

No Deal in Islamabad Due to US Extortion

Holding the upper hand on the battlefield, Iran sees no reason to yield to Washington's excessive demands

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US Vice-President JD Vance (center) arrives for a meeting with Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif (not pictured) prior to the US-Iran peace talks in Islamabad on April 11, 2026.

Vance's approval rating plunges to a historic low

Vice President JD Vance's popularity has plummeted in recent months, reaching what analysts describe as the lowest approval rating for any vice president at this stage of a first term in modern history.

According to an aggregate of national polls compiled by CNN data analyst Harry Enten, Vance's net approval rating has fallen from a positive 3 points early in his tenure to a negative 18 points—a dramatic 21-point swing downward.

Speaking on CNN, Enten noted that Vance now ranks last among recent vice presidents at a comparable point in their time in office. For context, Kamala Harris had a net approval of minus 13 points, Mike Pence stood at minus 7, Joe Biden held a net positive of 4 points, and Dick Cheney enjoyed a strong net positive of 37 points at a similar stage.

"JD Vance is not doing too hot to trot at this point," Enten said, adding that while vice presidents have generally become less popular over time, the depth of Vance's decline stands out as historically the worst. ► Page 3

Lascaris: Trump's Iran policy trapped by delusions and unilateralism

TEHRAN- Political analyst Dimitri Lascaris says the Trump administration's approach to Iran is fundamentally flawed – undermined by ideological delusions such as an obsession with maximalist pressure and a disregard for diplomatic norms.

According to Lascaris, as long as Washington refuses to accept the limits of coercive diplomacy and ignores geopolitical realities – including Iran's strategic autonomy and regional influence – meaningful negotiations will remain impossible. He argues that the White House's behaviour reflects broader critiques of Trump's foreign policy as erratic and out of touch with international consensus.

Lascaris also points to recent comments by Vice President JD Vance, who claimed that Iran rejected the Trump administration's proposal as the "best and final" deal. That claim, Lascaris says, highlights the growing tension between US assertiveness and Iranian scepticism. The resulting impasse is rooted in mutual distrust, unilateralism. ► Page 3

Qalibaf: US failed to earn Iran's trust in Islamabad talks; 'diplomacy of power' to continue

TEHRAN- Iran's Parliament Speaker, Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, said the United States has yet to earn Tehran's trust following the latest round of negotiations held in Islamabad.

In a post on X on Sunday, Qalibaf, who headed Iran's negotiating delegation, stated that the talks concluded without tangible results, as the American side failed to convince Iranian officials of its credibility.

"Before the negotiations, I emphasized that we possess the necessary goodwill and determination. However, based on the experience of two previous wars, we do not trust the other side," he wrote. "Members of the Iranian delegation presented constructive initiatives, but ultimately, the opposing side was unable to gain the trust of the Iranian team during this round."

He added that the United States had come to understand Iran's logic and principles, stressing that Washington must now decide whether it is capable of building trust with Tehran. ► Page 3

"Minab's Angels" music album unveiled in tribute to martyred students

TEHRAN –The music album "Minab's Angels" was unveiled during a ceremony held at the Tehran's City Theater, on Friday, the eighth day of the "For Iran, the Source of Art" cultural festival.

The album serves as a musical memorial for the young students of the Shajareh Tayyebeh Elementary School in Minab, Hormozgan province, who attained martyrdom during a coordinated attack by the United States and Israel. The event, attended by cultural officials and artists, Mehr reported.

Speaking at the ceremony, Babak Rezaei, Director General of the Music Office, stated that the collection features works by prominent pop vocalists including Zanko, Ali Raha, Hatef, Mohammad Fereshtenejad, Reza Rahimian, and Amir Haqiqat. ► Page 8



Iran freestyle team defend title in 2026 Asian Championships

TEHRAN – Iran freestyle team defended their title at the 2026 Asian Wrestling Championships on Sunday.

Team Melli finished in first place with 178 points, followed by India (162 points) and Japan (127 points).

The Iranian freestylers claimed four gold medals, one silver and three bronzes.

The 2026 Asian Wrestling Championships took place in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan from April 6 to 12.

Iran Greco-Roman team had previously won the title in the event.

Iran, Russia presidents discuss West Asia developments

Vladimir Putin and Masoud Pezeshkian held a phone call to discuss the latest developments in the Middle East, according to a statement from the Kremlin.

During the conversation, Pezeshkian briefed Putin on the recent Iran-US talks held in Pakistan on April 11. He also expressed appreciation for Russia's "principled position" aimed at de-escalating tensions and thanked Moscow for its humanitarian assistance to the Iranian people.

For his part, Putin reaffirmed Russia's readiness to support efforts toward a political and diplomatic resolution to the ongoing conflict. He emphasized Moscow's willingness to play a mediating role in pursuit of a just and lasting peace in the region, the Kremlin statement noted.

Both leaders also reiterated their commitment to strengthening good-neighborly relations and expanding cooperation between Russia and Iran.

In addition, Pezeshkian extended Easter greetings to Putin and Orthodox Christians in Russia.

Hegseth faces backlash for calling the Persian Gulf the 'Arabian Gulf'

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN - US War Secretary Pete Hegseth has come under fire after referring to the Persian Gulf as the "Arabian Gulf" in a post on X, reigniting a long-standing dispute over the internationally recognized name of the body of water.

In the post referencing US Central Command operations, Hegseth said that the USS Frank E. Peterson and USS Michael Murphy had transited the Strait of Hormuz and operated in what he called the "Arabian Gulf" as part of a broader mission involving mine-clearing operations aimed at ensuring safe navigation through the region.

Iran's Embassy in Austria said the reference was "no coincidence," arguing that it reflected a political framing of the region. It said the US has "suffered a resounding defeat in the war against Iran—particularly over control of the Strait of Hormuz." The embassy noted that Hegseth has "searched for the Strait of Hormuz in a wrong place, not knowing that it lies in the Persian Gulf." It further suggested he repeat "Persian Gulf" ten times each morning.

Iran's Vice President for Rural Affairs, Abdolkarim Hosseinzadeh, also criticized the Pentagon chief in comments posted on X. He said: "Are you angry that your war-driven project has failed?" ► Page 3

Luca Brasi sleeps with the fishes

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN — After around twenty-one hours of talks in Islamabad on April 11, the highest-level meeting between Tehran and Washington since 1979, no agreement emerged. Vice President JD Vance stepped off Air Force Two and delivered the verdict with chilling clarity: "They have chosen not to accept our terms."

Not "we could not bridge differences." Not even "both sides fell short." "Our terms," that phrase tells everything.

The United States came to dictate a surrender. This was no surprise to anyone in Tehran who has watched American statecraft for decades.

Vance called the American package a "final and best offer," a one-shot ultimatum demanding zero enrichment, the abandonment of regional alliances, and a full re-opening of the Strait of Hormuz on Washington's unilateral conditions.

In a Truth Social post just hours after the talks ended, U.S. President Donald Trump threatened a naval blockade against Iran, issuing sweeping military directives and escalating rhetoric. ► Page 3

TEHRAN PAPERS

In the following column, we take a look at some important contents and views in yesterday's Iranian newspapers.

The heavy shadow of the Strait of Hormuz over global economic calculations

Kayhan, in a commentary, highlighted the importance of the Strait of Hormuz as a pressure lever for Iran in its confrontation with the United States. Managing the Strait of Hormuz can not only weaken the position of the United States, but, through collecting transit fees and generating revenue for the country, may even help ease sanctions. Exercising legal sovereignty over the strait brings Iran multiple advantages. Under such conditions, Iran would be in a strong position against countries that have participated in sanctions against it, and could also collect lawful fees for securing this strategic waterway. Economic expert Hossein Raghfar argues that the West and the United States would face serious challenges if Iran were to assert control over the Strait of Hormuz; therefore, preserving this major strategic achievement is valuable at any cost.

Shargh: Artificial respiration for the strait

Shargh dedicated its editorial to the issue of keeping the Strait of Hormuz open during the ceasefire period. The US acceptance of Iran's proposals merely as a 'basis for negotiations' carries no inherent concession. Typically, in negotiations, the US insists on its 15-point plan and Iran on its 10-point plan, resulting in no breakthrough—at best, an agreement to postpone talks for another week or two. In such a scenario, the Strait of Hormuz would effectively remain open for a month. Thus, the ceasefire becomes a form of artificial respiration for the strait and lifts the shadow of war from the pulse of the global economy. Negotiations, therefore, become a tool for the US to buy time and for the world to receive temporary relief.

Etamad: No contradiction between the battlefield and diplomacy

Etamad, in an analysis, argued that there is no contradiction between diplomacy and the battlefield. Quoting political figure Esmail Gerami-Moghaddam, the paper states that he views the recent Iran-US understanding—mediated by Pakistan—as the product of coordination between 'the battlefield and diplomacy,' and as a sign of the United States' strategic failure after four decades of confrontation with the Islamic Republic. Emphasizing three pillars—military capability, cohesion within the political-military structure, and public awareness—he believes the recent potential understanding simultaneously showcased Iran's military and civilizational power to the world. The recent ceasefire between Iran and the United States for ne-

gotiations is not merely a 'temporary arrangement' at the end of a security crisis; it marks an important point in the trajectory of a 46-year confrontation between the Islamic Republic and the United States.

Javan: The US negotiates on behalf of Israel

Javan, in an article, examined the strong presence of the Iranian delegation in Islamabad for negotiations with the United States. According to the paper, analysts believe that the presence of high-ranking military figures in Iran's negotiating team symbolizes strength and reflects an assertive approach aimed at preserving the military and economic gains of the war. This assertive posture and deep mistrust were reinforced even before the talks began, through Iran's declaration of two fundamental preconditions—especially after Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf explicitly stated that Iran would not enter negotiations until a ceasefire in Lebanon is established and Iran's frozen assets are released. The paper argues that Iran's precise and calculated strategy—using all political, military, and economic tools to secure maximum concessions from these decisive negotiations—shows that Tehran, recognizing its battlefield successes, intends to enter the talks from a position of strength.

Jam-e-Jam: The Strait of Hormuz, the bottleneck of the global economy

Following the start of the third imposed war and Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz, Donald Trump stated that the strait was not important to him and that those who rely on it should work to reopen it. Yet he has now come to the negotiating table to hear Iran's conditions for reopening the strait. Approximately 20 percent of the world's oil passes through the Strait of Hormuz, and its management has come under Iran's control. In recent years, the strait's role has expanded into the realm of food security and survival. Additionally, the seabed of the Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf of Oman hosts a vast network of international fiber-optic cables connecting China and India to Europe and the United States. These cables form the backbone of global data transmission, banking transactions, and the operation of international servers. The paper concludes that in today's world, merely possessing a strategic location is no longer sufficient; rather, it is the intelligent and strategic use of that location that determines a country's standing in global economic equations.

IRGC warns to trap enemies in 'deadly whirlpools' of the Strait of Hormuz



The Islamic Revolution Guard Corps issued a stern warning to the United States after President Donald Trump's latest anti-Iran threats over the Strait of Hormuz.

The IRGC naval command said in a post on X that "any miscalculated move will trap the enemy in the deadly whirlpools in the Strait."

It said the Iranian security forces have the Strait of Hormuz "under full control".

Trump on Sunday announced a US naval blockade of the Strait of Hormuz and threatened to destroy "the little that is left of Iran" after peace talks in Islamabad fell apart.

No deal in Islamabad due to US extortion

Holding the upper hand on the battlefield, Iran sees no reason to yield to Washington's excessive demands

TEHRAN— US President Donald Trump has once again intensified threats against Iran following negotiations between Tehran and Washington in the Pakistani capital Islamabad, where high-level talks ended on Sunday without a deal.

The negotiations, mediated by Pakistan, brought together senior Iranian and American officials in the wake of a fragile two-week ceasefire following a 40-day US-Israeli war against Iran that began on February 28. The talks began on Saturday and continued into early Sunday but ended in deadlock, with both sides blaming each other for the failure.

High-level talks

Vice President J.D. Vance led a delegation, joined by US special envoy Steve Witkoff and President Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner. The Iranian delegation was headed by Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf and included Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and other senior officials. Despite the seniority of both teams, no breakthrough was achieved.

Iran's nuclear program

At the core of the disagreement remained Iran's nuclear program. Vance demanded an "affirmative commitment" that Iran would not pursue nuclear weapons among other excuses.

Iran has repeatedly stressed that its nuclear program is entirely peaceful and compliant with international law. Tehran has also reiterated that it has no intention of developing nuclear weapons, a position also supported by international intelligence assessments which have found no evidence of a weapons program. Iranian officials maintain that uranium enrichment on the country's soil is a sovereign right and cannot be subject to external imposition.

A wall of mistrust

Iran's parliament speaker, the head of the Iranian team, said although Iran offered "constructive initiatives", the US was "unable to gain the trust of the Iranian delegation in this round of negotiations". He said it was



now up to Washington "to decide whether it can gain our trust or not".

Qalibaf said Iran has no trust in the opposite side due to the experience of the two US-Israeli-imposed wars; the ones they launched on February 28 and in June last year.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei noted that while limited convergence was achieved on secondary issues, major differences remained on two to three core matters. Iranian media also reported that excessive US demands were the main obstacle to any agreement.

US-Israeli warmongering

The diplomatic breakdown followed the 40-day war that began with coordinated US-Israeli strikes on Iran, including the assassination of Iran's Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei and several senior military officials in Tehran on February 28.

Throughout the war, Iranian territory came under extensive attack targeting energy infrastructure, hospitals, schools, and residential areas, resulting in heavy casualties and widespread destruction.

Iranian deterrence

Despite the scale of the military campaign, Iran's defense structure was not broken. Instead, Iranian forces mounted a forceful response, striking US bases across the Persian Gulf region and Israeli targets in cities such as Haifa and Tel Aviv. These retaliatory strikes underscored Iran's continued operational reach and deterrence capability.

A key strategic development

was Iran's effective control over the Strait of Hormuz, where it restricted the movement of vessels linked to the US, Israel, and their partners. The move triggered global energy concerns and highlighted Iran's leverage over one of the world's most critical maritime chokepoints.

Strategic miscalculation

The outcome of the 40-day conflict is increasingly viewed as a major strategic miscalculation by Washington and Tel Aviv. Despite declared objectives of dismantling Iran's military capabilities and forcing unconditional surrender, those goals were not achieved. Iran maintained its defensive structure, sustained retaliatory capacity, and preserved strategic deterrence throughout the war.

Diplomatic breakdown

The failure on the battlefield was mirrored in Islamabad. US maximalist demands clashed with Iran's insistence on sovereign rights and mutual respect. Even Pakistan's mediation could not bridge the gap, and both sides left the talks without progress while exchanging blame.

Return to pressure

Following the collapse of negotiations, Trump sharply escalated his rhetoric once again, warning of new measures against Iran and signaling a potential maritime escalation in the Strait of Hormuz.

In a series of posts on Truth Social, Trump claimed that the United States Navy would begin intercepting vessels in and around the strategic waterway, including ships he described as

being linked to Iran or "paying a toll" to Tehran. He said the US would move to "block any and all ships trying to enter or leave the Strait of Hormuz," and added that American forces would act to neutralize maritime threats, including the removal of mines allegedly laid in the area.

He further warned that any Iranian action against US forces or commercial shipping would be met with overwhelming force, stating that those who target "peaceful vessels will be blown to hell." Trump also declared that Washington remained "locked and loaded," suggesting that the United States was prepared for further military escalation "at the appropriate moment."

At the same time, he framed the proposed measures as part of an effort to prevent what he described as Iranian "extortion" through control of the strategic waterway, insisting that Iran "will not be allowed to profit" from the situation and reiterating claims that Tehran's actions were tied to broader nuclear ambitions.

In effect, the rhetoric combined threats of direct military engagement with an attempt to internationalize enforcement of a potential blockade, signaling a continuation of coercive pressure despite the failure of both military and diplomatic tracks to produce the stated objectives.

Iran has said that all vessels not affiliated with the United States, Israel, and countries involved in the recent aggression against Iran may pass through the Strait of Hormuz, subject to coordination with Iranian authorities.

It appears that Washington is now attempting to internationalize the consequences of its failed strategy by drawing other countries into maritime enforcement and pressure measures, in an effort to share the costs of a confrontation that has already exposed the limits of US military and diplomatic leverage.

Iran medical body identifies over 3,750 victims of US-Israeli aggression

TEHRAN— Iran's Forensic Medicine Organization has identified 3,753 people killed in the joint US-Israeli war, the head of the body announced, amid efforts to assess the human toll of the aggression launched on February 28.

Abbas Masjedi said the victims were identified using "scientific and specialized methods." Of the total number, 2,875 were men and 496 were women. He added that foreign nationals were also among the dead, including citizens of Afghanistan, Syria, Turkey, Pakistan, China, Iraq, and Lebanon.

The announcement comes as Iranian authorities release further details about the scale of civilian casualties resulting from the unprovoked American-Israeli military campaign.

Majid Miadfar, head of Iran's Emergency Organization, also said the death toll includes 260 women and 221 individuals under the age of 18. Among them were 18 children under the age of five.

Miadfar described the death of 168 people, most of them schoolgirls, from Shajareh Tayyebeh Elementary School in the southern city of Minab as one of the most harrowing chapters of the war. A US missile hit the school in the first day of the aggression on February 28.

Miadfar also detailed extensive damage to Iran's healthcare infrastructure. A total of 400 medical facilities, 57 emergency bases, and 47 ambulances have been struck and damaged during the US-Israeli attacks. Two air ambulances and one sea ambulance also suffered significant damage.

Among health workers, 26 have been martyred and 118 injured. Of those wounded, 78 were on duty treating injured civilians at the time of the strikes.

The United States and Israel began their military campaign despite indirect negotiations between Tehran and Washington over Iran's nuclear program. The aggression has included a wave of strikes targeting both mil-



itary sites and civilian infrastructure across the country, resulting in heavy casualties and widespread destruction.

In response, Iran's Armed Forces have carried out multiple waves of retaliatory missile and drone operations targeting US positions in the Persian Gulf region and Israeli sites in the cities such as Haifa and Tel Aviv, vowing that acts of aggression against the Iranian nation will not go unanswered. Iran and the US agreed to a two-week ceasefire last week.

Betrayed at the table, unbroken in spirit: Iran's path to dignified peace with US

By Mir Mohammad Alikhan

(This article was written before the talks between Iran and the U.S. in Pakistan ended inconclusively due to excessive demands from the American side)

As a Wall Street banker with more than thirty years observing the turbulent waters of Iran-U.S. relations—from the transformative 1979 Islamic Revolution that reshaped the Middle East to the high-stakes Islamabad talks unfolding even as I write these words in April 2026—I have witnessed cycles of hope and

betrayal that few other relationships can match.

Twice in recent memory, while genuine negotiations were actively progressing, American military force struck Iranian territory. In June 2025, during the first round of Omani-mediated talks that had shown cautious progress, the United States launched devastating airstrikes under Operation Midnight Hammer, targeting the Fordow and Natanz nuclear facilities, and the Isfahan nuclear technology center with bunker-buster bombs and Tom-

ahawk missiles.

Then, in early 2026, even as indirect discussions continued in Geneva and other venues, further U.S.-Israeli operations escalated tensions dramatically. Iranian diplomats and officials rightly described these actions as unprovoked betrayals of the negotiating spirit. We were seated at the table in good faith, exchanging proposals through mediators, yet Washington chose the language of force.

The message sent to every Iranian family in Tehran, Tabriz, or

Shiraz—and to our vast, people across Europe, North America, and beyond—was crystal clear: America's commitments, even amid dialogue, remain fragile and untrustworthy. Yet Iran persists in these Islamabad talks not out of weakness, but from the deep well of resilience that has defined our nation since the Revolution. We choose principled engagement because true strength lies in defending sovereignty while extending a hand for mutual respect.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Hegseth faces backlash for calling the Persian Gulf the 'Arabian Gulf'

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN - US War Secretary Pete Hegseth has come under fire after referring to the Persian Gulf as the "Arabian Gulf" in a post on X, reigniting a long-standing dispute over the internationally recognized name of the body of water.

In the post referencing US Central Command operations, Hegseth said that the USS Frank E. Peterson and USS Michael Murphy had transited the Strait of Hormuz and operated in what he called the "Arabian Gulf" as part of a broader mission involving mine-clearing operations aimed at ensuring safe navigation through the region.

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Iran's Vice President for Rural Affairs, Abdolkarim Hosseinzadeh, also criticized the Pentagon chief in comments posted on X. He said: "Are you angry that your war-driven project has failed?"



You have every reason to be. Now you're trying to milk the Arab countries? I understand. Not from you — but I do expect my Arab brothers not to spend their money on the delusions of someone who failed to defend them."

He said the generals of Alexander the Great and the Mongols even failed to change the 2,500-year-old name of the Persian Gulf. Hosseinzadeh added a pointed remark referring to Hegseth as "no more than a captain," in a jab contrasting him with historical military figures.

In Washington, Democratic

Congresswoman Yassamin Ansari, who is of Iranian descent, said she had previously introduced the "Persian Gulf Act" aimed at protecting the historical designation amid earlier political discussions over renaming it. She emphasized that "Persian Gulf" remains the term used in international institutions, historical maps, and academic references for centuries. "Trump and Hegseth can't change that now," Ansari said.

The naming dispute has periodically resurfaced in regional politics, with "Arabian Gulf" used in some political contexts, while "Persian Gulf" remains the over-

whelmingly dominant term in historical records, classical geography, medieval Islamic scholarship, early European cartography, and modern international institutions.

The latest exchange underscores how geographic terminology in the Persian Gulf region remains closely tied to broader geopolitical tensions surrounding the Strait of Hormuz, a vital global maritime chokepoint. It also reflects continuing friction in the aftermath of the February 28 war launched by the US and Israel against Iran and Tehran's control over the strait.

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Straight Truth
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Qalibaf: US failed to earn Iran's trust in Islamabad talks; 'diplomacy of power' to continue



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In a post on X on Sunday, Qalibaf, who headed Iran's negotiating delegation, stated that the talks concluded without tangible results, as the American side failed to convince Iranian officials of its credibility.

"Before the negotiations, I emphasized that we possess the necessary goodwill and determination. However, based on the experience of two previous wars, we do not trust the other side," he wrote. "Members of the Iranian delegation presented constructive initiatives, but ultimately, the opposing side was unable to gain the trust of the Iranian team during this round."

He added that the United States had come to understand Iran's logic and principles, stressing that Washington must now decide whether it is capable of building trust with

Tehran.

Qalibaf further underscored that Iran will continue to pursue a "diplomacy of power" alongside its military resistance, describing the approach as essential to safeguarding the rights of the Iranian people. He noted that efforts to consolidate the achievements of "forty days of national defense" would remain ongoing.

The speaker also expressed gratitude to Pakistan for hosting and facilitating the negotiations, and praised the Iranian public for their support, saying they had rallied in large numbers in response to guidance from the country's leadership. He also commended his negotiating team for their efforts during the "intensive 21-hour talks."

Senior Iranian and US officials met in Islamabad on Saturday to explore a permanent resolution to the US-Israeli war against Iran, following a two-week ceasefire between Iran and the United States. The discussions ended without an agreement.

Vance's approval rating plunges to a historic low

Vice President JD Vance's popularity has plummeted in recent months, reaching what analysts describe as the lowest approval rating for any vice president at this stage of a first term in modern history.

According to an aggregate of national polls compiled by CNN data analyst Harry Enten, Vance's net approval rating has fallen from a positive 3 points early in his tenure to a negative 18 points—a dramatic 21-point swing downward.

Speaking on CNN, Enten noted that Vance now ranks last among recent vice presidents at a comparable point in their time in office. For context, Kamala Harris had a net approval of minus 13 points, Mike Pence stood at minus 7, Joe Biden held a net positive of 4 points, and Dick Cheney enjoyed a strong net positive of 37 points at a similar stage.



"JD Vance is not doing too hot to trot at this point," Enten said, adding that while vice presidents have generally become less popular over time, the depth of Vance's decline stands out as historically the worst.

Vance was the head of the American delegation in the recent talks between Iran and the United States. Analysts believe that following Donald Trump's policies is one of the most important reasons for his declining popularity.

They suggest the decline mirrors broader challenges facing the Trump administration, with Vance appearing to be "dragged down along with the president of the United States" amid the current political environment.

The erosion of early goodwill for the Ohio native and former senator highlights the volatile nature of public opinion in the early years of the administration. It remains unclear whether Vance's numbers will stabilize or face further pressure as the White House advances its policy agenda heading into the 2026 midterms and beyond.

LATEST NEWS

Iran to restore oil refinery on Lavan Island soon

Iran will soon restore the oil refinery on Lavan Island that was attacked after a ceasefire took effect, Deputy Oil Minister Mohammad Sadegh Azimifard said.

"Teams are currently working to remove the rubble and replace damaged equipment. We will relaunch a part of the refinery in about ten days, and its other plants will also gradually return to operation," the SNN TV channel quoted him as saying.

US destroyers' Strait of Hormuz stunt failed— came minutes away from destruction

A Press TV investigation has revealed that the US military's attempt to sail two destroyers through the Strait of Hormuz ended in complete failure, with the American vessels coming within minutes of being destroyed by Iranian naval forces before being forced to retreat.

US oil giants warn Trump: Prolonged Hormuz blockade will deepen energy crisis

CEOs of America's three largest oil companies, ExxonMobil, Chevron, and ConocoPhillips, have warned the Trump administration that the ongoing closure of the Strait of Hormuz threatens to worsen the global energy crisis and drive prices even higher, according to a Wall Street Journal report.

In recent White House meetings, the executives cautioned that continued disruptions to energy shipments through the strategic waterway will increase market volatility and lead to severe shortages of refined fuels such as gasoline and diesel.

Israel says war on Iran cost over \$11bn

Israel's finance ministry says the war it launched on Iran with the US has cost the

country over \$11bn, according to a preliminary estimate.

The ministry cited 35bn shekels (\$11.52bn) in budgetary expenses, with 22bn shekels of that going to defence. The amount has already been added to the 2026 budget, it said.

IRGC Navy: Any enemy misstep in Hormuz will bring 'deadly danger'

The Islamic Revolution Guard Corps Navy announced that all transit movements in the Strait of Hormuz are under the complete control of Iranian armed forces.

"Any wrong move by the enemy in the Strait of Hormuz will lead to it falling into a deadly danger zone," the statement warned.

Trump: I expect Iranians to give us everything we want

The US President Donald Trump says the Iranian delegation has not walked away from negotiations, and he expects they will come back and concede to all US demands.

Pezeshkian urges agricultural cooperation with neighbors

President Masoud Pezeshkian called for expanding agricultural cooperation with neighboring countries, including joint investments and activating northern transit routes.

During his visit to the Ministry of Agriculture Jihad on Sunday, he stressed the need for equitable food distribution and highlighted Iran's potential as a member of the Eurasian economic grouping to reduce tariffs and commodity prices amid the ongoing imposed war.

Israeli journalist: Iran emerged stronger after war

Israeli journalist Barak Seri told Maariv that Iran is in a stronger position today than

before the war, appearing at the negotiating table with greater power and confidence. He criticized Israel's warmongering, saying the attack only strengthened Tehran. A poll shows 63% of Israelis are dissatisfied with the war's outcome.

Israeli analyst blames White House for Iran-US talks failure

Israeli analyst Danny Citrinowicz said that the White House is responsible for the collapse of Iran-US talks in Islamabad, citing US "miscalculation" and "extensive demands."

Zarif blames US dictation for Iran talks failure

Former Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said the Islamabad talks failed because the US tried to dictate its terms to Iran. Reacting to JD Vance's statement that Iran "chose not to accept our terms," Zarif wrote: "No negotiations with Iran will succeed based on 'our/your terms.' The US must learn: you can't dictate to Iran."

Spain's ambassador: Strengthening ties with Tehran a top priority

Spain's newly appointed ambassador to Iran said upon entering the country via the Astara border crossing that enhancing bilateral cooperation and promoting lasting peace are among his key priorities.

He noted that assessing regional infrastructure and exploring opportunities for economic cooperation and investment will be central to his diplomatic agenda.

The ambassador also expressed hope that, alongside advancing diplomatic relations, the region's tourism potential can be evaluated, helping to pave the way for future joint initiatives and expanded collaboration between the two countries.

Lascaris: Trump's Iran policy trapped by delusions and unilateralism

TEHRAN- Political analyst Dimitri Lascaris says the Trump administration's approach to Iran is fundamentally flawed – undermined by ideological delusions such as an obsession with maximalist pressure and a disregard for diplomatic norms.

According to Lascaris, as long as Washington refuses to accept the limits of coercive diplomacy and ignores geopolitical realities – including Iran's strategic autonomy and regional influence – meaningful negotiations will remain impossible. He argues that the White House's behaviour reflects broader critiques of Trump's foreign policy as erratic and out of touch with international consensus.

Lascaris also points to recent comments by Vice President JD Vance, who claimed that Iran rejected the Trump administration's pro-

posal as the "best and final" deal. That claim, Lascaris says, highlights the growing tension between US assertiveness and Iranian scepticism. The resulting impasse is rooted in mutual distrust, unilateralism, and a complete absence of genuine negotiation.

"Real engagement demands flexibility, transparency, and respect for international norms – elements that are entirely absent in Trump's hardline stance," Lascaris said. Until those elements are restored, he concludes, meaningful diplomacy with Iran is unlikely to move forward.

Negotiations between Iran and the United States in Islamabad, Pakistan, concluded without an agreement this Sunday morning. Iran attributed this outcome to the excessive demands made by the American side.

Former UN expert says US responsible for failed Islamabad talks

Alfred de Zayas has blamed the United States for the failure of recent negotiations with Iran, while calling on the international community to take a firmer stance against Washington's policies.

In a series of posts on X, the former UN independent expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order sharply criticized US conduct in the talks held in Islamabad, describing Washington as unwilling to engage in good-faith negotiations.

He argued that the breakdown of the Pakistan talks was the direct result of what he characterized as the United States' pattern of imposing unilateral demands rather than pursuing mutual compromise. According to de Zayas, Washington is "not interested in quid pro quo, but only in imparting commands."

The former UN expert also urged the international community, including Persian Gulf

states, to recognize the United States and Israel as the primary aggressors in the ongoing tensions, stating that regional countries are bearing the consequences of 'an unprovoked attack' on Iran.

In his remarks, de Zayas further expressed skepticism about US and Israeli commitments, asserting that both countries have a record of failing to uphold agreements or reinterpreting them unilaterally to their advantage, undermining trust at the international level.

Additionally, he made controversial remarks regarding domestic US politics, calling for constitutional measures to remove the American president and accusing Washington of prioritizing Israeli interests over its own, at significant human and financial cost.

The remarks come after talks held in Islamabad between Iranian and US officials ended without agreement.

Iran's petrochemical sector hits 100m-ton capacity under 14th government

TEHRAN – Iran's petrochemical industry has recorded remarkable growth under the 14th government, reaching a nominal production capacity of 100 million tons.

This milestone was realized through 79 operational complexes spread across the country.

Officials highlight that this achievement underscores the sector's strategic role in non-oil exports and foreign currency earnings.

The expansion aligns with national plans to maximize petrochemical output and reduce reliance on crude oil sales.

Industry experts note that the rapid capacity growth results from completing delayed projects and optimizing existing units.

With new plants coming online, Iran aims to further raise its annual capacity in the coming years.

The 100-million-ton mark positions the country as a major regional petrochemical hub, promising increased revenue and job creation in downstream industries.

Based on formulated strategic plans, Iran's petrochemical industry will see a 37% leap in production capacity by the Iranian year 1412 (2033-2034) through the implementation of 66 new projects and the completion of 45 semi-finished projects.

Accordingly, the National Petrochemical Company of Iran (NPC) has forecast the key estimates of this vision as follows:

· Year 1403 (2024-2025): Production capacity of 96.6 million tons and sales value of \$12.7 billion. This figure reached 100 million tons of production in the year 1404 (2025-2026).

· Year 1407 (2028-2029): Production capacity of 131.5 million tons and export value of \$26 billion.

· Year 1412 (2033-2034): Achieving a capacity of 182.7 million tons and a production value of \$46.4 billion.

To realize these goals, approximately \$246.1 billion in new investment is required—a path that will solidify Iran's petrochemical industry as the undisputed top regional petrochemical power.

Iran's petrochemical industry has experienced one of its most brilliant periods under the 14th government, achieving \$29.1 billion in net sales, extensive product exports, and raising nominal production capacity to 100 million tons.

The industry has set unprecedented records in net sales, exports, and production capacity expansion, cementing its path to sustainable growth.

From smart pricing governance to an energy technology revolution and the launch of major national projects, the industry's track record shows that by the Iranian year 1412 (2033-34), Iran will become the region's undisputed petrochemical power with 182 million tons of various petrochemical products.

Undoubtedly, petrochemicals are among the most important and export-oriented industries for any country, and this advantage doubles when a nation uses domestic resources to supply feedstock—meaning low-cost local resources are transformed into valuable export products relying on domestic technology, engineering, and production capability.

Iran possesses an extensive petrochemical value chain, with a real operating capacity of 100 million tons, providing significant foreign exchange earnings. However, in the first months of the 14th government, these production units faced serious fuel and feedstock supply challenges. By 2025, necessary measures largely resolved these issues, and the National Petrochemical Company removed many obstacles.

To establish sustainable governance and improve efficiency, the National Petrochemical Company has steered private sector engagement and product pricing dispute resolution toward legal and economically rational frameworks.

In 2025, with government approval and issuance, the National Petrochemical Company adopted a new approach to pricing petrochemical products, aiming to create an effective governance framework.

This effort seeks to establish a transparent, predictable environment for constructive interaction among producers, consumers, and regulators, while resolving potential disputes through specialized mechanisms.



One of the toughest winters for Iran's petrochemical industry was 2024, when fuel and feedstock shortages forced some units to suspend production for three months, causing tens to hundreds of millions of dollars in lost profit per company.

However, with the government's spring and summer 2025 approach to fuel supply management, production stoppages were minimized.

By February 13, 2026 (24 Bahman 1404), gas restrictions were lifted, allowing companies to withdraw gas up to their capacity limits.

Hassan Abbaszadeh, the managing director of the National Petrochemical Company, noted fluctuations in gas withdrawal during mid-February. In October (Mehr), daily withdrawal was around 90 million cubic meters, at times dropping to 75, 60, or even 50 million, but now an increasing trend has begun, exceeding 100 million cubic meters, with companies preparing for full production return. According to available data, about 98% of petrochemical supply and production capacity has been restored, and exports have grown about 2% compared to last year despite all restrictions.

Since 2024, the National Petrochemical Company has implemented a plan to encourage household fuel consumption reduction.

The result was lower household consumption in Mazandaran, Gilan, and Golestan provinces.

Proceeds from savings funded social services such as wheelchairs for the disabled, school supplies, and standard home heating equipment. The campaign ran for a second consecutive year starting December 21, 2025 (30 Azar 1404).

Abbaszadeh stated that under signed agreements, several petrochemical companies will invest in areas like awareness campaigns, equipment replacement, and other energy efficiency measures in Gilan, Mazandaran, and Golestan provinces.

These projects aim to reduce natural gas use in households, public facilities, greenhouses, and poultry farms to sustain petrochemical production. Emphasizing the role of public participation, he said without people's involvement, any plan would be incomplete.

The main incentive for the campaign's second year is increased public engagement in the three northern provinces, with results to be announced via a prize draw in the coming weeks.

He explained that due to direct impact from gas imbalances, the petrochemical industry decided to purposefully address this area, selecting three northern provinces as pilots—regions with high gas consumption in households, public sectors, greenhouses, and poultry farms.

This year's savings target is double last year's, estimating a reduction of about 2 million cubic meters per day over several months, equivalent to the feedstock for one major petrochemical plant.

Iran's petrochemical industry has moved from mere production to value creation and technology in line with the Seventh Development Plan's goals.

Smart governance, export infrastructure development, localization of key technologies, and value chain completion have made this industry not only a brilliant achievement of the 14th government but also a model of sustainable management and knowledge-based exports for all of Iran's industries.

Back in January, the managing director of National Petrochemical Company stated that the company has set a goal of increasing petrochemical production capacity by over 130 million tons under the Seventh National Development Plan.

Asian Development Bank warns war in West Asia will slow Asia's growth

TEHRAN— A new report from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) indicates that the economies of Asian countries will face a slowdown in growth even if oil prices remain relatively stable — a development that highlights the far-reaching effects of the war in the West Asia on the region.

The conflict between the United States-Israel and Iran, now in its second month, is sending shockwaves through energy markets and trade routes that millions of Asian businesses and consumers depend on daily.

According to Bloomberg, the international institution stated in its latest economic outlook that the military confrontation could halt the region's postpandemic recovery in its tracks.

As a result, economic growth in developing Asian countries is expected to fall to 5.1% this year, down from an estimated 5.4% last year.

While the forecasts assume oil prices will return to prewar levels by the end of 2026, severe volatility in energy markets remains a significant and unpredictable risk. Masato Kanda, a senior ADB official, warned that Asia's economy is facing a serious test, as rising energy and commodity prices could fuel inflation and tighten financial conditions across the continent.

China and India feel the pressure. China's economy — the main engine of regional growth — is expected to slow from 5% last



year to just 4.6%, largely due to weak domestic consumption.

India is also facing external headwinds, with growth forecast to fall from 7.6% to 6.9%, although strong domestic demand may provide some cushion.

Meanwhile, inflation in developing Asia is set to rise to 3.6%, driven mainly by higher energy costs.

Food prices are also climbing because many Asian nations rely on fertilizer imports from the West Asia.

Beyond energy, the war threatens global supply chains in semiconductors, where raw materials like helium and petrochemicals face disruption.

The tourism industry, still recovering from the pandemic, is also suffering from a drop in international travel. The ADB has urged policymakers to avoid aggressive interest rate hikes or broad price controls, recommending instead targeted fiscal measures and careful management of inflation expectations to weather the storm.

Iran war making life more expensive for Americans



TEHRAN— The war with Iran has roiled Wall Street, driving up the cost of a mortgage along with auto and credit card loans, making everyday life more expensive for Americans, according to a recent CNN report.

Mortgage rates climbed for five straight weeks after the war began, but ticked down this week to 6.37% for the average 30-year fixed mortgage, according to Freddie Mac.

Just weeks ago, borrowing was far cheaper. In late February, just two days before the United States and Israel began joint strikes on Iran, the average 30-year fixed mortgage rate fell to 5.98%, dipping below 6% for the first time in more than three years.

Different consumer borrowing rates track different metrics. Some loans, for example, track US Treasuries; those yields are up now as investors worry about inflation.

Other borrowing is pegged to the interest rate set by the Federal Reserve. The Fed has been in a holding pattern on rates lately, a stance that's likely to continue if rising energy costs reignite inflation.

Mortgage rates tend to track the 10-year US Treasury yield, which has climbed across the

past month as investors have reckoned with the surge in oil prices, nerves about inflation and the potential for increased government spending to fund the war. Yields rise when bond prices fall.

The 10-year US Treasury yield rose from below 4% at the end of February to as high as 4.48% in March before trading around 4.3% this week. That yield is one of the most significant interest rates for the economy, strongly influencing mortgage rates and a range of other borrowing costs for everyday Americans, as well as businesses and the US government.

"Investors are now coming to grips with the likelihood of a prolonged war with Iran and what that would mean for the economy," said Jeffrey Roach, chief economist at LPL Financial. "The longer global oil supply is crimped, the more likely inflation pressures will increase."

Here's how the war is making Americans pay more for credit:

Mortgage rates

Even with this week's drop in mortgage rates, a typical homebuyer who locked in a rate just a few weeks ago would save tens of thousands of dollars over the life of a loan compared with someone taking out a mortgage

today.

Take a \$500,000 home. Assuming a 20% downpayment, a buyer who locked in a 30-year fixed mortgage in February, when the average mortgage rate was 5.98%, would be paying about \$28,700 per year in principal and interest. At this week's average mortgage rate of 6.37%, the yearly payment on that same loan would be \$29,931. While that may not seem like much, the difference in yearly payments adds up: Over the life of the 30-year loan, today's homebuyer would pay more than \$36,000 than a buyer in February.

"Borrowers are not going to like that," said Larry White, professor of economics at NYU Stern. "That adds a non-trivial amount to their monthly mortgage payment."

But despite the rise in rates over the past few weeks, mortgage rates are still lower than at this time last year, when the 30-year average fixed mortgage rate was 6.62%.

Auto loans

Rising Treasury yields could impact other borrowing rates, like auto loans, since the interest rate on a five-year auto loan tends to track short-term bond yields.

Five-year and two-year Treasury yields soared in March and are hovering at their highest levels since August.

Average rates on five-year auto loans have barely budged during the war, according to Bankrate data, but higher-for-longer bond yields could keep auto rates elevated after they had climbed higher in recent years.

"We're probably looking at a plateau," said Stephen Kates, financial analyst at Bankrate.

"The biggest question for borrowing rates, and this is true of mortgages, which obviously have gone up substantially, is the duration of this conflict," Kates said.

"How long this goes on and the uncertainty it brings is going to have more of an impact on borrowing rates than anything."

The average five-year auto loan rate hovers around 7%, according to Bankrate. For a borrower who takes out a five-year \$30,000 loan at a 7% rate, it translates into monthly payments of roughly \$594.

That higher cost comes when Americans are also facing higher gas prices. And car prices have climbed, too.

"Financing auto loans will be more costly for longer and so the affordability of a new car (which are already quite expensive by historical standards), will become even more so," Derek Stimmel, associate professor of teaching economics at the University of California at Davis, said in an email.

Credit cards

Many interest rates across the economy, like credit card rates, tend to track the Fed's benchmark interest rate. The rates on credit cards also include a (usually) large margin.

Credit card rates soared in 2022 and 2023, and the average annual rate remains above 19%.

Credit card rates have stayed elevated despite the Fed cutting rates a few times across 2024 and 2025. The war with Iran has not directly pushed those card rates higher, but it's unlikely they'll come down anytime soon.

Traders have dialed back expectations for the Fed to cut interest rates this year, with markets now anticipating the central bank will hold rates steady in the coming months.

"If the Fed keeps rates where they are and doesn't cut, then credit card rates will remain elevated, making it more difficult to afford more routine purchases such as groceries or other spending that ends up in credit card balances," Stimmel said.

Special customs facilities remain in place during emergency situations

TEHRAN— The head of Iran's Customs Administration, referring to the directives and instructions issued during the war, emphasized the continued provision of special customs facilities to economic actors in emergency situations.

According to IRNA from Iran's Customs Administration, Foroud Asgari, while appreciating the relentless efforts of customs personnel as the country's economic border guards during the third imposed war, added: "During the third imposed war, the dedicated and hardworking customs staff, just as in the 12-day war, stood alongside the people in the field of service. With

round-the-clock efforts throughout this period, they were present in the arena of service and defense of the homeland. These relentless efforts and hardships deserve appreciation and gratitude."

He stated: "Despite repeated threats at zero border points and ports across the country, bringing satisfaction and contentment to the people, especially economic actors, was the best reward during these difficult days. Customs personnel, as the economic border guards of the country, once again distinguished themselves with honor and pride by maintaining their pres-

ence at customs offices and carrying out customs procedures for essential goods and basic necessities around the clock, in defense of the homeland."

The head of Iran's Customs Administration added: "In the current circumstances, it is essential to maintain the level of preparedness and vigilance in the coming days within the framework of the directives and instructions issued during the war, and within this same framework, special customs facilities during emergencies should continue to be provided to the entrepreneurs."

US irrational demands bring Islamabad talks to inconclusive end

TEHRAN – Excessive and irrational demands from the United States during the marathon talks in Islamabad brought the negotiations between Iranian and American negotiators to a failure.

The talks followed two weeks of ceasefire between Iran and the U.S. mediated by Pakistan.

Vice President JD Vance, the top U.S. negotiator, said negotiations had failed to immediately produce an agreement. Before leaving Islamabad, he told reporters Iran had “chosen not to accept our terms.”

Calling the U.S. offer “final and best,” Vance added, “We’ll see if the Iranians accept it.”

Vance’s remarks drew a sharp response from former Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif who said the U.S. is seeking to dictate terms to Iran. Wring on social media, Zarif said it was “not too late” for the United States to learn that it “can’t dictate terms to Iran.”

The U.S. wants Iran to abandon its control over the strategic Strait of Hormuz through which a fifth of global oil and gas supplies passes, and terminate its peaceful nuclear program.

It also wanted Iran to give up its possession of nearly 400 kilograms of uranium enriched to 60 percent without giving any tangible concessions in return. Further, it refused to unfreeze about \$27 billion of Iranian revenues held abroad. The American side also rejected to pay reparations for damage from six weeks of airstrikes on Iran.

On the total lifting of illegal sanctions, the U.S. just said it could happen slowly.

Though Iran’s control of the Strait of Hormuz and Iran’s uranium stockpiles were the major sticking points, they can be easily resolved. If the U.S. and Israel stop their illegal war on Iran forever and Washington provides guaranteed assurances that no attack will take place on Iran, the Strait will return to its previous state. However, as media reported, if the U.S. seeks “management of the security of the Strait of Hormuz on their own terms” it would be impossible to bridge the gaps because the northern part of the narrow Strait falls within Iran’s territorial waters, not international waters.

Also, on the uranium stock-



iles, Iran had already put forward proposals to dilute the highly enriched uranium.

However, neither Vance nor Iran’s chief nuclear negotiator Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf ruled out another round of negotiations before the two-week ceasefire expires on April 21.

In a statement on social media, Ghalibaf, Iran’s parliament speaker, said Iran entered the talks with deep mistrust of the U.S.

“Before the talks I insisted that we had the goodwill and the necessary determination, but due to the two previous wars we don’t trust the other side,” he pointed out.

He said the U.S. had been “unable to gain the trust of the Iranian delegation in this round of talks,” suggesting, “Now it is time for it to decide whether it can earn our trust or not.”

The U.S. and Israel launched surprise attacks on Iran during the talks, first in June 2025 and in Feb. 28.

It is clear that striking a deal in a single round of talks was highly unlikely. Iran’s Foreign Ministry spokesman, Esmail Baqaei, said, “Naturally, we should have never expected to reach a deal in one session. We will continue to work to bring the two views of Americans and Iranians closer together.”

What is evident is that the U.S. must give concessions to Iran, instead of putting forward illogical demands.

Quoting two Iranian officials familiar with the talks, the New York Times said the United States had demanded that Iran immediately reopen the Strait of Hormuz to all maritime traffic. Iran refused to give up its leverage over the critical choke point

for oil tankers, saying it would do so only after a final peace deal, according to the officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

The U.S. side also wanted Iran to curtail its missile program, an illogical demand to make the country quite vulnerable to Israel’s attacks, especially as Netanyahu has openly called for the overthrow of the Islamic Republic. In his newest remarks, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who is wanted for war crimes in Gaza, has said the war with Iran is “not yet over.”

Though Israel was not physically present in the talks, the American side mostly represented the wishes of the ultra-extremist Zionists in Israel and elsewhere.

Some of Netanyahu’s allies have said that Vance’s statement on Iran’s nuclear program indicated that the United States and Israel were closely aligned. “The American insistence on preventing Iran from acquiring (what he called) nuclear weapons proves the complete coordination between the countries,” Miki Zohar, a government minister who belongs to Netanyahu’s right-wing Likud party, wrote on social media.

Win-win game entails concessions by two sides

International relations experts and experienced diplomats have always been saying that negotiations entail “give and take” otherwise there will be no agreement.

“When two serious teams with an intention for a deal come to the table, it has to be a win-win for both. It is unrealistic to think we can come out of this without making any serious concessions; the same holds true for the

Americans,” said Mehdi Rahmati, an analyst in Tehran, in a telephone interview.

Difficult options

The Times said the failure of the Islamabad talks leaves the Trump administration facing several unpalatable options: A lengthy negotiation with Tehran over the future of its nuclear program, or a resumption of a war that has already created the largest energy disruption in modern times.

Also, the negotiation appears to have not differed from the one in Geneva late February as Iran refused to bow down to Washington’s excessive demands.

Trump and his generals must also realize that more than 13,000 U.S. airstrikes and more than 10,000 by Israel have failed to change Iran’s mind. Moreover, the public opinion in the U.S. and the world is against the war.

Furthermore, the U.S. and its allies now feel more militarily vulnerable as Iranian forces managed to fire volleys of ballistic missiles and drones at Israel and across parts of the Persian Gulf region for 40 days, depleting supplies of vital interceptors in a number of countries on the receiving end.

“The heavy loss of our great elders, dear ones, and fellow countrymen has made our response to pursue the Iranian nation’s interests and rights firmer than ever before,” the Iranian Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

Analysts believe that the illegal war has hardened Iran’s views, not loosened it. That is why resuming combat operations is not a particularly viable political choice for Trump.

Trump’s war has already sent the price of gasoline soaring, and creating shortages of fertilizer and, among other critical supplies, helium for the production of semiconductors.

Now control of the vital Strait of Hormuz is wrapped in Iran’s demands and it is something that the Trump has rewarded Iran with its reckless and illegal war on Iran with the provocation of Netanyahu and the Zionist regime’s American lobby.

In view of these facts, the Trump administration has no choice other than seeking a face-saving exit route from the Iran quagmire.

Luca Brasi sleeps with the fishes

Why Tehran sees Washington’s Islamabad ultimatum as a mafia-style shakedown

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN — After around twenty-one hours of talks in Islamabad on April 11, the highest-level meeting between Tehran and Washington since 1979, no agreement emerged. Vice President JD Vance stepped off Air Force Two and delivered the verdict with chilling clarity: “They have chosen not to accept our terms.”

Not “we could not bridge differences.” Not even “both sides fell short.” “Our terms.” that phrase tells everything.

The United States came to dictate a surrender. This was no surprise to anyone in Tehran who has watched American statecraft for decades.

Vance called the American package a “final and best offer,” a one-shot ultimatum demanding zero enrichment, the abandonment of regional alliances, and a full reopening of the Strait of Hormuz on Washington’s unilateral conditions.

In a Truth Social post just hours after the talks ended, U.S. President Donald Trump threatened a naval blockade against Iran, issuing sweeping military directives and escalating rhetoric. The message was an alarming overreach and it framed an aggressive military posture as an immediate response to the negotiations.

The failed shakedown

We shouldn’t mistake this for diplomacy; it’s merely negotiation at gunpoint, echoing the same hostile pattern of interference Iran has endured for decades.

The battlefield phase of the current war has already failed. Despite killing senior leaders and striking deep inside our borders, the Islamic Republic did not crumble. Iran even gained new instruments of sovereignty as a result of the war.

So, Washington tried to win at the table what it could not win on the ground.

The Godfather metaphor fits too perfectly to ignore. In the film, Michael Corleone recalls a story: “My father made him an offer he couldn’t refuse... Luca Brasi held a gun to his head, and my father assured him that either his brains, or his signature, would be on the contract.”

That is the offer Vance delivered in Islamabad: sign away your rights and your sovereignty, or face renewed annihilation.

Yet here is the difference that matters: Iran has refused the offer time and again. Unlike the Native American nations whose 370 treaties with the United States were all broken once land or gold became convenient, Iran has stood firm.

The enforcer’s tactics (sanctions, assassinations, and airstrikes) have failed to produce a signature. In the language of the film, Luca Brasi sleeps with the fishes. The bully has met a nation that refuses to be bullied.

The normalization of diplomaticide

The threats did not stop at rhetoric. Shortly before the talks, Trump posted that Iranians “don’t seem to realize they have no cards” and that “the only reason they are alive today is to negotiate.”

This came after Israel assassinated Ali Larjani, a veteran politician and security chief in a March 17 airstrike.



Kamal Kharrazi, a senior foreign policy adviser who reportedly been quietly keeping channels open, was gravely wounded in an April 1 strike who succumbed to his injuries about a week later.

This aligns perfectly with the established Israeli playbook of diplomaticide. Just as they targeted key figures during previous rounds of mediation, they continue the strategy of killing the very people sent to the table, whether in Doha or elsewhere in the region.

The normalization of such barbarism reached a new low when The Washington Post published Marc Thiessen’s op-ed. Thiessen openly urged a “final barrage of leadership strikes,” arguing that Iranian officials must understand their lives literally depend on reaching a negotiated settlement to Trump’s liking. If they refuse to do so, they will be killed.

This is incitement to state terrorism. As thinkers like Nassim Nicholas Taleb have noted, civilization has meant sparing negotiators since the dawn of recorded history.

To target envoys is to destroy the possibility of an off-ramp. By proving that no envoy is safe, the United States and Israel are inviting endless wars.

A legacy of broken ink

These outrages rest on a long record of deceit. Between 1778 and 1871, the United States signed hundreds of treaties with Indigenous nations and broke every single one.

In 1953, the CIA spent millions to stabilize a post-coup government. In 1988, the U.S. Navy killed 290 civilians on Iran Air Flight 655 and never apologized.

The 2015 JCPOA saw Iran comply fully (as verified at least fifteen times by the IAEA) only for Trump to tear it up in 2018.

Both the 12-day war in June 2025 and the current war started during diplomacy, reinforcing the grim reality that talks are often the loudest warning of an imminent attack.

The Libya model is also seared in memory: Muammar Gaddafi disarmed his programs in 2003 only to be destroyed by NATO in 2011.

Israel’s record mirrors this cynicism. The Oslo Accords became a shield for settlement numbers to explode from 110,000 to over 700,000.

Dimona’s illegal nuclear program grows under American silence while Iran, an NPT member, faces executive demands.

Also, ceasefires in Lebanon and Gaza have been violated thousands of times.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Is Israel’s negotiation offer a trap for Lebanon?

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – As bombs fall on Lebanon, a sudden invitation to talks emerges, but is it peace or a political ambush?

The Lebanese government seeks to hold direct talks with the Zionist regime in Washington. The negotiations, scheduled for Tuesday, have triggered alarm bells inside Lebanon as well as protests as the country is under the Israeli fire.

The occupation regime’s own statements reveal its opening position at the negotiating table: first, dismantle Hezbollah’s weapons; second, normalize relations “with us” and third, secure the Lebanese border “for us.”

The regime’s first demand, for the Lebanese government to assume responsibility for disarming Hezbollah, is a trap disguised as a security request. The regime knows that Hezbollah is deeply embedded in Lebanese society, both as a military force and a political bloc. By asking the Lebanese government to disarm Hezbollah, the Zionist regime is pushing Lebanon toward what it truly wants: for the Lebanese to turn on each other.

This is not a metaphor for peace but an invitation to internal conflict and potential civil war. If Lebanon accepts this condition, it would be

forced to fight its own citizens on behalf of a foreign occupier, tearing the country apart from within.

The second and third demands go even further. Normalization with the occupation regime would mean abandoning decades of Lebanese and Arab consensus rejecting formal ties with an entity that continues to occupy land and commit war crimes.

As for securing the Lebanese border for the Israeli regime, this is what the regime wants the Lebanese government to do: achieve on behalf of Israeli occupation forces what they have failed to accomplish militarily.

The regime cannot impose its will on the ground, so it seeks to extract through negotiation what it could not win through war. Taken together, these conditions are not about peace or stability. They are about subjugating Lebanon, dismantling its resistance, and turning it into a compliant neighbor, without any guarantee of withdrawal from the occupied Lebanese territory or any guarantees to end the aggression.

Suddenly, after a sudden escalation from Donald Trump to “obliterate Iranian civilization,” a U.S.-backed Pakistani initiative emerged. Pakistan’s Prime Minister announced in a social media post that the U.S. and Iran agreed to a



15-day ceasefire for negotiations, explicitly stating it covers all allies, including Lebanon.

But this path soon grew complicated. Trump backtracked on including Lebanon in any regional truce deal, under political pressure from the Zionist regime to separate Lebanon from the broader framework and tie it to different terms.

To block a ceasefire, Netanyahu triggered fierce military escalation in Lebanon. The occupation regime’s military committed war crimes and crimes against humanity across Lebanon, with Netanyahu boasting of 160 airstrikes in just ten minutes.

Despite Iran’s insistence on linking Lebanon to a ceasefire and

regional settlement, Lebanese officials suddenly insisted that only the Lebanese state can negotiate on Lebanon’s behalf. At the same time, reports emerged that the Israeli regime now accepts direct talks with Lebanon after a long refusal.

This acceptance raises serious concerns about its timing and meaning. Is it paving the way for real negotiations as Lebanese leaders hope, or setting a new political-military trap that exposes Lebanon to existential danger?

The talks will come as the number of people killed by Israeli strikes has surpassed 2,000 since March 2, according to the Lebanese health ministry.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

photo of the day



Hundreds of demonstrators gathered outside the Iranian Embassy in Mexico City on April 11, 2026, expressing solidarity with the Iranian people and condemning U.S.-Israeli military aggression. Participants carried Iranian national flags and white roses to honor the victims of the Minab school massacre.

Alexander's Prison: Where myth meets architecture in the heart of Yazd

TEHRAN - Known locally as Zendaan-e Eskandar ("Alexander's Prison") and more formally as the Zia'iya School, this enigmatic monument stands among the most intriguing historical attractions of Yazd, which is a UNESCO-listed oasis city famed for its earthen architecture and deep cultural continuity.

Situated in the historical Fahadan quarter, a labyrinth of mud-brick alleys and wind-catcher-topped houses, the structure embodies a compelling fusion of history, architecture, and legend.

Despite its evocative name, Alexander's Prison was never a prison in the conventional sense. Historical evidence indicates that the complex was constructed in 631 AH (13th century CE) and completed in 705 AH under the patronage of Zia al-Din Hossein, the father of the renowned historian Sharaf al-Din Ali Yazdi. Originally built as a theological school, it reflects the educational and spiritual life of medieval Iran during the Ilkhanid (Mongol) period.

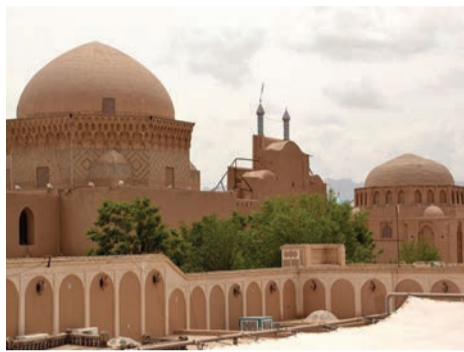
Architecturally, the monument is a masterpiece of the Azeri style, characterized by its restrained ornamentation and structural ingenuity. Built almost entirely of sun-dried mud bricks, the complex demonstrates remarkable durability in Yazd's harsh desert climate. At its heart rises a striking dome, approximately 18 meters high, constructed using a sophisticated double-shell technique.

The transition from the square base to the circular dome is achieved through a hallmark of Persian architectural innovation. Traces of delicate plasterwork, once adorned with gold and azure pigments, still hint at the building's former splendor.

The layout centers on a spacious courtyard surrounded by arcades (riwaqs), chambers, and iwans on three sides. The western iwan is particularly prominent, featuring a finely decorated mihrab. Beneath the courtyard lies a subterranean space, accessed through a well-like shaft, which has fueled much of the site's mystery. This deep pit, often described as a dungeon, has been central to the enduring legend that associates the site with Alexander the Great.

According to local lore, Alexander ordered the construction of a prison here during his conquest of Persia in the 4th century BC. Some narratives claim that dissidents were held in the underground chamber, while others suggest the name emerged later, inspired by poetic references such as those of Hafez, who metaphorically used the term "Alexander's prison" in his verses. While historians largely dismiss these claims as myth, the legend continues to enrich the cultural aura of the site.

Today, the monument functions partly as a small museum, displaying ancient tombstones, inscriptions, and archaeological finds from the region. Careful restoration efforts, using traditional materials like mud brick, have helped preserve its authenticity. The site was officially registered on Iran's National Heritage List in 1968, underscoring its historical significance.



Alexander's Prison is ideally located for visitors exploring Yazd's historic core. Nearby attractions include the Tomb of the Twelve Imams, the Lari House, and the Jameh Mosque of Yazd, all of which contribute to the city's rich architectural tapestry.

For travelers, a visit to Zendaan-e Eskandar offers more than a glimpse into the past, it provides an immersive encounter with the layered narratives of Iranian history, where architecture, legend, and cultural memory converge in one of the country's most atmospheric settings.

A don't miss destination

In July 2017, the historical core of Yazd, the provincial capital, was named a UNESCO World Heritage site. Yazd is regularly referred to as a delightful place to stay, or a "don't miss" destination by almost all of its visitors. The city is full of mudbrick houses that are equipped with innovative badgirs (wind catchers), atmospheric alleyways, and many Islamic and Iranian monuments that shape its eye-catching city landscape.

Cultural heritage experts believe that Yazd is a living testimony to the intelligent use of limited available resources in the desert for survival. Water is brought to the city by the qanat system. Each district of the city is built on a qanat and has a communal center. Furthermore, the use of earth in buildings includes walls and roofs through the construction of vaults and domes. Houses are built with courtyards below ground level, serving underground areas. Wind-catchers, courtyards, and thick earthen walls create a pleasant microclimate.

The historical core of Yazd is chockfull of mudbrick houses, bazaars, public bathhouses, water cisterns, mosques, synagogues, Zoroastrian temples, and centuries-old gardens. From the divine point of view, the city enjoys the peaceful coexistence of three religions: Islam, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism.

Yazd is home to numerous qanats which have supplied water to agricultural and permanent settlements for thousands of years. The man-carved underground qanat system relies on snow-fed streams flowing down the foothills of surrounding mountains. The earliest water supply to Yazd is estimated to date from the Sassanid era (224 to 651 CE). However, many others have been continually repaired and used over time, and most surviving Ab-Anbars (traditional mudbrick cisterns) can today be traced to the late Safavid and Qajar periods.

World Heritage sites: Schokland and Surroundings

Schokland was a peninsula that by the 15th century had become an island. Occupied and then abandoned as the sea encroached, it had to be evacuated in 1859. But following the draining of the Zuider Zee, it has, since the 1940s, formed part of the land reclaimed from the sea.

Schokland has vestiges of human habitation going back to prehistoric times. It symbolizes the heroic, age-old struggle of the people of the Netherlands against the encroachment of the waters.

Schokland has vestiges of human habitation going back to prehistoric times. It symbolizes the heroic, age-old struggle of the people of the Netherlands against the encroachment of the water. As a result of the colossal reclamation program that began in the early years of the 20th century, Schokland and the settlement mounds and other human interventions that surround it stand as mute testimony to the skill and fortitude of the Dutch people in the face of this

never-ceasing natural threat.

The contours of the former island of Schokland above the flat lands of the reclaimed Noordoostpolder are still easy to trace in the topography within the former island — there are four large village terps, all of them protected archaeological sites. A fifth such site includes traces of Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age settlements.

The remains of dykes and terps located outside the present island reflect the former contours of the island and the land that has been lost over the course of time. Also located outside the present island, but within the boundaries of the World Heritage property, are more than 160 archaeological sites with remnants of prehistoric occupation. A church and church ruins, residential and commercial buildings, barns, a former harbor, and land division patterns (both old and new) go to complete the story of Schokland.

(Source: UNESCO)

Over 29 million Nowruz trips taken in Iran amid challenging conditions

TEHRAN - Iran saw more than 29 million domestic trips during the Nowruz holiday period, a significant increase compared to previous years, according to a statement from the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts.

In a statement released on Saturday, Anooshirvan Mohseni-Bandpey, the deputy minister for tourism, noted that the 2026 Nowruz holiday, marked by unprecedented conditions, was not only a time for leisure but also served as a tool to restore social resilience and calm. "This year's Nowruz saw a fundamental shift in travel patterns, from being primarily leisure-focused to emphasizing security," he said.

The deputy minister highlighted a notable trend toward smaller cities and rural areas. "Costs shifted from entertainment to the purchase of essential goods, and travel planning became more fluid and less structured," Mohseni-Bandpey explained.

According to data based on SIM card usage, the most visited provinces were Mazandaran, with 4.48 million trips, Gilan with 3.21 million, Khorasan-Razavi with 1.81 million, and East Azarbaijan with 1.66 million. The province of Bushehr saw the fewest visitors, with only 232,943 trips, ranking 31st.

Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri, Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, also commented on the high number of Nowruz trips, noting the country's challenging circumstances, including security, military, and social crises. "Iran is facing one of the largest imposed crises of the century, with military confrontations involving Zionist regime of Israel and the United States, placing the Iranian people under a historic test," he said.

Salehi-Amiri added that the surge in domestic travel reflects



the resilience of the Iranian people and their efforts to manage the ongoing wartime conditions.

The minister praised the efforts of local officials, including governors, mayors, and village heads, calling them crucial in ensuring the smooth management of the country during these difficult times. "Today, the administration is on the front lines of service delivery, with all branches, from the [Iranian] President to local managers, focused on one mission: to serve the people sincerely," he said.

The minister also emphasized the international solidarity among Iranians, noting that the Nowruz period saw an unprecedented unity among Iranians both inside and outside the country. "This solidarity, rare in the post-revolutionary period, shows that when faced with historical challenges, the Iranian nation unites to protect its national interests," he said.

Nowruz, the Persian New Year,

is one of the most significant holidays in Iran, marking the first day of spring and the beginning of a new year in the Iranian calendar. During this time, millions of Iranians embark on trips across the country to visit family, enjoy the changing seasons, or simply take a break from their daily routines. These travels are deeply rooted in the cultural and social fabric of Iran, with many people making the journey to both urban centers and rural areas.

Typically, Nowruz travel peaks over the two-week holiday period, with the first days of Farvardin (the first month of the Iranian calendar) seeing the highest volumes of movement.

While major cities like Tehran, Isfahan, and Shiraz remain popular destinations during Nowruz, a noticeable trend in recent years has been the increasing popularity of smaller towns, rural villages, and natural sites. Many Iranians seek out quieter, less crowded places to spend their holiday.

Another aspect of Nowruz travel is the increasing focus on "safe" and "affordable" destinations. Rising travel costs have led some families to reconsider their travel plans, prioritizing destinations that are within driving distance and offer more modest expenses.

Throughout the holiday, the Iranian government and local authorities play an active role in ensuring the smooth flow of travel. Traffic management, road safety measures, and the provision of temporary accommodation are organized to handle the surge in visitors. Special Nowruz-themed events, festivals, and exhibitions are often held in major tourist destinations, adding an additional layer of cultural engagement to the travel experience. Despite the challenges that come with high demand for services and infrastructure, Nowruz travel remains an essential part of Iranian culture, symbolizing renewal, family bonds, and the joy of welcoming the new year.

Surge in illegal excavations reported in Fars province amid war

TEHRAN - Illegal treasure hunting has increased across several archaeological sites in Iran's Fars province since the outbreak of war on Feb. 28, a local cultural heritage activist said on Sunday.

Siavash Arya, a researcher and advocate for cultural heritage preservation in Fars, told ISNA that he conducted field visits weeks before the war starts across multiple districts, including Firuzabad, Farashband, Darab, and Shiraz. Arya noted that the sites were in poor condition due to extensive unauthorized excavations carried out by individuals seeking mythical treasures.

"Sadly, in these regions, particularly in historical sites such as the Sassanian fire temple in Farashband and the ancient ruins in Darab, treasure hunters have caused severe damage," Arya said. "The most alarming discovery was in Qasr Abunassar in Shiraz, where the destruction has escalated."



Arya, who was unable to provide photographic evidence due to Internet disruptions, highlighted that unauthorized excavations at Qasr Abunassar have been ongoing for two to three years. These efforts have intensified recently, with a hole that started at 40-50 cm last year now

reaching several meters in depth.

The activist said that he had informed local cultural heritage authorities about the situation, urging immediate action. "I have reported these activities with full details to the provincial Department of Cultural Heritage and its deputy for further investigation," he stated.

Arya stressed that the responsibility of heritage activists and experts becomes even more crucial during turbulent times such as conflicts or natural disasters, when opportunistic treasure hunters may target historical sites. "We must be vigilant and proactive in preserving our national heritage and fulfilling our social responsibility," Arya said.

The activist concluded by calling for greater awareness and collective efforts to safeguard the country's irreplaceable cultural landmarks from further destruction.

AUCTION SJSICO. D140501

Sirjan Jahan Steel Company is pleased to announce the sale and export of 25,000 tons DIRECT REDUCED IRON (DRI), with the option to increase the contract quantity by up to 20% on basis of FAS at the Buyer's warehouse in Bandar Abbas, IRAN (Other ports are negotiable) according to INCOTERMS 2020. Interested applicants are hereby invited to obtain the tender documents by visiting the official website of Sirjan Jahan Steel Company at sjsco.ir, through the Sales and customer portal, Tender and Foreign Tender section. All documentation will be provided electronically. All bids on conformity to tender instruction should be submitted no later than **Monday, April 20, 2026**. For more information, please contact us at: Tel: +2186084642



AUCTION SJSICO. B140501

Sirjan Jahan Steel Company is pleased to announce the sale and export of 10,000 tons STEEL BILLET (Size 150 x 150 mm), with the possibility of increasing the contract amount to 30,000 tons on basis of FOB Bandar Abbas according to INCOTERMS 2020. Interested applicants are hereby invited to obtain the tender documents by visiting the official website of Sirjan Jahan Steel Company at sjsco.ir, through the Sales and customer portal, Tender and Foreign Tender section. All documentation will be provided electronically. All bids on conformity to tender instruction should be submitted no later than **Monday, April 20, 2026**. For more information, please contact us at: Tel: +2186084642



Some 8,000 IRCS teams provide relief services during war

TEHRAN – From the beginning of the imposed war on February 28 till April 9, a total of 7,984 relief teams consisting of more than 28,000 rescuers affiliated with the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) has carried out more than 2,000 rescue missions.

Relief workers have participated in rescue operations such as searching and rescuing, and removing debris on daily basis, IRNA reported.

A majority of rescue missions are conducted in provinces of Tehran, 522 operations, Hormozgan, 177 operations, Khuzestan, 151 operations, and Isfahan, 148 operations.

All in all, 125,392 civilian units, including residential and business ones, are destroyed, with some being totally damaged during attacks.

A total of 994 civilians trapped under the debris during US-Israeli airstrikes were saved by the IRCS relief teams through search and rescue operations.

Some 257 women were martyred, three of whom were pregnant; the number of martyred individuals under the age of 18 amounted to 220.

About 20 medical centers, storehouse, and branches of the IRCS, as well as 49 rescue vehicles are severely damaged.

During 40-day strikes, 18 IRCS rescuers were wounded, and four lost their lives while carrying out their duties.

Some 2,006 IRCS consultants received 152,427 calls, providing psychological supports to the fellowmen suffering from traumas caused by the war.

Be the voice of suffering of Iranian nation

President of the IRCS, Pirhossein Kolivand has called on the UN Special Envoy to be the voice of



the suffering of the Iranian nation.

Jean Arnault, UN Special Envoy for the Middle East, in a meeting with Kolivand, discussed the war crimes and damages on civilian areas during U.S.-Israel airstrikes on Iran.

At the meeting, which was attended by officials, relief workers, and a large number of representatives from mass media, Kolivand presented the latest statistics on the damage inflicted on civilian areas and facilities, stating: "So far, six weeks into this war, 857 schools and educational facilities, 338 hospitals, clinics, and emergency centers, 49 relief logistics facilities, 43 ambulances, 20 Red Crescent centers, and three Red Crescent helicopters have been hit by missiles, damaged, or destroyed."

The President of the Iranian Red Crescent said that four aid workers were killed and many others injured while carrying out search and rescue and relief missions for the affected people during humanitarian operations in this war.

The official elaborated the

various aspects of war crimes in the attacks, saying you certainly have laws that, under all circumstances, prohibit attacks on these areas and classify targeting them as war crimes. Yet those who enact these laws are the very ones who violate them.

He emphasized that the Iranian Red Crescent Society, as an independent institution, has submitted and reported its documentation and observations of these crimes to the United Nations (UN), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Criminal Court (ICC), and all relevant international bodies.

The official presented a map of the targets struck in civilian, residential, and commercial areas, along with videos showing Red Crescent rescuers saving people trapped under the rubble, to the UN Special Envoy.

While showing a video of consecutive airstrike explosions near Khatam al-Anbiya Hospital in Tehran, depicted the panic of patients and the efforts of nurses and medical staff to evacuate them and transfer newborns out of the hospital, the President of the Red Crescent stated

that at the time of these attacks, 21 patients were simultaneously undergoing cardiac surgery, and 16 operating rooms were active, and that the hospital sustained damage comparable to a 7.5-magnitude earthquake.

He stressed: "How long must international organizations remain silent in the face of these crimes? We provided humanitarian assistance under these conditions. Who can challenge these documents? I ask you, since you have come here and are witnessing these events firsthand, to awaken the consciences of the world and fulfill your legal responsibilities, as well as those of other organizations."

During the meeting, the President of the Iranian Red Crescent Society presented additional videos of the Society's relief and rescue operations amid the rubble created by the recent imposed war to the UN Envoy.

Kolivand stated clearly: "Be the voice of the suffering of the Iranian people. I urge you, and all international organizations, to take action to uphold the rights of those who have lost their lives in this war."

Iran receives intl. humanitarian aid from Iraq, China, Azerbaijan, and Dagestan



TEHRAN – The Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) has received the fourth humanitarian shipment from Iraq, and the third aid consignments from China and Azerbaijan.

Following the outbreak of war on February 28, humanitarian shipments from different countries have been sent to Iran.

The fourth humanitarian consignment from the Iraqi Red Cross Society included 28 equipped ambulances, 65 trucks containing medical and construction tools, IRNA reported.

The shipment also involved 11 loaders, backhoes, motorcycles, wheelchairs, tents, air-conditioning systems, and heaters. In return for their help, Iran dispatched 11 tankers of drinkable water, chlorine for disinfection, and mobile laboratory to Wasit province in Iraq, where water distribution facilities had been destroyed.

The first consignment of the Chinese Red Cross included five Toyota rescue vehicles, 20 motorcycles, and the second shipment involved a loader, a backhoe, a mini-loader (bobcat), and 5,000 blankets.

The third aid shipment contained 11 bobcats, two cranes, a backhoe, and eight motorcycles.

Azerbaijan also sent the third consignment of relief items via 10 trucks. The consignment included 200 tons of essential goods like flour, food and medical items, rice, sugar, drinkable water, oil, tea, and medical equipment, which were delivered through land border in Astara, Gilan province, ISNA reported.

The first two shipments primarily involved eight trucks of essential food items, medicine, and medical equipment.

Dagestan Republic also dispatched its first humanitarian aid to the country. Seven trucks transported 140 tons of relief items including flour, rice, sugar, pasta, legumes, and oil.

Commending the neighboring countries support of Iran during this critical situation, the IRCS described it as a symbol of unity, brotherhood, and solidarity among nations.

The head of the Iranian Red Crescent Society, Pirhossein Kolivand, has lauded humanitarian aid sent by friendly countries to support Iran during the US-Israeli war, highlighting that their empathy reflects their deep human, cultural, and historical bonds with the Iranian nation.

With the outbreak of the war, some countries including Iraq, China, Russia, Uzbekistan, India, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, and Turkmenistan have dispatched humanitarian consignment to the IRCS.

Iraq has recently delivered the second shipment of humanitarian aid, including 27 trucks of essential items such as ambulances, beds, stretchers, medical equipment, debris removal tools, blankets, and medicines.

Russia was another country that has sent relief items to the country. The shipment included 313 tons of medicines, Mehr news agency reported.

Russia had formerly sent a shipment of 30 tons of medicine to the IRCS.

To express their solidarity with Iran, Tajikistan also prepared a shipment comprising 110 trucks carrying a total of 3,610 tons of humanitarian aid, including 45 tons of medicine, hygiene, and medical supplies, along with children's clothing, food supplies, household appliances, bedding, tents, construction materials, and other essential items.

Turkmenistan has sent four trucks of humanitarian aid. The 50-ton shipment included medicines, food, and children's clothing.

A five-ton shipment of humanitarian aid was sent by India. The aid involved medicines and medical equipment.

According to the IRCS website, Azerbaijan has sent a shipment of 25 tons of food and medical items to Iran.

Moreover, Uzbekistan dispatched six trucks of relief items, 43 tons of medicines, and 75 tons of food supplies such as flour, edible oil, sugar, canned food, and pasta.

Average spring precipitation exceeds normal level

TEHRAN – Precipitation in the first month of the spring have contributed to somehow compensating lack of rainfall; currently, the recorded average rainfall is seven percent above the normal figure, the head of the Meteorological Organization has said.

Rainfalls in spring have significantly increased. Compared to the last year, the amount of rainfall has doubled in most areas located in northwest and west of the country, IRIB quoted Ahad Vazifeh as saying.

Overall, the country has received 13 mm more rain in comparison to the long-term period of 30-year, the distribution of precipitations have been unequal, though, Vazifeh noted.

Despite light snowfall in winter, low temperature along with abundant rainfall has increased the amount of snow in Alborz and Zagros heights, as well as the amount of water saved in dams.

Precipitation in the last month of the winter and the first two weeks of the spring was unprecedented in some provinces; in Ilam province, the received rainfall was the highest amount recorded over the past 76 years. The rainfall has been above normal in South Khorasan, Kerman, Hormozgan, south of Fars, and Bushehr provinces, he added.

In Tehran province, the lack of rainfall has dropped from -55 percent to -35 percent.

Rainfalls are forecast to restart in the second month of the spring, particularly in western half of the country.

As Iran has entered El Niño phase, particularly in spring and summer, precipitation is forecast to be low in southeast of the country in summer, but

normal in fall, Vazifeh highlighted.

Currently, El Niño, and La Niña phases are in neutral conditions, that is the difference between the temperature of the water in the surface of Pacific Ocean and 200 meters below the surface of the ocean, in central and eastern parts, is less than 0.5 degrees cooler compared to normal situation which indicates neutral condition, he added.

However, based on simulated models, the temperature of water at the surface of the ocean is predicted to get more than 0.5 degrees warmer, and enter El Niño Southern Oscillation phase, ISNA quoted Vazifeh as saying.

The situation is not expected to affect summer much as summers are mostly dry in the country; rainfalls in southern half of Sistan-Baluchestan, east of Hormozgan, and south of Kerman will be less than normal.

Precipitation in fall will be influenced by El Niño and are projected to be normal, unlike last year in which rainfall dropped significantly, the official further noted.

Referring to the provinces that have received less-than-normal rainfall, the official said precipitation in Alborz province and Tehran province has been less than normal.

'El Niño' or "the boy" is widely used to describe the warming of sea surface temperature that occurs every few years, typically concentrated in the central-east equatorial Pacific.

'La Niña' or "the girl" is the term adopted for the opposite side of the fluctuation, which sees episodes of cooler than average sea surface temperature in the equatorial Pacific.

World Parkinson's Day: improving care and helping bridge the gap

Every year, the global Parkinson's community comes together to mark World Parkinson's Day, April 11 — a day dedicated to raising awareness, increasing understanding, and driving meaningful change for people living with Parkinson's.

This date commemorates the birthday of Dr James Parkinson (1755-1824), the London doctor who gives Parkinson's its name when it was first recognised as a medical condition in 1817, thanks to his famous 'Essay on the Shaking Palsy'.

Parkinson's is a neurological condition which affects the brain's ability to produce dopamine — the chemical which helps us control movement.

It's a type of progressive condition — meaning symptoms appear gradually and slowly get worse, as the brain becomes increasingly damaged over time.

Currently, the diagnosis of Parkinson's disease is clinical, based on an interview and physical examination of the patient. This requires the presence of several symptoms and signs (e.g., slowed movement, tremor of hands and feet, rigidity and alteration of gait, among others).

However, attempts have been made to identify Parkinson's disease according to so-called prodromal symptoms for years. These precede the cardinal symptoms — which are those that can be diagnosed — that are seen when the disease is in its full expression.

The condition is life-altering, but not life-threatening — while some advanced symptoms may make you more vulnerable to infection, for most people Parkinson's will not significantly reduce life expectancy.

The two main groups of symptoms are "motor" symptoms affecting movement — such as tremor (shaking), muscle rigidity and slowness of movement — and "non-motor" symptoms like pain, anxiety and depression.

We don't yet know for sure what causes Parkinson's — it's most likely a combination of our genetics and environmental factors. The specifics around which genes are defi-

nately involved and what all of the potential environmental factors are remain unknown.

This year, Parkinson's Europe, one of the founders of World Parkinson's Day, has set "Bridging the care gap" as the theme for the day, highlighting the need for better support, more coordinated services, and improved care for people living with Parkinson's.

They encourage governments and healthcare systems to focus on three key areas:

1. Ensuring that people receive clear and accessible information about available support from the moment they are diagnosed
2. Improving access to Parkinson's nurses or equivalent neurodegenerative care specialists
3. Making healthcare systems more responsive as a person's condition changes over time.

Better Parkinson's care starts with better insight into symptoms and how they evolve over time. This includes making symptoms more clearly visible through objective measurement and using these insights to support therapy optimization.

Continuous follow-up of disease progression is also important to support appropriate treatment adjustments and to ensure that advanced treatment options are considered at the right time. For us, improving care means enabling a more timely, informed, and responsive approach throughout the patient journey.

World Parkinson's Day is also a reminder that better care is a shared responsibility. It calls on healthcare systems, clinicians, advocates, caregivers, and innovators to work toward the same goal: ensuring that people with Parkinson's are not left to navigate complex care needs alone.

A wide variety of complementary and supportive therapies and lifestyle changes may be used for PD, including:

* A healthy diet. At this time, there are no specific vitamins, minerals, or other nutrients that have any proven therapeutic value in PD. However, a healthy diet can promote



overall well-being for people with PD just as it would for anyone else. Eating a fiber-rich diet and drinking plenty of fluids can help alleviate constipation.

Exercise. Physical activity, such as walking, yoga, cycling, swimming, and other activities can help people with PD. Exercise can improve mobility, flexibility, balance, and strength. People with PD should always check with their doctors before beginning a new exercise program. Researchers are conducting clinical trials to test whether high-intensity exercise can slow the progression of PD.

Parkinson's in Iran

The incidence rate of Parkinson's disease in Iran is 40 percent higher than the global average, according to the vice president of Iran's Parkinson's Association.

Currently, there is no cure for Parkinson's disease in the world. The treatments help reduce the movement symptoms, IRNA quoted Mohsen Mir-Mohammadi as saying.

Parkinson's disease incidence is increasing in the country, and it is estimated that the number of people with Parkinson's in Iran has reached more than 250,000 cases now.

Referring to patients' problems, the official said people with Parkinson's face many problems, mainly a lack of adequate access to quality medicine, and proper insurance coverage.

The Association is planning to launch a specialized clinic for patients with movement disorder patients in Tehran, Mir-Mohammadi added.



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APRIL 13, 2026

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Most of those who lose their wisdom, do so because of being dazzled by greed, and shutting their eyes against fact.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:05 Evening: 18:54 Dawn: 4:05 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:33 (tomorrow)

Iranian artist commemorates Martyr Leader through painting, poetry

TEHRAN- To mark the 40th day since the martyrdom of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, Iranian painter and poet Ali Davoudi has unveiled a new portrait of the Martyr Leader, accompanied by a poem, reflecting the sorrow and resilience of the nation's artists.

The commemorative work, released via the Art Bureau of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization, stands as a testament to the enduring bond between the late Leader and the artistic world, IRNA reported.

In his poem, Davoudi characterizes the Leader's legacy as an eternal and boundless force that transcends the constraints of time. He portrays Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei as an immortal figure whose presence remains deeply rooted in the hearts of the people, even after his martyrdom.

Speaking on the inspiration behind the piece, Davoudi emphasized that authentic art carries a mission beyond mere aesthetic display. "True art seeks to find the heroes and great men who have shaped human history—from brave warriors to wise leaders," he stated. "History proves that such figures have always been the focal point for artists striving to record the truth."

The artist noted that the Iranian nation was blessed with the guidance of a figure who was "uniquely comprehensive," excelling simultaneously in the realms of politics, military strategy, and deep spirituality.

Davoudi further highlighted the special relationship Ayatollah Khamenei maintained with the cultural sphere. "His profound gaze toward culture ensured that poetry and art remained a primary priority for the country. The tragic loss occurred just as the artistic community was eagerly preparing for their annual meeting with him—a bitter coincidence that has left a multi-layered grief in our hearts."

While numerous works have celebrated the Leader's persona over the decades, Davoudi remarked that the days following his martyrdom have sparked a localized renaissance of artistic creativity fueled by longing and devotion.



Following the coordinated US- Israeli attack on February 28, which targeted key national facilities in Iran, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, was martyred. Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei has since been appointed as the new Leader by the Assembly of Experts.

The tragedy extended beyond political leadership to civilian infrastructure. In one of the most devastating attacks, Shajareh Tayyebah elementary school in Minab, Hormozgan Province, was struck, resulting in the martyrdom of 168 children and 95 injuries. These strikes destroyed numerous homes while directly targeting cultural and educational centers.

These attacks caused irreparable damage to residential and cultural areas across Iran. Many schools, theaters, libraries, and cultural institutions were either completely destroyed or heavily damaged. Iranian families in cities like Minab, Tehran, Isfahan, Hamedan, Tabriz and other regions have faced the devastation of home destruction and the loss of loved ones. Despite this, the spirit of resistance and resilience among the Iranian people has been strengthened. The ongoing efforts to rebuild and preserve the country's cultural heritage continue.

Cartoon of Day



Pakistan Negotiations

Cartoonist: Masoud Shojai Tabatabai from Iran

Martyr Leader's lifelong devotion to books, reading

TEHRAN – Every year in mid-spring, the Martyr Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei visited the Tehran International Book Fair (TIBF) as one of his prominent characteristics was his fondness for books and reading.

During his visits to various booths at the TIBF, the Martyr Leader addressed the most important issues in the publishing sector and expressed his concerns about books: from the challenge of sourcing and the high price of paper to the high cost of books and the necessity of protecting publishers' rights against smuggling, ISNA reported.

Regarding books, he had said: "One should pay attention to books. One of the worst forms of indolence is laziness in reading books. The issue of books is important, and the country's cultural development always needs books. A book is the most enduring work of art."

Recounting the memories of his esteemed father, the Martyr Leader had said: "My father was always awake when we were asleep, and whenever we woke up, he was awake and busy reading... He was passionate about reading."

The Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi has also recounted a memory of the Leader: "In 1978, following the attack by the Pahlavi regime on Imam Reza (AS) Hospital in Mashhad, a 14-day sit-in was organized by the Leader and the city's scholars. It was said that during this



Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei visits the Tehran International Book Fair in May 2016.

time, the Leader was among the only scholars who had brought books with them and would read when he wasn't speaking or in a meeting."

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution was martyred during US-Israeli airstrikes that targeted his office in central Tehran on February 28, when an imposed war by the American-Zionist regimes against Iran started.

For 40 days, the aggressors martyred about 3,000 people including several officials and military commanders as well as numerous civilians, among them many women and children.

Ayatollah Khamenei was elected as Iran's Leader in June 1989, following the passing of the Found-

er of the Islamic Republic, Imam Ruhollah Khomeini.

He was interested in poetry and literature. He was also fond of novel and short story. He read the world's most well-known novels and short stories. He was also a literary critic and was in contact with many of the writers and intellectuals of his time.

The Martyr Leader attended many literary associations with the participation of great poets. He was not only a critic in poetry but also composed poems in the recent years. He also studied history books and had a good knowledge of modern history.

Ayatollah Khamenei started his research and writings when he was a theology student. He wrote

and translated some books before the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Some of his books and researches are: "General Outlines of Islamic Thought in the Quran", "Patience", and "A Report about Historical Past and Present Condition of the Qom Seminary".

He also translated books entitled "Imam Hassan Peace: History's Most Magnificent Heroic Flexibility" written by Sheikh Rezi Al-e Yassin; and "Muslims in India's Freedom Movement" written by Abdul Man'am al-Nemer.

This year's edition of the Tehran International Book Fair was scheduled to be held from May 13 to 23; however, due to the current circumstances, it may be postponed.

"Minab's Angels" music album unveiled in tribute to martyred students

TEHRAN –The music album "Minab's Angels" was unveiled during a ceremony held at the Tehran's City Theater, on Friday, the eighth day of the "For Iran, the Source of Art" cultural festival.

The album serves as a musical memorial for the young students of the Shajareh Tayyebah Elementary School in Minab, Hormozgan province, who attained martyrdom during a coordinated attack by the United States and Israel. The event, attended by cultural officials and artists, Mehr reported.

Speaking at the ceremony, Babak Rezaei, Director General of the Music Office, stated that the collection features works by prominent pop vocalists including Zanko, Ali Raha, Hafez, Mohammad Fereshtenejad, Reza Rahimian, and Amir Haqiqat.

"These pieces were crafted by our nation's artists over the past forty days to honor the purity of the students we lost," Rezaei noted. He added that the album would be distributed to the public via QR-coded cards during the event and at nightly gatherings across the capital.

The ceremony featured a live performance by pop singer Zanko, who sang "Sleep Peacefully". Addressing the crowd, Zanko emphasized the resilience of the domestic art scene. "We stand here in the cradle of theater and art," he said. "We must not allow foreign networks to dictate our path or decide who we should listen to; the livelihood and passion



of many artists are rooted right here on this stage."

In addition to the musical unveiling, the program included a traditional Tazieh (Iranian passion play). The performance was dedicated to the memory of the late Leader Ayatollah Khamenei and the martyred schoolchildren. Poetry recitals by Hadi Janfada and Fatemeh Ghasvand, alongside the screening of short films from the Iranian Youth Cinema Society, further enriched the cultural gathering.

The "For Iran, the Source of Art" event, which began on April 1, continues to host various workshops, art galleries, and performances, aiming to foster national solidarity

through the language of art.

On February 28, the Shajareh Tayyebah girls' elementary school in Minab, Hormozgan province, became the site of a devastating massacre as the United States and Israel initiated their strikes against Iran.

While dozens of girls and boys aged between 7 and 12 were beginning their lessons, the school was targeted by a missile strike that caused the building to collapse, trapping children and teachers beneath the rubble. Iranian authorities confirmed a final death toll of 168 people, with at least 95 others wounded, marking one of the most harrowing incidents of the conflict's opening day.

Despite attempts by US and Israeli authorities to distance themselves from the carnage as images of the tragedy spread across social media, detailed forensic and digital investigations have painted a starkly different picture.

An analysis by Al Jazeera's digital investigations unit, utilizing over a decade of satellite imagery and recent video clips, revealed that the school was a clearly distinct civilian facility, separated from any adjacent military sites for at least ten years. Furthermore, witness accounts and satellite-based analyses confirmed that the school was triple tapped by three separate, deliberate strikes, leaving no doubt about the nature of the attack.

The international community has faced mounting evidence regarding the responsibility for this atrocity, with investigations from major global outlets including The New York Times, BBC Verify, CBC, and NPR all concluding that the United States was responsible for the strike.

These findings have raised fundamental questions about the intelligence used to justify the bombing, as the patterns of the strike suggest a direct targeting of a civilian educational institution. The Minab school tragedy now stands as a somber testament to the immense human cost of the aggression and a focal point for those demanding international accountability.

"The Sky is the Same Color Everywhere" to represent Iran at 48th Moscow International Film Festival



TEHRAN – The Iranian feature film "The Sky is the Same Color Everywhere" will compete in the main section of the 48th Moscow International Film Festival (MIFF) in Russia.

Written and directed by Hamidreza Ghasemi and produced by Hossein Kakavand, the film has been selected for the main competition section

of this year's edition of the festival in its global premiere, ISNA reported.

The MIFF is one of the A-list festivals worldwide and is approved by FIAPF, the International Federation of Film Producers Associations.

This year, the festival will host seven feature films from Iran, Italy, Spain, Russia, South Korea, Mongolia, and India in the main competition section. "The Sky is the Same Color Everywhere" will represent Iranian cinema at the event.

The cast of the Iranian film includes Noushin Masoudian, Hamidreza Abbasi, Shahram Ebrahimi, Saeed Safa, Maryam Mahour, Fariba Talebi, Mahvash Sheikhhi, and Sara Feyz.

The 48th edition of Moscow International Film Festival is set to be held in Moscow from April

16 to 22.

MIFF is one of the oldest world film forums (the second after the Venice Film Festival). It has been leading its history since 1935. Then the chairman of the jury was Sergey Eisenstein, however, in subsequent years the festival was not held regularly. Therefore, it has officially counted down since 1959, when it was renewed and turned into a regular event - it was carried out over odd years, alternating with the Karlovy Vary Film Festival. In 1999, the MIFF became an annual event.

The festival's top prize is the statue of Saint George slaying the dragon, as represented on the Coat of Arms of Moscow. Nikita Mikhalkov has been the festival's president since 2000.