Aimed at Buying Time to Delay Iran's Response



TEHRAN (MNA) - The Doha talks on sealing a ceasefire in Gaza were fruitless and were just aimed at delaying Iran's response to the Israeli regime's assassination of Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran, an Iranian diplomat says.

"They are buying time to delay Iran's legitimate response to the Israeli regime's clear aggression in violating the sovereignty of the Islamic Republic of Iran," said Mohammad Soltanifar, the head of the Office for the Protection of the Interests of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Cairo.

He said that the Doha negotiations, which one of the leaders of Hamas called a "waste of time", did not yield results as could be predicted.

Ismail Haniyeh and one of his bodyguards were martyred after their residence was targeted in Tehran on July 31, according to a statement released by the IRGC.

Issuing a statement, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps said that the assassination of Ismail Haniyeh was "designed and implemented by the Zionist regime and supported by the criminal government of America."

Reacting to the Israeli act of terror, high-ranking Iranian officials vowed to give a proper response to the Zionist regime, with the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei saying, that by assassinating Ismail Haniyeh, the Israeli regime has prepared the ground for harsh punishment for itself.

On Saturday, the political adviser to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Rear Admiral Ali Shamkhani took to X social media platform, formerly Twitter, to write that preparations have been made to severely punish a regime that only understands the language of force.

The sole goal of the Israeli regime in killing the worshippers of the Al-Tabin school in Gaza and assassinating the martyr Ismail Haniyeh in Iran is to seek war and make the ceasefire negotiations fail, Shamkhani wrote.

Preparations for severe punishment of the Israeli regime have been made following the legal, diplomatic, and media processes, he added.

Over 100 Journalists Urge U.S. to Impose Arms Embargo on Israel



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - More than 100 journalists have called on the administration of US President Joe Biden to impose a ban on weapons transfers to Israel over the occupying regime's killing of Palestinian media persons and reporters in its months-long aggression on the besieged Gaza Strip.

The call was made in a letter addressed to US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, which was signed by 113 journalists, seven press freedom organizations and 20 news outlets as Israeli forces have claimed the lives of more than 160 Palestinian journalists since the Gaza war in October last year.

"As journalists, publications and press freedom groups in solidarity with the courageous Palestinian journalists of Gaza, we call on you to do more to protect journalists and show unwavering support for free and independent media by supporting an arms embargo against Israel," the letter said.

"Israel's deliberate targeting of journalists follows a longstanding pattern by the Israeli regime to suppress truthful reporting on its treatment of Palestinians and its war in Gaza. By providing Israel with the weapons used to kill journalists, the State Department is abetting Israel's violent suppression of journalism."

Underlining the US complicity in Israel's crimes due to its unwavering support for Tel Aviv, the letter also pointed to the ways in which Israel has suppressed coverage of its war on Gaza, including occasional internet outages, barring foreign reporters from Gaza and the raid of Al Jazeera's office in occupied al-Quds.

"Israel has gone to great lengths to suppress media coverage of its war in Gaza, imposing military censorship on both its own journalists and international reporters. The world relies only on the Palestinian journalists in Gaza to report the truth about the war and Israel's widespread violations of international law," the signatories wrote.

"Israel's military actions are not possible without US weapons, US military aid, and US diplomatic support. By providing the weapons being used to deliberately kill journalists, you are complicit in one of the gravest affronts to press freedom today."



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

President Calls for National Consensus as Majlis Begins Debating Cabinet Lineup

TEHRAN - Iran's Parliament officially started reviewing the qualifications of proposed ministers in the new administration, with President Masoud Pezeshkian underscoring the importance of maintaining unity and cohesion among the three branches of government to resolve the country's problems.

In an open session of the Parliament on Saturday, Pezeshkian threw his weight behind his 19 ministerial picks and called for amicable solutions to address the national and international challenges instead of resorting to harsh measures.

He highlighted the loyalty and faithfulness of the Iranian nation, stressing that honesty and transparency of the government would strengthen bonds between the two sides.

"The cabinet that was introduced to the parliament today is the government of national unity; the government of national unity is a government that considers itself the government of all Iranian people. The national unity government is obligated to secure the citizenship rights of all Iranians and is committed to the prioritization of national interests over any other interest," Pezeshkian said.

Calling for joint and coordinated measures by the three branches of government to fulfill the people's demands, the Iranian president said, "If the voices of the public are not heard in time, there will be growing frustration and disappointment, which would result in the loss of hope and the destruction of capitals."

Pointing to various challenges facing the country, Pezeshkian said the Islamic Republic is suffering "imbalances" in the economic, societal, environmental, educational and cultural fields but, "Our people showed that they love their country, and if effective procedure is pursued to solve the problems, they will turn out with all their strength."

The president underlined the significance of policy- and decision-making based on

a scientific approach, as well as solving problems in light of collective wisdom instead of relying on personal opinions and tastes.

Pezeshkian also emphasized his resolve to fight against corruption and respect freedom of speech as well as criticism and national dialogue.

He termed US sanctions as the main threat to the Iranian nation and called for "togetherness" among the public to address the issue.

"Economy is the cornerstone of the country's problems, but dissociating the economy from other areas and reducing it to conventional economic issues is a big mistake. Today, simultaneous reforms in international relations and internal reforms are the only way out of the current situation," Pezeshkian said.

"This can only be achieved with an integrated view of domestic and foreign, economic and political issues and an integrated view and common understanding of the current issues in the country, which demands the cooperation and empathy of the three branches," he added.

Pezeshkian will have two and half hours to defend his cabinet at Parliament and then, five opponents and five supporters of the proposed ministers will deliver a speech during the session.

He submitted the list of his new cabinet members to the Parliament on August 11, less than two weeks after he was sworn in before the country's legislators. Abbas Araçchi and Abdolnaser Hemmati are the most well-known figures on his list.

Pezeshkian's cabinet lineup has ruffled the feathers of a number of individuals in the Reformist camp but he has defended his proposed ministers and has called on critics to "wait for the cabinet to start work and criticize it based on its performance."

Hezbollah's Retaliation Will Be Much Greater Than What Israel Could Imagine

BEIRUT (Dispatches) - A senior Hezbollah official says the Lebanese resistance movement's surprise retaliation for the ongoing Israeli acts of aggression and assassinations of resistance figures in the Arab country will be far beyond the Zionist regime's imagination.

Vice President of the Executive Council of Hezbollah Sheikh Ali Damoush said on Friday that the recent unveiling of the Imad 4 underground missile facility indicated that Hezbollah has advanced capabilities that could be used in any reprisal attack against the Israeli regime.

"The showcase of the sophisticated Imad 4 underground missile facility sent a clear message to the Israeli enemy that the capabilities, potentials, and surprises that Hezbollah possesses are much greater than what it can imagine," he said.

"Therefore, any act of adventurism against Lebanon will end in a humiliating defeat for the Zionist entity, and will be much more catastrophic than what it suffered in August 2006," he added.

He added that simmering tensions in West Asia are due to Israel's insistence on perpetrating more crimes and continuing the genocidal war in Gaza, lambasting Washington for turning a blind eye to such facts.

"The United States would have better exerted pressure on [Israeli prime minister Benjamin] Netanyahu than to press Iran and Hezbollah and seek to dissuade them from responding to the crimes of the Zionist enemy," Damoush stressed.



"All the pressures and threats that we are experiencing will not discourage us from retaliating against Israeli acts of aggression and firmly supporting Gazans," the top Hezbollah official pointed out.

Damoush further noted that Israel cannot escape punishment for its crimes in Lebanon anymore, as the era of hit-and-run is over.

"Hezbollah is fairly committed to its pledge to respond to the Israeli crime of assassinating great resistance commander Fuad Shukur" in an airstrike on a building in the southern Beirut suburb of Dahieh on July 30, he underscored.

Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah has vowed retaliation for the act of terror.

Hezbollah and Israel have been exchanging deadly fire since early October last year, shortly after the regime launched the genocidal war against the Gaza Strip in response to a surprise operation by the Palestinian Hamas resistance group.

The Lebanese resistance movement has vowed to keep up its retaliatory attacks as long as the Israeli regime continues its war on Gaza, which has so far killed more than 40,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, in the besieged territory.

Hezbollah officials have repeatedly said they do not want a war with Israel while stressing that they are prepared in case it occurs.

Two Israeli wars waged against Lebanon in 2000 and 2006 were met with strong resistance from Hezbollah, resulting in the retreat of the regime in both conflicts.

Iran, Russia Oppose Clash of Civilizations



ASTRAKHAN (IRNA) - Iran's Ambassador to Russia, Kazem Jalali, has stated that both Iran and Russia oppose the clash of civilizations and believe in respecting all civilizations.

Jalali made the remarks at the 9th Caspian Media Forum in Astrakhan, Russia, on Saturday.

He addressed the concept of clash of civilizations predicated on the notion of one civilization's superiority, emphasizing that nations like the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Russian Federation reject such views.

Jalali highlighted that nations with rich, ancient cultures advocate for intercultural dialogue and respect for all civilizations, asserting that no civilization should be subjected to insult.

While criticizing the recent events at the opening ceremony of the 2024 Paris Olympics, the Iranian envoy to Russia said, "What happened in the Paris Olympics is worth considering. One day Christianity is insulted, the next day Islam is insulted, the next day the Prophet of Islam and the next day the Quran is insulted. Such issues have been theorized in the issue of the clash of civilizations."

Referring to the consequences of a unipolar world and the genocide in Gaza, he said that Iran and Russia oppose such issues, noting that the architects of a war of civilizations bear responsibility for the massacre in Gaza.

He emphasized that the media should strategize towards establishing a multipolar world and asserted that the Caspian field does not require the involvement of extra-regional powers.

In his concluding remarks, Jalali highlighted the strengthening ties between Iran and Russia, noting that under the administration of the late Ebrahim Raisi, Iran-Russia relations significantly broadened, assuring that Iran will maintain and develop its relations with Russia and other neighboring nations with its new government.

Representatives from the Caspian Sea littoral states, as well as delegations from Moldova and Uzbekistan, participated in the one-day conference on Saturday.

The Caspian Media Forum, which is held annually, has become a platform for strengthening dialogue and cooperation among media professionals in the Caspian region.

UN Special Rapporteur Calls for End to Forced Displacement of Palestinian Populations



GENEVA (Dispatches) - The UN's special rapporteur on the human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian territories calls upon the international community to put an end to Israel's forced displacement of Palestinian populations.

"I IMPLORÉ the diplomatic community, the UN and international organizations in the West Bank to intervene, including with their physical presence on the ground, to stop the ongoing and violent forced displacement of Palestinian communities," Francesca Albanese wrote in a post published on her X account on Saturday.

In her post, she cited Israeli activists from Farsyia, a Bedouin village in the northern Jordan Valley, as saying that the Israeli settlers pass through Palestinians' houses, threatening them and scaring the children so that the whole community decided to evacuate.

The activists' comments came after Palestinian shepherds from the West Bank community of Umm Jamal finally surrendered and fled in fear.

"The women and children fled yesterday. The men are tearing everything apart, loading everything on a van, waiting for a truck. A very beautiful place. They've lived here for 30 years," Albanese quoted the activists as saying. "Here is it matter of death or life, help us."

The UN rapporteur emphasized that being on the receiving end of this call gives the term "helplessness", a different and more bitter taste.

"The assault on the Palestinian is total. And it will be unstoppable until we stop it," Albanese pointed out.

Late in July, the Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor said Israel's forced displacement orders in the southern parts of the Gaza Strip are part of the regime's genocidal war that led Palestinians to "actual death."

The Geneva-based right group has previously said that the regime's mass forced displacement campaign "has so far affected about 2,000,000 people in the Gaza Strip, most of them forcibly displaced multiple times."

China Youth Unemployment Jumps to 17.1% in July

BEIJING (Dispatches) - Youth unemployment in China ticked up to 17.1 percent in July, official figures showed, the highest level this year as the world's second-largest economy faces mounting headwinds. China is battling soaring joblessness among young people, a heavily indebted property sector and intensifying trade issues with the West. Chinese Premier Li Qiang, who is responsible for economic policy, on Friday called for struggling companies to be "heard" and "their difficulties truly addressed", according to the state news agency Xinhua. The unemployment rate among 16- to 24-year-olds released Friday by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) was up markedly from June's 13.2 percent. The closely watched metric peaked at 21.3 percent in June of 2023, before authorities suspended publication of the figures and later changed their methodology to exclude students. Nearly 12 million students graduated from Chinese universities this June, heightening competition in an already tough job market and likely explaining July's sharp increase in joblessness. In May, President Xi Jinping said countering youth unemployment must be regarded as a "top priority".



India's Kashmir to Vote in Polls From Sept. 18



NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - India will hold provincial elections in the Himalayan territory of Jammu and Kashmir from Sept. 18, the Election Commission said on Friday, the first regional polls there in a decade and five years after New Delhi scrapped the region's special autonomy.

India's only Muslim-majority region, Jammu and Kashmir has been at the heart of more than 75 years of animosity with neighbouring Pakistan since the birth of the two nations in 1947 at independence from colonial rule by Britain.

The larger Kashmir region is divided between India, Pakistan and China. The part ruled by India had a special status that was revoked by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government in 2019 and the state was split into two federally-administered territories.

The decision to hold fresh elections follows a December order by India's Supreme Court that rejected petitions challenging the revocation of Kashmir's special status and set a deadline of Sept. 30 for holding provincial polls.

Nearly 9 million people are registered to vote for the 90-member legislative assembly, Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar told reporters.

The vote will be held in three phases and ballots counted on Oct. 4, with results expected the same day.

Modi says his 2019 decision brought normalcy to Kashmir after decades of bloodshed and that the special status allowed it a measure of administrative autonomy that held back the region's development.

Harris Vows to Tackle Price Gouging, Ease Cost of Living in Economy Plan

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Vice President Kamala Harris is promoting a broad set of economic proposals that would offer new tax breaks and lower the cost of living for Americans, aiming to address the financial concerns that are at the top of the mind for voters and that Republican Donald Trump is trying to lay at her doorstep.

Harris traveled to the battleground state of North Carolina to lay out her plans on Friday, including a proposal for a federal ban on price gouging on groceries. She also is proposing \$25,000 in down payment help for certain first-time homebuyers and tax incentives for builders of starter homes, among other things.

Harris is calling for tax breaks aimed at families, as well as middle- and lower-income people. She would expand the child tax credit to up to \$3,600 - and \$6,000 for children in their first year of life. Harris would expand the earned income tax credit to cover people in lower-income jobs without children, which the campaign estimates would cut their effective tax rate by \$1,500. Harris also wants to lower health insurance premiums through the Affordable Care Act.

Overall, the plan represents a continuation of many Biden administration priorities but with a pronounced shift in emphasis from job creation and infrastructure and to matters more closely tied to easing the cost of living - food prices, housing and tax breaks for families. Many initiatives would require congressional approval, which is far from assured in the current political environment, and there were scant details on how to pay for the ideas.

Brazil, Colombia Call for New Venezuela Elections as Opposition Cries Foul

BOGOTA (Dispatches) - The presidents of Brazil and Colombia on Thursday called on Venezuela to hold a new presidential election amid the ongoing political crisis over Nicolas Maduro's disputed re-election. The proposal was swiftly rejected by the Venezuelan opposition and the United States.

The presidents of Brazil and Colombia called Thursday for fresh elections in Venezuela after last month's disputed victory by Nicolas Maduro - a proposal quickly rejected by the opposition, who slammed the strongman for blocking a "political transition."

The two South American leaders, who spoke on the phone Wednesday to discuss a possible political way forward from Venezuela's post-election crisis, independently urged Maduro to consider a new election.

But Venezuelan opposition leader Maria Corina Machado said it would show "a lack of respect" for the popular will already expressed on July 28.

And opposition candidate Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia, a 74-year-old retired diplomat who claims he defeated Maduro by a wide margin, accused the longtime leftist leader of "playing with the lives of millions" by refusing to cede defeat.

"The country's economy is getting worse and worse with each passing day with no political solution in sight, and you are responsible for this tragedy," Gonzalez Urrutia said in a video posted to social media on Thursday.

"Venezuela deserves a future of stability, prosperity and peace, but in order to have that, the will of the people must be respected."

For his part, Maduro, while not directly mentioning a new election, said: "Conflicts in Venezuela... are resolved by Venezuelans, with their institutions, laws and Constitution."

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva said if Maduro were "sensible... he could try to appeal to the people of Venezuela, perhaps even organize elections."

Lula told a Brazilian radio station there should be "criteria for participation of all candidates" in a new election, which should "allow observers from all over the world."

Colombian President Gustavo Petro meanwhile called on X for the lifting of all sanctions against Caracas, a "general national and international amnesty," "new, free elections" and a "transitional cohabitation government."

In Washington, US President Joe Biden signalled he would back such a move, but the White House walked back his comment, with a spokesman suggesting Biden had been "speaking to the absurdity of Maduro and his representatives not coming clean about the July 28 elections."

It is "abundantly clear" that Gonzalez Urrutia won, the US spokesman said.

When asked about statements made by foreign leaders, Maduro said: "We're not going to conduct diplomacy at microphones. Every president, every country knows how to manage domestic affairs."

Machado, who was barred from seeking election by Maduro-friendly state institutions, told a virtual press conference Thursday that Venezuelans had voted "in very adverse conditions where there was fraud and we still managed to win."

The country's CNE electoral council proclaimed Maduro the winner of a third, six-year term, giving him 52 percent of votes cast but without providing a detailed breakdown of the results.

The opposition says polling station-level results show Gonzalez Urrutia won easily.

Gonzalez Urrutia and Machado have been in hiding since the president accused them of seeking to foment a "coup d'etat" and called for the pair to be jailed.

Maduro's victory claim has been rejected by the United States, European Union and several Latin American countries.

The Organisation of American States will meet Friday at Washington's request to consider a resolution that would call on the CNE to publish detailed election results and allow independent verification of that data.

Anti-Maduro protests have claimed 25 lives so far, with dozens injured and more than 2,400 arrested.

Maduro has previously rejected the possibility of new elections and asked the country's highest court, also viewed as loyal to him, to certify the outcome.

Meanwhile, Venezuela's legislature on Thursday approved a law to regulate the registration and funding of NGOs described by Maduro's regime as a "facade for the financing of terrorist actions."

The law is one of several under consideration in the regime-friendly National Assembly that critics say are meant to criminalise Maduro's opponents.

The vast majority of the 277 lawmakers in the single-chamber National Assembly are loyal to Maduro, who had warned of a "bloodbath" if he lost his reelection bid.

Rights activists in Venezuela on Thursday raised the alarm over the NGO law, which they said would "deepen the persecution" of Maduro critics.

Since coming to power in 2013, Maduro has presided over an economic collapse that has seen more than seven million Venezuelans flee the country as GDP plunged 80 percent in a decade.

His previous reelection, in 2018, was also rejected as a sham by dozens of countries.

Kremlin Accuses the West of Helping Ukraine

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - An influential aide to Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Friday that the West and the U.S.-led NATO alliance had helped to plan Ukraine's surprise attack on Russia's Kursk region, something Washington has denied.

The lightning incursion, the biggest into Russia by a foreign power since World War Two, began on Aug. 6 when thousands of Ukrainian troops crossed Russia's western border in a major embarrassment for Putin's military.

Ukraine said the incursion was needed to force Russia, which sent its forces into Ukraine in February 2022, to start "fair" peace talks.

But the United States and Western powers, eager to avoid direct military confrontation with Russia, said Ukraine had not given advance notice and that Washington was not involved, though weaponry provided by Britain and the U.S. is reported to have been used on Russian soil.

Influential veteran Kremlin hawk Nikolai Patrushev dismissed the Western assertions in an interview with the Izvestia newspaper.

"The operation in the Kursk region was also planned with the participation of NATO and Western special services," he was quoted as saying, without offering evidence.

"Without their participation and direct support, Kyiv would not have ventured into Russian territory."

The remarks implied that Ukraine's first acknowledged foray into sovereign Russian territory carried a high risk of escalation.

Putin chaired a meeting of Russia's Security Council, including Patrushev, and said the discussion would focus on "new technical solutions" being employed in what Russia calls its special military operation.

"Washington's efforts have created all the prerequisites for Ukraine to lose its sovereignty and lose part of its territories," Patrushev said.

Ukraine said on Thursday that it had installed a military commandant in the area it controlled, even as Russia intensified its offensives in Ukraine's east.



Russia's defence ministry for its part said it had repelled a series of Ukrainian attacks along the Kursk frontline.

Kursk regional governor Alexei Smirnov said Ukraine had destroyed a road bridge over the Seym river in the region's Glushkovsky district. State news agency TASS, citing Russian security officials, said that could hinder an ongoing evacuation of the frontier district's roughly 20,000 inhabitants.

While the Ukrainian attack has revealed weaknesses in Russian defences and changed the public narrative of the conflict, Russian officials said Ukraine's "terrorist invasion" would not change the course of the war.

Russia has been advancing for most of the year in the key eastern sector of the 1,000-km (620-mile) front and has vast numerical superiority. It controls 18% of Ukraine.

After more than 10 days of fighting, Ukraine holds at least 450 sq km (175 sq miles) of territory, or less than 0.003% of Russia. But for Putin, the incursion crosses another red line.

One Russian source told Reuters the incursion could embolden hardliners in Moscow who advocate a bigger war, but Putin's choice may not be easy.

He has sought to portray Europe's biggest war in seven decades both as a limited "special military operation" that need not upset daily Russian life and as a historic fight with a West that scorns Moscow's interests and seeks to dismember Russia.

The U.S., which has said it cannot allow Putin to win the Ukraine war, so far deems the surprise incursion a protective move that justifies the use of U.S. weaponry, officials in Washington said.

But they also expressed worries about complications as Ukrainian troops push further into enemy territory.

One U.S. official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that if Ukraine started taking Russian villages and other non-military targets using U.S. weapons and vehicles, it could be seen as stretching the limits Washington has imposed, precisely to avoid any perception of a direct NATO-Russia conflict.

Russia's defense ministry has published footage that it said showed a Russian drone destroying a U.S.-made Stryker armored combat vehicle in the Kursk region.

Europe on Alert as Sweden, Pakistan Report First Cases of Mpox

STOCKHOLM (Dispatches) - Health authorities warned yesterday that Europe must be ready for more cases of a deadly strain of mpox that has killed hundreds of people in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The World Health Organization urged pharmaceutical firms to ramp up vaccine production and China said it would screen travelers for the disease after the first cases of the more deadly strain to be recorded outside Africa were announced in Sweden and Pakistan.

France's Prime Minister Gabriel Attal said his country was on the "highest alert" and would implement "new recommendations" for travelers to risk areas.

Mpox is caused by a virus transmitted to humans by animals but can also spread human-to-human through close physical contact.

It causes fever, muscular aches and large boil-like skin lesions.

The WHO on Wednesday declared the rapid spread of the new Clade 1b strain an international public health emergency - the agency's highest alert.

This follows the spread of the more deadly mpox from Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to other African countries.

"We do need the manufacturers to really scale up so that we've got access to many, many more vaccines," WHO spokeswoman Margaret Harris told reporters.

The WHO is asking countries with vaccine stockpiles to donate them to countries with outbreaks.

Harris said mpox was "particularly dangerous for those with a weak immune system, so people who maybe have HIV or are malnourished", and was also

dangerous for small children.

The United States has said it will donate 50,000 doses of an mpox vaccine to DRC and Attal said France would also send vaccines to risk countries.

Danish drugmaker Bavarian Nordic said Thursday it would be ready to make up to 10 million doses of its mpox vaccine by 2025 but that it needed contracts to start production.

The Stockholm-based European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) said the overall risk in Europe was "low". But it warned that "effective surveillance, laboratory testing, epidemiological investigation and contact tracing capacities will be vital to detecting cases."

"Due to the close links between Europe and Africa, we must be prepared for more imported clade I cases," ECDC director Pamela Rendi-Wagner said in a statement.

The virus has swept across DRC, killing 548 people so far this year, the government said Thursday.

Nigeria has recorded 39 mpox cases this year, but no deaths, according to its health authorities. Previously unaffected countries such as Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda have reported outbreaks, according to the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention.

Sweden's Public Health Agency announced Thursday it had registered a case of Clade 1b.

The patient was infected during a visit to "the part of Africa where there is a major outbreak of mpox Clade 1", epidemiologist Magnus Gisslen said in a statement.

The mpox strain in the Pakistan case was not immediately known, the country's health ministry said in a statement.

It said the patient, a 34-year-old man, had "come from a Gulf country".

China announced it would begin screening people and goods entering the country for mpox over the next six months.





Alcaraz Out After Worst Match While Sinner Wins in Walkover

CINCINNATI (Dispatches) - Carlos Alcaraz let loose his frustrations with a violent racquet smash in a 4-6, 7-6 (7/5), 6-4 defeat at the ATP and WTA Cincinnati Open that he called the "worst match" of his career.

The reigning Roland Garros and Wimbledon champion could not match the wily skills of 37-year-old French opponent Gael Monfils, two decades in the game and a threat to any young gun. "It was the worst match that I ever played in my career," Alcaraz said. "I couldn't play. "I don't know what happened. Honestly, I couldn't, I couldn't control myself. I couldn't be better. It was impossible to win, and that's all."

The Spaniard added: "I came here thinking I'm going to feel good. I'm going to put in a good tennis, because I know how to play on this court."

Alcaraz said he had never before broken a racquet in anger but this match was the exception. The ATP number three and 2023 Cincinnati runner-up heads to the US Open starting a week from Monday without a hardcourt win and only one second-round summer cement match in his legs. "It's really difficult to find some good stuffs from this match -- I want to forget it and try to move on to New York," he said.

"I'll try to practice well, to get used to those courts. And I will forget this match."

Monfils then started a third-round catch-up match only hours after his victory, but ran out of puff as Holger Rune scraped out a 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 comeback victory.

While frustrated second seed Alcaraz was fuming at his form and occasionally screaming at his team, world number one Jannik Sinner celebrated a quiet 23rd birthday, with fate handing him a present in the form of a walkover.

The Italian advanced effortlessly into the quarters when Australian opponent Jordan Thompson

withdrew before their match with a rib injury.

Sinner next gets a rematch of last week's quarter-final in Canada, which he lost to Andrey Rublev. The Russian finished a rain-delayed match over Brandon Nakashima 7-6 (7/5), 6-1.

Third seed Alexander Zverev advanced into the last eight over Spain's Pablo Carreno Busta 7-5, 7-6 (8/6).

Number five Hubert Hurkacz continued his quick return from July knee surgery with a 6-3, 3-6, 6-1 defeat of Italy's Flavio Cobolli.

The poor run of form for seventh seed Casper Ruud continued as the Norwegian went down 6-3, 6-1 to Felix Auger-Aliassime in 68 minutes, with the Canadian sending down 14 aces.

Women's top seed Iga Swiatek defeated Marta Kostyuk for the second time this season, powering into the quarter-finals 6-2, 6-2.

The Pole backed up her win over the Ukrainian at Indian Wells last March and now stands 3-0 in the rivalry without the loss of a set. Due to the morning of rain, Swiatek stepped onto the court without her usual pre-match routine, but showed no ill effects.

Top-ranked Swiatek was able to finish off victory efficiently after struggling through three sets in the previous round to defeat Varvara Gracheva.

Swiatek secured the opening set in 31 minutes and was untroubled as she rolled through the second.

"I'm happy that I kept my intensity, in the first match, it got a little bit down," Swiatek said. "But I was ready in every game."

Norrie, Vondrousova Withdraw From US Open



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Britain's Cameron Norrie and 2023 Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova of the Czech Republic announced on Friday they have withdrawn from the US Open.

Norrie, 47th in the ATP rankings, will miss the year's final Grand Slam tennis tournament, which starts in New York on August 26, due to a forearm injury.

Vondrousova, 18th in the WTA rankings, has not played since a first-round loss in defending her title at Wimbledon, skipping the Paris Olympics due to a hand injury.

Norrie has not played since mid-July in Bastad, where he lost to Rafael Nadal 6-4, 6-4 in the Spaniard's first event back from injury.

Norrie reached the third round at last year's US Open. His best run in New York was to the fourth round in 2022 when he lost to Andrey Rublev.

Vondrousova, 25, will allow 98th-ranked Petra Martic into the main draw by pulling out. She joined Sorana Cirstea and Zhu Lin in withdrawing from the US Open.

PSG Begin Post-Mbappe Era With Win at Le Havre



LE HAVRE (Dispatches) - Paris Saint-Germain began their defense of the Ligue 1 title with a 4-1 win at Le Havre on Friday in their first competitive game since the departure of talisman Kylian Mbappe to Real Madrid.

Lee Kang-in gave PSG the lead inside three minutes in Normandy only for Gautier Lloris to equalise, but late goals by Ousmane Dembele, Bradley Barcola and a Randal Kolo Muani penalty sealed the victory for the reigning French champions.

It was a comfortable win in the end for Luis Enrique's team, with their substitutes ultimately making the difference as PSG's strength in depth proved too much for a team who only just avoided relegation last season.

"It is the first game back and it's a very good start," said PSG's Spanish coach.

The French international trio of Kolo Muani, Dembele and Barcola all began the game on the bench, while Portugal midfielder Joao Neves came on at half-time for his debut after joining from Benfica for a fee that could reach 69.9 million euros (\$76.7m) including bonuses.

Yet Le Havre will wonder what might have been had a Josue Casimir goal -- which would have put them in front early in the second half -- not been disallowed by VAR for a handball.

"We had highs and lows, but the substitutes did a lot of good for us," added Luis Enrique.

"The final score disguises the fact that there are things to improve upon. We gave away lots of easy balls and had we gone 2-1 down that might have changed everything."

PSG have not made any marquee signings to fill the enormous void left by Mbappe, who departed for Madrid in June after scoring 44 goals last season and registering a club-record 256 across his seven years at the club.

It remains to be seen if Luis Enrique's team can repeat their performances of the last campaign, when they swept all the domestic honours and reached the semi-finals of the Champions League.

The Spanish coach was without several regulars here, with left-back Nuno Mendes suspended while Fabian Ruiz is not yet ready to return after helping Spain win Euro 2024.

There was a debut on the left wing for Ibrahim Mbaye, who is only 16 and was one of three teenagers in PSG's starting line-up alongside Yoram Zague and Warren Zaire-Emery, both 18.

South Korea star Lee opened the scoring when he collected a Goncalo Ramos pass on the right wing before sending a shot into the far corner with the aid of a deflection.

Zirkzee Shines on Debut as Man United Defeat Fulham

MANCHESTER (Dispatches) - Joshua Zirkzee made himself a Manchester United hero on his debut with a late winner to beat Fulham 1-0 in the opening match of the Premier League season. Zirkzee, lacking match fitness after his £36.5m (RM206 million) move from Bologna last month, came on only for the final half hour.

The Dutch international saved the Red Devils from a frustrating evening at Old Trafford when he poked in Alejandro Garnacho's cross on 87 minutes.

"To win here in my first home game and to grab a goal, it couldn't be better," said Zirkzee.

"I've been told (scoring at the Stretford End) is one of the best feelings at Manchester United. I'm so thankful and blessed I could experience it in my first game. It's an amazing feeling."

United boss Erik ten Hag survived at the end of last season, despite finishing eighth in the Premier League, thanks to winning the FA Cup.

Whether that shock victory over rivals and English champions Manchester City in May could be a springboard remains to be seen after a performance that was eerily reminiscent of many last season. "I have seen many spaces where we have to improve but that is normal," said Ten Hag. "It (the win) is good

to strengthen the belief." The Dutchman revealed on the eve of the game that his side were "not ready" for the new campaign with key players missing through injury or a lack of match fitness, and it showed.

Bruno Fernandes started in a centre-forward role in the absence of Rasmus Hojlund, while Zirkzee was on the bench after returning to pre-season late following Euro 2024.

Noussair Mazraoui was thrown straight into the starting line-up at left-back after joining from Bayern Munich this week.

But there was no place in the squad for Jadon Sancho even though the winger and Ten Hag appeared to have settled their differences.

Fulham won at Old Trafford last season for the first time in 20 years in February during a torrid campaign for United.

Little seemed to have changed in the opening 20 minutes as the visitors started confidently and Andre Onana did well to prevent Kenny Tete's dipping effort finding the top corner.

But United grew into the game after a slow start.

Manchester United's Portuguese midfielder #08 Bruno Fernandes gestures during the English Premier League football match between Manchester United and Fulham at Old Trafford in Manchester August 16, 2024.



Home Hope Kerbaol Soloes to Win at Tour de France

PARIS (Dispatches) - French rider Cedrine Kerbaol broke away to win stage six of the women's Tour de France and go second in the overall standings with two days to go.

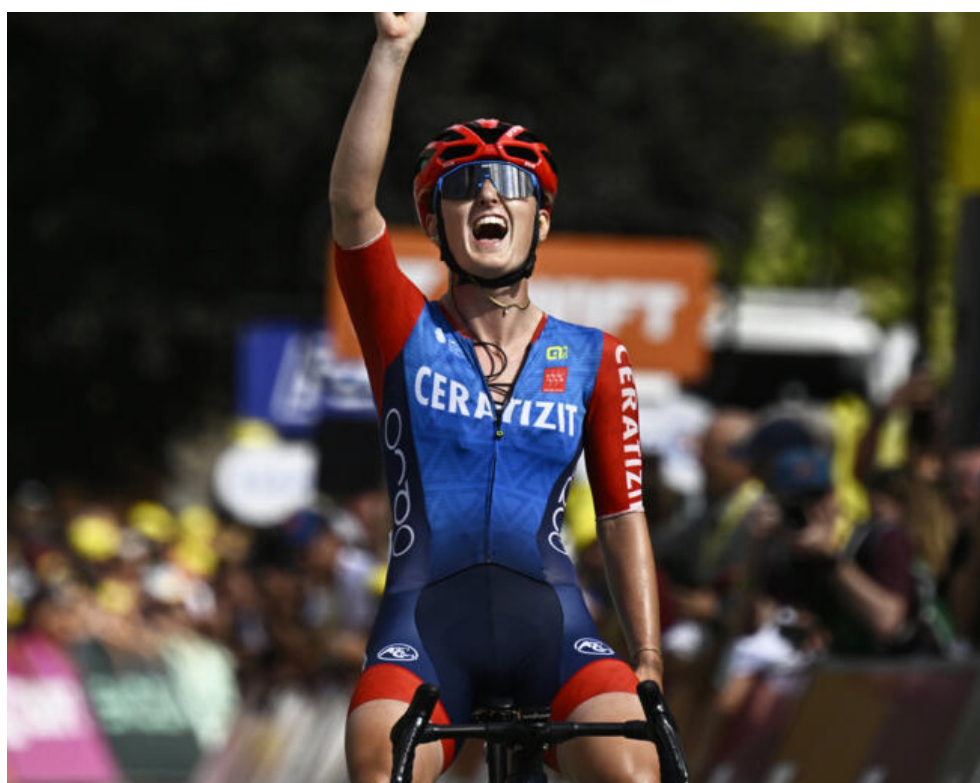
The 23-year-old raced home up a hill ahead of a pack of around 25 riders that included leader Katarzyna Niewiadoma of Poland.

The sixth stage was decided up the Cote des Fins climb less than 15km from the line when Kerbaol made a late counter-attack and then produced a solo run to the line.

The rider from Brest is the first French woman to win a Tour de France femmes stage. She said she was in shock from the effort.

"I gave everything. The effort was so violent that I wanted to vomit," she said. "I really wanted it, I was so motivated."

Niewiadoma leads the race by 16sec from Kerbaol while Olympic champion Kirsten Faulkner of the United States is third at 19sec after the rolling 159km stage.



A day after a nasty fall, defending champion Demi Vollering was in the chasing group that came home 21sec behind the winner Friday. The Team SD Worx leader sits in 10th at 1min 19sec.

The race leader suggested after Friday's stage that Vollering was the key danger.

"I am confident because I feel very fit but I also know that at 1:19 in the mountains is not much."

Vollering was brought down in a 10-rider pile up Thursday, took more than a minute to remount and lost the lead to Niewiadoma.

British cyclist Pfeiffer Georgi was caught in the same crash and her DSM-Firmenich team said Friday she had a fracture in her neck, but will not need surgery.

The standings could all change on Saturday's 167km run over a series of climbs in the Alps to a summit at the Grand Bornand peak, a 7km climb at five percent closing the day.