

# Conservatives leading in parliamentary elections

## National Desk

Iran began counting ballots on Saturday after a vote for Parliament and Assembly of Experts, with preliminary results showing that the conservatives are grabbing most of the seats in the Iranian Parliament.

Officials have not yet released the total voter turnout. However, preliminary results from the elections show that 41 percent of eligible voters went to the polls during the Friday elections.

Citing unofficial statistics, Iranian media reported that the rate of participation in the vote for the 12th term of the Iranian Parliament and the 6th term of the Assembly of Experts was over 40 percent.

The polls opened at 8 a.m. local time (04:30 GMT) on Friday and the voting began at 59,000 polling stations across the country, with over 15,000 candidates competing for 290 seats in the Iranian Parliament, and 144 candidates vying for positions for the eight-year-term Assembly of Experts, an 88-member body in charge of overseeing the activities of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, with a position of authority to either appoint or dismiss the Leader.

Voting for the two elections ended at midnight local time.

A total of 61.17 million people, comprising 30.94 million men and 30.22 million women, were eligible to vote in the two elections, with the Iranian Interior Ministry saying more than 25 million cast their ballots at the polls.

The voting was initially scheduled to end at 18:00 local time but was extended three times, with each extension lasting for two hours.

In a message on Saturday, President Ebrahim Raisi expressed gratitude to the Iranian people for their remarkable turnout.

Raisi said the enthusiastic and conscious presence of Iranians in Friday's vote was a "big no" to global arrogance after its historic defeat in last year's riots, which broke out following the death of a 22-year-old woman in the capital Tehran.

"The ill-wishers of our beloved Iran had mobilized all their power so that the March 1 elections would be held without fervor," he said.

Candidates for Parliament are vetted by the country's Constitutional Council. It approved a total of 15,200 candidates, out of nearly 49,000 applicants, to run



Election officials begin counting votes cast at the parliamentary and the Assembly of Experts elections in Tehran on March 2, 2024. **TASNIM**

for seats in Parliament.

A total of 144 candidates were also competing for the Assembly of Experts seats. Former president Hassan Rouhani, a current member of the assembly, was banned from standing again in the election for the Assembly of Experts.

The elections took place amid crippling international sanctions and mounting economic hardship in Iran, where inflation has hovered around 50 percent, and the rial has sharply declined against the dollar.

The problems had caused concern among the country's officials

about the low participation of the people in the elections.

Before the elections, Iranian officials had called on people to participate in the polls.

Iran's last parliamentary elections in 2020 had a voter turnout of 42.57 percent - the lowest since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

## Sistan and Baluchestan hit by severe floods



## National Desk

Rescue teams have been dispatched to the south-eastern province of Sistan and Baluchestan, which has been hit by severe floods in recent days.

Head of the country's national crisis management organization, Mohammad Hassan Nami, said floods caused by heavy rains since Wednesday have hit 16 cities and 1,947 villages in the province. Vast areas in the province have been inundated by floods. The floods have led to the closure of many roads and caused power outage in many cities and villages. However, Nami said most of the roads have been reopened and power has been restored in many cities and villages.

Nami said that the rescue teams have provided emergency accommodations for more than 8,000 people in the flood-hit areas. They have been also provided with tents and food packages. There has been no report of casualties so far.

Nami said that north of the Chabahar region in south of the province is the hardest-hit region.

The country's Red Crescent Society said more than 150 rescue teams are present in the region and are providing relief to people affected by the floods.

The intensity of the rains has been such that several dams have overflowed. The heavy rains over the past month have so far caused about 40 million dollars of damage to infrastructure and roads and the agricultural sector.

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, who is on a trip to Algeria to participate in the 7th GECF Summit, has ordered the Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi to visit the flood-affected areas to speed up relief to people in need.

## UN says large number of Palestinians shot in Gaza aid incident

## International Desk

A United Nations team and medical officials have reported seeing "a large number" of gunshot wounds among Palestinians in Gaza after Israeli troops opened fire near an aid convoy, which has triggered global condemnation.

Their claims confirm numerous testimonies by witnesses that Israeli gunfire killed and wounded scores of Palestinians desperately seeking food aid on Thursday, contradicting Israel's initial claims people were hurt due to a stampede and trampling.

Israeli troops opened fire as Palestinian civilians scrambled for food supplies during a chaotic incident in Gaza City that the Health Ministry in the Palestinian territory said killed 115 people and wounded more than 750.

The Israeli military has claimed that a "stampede" occurred when thousands of Gazans surrounded the aid convoy. However, an Israeli source ac-

knowledged troops had opened fire on the crowd, believing it "posed a threat".

On Friday a UN team visited some of the wounded from the aid incident, in Gaza City's Al-Shifa Hospital, and saw a "large number of gunshot wounds", UN chief Antonio Guterres's spokesman said.

The hospital received 70 of the dead, and around 200 wounded were still there during the team's visit, spokesman Stephane Dujarric said.

Hossam Abu Safiya, director of Gaza City's Kamal Adwan Hospital, said all the casualties it admitted were hit by "bullets and shrapnel from occupation forces," a reference to Israel. The aid convoy deaths helped push the number of Palestinian death toll in Gaza to 30,320, mostly women and children, according to the Health Ministry.

## Dying from malnutrition

On Saturday, the Health Ministry also said thousands of people in north Gaza "are at risk

of dying from dehydration and malnutrition," and the World Health Organization said it had delivered treatment for 50 acutely malnourished children in the north.

The ministry on Friday reported a total of 10 children had died of "malnutrition and dehydration".

Meanwhile, Hamas's military wing said Friday that seven more captives held by the resistance group had died because of Israeli military operations.

## Air-dropping relief supplies

US President Joe Biden has said his military would start air-dropping relief supplies into the Palestinian territory.

Biden said Washington would begin deliveries from the sky "in the coming days".

The International Rescue Committee said the very fact air-drops were "being considered is testament to the serious access challenges in Gaza". But the group said parachut-



A man grimaces as he receives medical attention at the Kuwaiti hospital for wounds sustained in an Israeli bombardment that hit a camp sheltering displaced Palestinians near the Emirati hospital, in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip on March 2, 2024. **AFP**

ing aid is not the solution and distracts "time and effort from proven solutions to help at scale".

The United Nations has particularly cited restrictions on access to northern Gaza, where residents have been reduced to eating animal fodder and even leaves.

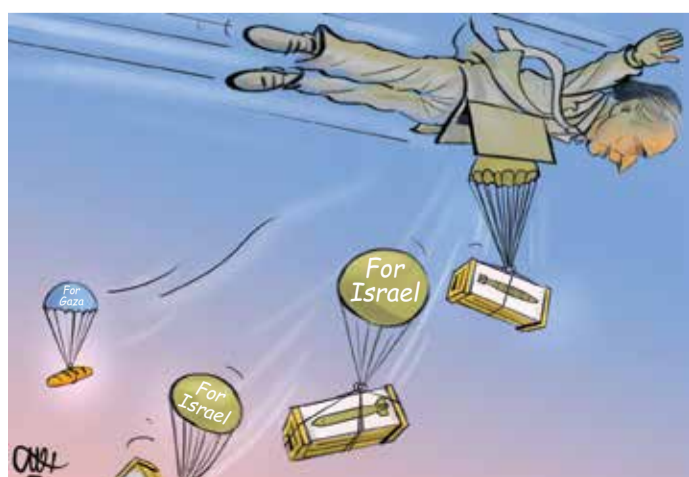
Hisham Abu Eid, 28, of Zeitun in the Gaza City area, said he got two bags of flour from an aid distribution and gave one

to his neighbors.

"Everyone is suffering from famine. Aid that is getting into Gaza is rare and not enough for even a small number of people. Famine is killing people," Abu Eid said.

Mediators have also been trying to secure a cease-fire, and Biden on Friday said he was "hoping" it could still be reached by the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, which is due to start on March 10 or 11.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist



## IRGC advisor, Hezbollah members killed in Israeli attack in Syria

A member of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy serving as a military advisor was killed in an Israeli strike on Syria.

In a statement on Friday, the IRGC Navy said its member - Reza Zarei - was assassinated along with two members of the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement on Friday. They were killed in an Israeli attack on Syria's northwestern Baniyas port earlier in the day, it added.

Israel frequently targets military positions inside Syria, especially those of resistance fighters, who have played a key role in helping the Syrian army in its fight against

foreign-backed terrorists.

Iran maintains an advisory mission in Syria at the request of Damascus to help the war-torn Arab country defeat the foreign-backed militants who have been fighting the democratically-elected Syrian government since 2011.

Back in January, five IRGC military advisors along with several Syrian forces were assassinated in an Israeli strike in the Syrian capital, Damascus.

The attack targeted a three-story residential building in the city's Mezza neighborhood which houses several diplomatic missions.

**Notice of Public Tender No:**

**TEG1402/3001-22**

شركت سهامی توسعه سایپا

The Saipa Expansion Engineering Corporation Company (SEECO) intends to "RFP" for an T.A.R Oxidizing System through the bidding process among qualified contractor (s). The qualified applications are invited to visit our website: [www.seeco.ir](http://www.seeco.ir) for further information and send their technical/commercial proposal separately (two separate emails) till dated 11.03.2024 (16:00 PM) via email to the below mentioned email address: [tender@seesaipa.com](mailto:tender@seesaipa.com).