

Funeral procession for supreme leader to pass through Iraq

AFP | Tehran, Iran

An Iranian official yesterday said the funeral procession for late supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who was killed by US-Israeli strikes in February, will pass through Iraq before his burial in Iran.

In a video carried by state media, Tehran mayor Alireza Zakani said the farewell ceremonies and funeral for Khamenei would be held from July 4 to 9. "On July 8, 2026, they will take place in Iraq, and on July 9, 2026, God willing, in Mashhad" in Iran, where Khamenei will be buried, he added.

G7 to produce long-range missiles 'under licence' in Ukraine

AFP | Evian, France

European G7 nations and the United States are to grant licences for Ukraine-based companies to produce long-range missiles and air defence systems, a diplomatic source said Wednesday, with German Chancellor Friedrich Merz confirming the move.

"We are going to produce under licence not only air defence systems, but also deep-strike capabilities," said the diplomatic source.



Merz confirmed the decision, telling reporters: "We are all currently producing too little, and this can be offset by granting licences to companies that have these production capabilities, including European and Ukrainian firms."

The announcement comes during a three-day G7 meeting in the French town of Evian of the leaders of Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States, who pledged to intensify pressure on Russia to end more than four years of war against Ukraine.

US companies will, in particular, be able to grant licences for this purpose to European manufacturers, Merz said, adding he was "grateful" to US President Donald Trump "for this great willingness to cooperate".

Hunger striking British couple held in Iran at 'grave risk': UN experts

AFP | Geneva, Switzerland

UN rights experts warned yesterday that a British couple on a lengthy hunger strike in an Iranian jail were at serious risk, charging their detention could amount to "hostage-taking".

"They appear to have been wrongfully detained, prosecuted on highly questionable grounds, and sentenced after proceedings that failed to meet basic fair trial guarantees," they said.

Lindsay Foreman and her husband Craig were detained during a round-the-world motorbike trip at the start of 2025. They were sentenced in February to 10 years in prison on espionage charges that they deny.

The couple has launched a lengthy hunger strike, with Craig reportedly now past 30 days, and Lindsey past 20.

The pair "should not be in prison", the United Nations special rapporteurs on torture and on the rights situation in Iran said in a statement.



AFP | Evian, France

US President Donald Trump yesterday warned Iran he was ready to resume military action if Tehran did not abide by its obligations, two days ahead of the signing of an accord to end the war between the foes. "No it's not final. It's a memorandum of understanding,"

Trump said at the G7, referring to the agreement expected to be signed in Switzerland on Friday. "If I don't like it we will go back to shooting at them," he added alongside Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi. "If they don't behave, we'll go right back to dropping bombs right smack in the middle of their head." "Because they misbehaved for 47 years," he said, referring to the Islamic republic, founded in the

Islamic revolution after the ousting of the shah, a US ally, in 1979. The US-Israeli war against Iran began on February 28 with the killing in airstrikes of supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and other top officials. The talks on a final US-Iran settlement to end the conflict are set to begin Friday immediately after the signing of the accord in Switzerland and continue over a 60-day window to flesh out its details.

Opening Hormuz will be 'massive step forward': NATO chief

Brussels, Belgium

NATO chief Mark Rutte yesterday hailed the US-Iran deal to end the Middle East

war, saying the planned reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, would be a "massive step forward". "The restoration of free passage through the Strait of Hormuz will be a massive step

forward, and I know that many allies, through the initiative led by France and the United Kingdom, are ready to support," Rutte told a press conference in Brussels.

US blockade lifts

Iranian oil tankers have exited the zone in the Gulf blockaded by the US Navy, the TankerTrackers website said yesterday, calling it the country's "first crude oil exports in two months".

It came after an Iranian deputy foreign minister said the two-month US naval blockade on Iranian ports had been lifted.



India's trade agreement with UK to take effect on Jul 15: Modi

AFP | New Delhi, India

India's trade agreement with Britain will come into force on July 15, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said yesterday.

Under the agreement, India will reduce or eliminate tariffs on many British goods, making products such as whisky, gin and cosmetics cheaper in the Indian market over time.

The India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) was signed in July last year, after more than three years of negotiations.

In return, the UK will cut tariffs on many Indian exports, improving access for products including marine products, gems and jewellery, and toys as well as engineering goods, chemicals, and auto components.

"The India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement will enter into force on 15th July 2026," Modi, who is attending the G7 summit in Evian, announced on social media.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE STRAIT OF HORMUZ RE-OPENS?

After nearly four months of closure during the Middle East war, a US-Iran agreement is set to re-open the vital Strait of Hormuz on Friday.

RE-OPENING EXPECTED FRIDAY
Following a US-Iran agreement to end the Middle East war

01 ARE SHIPS READY?
Once formal approval is given, stranded ships could begin moving almost immediately.
Crews have maintained ships and equipment through regular drills and upkeep.
Some ships may need underwater hull cleaning to remove barnacles and marine growth.

02 WHO CAN PASS?
Operators will proceed cautiously and insurers may require naval escorts.
First likely: shipowners who operate their own fleet and those not listed on a stock exchange.
High tanker earnings mean higher war risk insurance is unlikely to be an obstacle.
Tankers linked to Kuwait, Iraq, UAE and Saudi Arabia likely among the first to resume transits.

03 MUST MINES BE CLEARED FIRST?
Iran has designated the central area of the strait as a mine-danger zone.
Until mines are cleared, ships can use coastal traffic zones which are mine-free but not well-suited for normal traffic.
France and Britain are assembling a coalition to remove mines and restore shipping.
The US has requested the deployment of mine-clearing capabilities; French and German vessels have been mobilised for that purpose.

04 ROAD TO NORMAL: TIME, REPAIR & REBUILD
Re-opening is only the first step. A full return to normal will take months, not days.
Crew changes, supply chains restarted and strategic energy reserves replenished.
Some tankers could take more than one month to reach Europe after the route reopens.
It could take 4-6 months before crude export volumes return to prewar levels.
Buyers have found alternative suppliers (US, Nigeria) and new routes and contracts.
Not everything will go back to normal with the snap of a finger.

WILL SHIPS HAVE TO PAY?
US Vice President JD Vance said there is an understanding with Iran that the strait will re-open "in a toll-free way for the long term".
Iran's foreign ministry says the deal allows it to charge maritime service fees rather than imposing "tolls".
Such fees could mean transferring funds indirectly to Iran's Revolutionary Guard, which several countries consider a terrorist organisation.

The Strait of Hormuz is a lifeline for global energy and trade—its safe and stable operation remains vital for the world.

US says Iran commits to dilute enriched uranium under deal

Trump threatens 'dropping bombs' if Iran doesn't 'behave'

China tells Iran 'all parties' must adhere to deal to end war

AFP | Beijing, China

China's top diplomat told his Iranian counterpart yesterday it was "key" for all sides to "genuinely implement" their commitments after Tehran and Washington reached a memorandum of understanding to end their war, Beijing's foreign ministry said.

"The dawn of peace has already emerged, the key part of the next step is for all parties to genuinely implement their commitments and eliminate interference from various sides," Wang Yi told Abbas Araghchi in a phone call. "China has consistently supported

Iran's reasonable and legitimate claims and Iran's efforts in safeguarding its own sovereignty and security," Wang added. The Chinese foreign minister also called for navigation through the Strait of Hormuz to be "properly handled, responding prudently to the widespread

concerns of the international community". In a phone call on Tuesday with his counterpart from Pakistan -- a key mediator between the United States and Iran -- Wang warned the following stage of negotiations would be "more difficult".