

News in brief

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian

headed to Armenia on Monday for talks on a planned corridor linking Azerbaijan with its exclave near the border with Iran, part of a peace deal signed at the White House. "The (possible) presence of American companies in the region is worrying," Pezeshkian said before departing on a pre-planned trip that also includes a visit to Belarus. "We will discuss it (with Armenian officials) and express our concerns," he added, according to footage broadcast on state television. The land corridor, dubbed the "Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity" (TRIPP), is part of a deal signed earlier this month in Washington between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Under the agreement, the United States will hold development rights for the proposed route, which would connect Azerbaijan to its Nakhchivan exclave, passing near the Iranian border.



Iran president heads to Armenia for talks on US-backed corridor

Nepal has eliminated rubella as a public health problem, the World Health Organization said Monday, citing the success of its immunisation campaigns and disease-surveillance programme.

Nepal eliminates rubella, says WHO

Rubella is a highly contagious viral infection transmitted through coughs and sneezes. It occurs most often in children and young adults, most of whom will develop a mild fever and rash. But it is particularly serious for pregnant women as infection can lead to miscarriage, stillbirth, or a range of lifelong and debilitating birth defects. A vaccination exists against rubella, which Nepal started using in its immunisation programme in 2012. By 2024, Nepal had achieved over 95 percent coverage for at least one dose of rubella vaccine.

Newsmax is to pay \$67 million to a voting technology firm over false claims the pro-Trump cable television channel made about the 2020 US presidential election.

The settlement of the defamation case brought by Newsmax on Monday with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). Under the settlement agreement, Newsmax said it had paid Dominion \$27 million on Friday and would pay \$20 million in 2026 and the final \$20 million in 2027. The Rupert Murdoch-owned Fox News settled a similar defamation lawsuit with Dominion in 2023 for \$787.5 million. Dominion filed a defamation suit against Newsmax in 2021 over false claims that its voting technology was used to rig the 2020 election, in which Democrat Joe Biden defeated Republican Donald Trump. Dominion sought \$1.6 billion in damages. In a statement, Newsmax said it had agreed to settle because it did not believe it could receive a fair trial from the Delaware judge presiding over the case.

Pro-Trump outlet to pay \$67 mn in voting defamation case



SPOTLIGHT

Amnesty says Israel deliberately starving Gaza's Palestinians

AFP | Jerusalem, Undefined

Rights group Amnesty International on Monday accused Israel of enacting a "deliberate policy" of starvation in Gaza, as the United Nations and aid groups warn of famine in the Palestinian territory. Israel, while heavily restricting aid allowed into the Gaza Strip, has repeatedly rejected claims of deliberate starvation in the 22-month-old war. In a report citing testimonies of displaced Palestinians and medical staff who treated malnourished children, Amnesty said that "Israel is carrying out a deliberate campaign of starvation in the occupied Gaza Strip."

The group accused Israel of "systematically destroying the health, well-being and social fabric of Palestinian life."

"It is the intended outcome of plans and policies that Israel has designed and implemented, over the past 22 months, to deliberately inflict on Palestinians in Gaza conditions of life calculated to bring about their physical destruction -- which is part and parcel of Israel's ongoing genocide against Palestinians in Gaza," Amnesty said.

The report is based on interviews conducted in recent weeks with 19 displaced Gazans

sheltering in three makeshift camps as well two medical staff in two hospitals in Gaza City.

Contacted by AFP, the Israeli military and foreign ministry did not immediately comment on Amnesty's findings.

In a report issued last week, the Israeli defence ministry's COGAT, a body overseeing civil affairs in the Palestinian territories, rejected claims of widespread malnutrition in Gaza and disputed figures shared by the health ministry in the Hamas-run territory.

In April, Amnesty accused Israel of committing a "live-streamed genocide" against Palestinians by forcibly displacing Gazans and creating a humanitarian catastrophe in the besieged territory, claims that Israel dismissed at the time as "blatant lies".

A man and young children push on a cart carrying a water tank at the Bureij camp for displaced Palestinians



Hamas accepts new Gaza truce plan

60-day truce and hostage release in two batches



Palestinians gather to receive cooked meals from a food distribution center in the Nuseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip

Mediators from Egypt and Qatar, backed by the United States, have struggled to secure a lasting truce

Israel has yet to respond

Out of 251 hostages taken during Hamas's October 2023 attack that triggered the war, 49 are still held in Gaza

AFP | Cairo, Egypt

Hamas has accepted a new ceasefire proposal for Gaza without requesting amendments, a source from the group told AFP Monday, after a fresh diplomatic push to end more than 22 months of war.

Mediators Egypt and Qatar, backed by the United States, have struggled to secure a lasting truce in the conflict, which has triggered a dire humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip.

But after receiving a new proposal from mediators, Hamas said it was ready for talks.

"Hamas has delivered its response to the mediators, confirming that Hamas and the factions agreed to the new ceasefire proposal without requesting any amendments," the source said, speaking on condition of anonymity.



tents housing displaced Palestinians in Gaza City

Israel has yet to respond.

A Palestinian source familiar with the talks said mediators were "expected to announce that an agreement has been reached and set a date for the resumption of talks", adding guarantees were offered to ensure implementation and pursue a permanent solution.

Another Palestinian official earlier said mediators had proposed an initial 60-day truce and hostage release in two batches.

The proposal comes more than a week after Israel's security cabinet approved plans to expand the war into Gaza City and nearby refugee camps, which has sparked international outcry as well as domestic opposition.

'Confronted and destroyed'

An Islamic Jihad source told AFP the plan envisaged a 60-day ceasefire "during which 10 Israeli hostages would be released alive, along with a number of bodies".

Out of 251 hostages taken during Hamas's October 2023 attack that triggered the war, 49 are still held in Gaza including 27 the Israeli military says are dead.

The Islamic Jihad source said "the remaining captives would be released in a second phase", with negotiations for a broader settlement to follow. They added that "all factions are supportive" of the Egyptian and Qatari proposal.

US President Donald Trump wrote on Truth Social: "We will

only see the return of the remaining hostages when Hamas is confronted and destroyed!" "The sooner this takes place, the better the chances of success will be."

Last week, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel "will agree to an agreement in which all the hostages are released at once and according to our conditions for ending the war".

Meanwhile, in a now familiar scene in Gaza, AFP footage from the southern city of Khan Yunis showed crowds of mourners kneeling over the shrouded bodies of their loved ones who were killed seeking aid the day before.



Hamas's October 2023 attack on Israel resulted in the deaths of 1,219 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on official figures. Israel's offensive has killed more than 62,004 Palestinians, most of them civilians, according to figures from the health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza which the United Nations considers reliable.