

DAILY BRIEFING

The Dispatch

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MAIN STORY: ROME TALKS MOVE TO PILOT-ZONE WITHDRAWAL MECHANICS

- Lebanese and Israeli delegations opened a two-day sixth round of US-mediated talks at the US embassy in Rome on Tuesday, moving the framework agreement from general principles to executive mechanics. The morning session turned tense. The Israeli delegation, over an hour late, conditioned withdrawal from the first pilot zone on prior Lebanese Army deployment and verified Hezbollah disarmament, while Lebanon insisted on withdrawal first with the army deploying behind it. Lebanon demanded starting in occupied areas against Israel's preference for non-occupied ones, with a floated compromise of simultaneous implementation in two villages, one occupied and one not. US intervention defused the standoff. The calmer second session agreed to form multi-specialty committees for the technical, military, and security files, and Lebanese accounts called the round positive as talks resumed Wednesday.
- President Joseph Aoun instructed the delegation to demand an immediate start to Israeli withdrawal from the two pilot zones before any further discussion, seeking gradual, sequential pull-outs one zone after another, with the Lebanese Army ready to progressively take control of vacated localities. Western Zawtar is the first withdrawal test, on the principle that wherever the army deploys, no armed presence remains. The mechanisms under negotiation cover designating the first zone, verifying the withdrawal, the US supervisory role, and army deployment arrangements. The army commander tracked the round from Baabda.
- Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar declared Israel ready to move forward on the two pilot zones and voiced hope the Rome round would deliver progress on withdrawal. A senior Israeli official framed the core dispute as pace and metrics: Lebanon seeks maximum control over the process to enable expanding the pilot program, while Israel holds that no further withdrawals follow until the first pilot proves itself. The sides are also split over how to measure whether the army completed its mission. Israeli officials stressed continued military readiness in the south and cast Hezbollah as trying to exploit the truce to reorganize. They named thwarting Iran's drive to link the Lebanese front to its confrontation with Washington as the central challenge, matching Ambassador Yechiel Leiter's standing conditions.
- Israeli forces intensified attacks in recent days on the proposed pilot zones themselves, western Zawtar, Kafr Tibnit, and the Ali Taher ridge in Nabatieh province, with Tuesday's strikes concentrated on eastern Zawtar. Lebanese security officials observed arson of homes and systematic destruction of neighborhoods where Israeli troops were positioned. They cannot determine whether the pattern signals preparation to withdraw or a deepening presence.

- Speaker Nabih Berri said he would not be upset if the Rome track achieved a positive outcome, naming withdrawal, return of the displaced, release of captives, and reconstruction as the tests. He repeated that direct negotiations have yielded no real benefit for Lebanon and dismissed the round as an extension of the same deviated course. He renewed his rejection of the pilot zones, arguing withdrawal on that path would take two years, most proposed zones are not occupied, and the scheme aims to embroil the army in internal strife serving Israel. He told Walid Jumblat that US-Iranian channels remain open and Lebanon would return as a separate agenda item. Hezbollah's Hussein al-Hajj Hassan, who a day earlier branded the framework an Israeli-Israeli agreement, warned the state cannot deliver disarmament.

STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT

The Rome round is the framework agreement's first real conversion test, and the sequencing fight over who moves first in the pilot zones is now the single binding constraint on implementation. The floated compromise of simultaneous implementation in one occupied and one non-occupied village is the likeliest path to a first withdrawal, provided US mediators pair it with a verification mechanism both sides accept, the piece still unagreed. Berri's softened tone, welcoming any track that delivers withdrawal even as he rejects the pilot architecture, indicates the domestic veto front would probably acquiesce to a completed first pullout rather than block it, though Hezbollah's disarmament red line stands untouched. The prior cycle's call that swift progress was unlikely held, as day one produced committees and procedure rather than a withdrawal date. Watch whether Wednesday's closing session names western Zawtar with a start date and a verification mechanism, the observable separating a functioning framework from another stalled principle.

IRAN

- US forces struck Iran for a fourth consecutive day. A five-hour wave hit coastal defenses, missile and drone sites, and naval targets in Bushehr, Chah Bahar, Jask, Konarak, Abu Musa and Bandar Abbas, where three Corsair sea drones destroyed a submarine and ship maintenance facility in the first US combat use of unmanned surface vessels. The naval blockade on Iranian ports went into effect Tuesday afternoon. The IRGC fired ballistic missiles at Muwaffaq Salti air base in Jordan, whose defenses downed four missiles. Trump, after a Situation Room meeting on a wider offensive, threatened to destroy Iran's power plants and bridges next week unless Tehran negotiates.
- Trump said US representatives held direct talks with Iranian officials on Tuesday, warning Tehran to reach a deal or see nothing left of its position. Mediation through Qatar, Pakistan and Oman continues in parallel to prevent further escalation.
- The Strait of Hormuz remains the memorandum's core fault line, with Iran reading point five as granting it management of the corridor and Washington reading it as an obligation to reopen the strait.
- Trump warned he will strike Pickaxe Mountain, the fortified underground complex near Natanz suspected of housing an undeclared enrichment site, promising "a nice big, fat shot right in the front door" relatively soon.
- Tehran hardliners suggest the sudden death of US Senator Lindsey Graham, a prominent advocate

of war with Iran, is linked to Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei's pledge of vengeance for his father's killing.

- Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's office categorically rejected claims that Mossad spent years trying to recruit him as a candidate to lead Iran and that he sits under house arrest, calling the allegations fabricated.
- The naval blockade proved critical to securing the June 18 memorandum. President Masoud Pezeshkian, fearful of the blockade and Iran's deteriorating economy, implored Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei to accept the deal despite Khamenei's insistence on retaining control of the Strait of Hormuz. The current fighting is narrower in geographic scope and smaller in total strikes than the March-April round. The blockade's reimposition marks the ceasefire's effective end and risks political fallout inside Iran beyond the battlefield.
- Trump cast US forces as the guardians of the Strait of Hormuz, saying Washington will end up controlling the waterway and will conclude the campaign once it controls all of Hormuz.
- President Masoud Pezeshkian answered Trump's remarks by declaring the Iranian nation will respond in practice and defend every inch of its territory.
- Iran's foreign ministry condemned the British plan criminalizing support for the IRGC with up to 14 years in prison as hostile, unjustified and contrary to international law.
- Iran hanged Mohieddin Abdollahi and Hossein Palani, convicted of armed rebellion as members of an ISIS cell in the Bamo mountains on the Iraqi border, amid at least 370 executions this year.
- Iran and Russia advanced their grid-connection project via Azerbaijan into a new phase, targeting exchanges of up to 1,000 megawatts of electricity after successful technical trials.
- Iran condemned Washington's pressure on International Criminal Court member states, including sanctions threats and visa cancellations, as blackmail designed to shield American and Israeli officials from prosecution.
- Kazem Jalali, Iran's ambassador to Russia, said renewed US escalation will produce a calculable and structural failure for Washington against Iran's deterrence doctrine.

ISRAEL

- Israel signed an 8.5 billion shekel (\$2.3 billion) framework agreement to build roughly 12,000 West Bank housing units and infrastructure, at a ceremony with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, Israel Land Authority chief Yehuda Eliyahu, and Shomron council head Yossi Dagan. Government sources simultaneously disclosed two decisions kept secret to avoid friction with Washington: the March approval of 34 new settlements, raising the total established under this government to 103, and the earlier NIS 1.3 billion allocation, now paired with NIS 1.075 billion for access roads. Defense Minister Israel Katz separately unveiled three military-linked Nahal outposts for northern Gaza, calling the enclave's destruction deliberate policy.
- US President Donald Trump pressed Netanyahu in their July 9 phone call to pull Israeli troops out of Syria and Lebanon, telling him "They don't want you there. You should redeploy." The call came a day after Trump met Syrian President Ahmad al-Sharaa at the NATO summit in Turkey. Netanyahu countered that Israel needs security zones along its borders, and the administration has concluded he will not make the concessions Washington seeks in either country. Israel mean-

while continues to slow-walk the south Lebanon withdrawal under discussion in the Rome track, aiming to defer any pullout until after the October parliamentary elections.

- Netanyahu warned Iran's leaders from Dimona that any new attack would draw a "far more powerful" response than its June strike, while former defense official Avner Vilan branded his Khamenei-assassination war aim an "absurd risk."
- The Knesset Finance Committee weighed transferring NIS 393 million to the Prime Minister's Office, including nearly NIS 100 million for security around the office and the Netanyahu family, drawn from reserves and other budget lines.
- The government took up a proposal to divert some NIS 568 million from the 2021 five-year plan for developing Arab society (government decision 550) to the Shin Bet, police, and enforcement against organized crime. The Mossawa Center appealed to Netanyahu and Attorney-General Gali Baharav-Miara to halt the move and is weighing legal action, arguing funds meant for employment, education, and infrastructure would shift to intelligence and enforcement, signaling reordered government priorities toward Arab citizens.
- The Israel Airports Authority warned that 33 US refueling planes parked at Ben-Gurion Airport, their evacuation frozen as the US-Iran fighting escalates, could force cancellation of up to 50,000 tickets at the summer peak.
- The Knesset passed, 58-54, a law shielding roughly 72,000 Haredi draft evaders from arrest and prosecution until November 30, over IDF chief Eyal Zamir's objection that it grants mass exemptions the army cannot afford.
- Katz asked President Isaac Herzog to pardon Elor Azaria and erase his record for the 2016 Hebron killing of a subdued Palestinian attacker, over IDF opposition citing Azaria's lack of remorse.
- Marwan Barghouti's family said the shooting of the jailed Palestinian leader occurred at Ganot Prison in the Negev and that he has received no medical treatment for the leg wound, which the Israel Prison Service still denies.
- An Israeli-released document attributed to slain Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar, anticipating a violent Israeli response up to a nuclear strike on Gaza, has ignited controversy over the decision to launch the October 7 attack.
- Journalist Ronen Bergman alleged Netanyahu selectively pursues security-leak investigations when disclosures damage him politically while permitting the release of highly classified material that serves his interests, much of it originating from the Prime Minister's Office.
- Central Arava Regional Council head Meir Tzur warned the Israel-Jordan border's torn wire fence is seldom patrolled and freely crossable, with the IDF intercepting only about half of smuggled weapons and goods.
- A settler from the Pioneers of Bashan movement, speaking from inside southern Syria, said members are on the ground day and night and claimed the Bashan region "belongs to the people of Israel according to the Holy Torah," urging the military to stay. The military stopped a separate infiltration attempt by the movement near Mount Hermon last Thursday. Damascus repeatedly demands Israel end violations of its sovereignty. It issued no immediate response.
- Likud MK Tally Gotliv demanded IDF chief Zamir's dismissal over his letter warning of a 17,000-soldier shortage, telling him to "know your place" after his criticism of the draft law.
- Some 100 Breslov Hasidim entered the Palestinian village of Kifl Haris on Monday night to press for access to the grave of Yehoshua Ben Nun, and police arrested five suspects aged 16 to 20

near Hizma.

- Border Police, IDF intelligence, and the Shin Bet arrested 14 suspects, including an Israeli citizen, for smuggling millions of shekels in dual-use materials to West Bank terrorist bomb-makers, seizing about 175 kg of explosive materials.
- US Representative Ro Khanna, detained for over an hour by IDF-backed settlers in the West Bank, said the absence of any punishment shows Israeli complicity and that he now views Israel as an occupying power practicing apartheid.
- EU foreign ministers coalesced around banning trade with Israeli settlements as the bloc's preferred response, with policy chief Kaja Kallas tasking ambassadors to advance the work and flagging a possible extraordinary meeting.

LEBANON

- Israeli forces shelled Wadi al-Hujeir valley, bombarded Byout al-Siyyad at dawn, demolished houses in Majdal Zoun and Haddatha, and triggered detonations in valleys from Majdal Zoun to Wadi Hassan and near al-Tiri and Kounine. They fired heavy machineguns toward Majdal Zoun and al-Mansouri as low-altitude drones overflew Beirut and its southern suburbs. Overnight the Israeli army shelled the Nabatieh-Kfartebnit area, conducted predawn detonations in Bint Jbeil and Beit Yahoun, and bulldozed roads from Bint Jbeil to Maroun al-Ras. The Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition recorded 15 attacks on Lebanese health care in 2025, down from 497 in 2024, nearly all by Israeli forces. Three health workers were killed.
- President Joseph Aoun condemned Iran's attacks on Gulf states and Jordan and the Houthi missile attack on an airport in southern Saudi Arabia, calling them blatant attempts to undermine the Gulf's stability and keep the region in constant tension. He affirmed Lebanon's complete official and popular solidarity with Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states and Jordan, declaring their security an integral part of Arab national security.
- Aoun urged Benjamin Netanyahu to change his approach if Israel seeks peace, arguing military force alone cannot guarantee long-term stability and more wars yield only death, destruction and displacement. Ahead of the Rome talks he vowed no compromise on Lebanon's sovereign rights, restating the goals of full withdrawal, reconstruction, return of the displaced, and repatriation of prisoners and remains now that the path of war has failed. Aoun will press Donald Trump in Washington this month to hold Israel to its prior commitments and exert pressure, looking to the talks to open a full Israeli withdrawal with Lebanese Army deployment into the occupied areas.
- UNDP's weekly tensions monitoring for 4-10 July recorded growing signs of a transition toward return and recovery, with 37 percent of displacement shelters at full capacity, down from 88 percent in mid-June. Government coordination on recovery and returns increased ahead of the upcoming negotiating round. The report judged return dynamics still fragile, with renewed regional escalation reinforcing uncertainty around Lebanon's security environment.
- Renewed war in the Gulf serves the interests of US oil companies and consolidates the United States' position as the world's leading oil exporter.

SYRIA

- Lebanon's Internal Security Forces detained a Syrian national it identifies as the Islamic State's general security emir for the group's central and southern Syria provinces, announcing Monday that the June 30 arrest followed extended surveillance. The detainee, born in 1994, ran the group's security operations in both provinces in coordination with emirs across its other Syrian branches. The arrest surfaces as Damascus investigates the IS cell behind the twin bombings during Macron's visit, which killed one person and wounded dozens near the French president's hotel. The Syrian interior ministry published the names of three men interrogated over the attack.
- Jamal al-Din al-Qasimi, head of the Syrian-French Business Council, said Tuesday that French business interest centers on maritime and air transport, logistics, and the development of ports, airports and railways, alongside energy, renewables, water and sanitation, infrastructure rehabilitation and waste treatment. The health sector is a French priority. A French parliamentary delegation including legal experts and legislative advisers visits in August to work with the People's Assembly on drafting the legislation reconstruction and investment will require. Macron's trip was the first by a Western head of state since Assad's fall in late 2024 and the first French presidential visit since Sarkozy in 2009.
- The EU Agency for Asylum assessed in two new country-of-origin reports that Syria's transition has brought gradual security improvement and lower conflict violence. Damascus is extending control over most of the country, including parts of the northeast, under the deal gradually folding the SDF into state institutions. Covering October 2025 through May 2026, the reports flag Israeli military operations in southern Syria as the foremost security challenge and tie slow transitional justice to continued violence against people linked to the former regime. More than 1.6 million refugees and 1.9 million displaced have returned since December 2024, while Syrians filed some 17,300 EU protection applications in the period.
- Turkish ambassador Nuh Yilmaz said Tuesday that Ankara-Damascus cooperation now extends to the naval domain, after Turkish Navy ships called at Latakia in the fleet's first port visit there since 2011. Navy commander Admiral Ercument Tatlioglu led the delegation aboard TCG Istanbul and was received by Syrian naval commander Brigadier General Mohammed al-Saud, extending a run of defense exchanges that included a Syrian defense ministry visit to Turkey's National Defense University in June.
- Aleppo Governorate began reorganizing the Northern Ring mass-transit line, deploying internal transport company buses to curb tariff violations and trip fragmentation, drawing protests from the sarafis minibus drivers transferred to the Southern Ring line.

PALESTINE

- An Israeli drone strike on a police post west of Jabalia killed at least eight people, including Jabalia police station director Col. Mohammed Marwan Salem and a woman officer, extending Israel's stepped-up targeting of Hamas security personnel that has killed dozens since October. Israeli fire elsewhere Tuesday killed 10-year-old Muataz Abu Shaar in Rafah and a 36-year-old man in Khan Younis. Bassem Mosaad Irmilat died of wounds from an earlier strike on Al-Qadisiyah camp. That raised the post-ceasefire toll to 1,110 killed. Israeli forces on Monday shot dead 30-year-old

worker Naser Kaabneh as he climbed the barrier at Bir Nabala, northeast of Jerusalem, to reach his job.

- Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Mohammad Mustafa met EU officials in Brussels as 65 delegations launched the Team Gaza Initiative, an initial €883.6 million (nearly \$1 billion) package for Gaza water, healthcare, energy, and food security.
- Israeli police arrested a 16-year-old Palestinian from Nahaleen who admitted planning to stab an IDF soldier near the Gush Etzion settlement of Neve Daniel and die a martyr, hiding a kitchen knife under a bench.
- The Church of England's General Synod voted overwhelmingly to engage with Kairos Palestine II, the Palestinian Christian report documenting genocide in Gaza, despite Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis's bid to block the debate.

KEY REGIONAL EVENTS

Kuwait and Bahrain

- The IRGC launched a third wave of Operation Nasr-2 against US military facilities in Bahrain and Kuwait, claiming the destruction of Fifth Fleet command-and-control, naval-intelligence, and fuel infrastructure in Juffair. Sirens again sounded over Manama. Kuwaiti forces intercepted a ballistic missile, five cruise missiles, and 33 drones, but a strike on a Kuwaiti naval vessel wounded four servicemen. A hit on a KGL Logistics warehouse in the Mina Abdullah industrial area sparked a fire that six brigades extinguished without casualties. IRGC Statement No. 14 appealed directly to Kuwaitis to press their government to expel US forces, professing no hostility toward Kuwait itself.

Bahrain

- Bahrain's prosecution sentenced three defendants to life imprisonment for colluding with the IRGC to assist hostile and terrorist acts against the kingdom, the latest convictions in a wartime crack-down on Iran-linked cells that has brought hundreds of arrests, most of them Shia Bahrainis.

Gulf

- GCC Secretary-General Jasim Mohammed Al-Budaiwi called on the UN Security Council to take a firm, deterrent stance against Iran's repeated attacks on Gulf states and to secure freedom of navigation after the strikes on two Emirati tankers.

Oman

- UN Yemen envoy Hans Grundberg met senior Omani officials and Ansar Allah chief negotiator Mohamed Abdul Salam in Muscat, pressing for immediate de-escalation to preserve the relative calm held since the 2022 truce.

C O R E G R O U P

United Arab Emirates

- The UAE released 55 Iranian fishermen its coast guard had detained in recent months, Iran's embassy in Abu Dhabi announced, with 14 already returned home aboard the vessel Arya via Bastak port.
- DP World is planning a new multipurpose port and container terminal on the UAE's east coast at Fujairah, a move that would cut Dubai's dependence on its flagship Jebel Ali hub and route cargo around the Strait of Hormuz entirely. The operator is in talks to develop both the new Fujairah port and an additional terminal at the emirate's existing harbor.

Saudi Arabia

- Pakistani Saab 2000 Erieye and Saudi King Air 350ER aircraft flew apparent paired ISR missions and Saudi C-130s shuttled between Jeddah and eastern bases, while Transport Minister Saleh Al-Jasser advanced aviation cooperation talks in Jakarta.
- Saudi-led forces struck Saada province, the stronghold of Houthi leader Abdul-Malik al-Houthi, hours after the Houthi missile and drone attack on Abha airport. The Houthis claimed downing a Royal Saudi Air Force Wing Loong II drone over Al-Bayda, where recovered wreckage included underwing weapons pylons, and celebrated a 10-hour halt in flight activity at Jazan, Abha, and Najran airports. Mohammed bin Salman sought and received Trump's advance backing for military action against Yemen. Yemen's Presidential Leadership Council warned that no foreign aircraft may enter Yemeni airspace without government authorization. The UAE and Arab League condemned the Houthi attack as the exchange strains the four-year truce.

Egypt

- Abdel Fattah El-Sisi flew to Manama after a morning stop in Qatar, telling King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa that Gulf security is an extension of Egyptian national security and condemning the attacks on Bahraini territory as a flagrant violation of international law. Sisi pledged Egypt's backing for any measures Gulf states take to protect their sovereignty and vital installations.
- Egypt's Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam dispute with Ethiopia is being subsumed into wider Horn of Africa rivalries, as Cairo broadens its regional military footprint and blocks Addis Ababa's drive for Red Sea access.

Kuwait

- New ground-level footage circulated from Kuwait as the country absorbed the Iranian attack wave.

Qatar

- Lebanese President Joseph Aoun and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan traveled to Doha on Tuesday to offer condolences to Emir Sheikh Tamim over the death of his father, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani.

Iraq

- Donald Trump hosted Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi at the White House, announcing a massive new oil partnership as Baghdad seeks major US investment in oil, gas, and power after the war hammered crude output and state finances. Al-Zaidi directed the oil, electricity, and communications ministries to prioritize American companies, with Chevron upstream negotiations, US-backed LNG ventures, and revived Mediterranean export pipelines on the table during the July 13 to 18 visit. Washington folded the meeting into its wider regional push on the memorandum's heels, inviting President Joseph Aoun to a July 21 White House summit.

Yemen

- Yemeni Vice President Abdullah al-Alimi called Iranian flights to Yemen an unacceptable violation of sovereignty, saying the planes carried equipment for the Houthis, whose delegation's aircraft ultimately landed at Hodeidah.
- The Southern Giants Brigades intercepted a boat in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait on July 14 carrying specialized materials and equipment for weapons manufacturing bound for the Houthis in Hodeidah, seizing the vessel and detaining its Houthi-affiliated smuggling crew after an intelligence surveillance operation.

Iran

- The IRGC warned in Statement No. 12 that oil and gas export routes serving the United States and its allies could close, declaring regional energy exports would remain open to everyone or be denied to everyone.

KEY INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

- Russia's agriculture and transport ministries announced they are working out alternative shipping routes and may limit Azov Sea traffic after Ukraine struck 116 vessels there in nine days, including tankers and cargo ships.
- World Food Programme acting chief Carl Skau warned Sudan risks sliding into deeper hunger as Hormuz-linked agricultural cost rises compound war and aid cuts, with 5 million people at emergency or catastrophic levels.
- Senate Democrats blocked the \$1 trillion National Defense Authorization Act 50-46, refusing to advance the bipartisan package and its troop pay raise in protest of the Iran war. The war is in its fifth month with no clear endgame. Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer said the bill "cannot become a permission slip" for recklessness in Iran, and that Trump does not get to drag Americans deeper into a war he cannot explain and then demand Congress look the other way. The vote came a day after the White House formally notified Congress it had resumed strikes on Iran, with volatile gas prices building ahead of the midterm elections.
- UN human rights chief Volker Turk urged an immediate return to the Iran-US ceasefire, calling renewed hostilities a "huge setback" for civilians and describing reports of the Strait of Hormuz closure as "very alarming."

- Ukraine and nine European countries, including France, Germany, and the United Kingdom, announced in Paris a coalition to build a shared ballistic missile defense capability for Europe, drawing on Kyiv's experience against Russian missile attacks.
- EU ambassadors held last-ditch talks on the bloc's 21st Russia sanctions package before a Wednesday deadline that would otherwise force the \$44 Russian oil price cap up toward war-inflated market prices. Brussels a day earlier sanctioned nine people and four entities over a Russian cyberespionage campaign targeting at least nine member states.

MARKETS

- Iran attacked seven commercial ships in seven days, killing, injuring or leaving missing more than 10 civilian crew, including cruise-missile strikes on ADNOC supertankers Mombasa and Al Bahiyah in Omani waters.
- Trump replaced his 20% Hormuz transit fee, which the UN maritime agency said had no legal basis and Brazil's Lula called piracy, with trade and investment deals by Gulf states.
- Oman pledged transparent, neutral cooperation with all parties to restore freedom of navigation in Hormuz under the UN Law of the Sea convention, as its Muscat talks with Iran and Qatar on fully opening the strait's median lane continued. Tehran hardened its terms: parliament tabled a bill formalizing Iranian management of the strait, and army spokesman Mohammad Akraminia conditioned any reopening on US compliance with the memorandum. Houthi political bureau member Mohammed al-Farah said closing Bab el-Mandeb alongside Hormuz would drive oil to \$200 a barrel.
- Brent crude climbed to \$86.19 a barrel, a four-week high, after Washington reimposed its naval blockade. Most Gulf bourses fell. Markets priced Bank of England and ECB rate rises by September.

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