

Biden criticizes 'most extreme' ministers in Israeli cabinet

US President Joe Biden said the cabinet of Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu contains "some of the most extreme" members he had ever seen. Joe Biden told CNN that Netanyahu had "problems in terms of his coalition" when asked why he had yet to visit the White House. Netanyahu's nationalist-religious coalition includes far-right parties. Biden's remarks have been criticized by some Israeli ministers. The leader of one of them, National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, denied that he was an extremist. Ben-Gvir, who has convictions for racist incitement and supporting a terrorist organization, also warned Biden that he "needs to realize that we [Israel] are no longer a star on the American flag". Energy Minister Israel Katz, a member of Netanyahu's Likud party, said the US president "knows the rules of democracy". He also noted a decision by Netanyahu's security cabinet on Sunday to "act to prevent the collapse

of the Palestinian Authority". Ben-Gvir voted against the move, while another far-right minister abstained. Biden also said in the CNN interview that the Palestinian Authority, which governs parts of the occupied West Bank that are not under full Israeli control, had "lost its credibility". "So, it is not all Israel now in the West Bank, all Israel's problem. But they are a part of the problem, particularly those individuals in the cabinet who say: 'We can settle anywhere we want; they have no right to be here, etc.'" "We are talking with them regularly, trying to tamp down what is going on. Hopefully, Bibi will continue move toward moderation and change," he added, using the Israeli prime minister's nickname. Netanyahu returned to power at the end of December, leading the most right-wing cabinet in Israel's history. Since then, the cabinet has advanced plans for 13,000 new housing units at settlements across the West



Bank, according to the Israeli anti-settlement group Peace Now. That is three times as many as in the whole of last year. Most countries deem the settlements, which are built on land captured by Israel

in 1967 in the Middle East War, to be illegal under international law, although Israel disagrees. The Biden administration warned last month that the settlement expansion was undermining the viability

of the two-state solution to the Israel-Palestinian conflict - the long-standing international formula for peace - as well as exacerbating tensions and harming trust between the two parties.



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (L) and US then-vice president Joe Biden talk prior to a meeting on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, on Jan. 21, 2016.
● MICHEL EULER/AP

Uzbeks re-elect Mirziyoyev as president

Iran's Raeisi extends congratulations



By Reza Abesh Ahmadlou
Staff writer

Uzbek incumbent President Shavkat Mirziyoyev was re-elected with over 87% of the vote on Sunday, the Central Election Commission announced on Monday. Reported by the Chairman of the Central Election Commission Nizomiddin

Zaynidinov, the candidate from the Movement of Entrepreneurs and Businesspeople - the Liberal Democratic Party (UzLiDeP), Mirziyoyev received 87.05% of the votes. Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi, in a message on Monday, congratulated his Uzbek counterpart on his victory in the election, hoping for the expansion of relations between Tehran and Tashkent.

The 65-year-old president has opened up the country of 35 million people to foreign trade and investment. At the same time, the candidate from the Social Democratic Party (SDPU) "Adolat," Robahon Mahmudova, received 4.43%, the candidate from the Ecological Party of Uzbekistan, Abdukshukur Khamzaev, 3.74%, and the candidate from the People's Democratic Party (NDPU), Ulugbek Inoyatov, received 4.02%. The turnout in the early presidential election held on Sunday was 79.8%, or 15.6 million voters, according to the CEC. According to the Central Election Commission of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 19.66 million voters registered in the presidential elections in the country. The decision on early

voting was announced by Mirziyoyev on May 8, following the results of a referendum on a new version of the Constitution (in accordance with Articles 110 and 128 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, as well as Article 66 of the Electoral

Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan). This was the first election after the amendments to the Constitution came into force, as the president is elected for seven years on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage by secret ballot.



● IRAN DAILY

Erdogan links Sweden's NATO membership to Turkey's EU accession

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, in an unexpected move, said on Monday the European Union should open the way for Ankara's accession to the bloc before Turkey's Parliament approves Sweden's bid to join the NATO military alliance. Turkey's bid to join the EU

has been frozen for years after membership talks were launched in 2005 under Erdogan's first term as prime minister, Reuters reported. The ties between Ankara and members of the bloc soured several years ago, especially after a 2016 failed coup attempt in Turkey, but have since im-

proved. The bloc depends on the help of NATO ally Ankara, particularly on migration. In a surprise change of tack, Erdogan on Monday linked Ankara's approval of Sweden's NATO bid to Turkey finally joining the EU. "I am calling from here on these countries that

are making Turkey wait at the door of the European Union for more than 50 years," Erdogan said, speaking ahead of his departure for the NATO summit in Vilnius. "First, come and open the way for Turkey at the European Union and then we will open the way for Sweden, just as we did for

Finland," he said, adding that he would repeat his call during the summit. A European Commission spokesperson said NATO and EU enlargement were "separate processes." "The accession process for each candidate country is based on the merits of each country," the spokesperson said, adding that

the two processes cannot be linked. Asked about Erdogan's comments, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said while he backs Ankara's membership of the EU, as far as he was concerned Sweden had already met the conditions required to join NATO.

NEWS IN BRIEF

North Korea warns US over spy planes violating its airspace

REUTERS - North Korea accused the United States on Monday of violating its airspace by conducting surveillance flights and warned that, while Pyongyang was exercising restraint, such flights may be shot down. Provocative military actions by the United States were bringing the Korean peninsula closer to a nuclear conflict, said an unnamed spokesperson of North Korea's Ministry of National Defence in a statement carried by the official KCNA news agency. The report also cited the use of US reconnaissance planes and drones and said Washington was escalating tensions by sending a nuclear submarine near the peninsula.

Putin met with Wagner chief in Moscow: Kremlin

AFP - The Kremlin said Monday that President Vladimir Putin had met with Wagner chief Yevgeny Prigozhin days after the mercenary group attempted to topple Russia's military leadership. The meeting in the Kremlin took place on June 29, several days after the short-lived rebellion. "Indeed, the president had such a meeting," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said, adding 35 people had taken part including Wagner's top leaders and Prigozhin himself.

Study: Heat killed 61,000 in Europe's 2022 summer



AFP - More than 61,000 people died due to the heat during Europe's record-breaking summer last year, a study said on Monday which called for more to be done to protect against even deadlier heatwaves expected in the coming years. The world's fastest warming continent experienced its hottest summer on record in 2022, as countries were hit by blistering heatwaves, crop-withering droughts and devastating wildfires.