

Iran Nobel winner Mohammadi 'between life and death': supporters

AFP | Paris, France

Jailed Iranian Nobel Peace Prize winner Narges Mohammadi is fighting for her life after being hospitalised under guard for the last five days with a heart condition, her supporters said on Tuesday.

"We are not just fighting for the freedom of Narges, we are fighting so that her heart continues to beat," said her Paris-based lawyer Chirinne Ardakani at a news conference of her supporters, adding that the 2023 laureate was now "between life and death".



Ukraine to observe own truce with Russia starting May 6, Zelensky says

AFP | Kyiv, Ukraine

Ukraine will observe its own truce with Russia starting May 6, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Monday, after Moscow declared a unilateral truce with Ukraine over the May 9 Russian holiday.

"As of today, there has been no official appeal to Ukraine regarding the modality of a cessation of hostilities that is being claimed on Russian social media," Zelensky said in a post on X.

"In this regard, we are announcing a ceasefire regime starting at 00:00 (2100 GMT) on the night of May 5-6. In the time left until that moment, it is realistic to ensure that silence takes effect," he added.

Iran-FIFA meet

FIFA has invited the Iranian football federation (FFIRI) to its headquarters for talks over the country's participation at this year's World Cup, a source told AFP.

Iran's presence at the tournament, held in the United States, Canada and Mexico between June 11 and July 19, has been shrouded in uncertainty since the war erupted.



People cycle past a humanoid robot police officer in Hangzhou, in China's eastern Zhejiang province on the third day of a five-day national May Day holiday. The tech hub's traffic police deployed 15 humanoid robots in total to bolster their ranks on May 1.

Race to find port for cruise ship battling deadly rodent virus

● WHO tracing over 80 people on flight taken by hantavirus victim

AFP | Praia, Cape Verde

Health authorities raced yesterday to find a port for a cruise ship battling a hantavirus outbreak, as it remained off the West African coast with passengers isolating after three people died.

The World Health Organization said the MV Hondius could head from Cape Verde to Spain's Canary Islands, though Spanish authorities said they wanted

A general view of the cruise ship MV Hondius stationary off the port of Praia, the capital of Cape Verde



health data from the expedition vessel before opening up a port.

The ship had been on an adventure cruise from Ushuaia in Argentina to Cape Verde off west Africa. It has been at the centre of an international alert since Saturday after it was revealed that the rare disease -- spread from infected rodents typically through urine, droppings and saliva -- was suspected in three deaths.

The priority now is to evacuate two sick crew members who require urgent care -- potentially to the Netherlands -- and "then the ship can move", WHO epidemic and pandemic preparedness and prevention director Maria Van Kerkhove said in Geneva.

So far, two hantavirus cases have been confirmed.

Ceasefire on brink

US threatens 'devastating' response to any Iran attack on shipping

AFP | Washington, United States

The United States is "not looking for a fight" over the Strait of Hormuz and its ceasefire with Iran still holds, but any attack on commercial shipping will be met with a "devastating" response, the Pentagon chief said yesterday.

The warning from Pete Hegseth came on the second day of a US effort to facilitate the transit of commercial ships through the Strait of Hormuz, which Iran had closed in response to the US-Israeli war against the Islamic republic.

Top US military officer General Dan Caine meanwhile said US forces are ready to resume major combat operations against Iran if ordered to do so.

"No adversary should

"We're not looking for a fight. But Iran also cannot be allowed to block innocent countries and their goods from an international waterway. If you attack American troops or innocent commercial shipping, you will face overwhelming and devastating American firepower"

PETE HEGSETH

mistake our current restraint with a lack of resolve," said Caine, who spoke alongside Hegseth.

Admiral Brad Cooper, the commander responsible for US troops in the Middle East, said Monday that Washington's forces had intercepted missiles and drones fired by

Iran and also destroyed six small Iranian boats that threatened shipping.

But both Caine and Hegseth downplayed those hostilities, with the general describing it as "low harassing fire" and the Pentagon chief saying that "right now, the ceasefire certainly holds."

US and Israeli forces



launched the war against Iran on February 28, after which the Islamic republic closed the Strait of Hormuz -- a vital route for oil and gas exports -- while American forces later launched a blockade of Iranian ports.

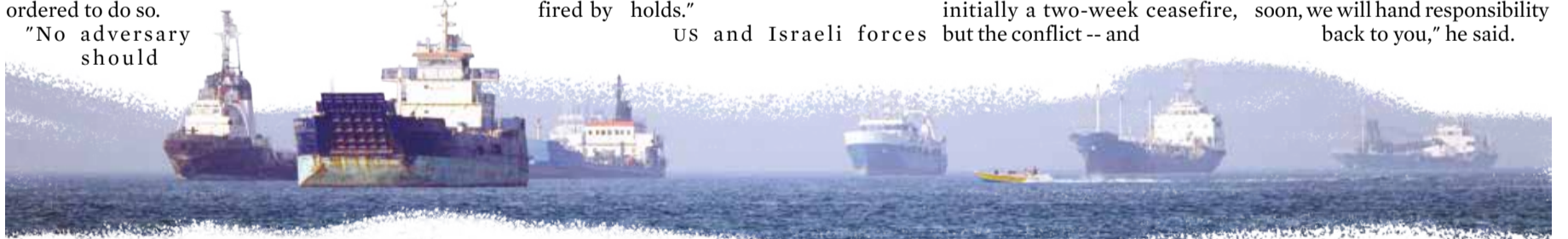
President Donald Trump has indefinitely extended what was initially a two-week ceasefire, but the conflict -- and

its widespread economic fallout -- remains unresolved.

Caine said there are currently "22,500 mariners embarked on more than 1,550 commercial vessels trapped in the Arabian Gulf, unable to transit."

Cooper said Monday that the United States is not directly escorting ships but rather had cleared a safe path through the Strait of Hormuz and then put in place multi-layered defenses including ships, aircraft and electronic warfare to respond to any threats. Hegseth made clear in his remarks that the operation will not be open-ended.

"We're stabilizing the situation so commerce can flow again, but we expect the world to step up. At the appropriate time, and soon, we will hand responsibility back to you," he said.



Vessels are pictured anchored in the Strait of Hormuz off Bandar Abbas in southern Iran

France's Macron to speak with Iran president

AFP | Yerevan, Armenia

French President Emmanuel Macron will speak with his Iranian counterpart Masoud Pezeshkian later on Tuesday, as he pushed for Tehran to reopen the Strait of Hormuz.

"I will be speaking with the Iranian president shortly," Macron told reporters at a press

conference in Yerevan, adding that France had long advocated for "the restoration of freedom of navigation" in the vital waterway.



Trump calls Iran war a 'little skirmish'

AFP | Washington, United States

President Donald Trump yesterday sought to minimize the war with Iran, calling it "a little skirmish."

"We're in a little skirmish military. I call it a skirmish, because Iran has no chance. They never did. They know it," Trump said during an Oval Office event on physical fitness among American kids.

Trump often touts the conflict as a resounding success, insisting for example that Iran's navy has been destroyed.

He sometimes openly calls it a war but more often tries to minimize it because the war is unpopular at home.

On Monday he called it a "mini-war." And last month he described US military operations against Iran as "a little excursion."

Urges Iran to 'do the smart thing'

AFP | Washington, United States

US President Donald Trump urged Iran yesterday to "do the smart thing" and make a deal, saying even as a Middle East ceasefire teetered that he did not want to kill more Iranians. "They should do the smart thing, because we don't want to go in and kill people. Really don't," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office when asked about Iran. "I don't want to, it's too tough."