

News in brief

◆ **Switzerland said yesterday** it was reopening its embassy in Tehran, which was closed last month amid an air war with Israel, and will resume representing US interests in the country. As of Sunday, the embassy is “again open having temporarily been closed on June 20 owing to the instability of the situation in the country,” the Swiss foreign ministry said in a statement. Ambassador Nadine Olivieri Lozano and a small team returned to Tehran overland on Saturday via Azerbaijan and the embassy will gradually resume operations, the statement went on. “Having now returned to Tehran, Switzerland is once again in a position to fulfil its role as a protecting power for US interests in Iran.”

◆ **Gunmen burst** into a sports hall in central Mexico and shot dead a local government official attending an amateur basketball game on Saturday, local authorities said. Families and children had gathered at the sports center in the violent state of Guanajuato, where Ignacio Alejandro Roaro, a city council secretary in Apaseo el Grande, was killed. The city council “strongly condemns the treacherous, despicable, and cowardly attack that occurred this Saturday, in which our colleague and friend, city council secretary Ignacio Alejandro Roaro, lost his life,” it said in a statement. Local media said an armed man had been arrested.

◆ **Iran’s supreme leader** Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Saturday made his first public appearance since the outbreak of his country’s recent 12-day war with Israel, taking part in a religious ceremony in Tehran, state media reported. The octogenarian leader was shown in a video broadcast by state television greeting people and being cheered at a mosque as worshippers marked the anniversary of the martyrdom of Imam Hussein, an important date for Shia Muslims. Khamenei, 86, can be seen on stage dressed in black as the crowd before him, fists in the air, chants “The blood in our veins for our leader!” State TV said the clip was filmed at central Tehran’s Imam Khomeini Mosque, named for the founder of the Islamic republic. Khamenei, in power since 1989, spoke last week in a pre-recorded video, but had not been seen in public since before Israel initiated the conflict with a wave of surprise air strikes on June 13. His last public appearance was two days before that, when he met with members of parliament. Israel’s bombing campaign followed a decades-long shadow war with Iran, and was aimed at preventing it from developing a nuclear weapon -- an ambition Tehran has consistently denied.



Switzerland reopens embassy in Tehran

Gunmen kill Mexico city councillor during basketball game

Iran’s Khamenei makes first public appearance since Israel war: state media



SPOTLIGHT

‘Simple Buddhist monk’ Dalai Lama marks landmark 90th birthday

McLeod Ganj, India

Calling himself a “simple Buddhist monk” who usually didn’t celebrate birthdays, the Dalai Lama marked his 90th on Sunday by praying for peace after China insisted it would have the final say on who succeeded the Tibetan spiritual leader.

Chanting of red-robed monks and nuns rang out from Himalayan hilltop forested temples in India, home to the Dalai Lama since he and thousands of other Tibetans fled Chinese troops who crushed an uprising in their capital Lhasa in 1959.

“I am just a simple Buddhist monk; I don’t normally engage in birthday celebrations,” the Dalai Lama said in a message, thanking those marking it with him for using the opportunity “to cultivate peace of mind and compassion”.

Dressed in traditional robes and a flowing yellow wrap, he walked with the aid of two monks while flashing his trademark beaming smile to thousands of followers.

Beijing condemns the Nobel Peace Prize winner -- who has led a lifelong campaign for greater autonomy for Tibet, a vast high-altitude plateau -- as a rebel and separatist.



Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama (C) leaves after attending a prayer ceremony celebrating his 90th birthday at the Main Tibetan Temple in McLeod Ganj, near Dharamsala

Alongside the celebrations, however, is the worry for Tibetans in exile that China will name its successor to bolster control over the territory it poured troops into in 1950 and has ruled ever since.

That raises the likelihood of rival challengers to the post; one by self-declared atheist Beijing, the other by the Dalai Lama’s office based in neighbouring India



Musk has donated to both Democratic and Republican candidates over the years. While he once described himself as “socially liberal and fiscally conservative,” in 2022 he publicly announced he would vote Republican, citing a shift in his political stance and growing criticism of Democratic policies.

Despite not holding any office, Musk’s influence on political discourse—particularly through X (formerly Twitter), which he owns—is considered significant, often sparking debate on issues ranging from free speech to climate policy.



Musk creates new US political party

"Today, the America Party is formed to give you back your freedom"

Musk shared a meme depicting a two-headed snak

Musk laid out plans to pick off vulnerable House and Senate seat

AFP | Washington, United States

Elon Musk, an ex-ally of US President Donald Trump, said yesterday he had launched a new political party in the United States to challenge what the tech billionaire described as the country’s “one-party system.”

The world’s richest person -- and Trump’s biggest political donor in the 2024 election -- had a bitter falling out with the

president after leading the Republican’s effort to slash spending and cut federal jobs as head of the so-called Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE).

Musk has clashed with Trump over the president’s massive domestic spending plan, saying it would explode the US debt, and vowed to do everything in his power to defeat lawmakers who voted for it.

Now he has created the so-called America Party, his own political framework, through which to try and achieve that.

“When it comes to bankrupting our country with waste & graft, we live in a one-party system, not a democracy,” the Space X and Tesla boss posted on X, the social media platform that he owns.

“Today, the America Party is

formed to give you back your freedom.”

Musk cited a poll -- uploaded on Friday, US Independence Day -- in which he asked whether respondents “want independence from the two-party (some would say uniparty) system” that has dominated US politics for some two centuries.

The yes-or-no survey earned more than 1.2 million responses.

“By a factor of 2 to 1, you want a new political party and you shall have it!” he posted on Saturday.

Musk also shared a meme depicting a two-headed snake and the caption “End the Uniparty.”

On Friday after posting the poll, Musk laid out a possible political battle plan to pick off vulnerable House and Senate seats and become “the deciding

vote” on key legislation.

“One way to execute on this would be to laser-focus on just 2 or 3 Senate seats and 8 to 10 House districts,” Musk posted on X.

All 435 US House seats are up for grabs every two years, while about one third of the Senate’s 100 members, who serve six-year terms, are elected every two years.

Some observers were quick to point out how third-party campaigns have historically split the vote -- as businessman Ross Perot’s independent presidential run in 1992 did when it helped doom George H.W. Bush’s re-election bid resulting in Democrat Bill Clinton’s victory.

“You are pulling a Ross Perot, and I don’t like it,” one X user wrote to Musk.

Cars, houses swept away



People look on as law enforcement and volunteers continue to search for missing people near Camp Mystic, the site of where at least 20 girls went missing after flash flooding in Hunt, Texas