



10,000 prisoners, including foreigners to be released from jails in Vietnam, to mark its recent parliamentary elections



Beijing	25	17	SNY	Los Angeles	20	12	SNY
Colombo	31	26	SNY	Melbourne	26	15	LC
Dhaka	31	19	SNY	Moscow	14	13	SNY
Dubai	26	21	SNY	New York	22	17	SNY
Houston	31	19	TDS	Singapore	28	25	TDS
Istanbul	26	19	SNY	Toronto	21	12	SNY
London	30	19	SNY	Washington	23	18	SNY

# Supreme Leader's adviser accuses US president of betraying democracy

White House indicates Trump is close to deciding on a deal; final pact yet to be reached, says Iran

**DUBAI**  
AN adviser to Iran's Supreme Leader on Saturday accused US President Donald Trump of "betraying democracy", as uncertainty persisted over a possible agreement between Washington and Tehran to end their conflict. Mohsen Rezaei, a former commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, said Trump was "betraying diplomacy for the third time" by maintaining a naval blockade and imposing conditions on negotiations. "By continuing the naval blockade and making excessive demands in negotiations, he has once again proven that he is not inclined toward negotiation and

is pursuing other objectives," Rezaei wrote on X. His remarks came as the United States reiterated that it was prepared to resume military action if necessary. Speaking at a defence summit in Singapore, US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth said Washington was "more than capable" of restarting the war, while US Central Command said American forces remained "present and vigilant" across the region. The White House has signalled that Trump is close to deciding on a proposed framework for a deal. However, Tehran denied that a final agreement had been

reached. US sources told AFP that the framework was awaiting Trump's approval following a White House Situation Room meeting on Friday. Trump has said any agreement must meet his key conditions, including a commitment by Iran never to develop nuclear weapons and the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz. Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei rejected Washington's demands, saying the Islamic Republic had "said goodbye to the language of 'must' 47 years ago". While exchanges of messages between the two sides were continuing, "no final agreement has been

reached", he said. Trump has claimed that Tehran would remove mines from the Strait of Hormuz and reopen the vital shipping route without imposing tolls, while the United States would lift its blockade. However, Iranian media reports disputed those assertions, saying no such provisions were included in the proposed agreement and rejecting claims regarding the destruction of Iran's enriched uranium stockpiles. The negotiations follow US strikes on Iran's Bandar Abbas port and retaliatory attacks this week. Iran's state media said air defences had shot down a drone allegedly belonging to the "US-Zionist aggressor enemy". Agencies



(Top) Screen grab shows two men being hugged after they were rescued; (inset) a rescue team freeing a man trapped inside a semi-submerged cave in central Xaysomboun province, northeast of the capital Vientiane | AFP

## Hegseth backs Pacific allies, strikes softer tone on Beijing

**SINGAPORE**

US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth assured Pacific allies on Saturday that Washington remained committed to the region, but toned down previous comments calling China a threat. Speaking to a group of world leaders, diplomats and top security officials at the Shangri-La defense conference in Singapore, Hegseth said that the region "has profound implications for US security and prosperity" and that Washington's priority was to "achieve a lasting and favorable balance of power in the Pacific." It was his second time addressing the forum, hosted by the International Institute for Strategic Studies. Last year, he raised the ire of Beijing by warning of rapidly developing threats from China, particularly its aggressive stance toward Taiwan. He said China is actively training daily to take Taiwan.

This year, however, the meeting comes only about two weeks after Donald Trump visited Chinese leader Xi Jinping in Beijing, following which Trump called Xi a "great leader" and said that they were going to have a "fantastic future together." Hegseth, who was with Trump in Beijing, said the two leaders had agreed that China and the US should "build a constructive relationship of strategic stability, based on fairness and reciprocity, reaffirming that while our nations will vigorously protect our respective interests, we can secure practical, mutually beneficial agreements where our interests align." AP

## Israel pounds southern Lebanon, issues evacuation alerts despite talks

**ADLOUN**

ISRAEL's air force and artillery struck areas close to a strategic mountain housing a Crusader-built castle in southern Lebanon on Saturday as fighting raged in villages close to the southern city of Nabatieh. Israel's military issued evacuation warnings for more than a dozen villages in southern Lebanon, a day after Lebanese and Israeli military officials held their first direct talks in decades at the Pentagon.

The situation in southern Lebanon was discussed during a meeting Saturday between Lebanon's president and prime minister who said in a statement later that they will intensify their contacts to make Israel stop demolition and bulldozing of homes and historical sites as well as its evacuation warnings. Lebanon's state-run National News Agency reported Israeli airstrikes and artillery shelling near the Crusader-built Beaufort castle that is about 15 kilometers (9 miles) from the Israeli border and overlooks wide parts of southern Lebanon. The strategic castle was held by Israeli troops for 18 years until they withdrew from Lebanon in May 2000.



Smoke rising after an Israeli air strike on the village of Maifadoun | AFP

Israeli troops have been advancing for days in villages close to the castle, including Yohmor and Zawtar al-Sharqieh near the city of Nabatieh after they crossed the strategic Litani River, which the Israeli military has used as a de facto boundary. Large areas to the south are under Israeli military control, despite an April 17, US-brokered ceasefire. NNA reported airstrikes on different parts of southern Lebanon including in the village of Ansar that killed three people. A drone strike on a road linking the village of Ebba with Nabatieh

wounded two Lebanese soldiers, the army said in a statement. Hezbollah, meanwhile, said its fighters fired rockets at northern Israel's largest city, Kiryat Shmona, on the border with Lebanon. The group said its attack was in retaliation for airstrikes that killed civilians in Lebanon. Hezbollah later said it also fired rockets toward the northern city of Safed. Among those killed in southern Lebanon on Friday were a Syrian family who died in an Israeli airstrike on the coastal village of Adloun, north of the city of Tyre. AP

## 10 DAYS ON, FIVE RESCUED FROM LAOS CAVE

**VIENTIANE**

FOUR more men trapped in a semi-submerged Laos cave for 10 days were freed on Saturday, rescuers said, after one was successfully brought to the surface a day earlier, but two remained missing.

Lee Kian Lie, a Malaysian rescue diver, told AFP via Messenger that the four were freed after water was pumped out of the cavern.

A video he took from the scene showed teams under a makeshift tent attending to four people lying on stretchers and covered with thermal blankets.

"Important they already out," Lee said. He declined to speculate on the condition of the two who remained unaccounted for. The Thailand Rescue Diver Facebook page said in a post that "rescue officials were able to bring out four more people trapped" at about 3.10 pm (0810 GMT) on Saturday. "A total of five people have now been rescued, while two remain missing," it said.

Seven men had been trapped in the cavern in a remote mountainous area of central Xaysomboun province since May 20, when

flash floods stranded them as they searched for gold, early state media reports said. They were trapped after heavy rains triggered flash flooding that blocked the exit of the cavern. Five of the men were located alive on Wednesday, huddling in a narrow shaft around 984 feet from the cave mouth. Rescuers guided a bedraggled and muddy man over unsteady ground to safety on Friday.

### Water pumped from cave

Rescue efforts had focused on pumping out the monsoon flood waters that trapped the men. Rescuers had expressed optimism earlier on Saturday about their chances of freeing the four. Lee, part of a specialist cave-diving team, said hopes were rising as water was pumped out and supplies sent in. There was no update on the two people still unaccounted for. The Lao Saychai Foundation posted a video to its Facebook page on Saturday of the man rescued the day before, identified only as Meud, who said the two missing men had gone about 500 metres deeper into the cave than he had. AFP



### EXPRESS READ

#### SL suspends senior monk accused of child abuse

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's powerful Buddhist clergy on Saturday suspended senior monk Pallegama Hemarathana, who faces child sexual abuse charges, following weeks of public pressure. The 71-year-old was arrested this month over allegations that he abused a 15-year-old girl at a temple in Anuradhapura. He was later granted bail. The Malwatta chapter suspended him and named an acting chief. He headed the revered Atamasthana shrines.

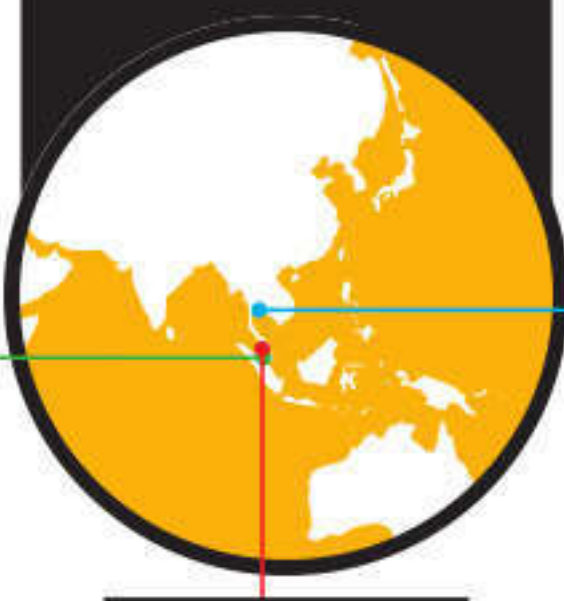
### Iran preparing 'grand' funeral for Khamenei

TEHRAN: Iranian authorities are preparing for a "grand" state funeral for slain supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, months after plans were delayed by the war with the United States and Israel, state media reported on Friday. A special headquarters has been set up to organise the ceremony, though no date has been announced. Officials said preparations were under way for a large public turnout once the funeral is formally scheduled.

### Agencies warn of fuel crunch as shipping falters

WASHINGTON: The heads of the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and International Energy Agency warned of growing risks to global fuel security if oil shipping through the Strait of Hormuz does not return to normal. Global oil inventories depleting at record pace due to Iran war. The agencies also warned that rising energy and fertiliser prices were disproportionately affecting lower-income countries and threatening food security.

### ASIA MATTERS



#### SINGAPORE

#### TWO IN FIVE FEEL ROADS UNSAFE

Two in five people find roads in Singapore unsafe, a new survey shows. More than three-quarters of the respondents blamed impatience for most traffic hazards. "Only 61 per cent of respondents said they find Singapore's roads safe, which leaves significant room for improvement," Senior Minister of State for Home Affairs Sim Ann was quoted as saying by Straits Times. About 1,000 Singapore residents took part in the survey. "We should be willing to prioritise safety for all over speed or convenience for the individual because the cost of not doing so is measured in lives," he said.

#### THAILAND

#### HEAVY RAIN LIKELY IN COMING DAYS

The Thai Meteorological Department (TMD) has issued warning for heavy to very heavy rain across Thailand in the coming days. The country faces heavy to very heavy rain, flash-flood risks and rough Andaman Sea conditions from May 30 to June 1, The Nation reported quoting TMD. "The conditions are being driven by a rather strong south-west monsoon prevailing over the Andaman Sea, the South and the Gulf of Thailand, together with a monsoon trough lying across upper Thailand," TMD said. The rains may trigger flash floods and forest run-off, in risk areas.

#### BUDGET CUTS TO HIT ALL MINISTRIES

Budget cuts are likely to hit all ministries as the government seeks to strengthen fiscal discipline, The Malaysia Star reported. However, key national priorities like quality education and infrastructure would see little impact. "There must be wisdom and an understanding of the macroeconomic situation," Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said

### MAJOR BREAKTHROUGH

## Gene test could help avoid chemo for breast cancer

**LONDON**

A DNA-based test could help thousands of breast cancer patients avoid chemotherapy each year by identifying those unlikely to benefit from the treatment, according to findings from an international study reported by the BBC.

Researchers led by University College London (UCL) found that more than two-thirds of patients enrolled in the trial could be safely treated without chemotherapy,

while maintaining survival rates comparable to those who underwent the treatment. The study involved more than 4,000 newly diagnosed breast cancer patients aged over 40 from the UK, Norway, Sweden, Australia, New Zealand and Thailand. Scientists used a genomic test known as Prosigna, which analyses the activity of 50 genes linked to breast cancer and estimates the risk of the disease returning. Patients classified as low risk

did not receive chemotherapy. After five years, their survival rate stood at 93.7%, compared with 94.9% among patients who received chemotherapy as part of their treatment.

Breast cancer is typically treated with surgery, followed by chemotherapy to reduce the chances of recurrence.

However, clinicians have increasingly questioned whether the treatment offers meaningful benefits to many patients with the

most common form of the disease, UCL said.

Chemotherapy can cause a range of side effects, including fatigue, nausea, hair loss, weakened immunity and fertility problems.

According to the university, the findings could allow more than 5,000 National Health Service patients in the UK to avoid chemotherapy annually. Professor David Miles, a cancer specialist involved in the study, described the results as "practice-changing".

## 22 dead as truck carrying refugees crashes in Afghan



A man carries an injured girl to a hospital in Jalalabad | AFP

**KABUL**

A truck carrying Afghan refugees returning from neighbouring Pakistan overturned on a highway in eastern Afghanistan on Saturday, killing at least 22 people and injuring about 36 others, most of them women and children, officials said.

The accident occurred in Laghman province on the main

highway linking Kabul, the Afghan capital, with Nangarhar province, said Abdul Malik NiAZAI, the spokesperson for the provincial governor. He said among the dead were 10 children and five women.

The provincial director of public health, Aminullah Sharif, said 22 people were killed and about 36 injured. He said the accident occurred when the truck

fell into a ditch after the driver fell asleep.

The passengers were among thousands of Afghans who recently returned from Pakistan, which launched a crackdown on migrants in 2023, and has since deported or pressured many to leave.

Iran also intensified expulsions of Afghan migrants around the same time. AP

## WHO chief visits Ebola epicentre in DR Congo

**BUNIA**

THE head of the World Health Organisation visited eastern Congo's Bunia, a city at the heart of an outbreak of a rare type of Ebola, where the virus is spreading faster than the response despite better-organised health facilities and new aid arrivals. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus is expected to visit a treatment centre and meet local authorities, health workers and affected families in Bunia. AP

**ICICI Bank** Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited, Pushpamangalam Estate, NH Bye Pass Road, Edappally, Cochin - 682024

**PUBLIC NOTICE-TENDER CUM E-AUCTION FOR SALE OF SECURED ASSET**

(See proviso to rule 8(6))  
Notice for sale of immovable assets

E-Auction Sale Notice for the sale of immovable asset(s) under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

This notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of ICICI Bank Limited will be sold on 'As is where is', 'As is what is' and 'Whatever there is' as per the brief particulars given hereunder:

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s)/ Guarantors/ Loan Account No.	Details of the Secured asset(s) with known encumbrances, if any	Amount Outstanding	Reserve Price/ Earnest Money Deposit	Date and Time of Property Inspection	Date & Time of E-Auction
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)
1.	Mr. Vijayan D (Borrower) Mrs. Jayoletha N J (Co-Borrower) LBNOC00005760021 LBNOC00005760020	5 Bhk House With Land Area 31570 Sq. Ft And Built-up Area 3000 Sq. Ft In Extend of 12.14 Ares And Extend of 17.2 Ares, Total of 29.34 Ares (72.5 Cents) In Resy No. 562/14-54, 562/28-2 In Mannar Panchayath, Mannar Village, Chengannur Taluk, Alappuzha - 690104. Bounded on The North: Property of Saradha Damodaran South: Property of Latha Vijayan East: Property of Damodaran West: Road And Property of Pradosh And Prasadh	Rs. 1,36,90,753/- As on 25, 2026	Rs. 80,00,000/- To 11:00 AM On 02:00 PM To 11:30 AM	June 17, 2026 from 11:00 AM To 02:00 PM	June 24, 2026 from 10:30 AM To 11:30 AM

The online auction will be conducted on the website (assets.matexauctions.com) of our auction agency M/s Matex Technologies Private Limited. The Mortgages/Notices are given a last chance to pay the total dues with further interest by June 23, 2026, before 05:00 P.M., else the secured asset(s) will be sold as per schedule.

The prospective bidder(s) must submit the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) Demand Draft (DD) (Refer Column E) at ICICI Bank, Pushpamangalam Estate, NH Bye pass road, Edappally, Cochin - 682024 Branch on or before June 23, 2026, before 05:00 P.M. Thereafter, they have to submit their offer through the website mentioned above on or before June 23, 2026, before 05:00 P.M. along with the scanned image of the Bank acknowledged DD towards proof of payment of EMD. In case the prospective bidder(s) is/ are unable to submit his/ her/ their offer through the website, then the signed copy of tender documents may be submitted at ICICI Bank, Pushpamangalam Estate, NH Bye pass road, Edappally, Cochin - 682024 Branch on or before June 23, 2026, before 05:00 P.M. Earnest Money Deposit DD/PO should be from a Nationalised/ Scheduled Bank in favour of 'ICICI Bank Limited' payable at 'Cochin'.

For any further clarifications in terms of Inspection, Terms and Conditions of the E-Auction or submission of tenders, contact ICICI Bank Employee number 965525532/8138023587.

The Authorised Officer reserves the right to reject any or all the bids without furnishing any further reasons. For detailed Terms and Conditions of the sale, please visit www.icicibank.com/n4p4s

Date : May 31, 2026 Place: Alappuzha Authorized Officer, ICICI Bank Limited