

US naval blockade risks wider conflict at sea

Iran Threatens to Halt Trade in Three Seas



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Foreign Ministry spokesperson: Iran will not compromise on enrichment rights

TEHRAN- Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei has emphasized that Iran will not compromise on its enrichment rights, asserting that its entitlement to nuclear energy is firmly rooted in international law and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Speaking in a press conference in Tehran on Wednesday, Baqaei dismissed the unfounded Western media speculations about Iran's enrichment program, emphasizing that Iran's legitimate rights, as recognized under international law, are non-negotiable, IRNA news agency reported.

The spokesperson underlined that the right to peaceful enrichment is not a gift or concession from any other country that can be revoked under pressure or in times of war. ▶ Page 2

Far-reaching economic fallout of striking Iran's energy infrastructure

TEHRAN- Any military action targeting Iran's economic infrastructure, especially its energy heartlands, would not be a localized event; the disruption would extend far beyond Iran's borders, shaking the economic security of major powers, destabilizing financial markets, and harming ordinary citizens worldwide.

The repercussions of the Zionist-American coalition's move to destroy Iran's economic infrastructure will not be confined to Iran's borders. ▶ Page 4

Iranian academic jailed in France returns home

TEHRAN- An Iranian academic who had been imprisoned in France on charges related to her public statements about the war in Gaza has returned to Iran, according to reports from Iranian media outlets.

Mahdieh Esfandiari, 39, arrived in Iran on Wednesday after sustained diplomatic efforts by Iranian authorities to secure her release.

Esfandiari had been detained in France and later sentenced on February 26 by a French court to four years in prison on charges of what they called "public defense of terrorism."

The charges were tied to her public condemnation of Israel's military campaign in Gaza, which she described as genocide. The court also imposed a permanent ban on her entry into French territory.

Before her sentencing, Esfandiari had spent approximately eight months in pretrial detention. She had been living in France as a graduate of Lumière University Lyon 2, where she previously worked in academic and language-related roles. ▶ Page 2

Iran says evidence links Persian Gulf states to weapons used in US-Israeli attacks

TEHRAN- Iran's ambassador to the United Nations has accused several Persian Gulf states of complicity in the recent US-Israeli military campaign against Iran, asserting that evidence indicates that weapons used in the strikes originated from their arsenals.

In a letter addressed to the UN secretary-general and the president of the Security Council, Iran's permanent representative, Amir Saeid Iravani, said remnants of munitions collected from multiple areas pointed to the involvement of regional governments. He argued that such findings demonstrate those states had "aided and abetted" the attacks and, in some cases, directly participated in acts of aggression under international law.

The letter was written in response to a communication circulated earlier this month by Bahrain on behalf of several Persian Gulf nations, which criticized Iran's military actions during the conflict. Iran rejected those claims as "wholly unfounded and deliberately misleading," insisting that the war began with an unlawful attack by the United States and Israel on February 28. ▶ Page 2

'Naval blockade neither feasible nor sustainable, Iran has sufficient alternative routes'

TEHRAN- An economic analyst, emphasizing the technical and deterrent limitations of enforcing a naval blockade against Iran, warned that such threats would immediately cause price shocks in energy markets and put European and East Asian economies under stagflation pressure.

Hossein Razavipour, speaking to IRNA about the recent action of the US president to impose a naval blockade on Iran aimed at exerting political and economic pressure on Tehran, stated: First, we must examine whether such a blockade is technically possible. When Iran blocks the passage of ships through the Strait of Hormuz, it should be noted that the Strait of Hormuz is a waterway with a narrow passage that can be monitored even with the naked eye, and ship traffic there can be controlled.

He added: Regarding waterways, it must be noted that these routes can be threatened with the simplest tools, including inexpensive but high-quality drones, to target unauthorized ships if they attempt passage. ▶ Page 4

Why the US naval blockade against Iran will fail

By Xavier Villar

MADRID - When Washington announced the start of operations to intercept vessels carrying Iranian oil, markets barely moved. That lack of alarm was not a sign of indifference, nor simply the result of traders grown accustomed to crisis; it was, rather, an indication of how thin the gap has become between Washington's language of blockade and the material reality of the Persian Gulf. The announcement was framed as an assertion of strength, as though a declaration of interdiction could itself bend shipping routes to American will. What followed was something less theatrical and more revealing: a demonstration, not easy to absorb in Washington, of the structural limits of American power in a region where geography does not obey sanctions and where the political economy of oil has long since learned how to move around pressure.

That failure begins before the first patrol is launched. In the weeks before the operation, a substantial share of Iranian crude had already been moved from vulnerable terminals and dispersed into routes beyond ▶ Page 3

Students, professors expelled from US 'warmly welcomed': science minister

TEHRAN - Minister of Science, Research and Technology Hossein Simaei-Sarraf has announced that Iranian students and professors who have been sacked from American universities will be warmly welcomed.

"Some of our students who were legally majoring, and some professors who were teaching in American universities have been expelled, recently. They should not worry about anything; they will be accepted by Iranian universities of the same level, Mehr news agency quoted Simaei-Sarraf as saying.

The official made the remarks on Wednesday while paying a visit to the aerospace research centre that was damaged during the US-Israeli war. ▶ Page 7



Pakistan's army chief in Tehran for high-level mediation talks

TEHRAN - A senior Pakistani delegation led by the country's army chief arrived in Tehran on Wednesday for high-level talks with Iranian officials.

Field Marshal Asim Munir was welcomed by Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi upon arrival in the Iranian capital.

He is accompanied by senior officials, including Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi. The Pakistan Army said in a statement that the delegation travelled to Tehran "as part of the ongoing mediation efforts." It is carrying a new message from the United States as diplomatic efforts to extend a fragile ceasefire between Iran and America gain momentum. ▶ Page 2

Iran condemns YouTube's removal of AI-driven Lego-style channel over anti-US narratives

TEHRAN- A YouTube channel producing artificial intelligence-generated animations in a Lego-inspired format focusing on recent US-Israeli aggression on Iran has been taken down, drawing criticism over what some describe as selective enforcement of content policies.

The channel, operated by Explosive Media, had gained attention since 2025 for publishing politically themed videos created by a young Iranian artist. The group announced that its account on YouTube was suspended on the grounds of "violent content," a characterization it has openly challenged. ▶ Page 8

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

America has no weapon capable of disabling Iran's defense system

Kayhan, in its editorial, examined Iran's defensive strength and capabilities. According to the paper, the 12-day war and the Ramadan War clearly demonstrated that the United States possesses no weapon capable of disabling Iran's entire defense system. Such a weapon, it argues, exists not in America's military arsenals but only in the imagination of Western-oriented Iranians. This war showed how shallow and unrealistic the analyses are that portray the US as an invincible superpower, depict Iran as incapable of confronting it, and therefore use the deceptive keyword of 'de-escalation' to beautify surrender and compromise with Washington. The paper wrote that this truth first became clear when, after 12 days of fighting with the US, the residents of the White House — having failed to achieve their main objectives — turned to Qatar to persuade Iran to accept a ceasefire.

Shargh: The power game in the gray zone

Shargh devoted its headline to the ceasefire between Iran and the United States. It was written that Iran and the US, in a sphere different from the battlefield, entered a diplomatic war under the shadow of a temporary ceasefire. The negotiating table in Islamabad was not an attempt at moral understanding but a diplomatic trench aimed at redefining spheres of influence in the Middle East. The point is that 'gunpowder diplomacy' still constitutes a rigid framework within an atmosphere of absolute distrust. Although the Islamabad meeting was a milestone in terms of negotiation format (direct, high-level talks), in terms of substance, it has currently reached a suspended deadlock due to both sides' insistence on maximalist positions.

Sobh-e-No: The wave of opposition to the fascist policies of Trump and Netanyahu

Sobh-e-No wrote in a commentary: The wave of opposition to the fascist policies of Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu — which has led to the isolation of the United States and Israel — is expanding every day. Now, after Spain, the Canadian government has also openly announced the suspension of financial aid and commercial and military cooperation with the US. According to the paper, the main reason for European countries' opposition to the war-mongering of Trump and Netanyahu — from Spain's explicit stance to Turkey's sharp positions, Greece's confrontation with Israel, and the numerous interviews of parliamentarians across Europe — stems from the collapse of the mythical image of America's supposedly invincible military during the Ramadan War. Today, opposition to the criminal decisions

of the 'evil coalition' of Netanyahu and Trump has become an influential winning card in global politics, aligned with the will and demands of nations.

Etemad: Iran will enter the negotiations with a strong hand

Etemad, in an interview with Ali Bagheri, a reformist political figure, assessed the potential next round of negotiations. According to this analyst, examining the positions and behavior of the other side shows that the possibility of the United States returning to the negotiating table still exists. When the costs of continued confrontation rise, even major powers are forced to reconsider their approaches. He argues that while the Islamic Republic of Iran has remained committed to its red lines, it has not completely closed the path of negotiation and has repeatedly stated that if the other side enters talks with a realistic and respectful approach, progress will be possible. The experience of this period of resistance and negotiation demonstrated that Iran can operate actively in both arenas — power and diplomacy — in a way that allows it to use its capabilities to defend national interests while also employing dialogue to resolve disputes. Continuing this path requires internal cohesion, an accurate understanding of international conditions, and the intelligent pursuit of national interests.

Hamshahri: Five strategic advantages for Tehran in its maritime confrontation with Washington

Hamshahri, in an article, examined Donald Trump's move to impose a naval blockade on Iran. International analysts believe that the US action, rather than being a military measure aimed at resolving tensions in the Strait of Hormuz, actually represents a strategic dead end for Washington. After the US president raised the idea of a naval blockade as a new tool to pressure Iran, the most immediate impact highlighted by media and analysts was the intensified strain on global energy markets. Regional observers argue that Iran possesses effective capacities and strategic advantages to neutralize Trump's new hostile measure — including its geopolitical position, the escalation of international tensions, disruptions to global economic chains, logistical costs, and the strategic leverage of Bab al-Mandab. Amid all this, the deepening crisis in global energy markets remains the most prominent consequence.

war of aggression.

He said that the conflict had been carried out in violation of core principles of the United Nations Charter, particularly the prohibition on the use of force. Countries that participate in or facilitate such actions, he added, bear responsibility under international law.

Iran further challenged the legal basis of the Emirati proposal to assign responsibility for maritime security in the strait to Tehran, with Kolivand calling the initiative flawed both technically and legally. He warned that such claims could politicize the work of the maritime body and divert attention from broader regional dynamics.

Despite rising tensions, Iran said that shipping traffic through the Strait of Hormuz has continued uninterrupted. Kolivand emphasized that non-belligerent vessels have maintained safe passage through coordination with Iranian authorities and in line with established safety measures.

The Strait of Hormuz, which connects the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman, is one of the world's most vital energy corridors, handling a significant share of global oil shipments. Any disruption to navigation in the waterway is closely watched by international markets and governments alike.

Iran reiterated its commitment to ensuring maritime safety and freedom of navigation, rejecting unfounded allegations and calling for a more balanced assessment of the region's security challenges.

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Speaking in a press conference in Tehran on Wednesday, Baqaei dismissed the unfounded Western media speculations about Iran's enrichment program, emphasizing that Iran's legitimate rights, as recognized under international law, are non-negotiable, IRNA news agency reported.

The spokesperson underlined that the right to peaceful enrichment is not a gift or concession from any other country that can be revoked under pressure or in times of war, adding that as long as Iran remains a member of the NPT, it must be able to benefit from its advantages.

Refuting media reports on alleged enrichment claims during the recent Iran-US negotiations in Pakistan, he noted that any agreement must first establish a comprehensive framework. Until the overall terms are agreed upon,



discussions on the specifics, especially regarding critical issues like war and peace involving both Iran and the United States, are premature, he explained.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Baqaei rejected claims that Iran had ceased its support for the Lebanese resistance, stressing that Iran has always stood with that country's legitimate resistance, and that stopping the war in Lebanon was one of the main components of the ceasefire understanding in the Islamabad talks.

He added that the other side

(the Zionist regime) ignored that part of the ceasefire from the beginning, but Iran has not backed down from its commitment and has pursued and continues to pursue this issue seriously in the Islamabad talks.

Baqaei noted that in any agreement, if one party violates its commitment, the other party is permitted to proportionally reduce its obligations. Propaganda about Iran's inattention to the resistance fronts in Lebanon, despite Iran's explicit commitment in the ceasefire understanding, is completely false, he added.

Reacting to the European pro-

posal to form a UN-led coalition to secure the Strait of Hormuz, Baqaei emphasized that Iran, as a littoral state and with the cooperation of regional countries, is fully capable of ensuring the security of this waterway.

He added that for decades, Iran has been the guardian of security in the Strait of Hormuz, and the only problems created in the past 40 days have been caused by the imposed war of the US and the Zionist regime.

Baqaei said that any foreign intervention in regional affairs would only complicate the situation further, expressing pleasure that many European countries have not fallen into the trap set by the US and the Zionist regime.

He said that Iran and regional countries can secure the Strait of Hormuz if US interventions and warmongering in the area cease.

In response to a question about the German Chancellor's claim about sending a team to Pakistan to meet with the Iranian delegation, the spokesperson clarified that no meetings took place in Islamabad other than with the Pakistani side and a trilateral meeting with the United States.

Iran says evidence links Persian Gulf states to weapons used in US-Israeli attacks



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In a letter addressed to the UN secretary-general and the president of the Security Council, Iran's permanent representative, Amir Saeid Iravani, said remnants of munitions collected from multiple areas pointed to the involvement of regional governments. He argued that such find-

ings demonstrate those states had "aided and abetted" the attacks and, in some cases, directly participated in acts of aggression under international law.

The letter was written in response to a communication circulated earlier this month by Bahrain on behalf of several Persian Gulf nations, which criticized Iran's military actions during the conflict. Iran rejected those claims as "wholly unfounded and deliberately misleading," insisting that the war began with an unlawful attack by the United States and Israel on February 28.

Iran maintains that the initial strikes violated core principles of international law, including the prohibition on the use of force. The letter accuses the Persian Gulf states of providing logistical and operational support, including access to their soil and airspace, which Iran says enabled attacks on civilian infrastructure.

Among the incidents cited was a strike on a school in the southern Iranian city of Minab that killed at least 168 children. Tehran believes that

the attack was launched from the territory of one of the unnamed regional states.

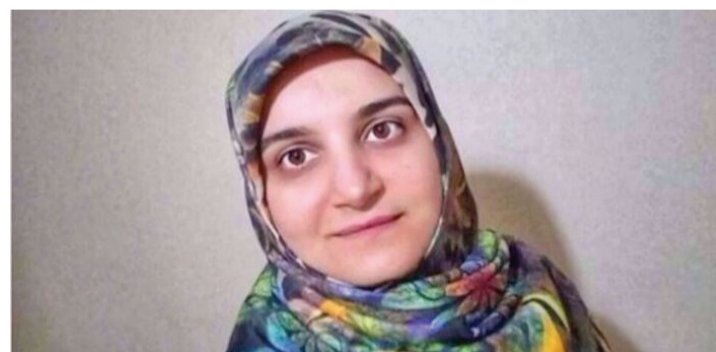
Iran also said military assessments show that foreign forces repeatedly used regional bases to plan and execute operations.

Iravani said that governments found to have supported the attacks could be held legally liable and required to provide compensation for damages.

In addition to addressing the military conflict, the letter pushed back against accusations linking Iran to extremist groups such as Al-Qaeda and ISIS. Iran described itself as a longstanding victim of terrorism and highlighted its role in combating such groups in the region.

Iran called on Persian Gulf states to cease any involvement in military operations against it and urged the Security Council to focus on the root causes of the conflict. It warned that continued efforts to shift blame could escalate tensions further and threaten international peace and security.

Iranian academic jailed in France returns home



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Esfandiari had been detained in France and later sentenced on February 26 by a French court to four years in prison on charges of what they called "public defense of terrorism."

The charges were tied to her public condemnation of Israel's military campaign in Gaza, which she described as genocide. The court also imposed a permanent ban on her entry into French territory.

Before her sentencing, Esfandiari had spent approximately eight months in pretrial detention. She had been living in France as a graduate of Lumière University Lyon 2, where she previously worked in academic and

language-related roles, including as a translator and interpreter.

Upon her arrival in Iran, Esfandiari criticized the legal process in France, saying it demonstrated a lack of freedom of expression. "The court's ruling was very unjust," she said, according to Iranian news agencies. "It is now clear that, at least in France, there is no freedom of expression."

"They imposed restrictions on me and held me hostage until their two spies were brought back to France, and on the same day those restrictions were lifted, and we were able to arrange the travel preparations," she said. Esfandiari was able to travel back to Iran upon the return to France of two French citizens, who had been held in the Islamic Republic of Iran for espionage.

Her case comes amid heightened tensions between Iran and Western countries, particularly in the aftermath of recent regional conflicts and diplomatic disputes.

Pakistan's army chief in Tehran for high-level mediation talks



TEHRAN - A senior Pakistani delegation led by the country's army chief arrived in Tehran on Wednesday for high-level talks with Iranian officials.

Field Marshal Asim Munir was welcomed by Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi upon arrival in the Iranian capital.

He is accompanied by senior officials, including Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi. The Pakistani Army said in a statement that the delegation travelled to Tehran "as part of the ongoing mediation efforts." It is carrying a new message from the United States as diplomatic efforts to extend a fragile ceasefire between Iran and America gain momentum. The Pakistani delegation is expected to discuss a reported new round of talks between the US and Iran.

The US and Iran held talks in Pakistan over the weekend aimed at ending their conflict, but the negotiations concluded without an agreement.

Islamabad hosted the weekend talks after Iran and the US reached a two-week ceasefire

on April 8 through Pakistani mediation. The truce followed the joint US-Israeli war on Iran on February 28.

President Donald Trump on Tuesday signaled that a second round of talks with Iran could be held in Pakistan.

Speaking at a press conference in Tehran earlier on Wednesday, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei said Iran would host a senior Pakistani delegation. Baqaei added that exchanges with the United States have continued through Pakistan following the weekend talks.

In the course of the joint US-Israeli aggression, nuclear facilities, schools, hospitals, and civilian infrastructure were targeted, resulting in the deaths of thousands of civilians.

Iran's armed forces responded with 100 waves of retaliatory strikes under Operation True Promise 4, launching hundreds of ballistic and hypersonic missiles, as well as drones, against US military bases in the Persian Gulf region and Israeli positions.

Iran threatens to halt trade in three seas

TEHRAN - Iran has issued a stern warning to the United States over the imposition of a naval blockade on Iranian ports, cautioning that continued pressure could endanger regional maritime security and undermine the fragile post-war ceasefire environment.

The escalation follows President Donald Trump's announcement on Monday of a naval blockade targeting all vessels entering or leaving Iranian ports.

The US Central Command (CENTCOM), which is responsible for military operations in the Middle East and is leading the war on Iran, said the blockade is being enforced against vessels of all nations "entering or leaving coastal areas or ports in Iran."

On Wednesday, the head of Iran's highest operational command warned the US against continuing "its illegal action of naval blockade."

Major General Ali Abdollahi, the commander of Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters, also cautioned the US against creating "insecurity for Iranian commercial ships and oil tankers" in the region.

"This action by the US will be the precursor to violating the ceasefire, and the powerful Iranian armed forces will not allow any exports or imports to continue in the Persian Gulf, the Gulf of Oman, and the Red Sea," he said. The top military official added that Iran "will act decisively to defend its national sovereignty and its interests".

His remarks underscore Tehran's position that the Strait of



Hormuz and surrounding waterways remain strategic red lines in any escalation scenario.

Cracks within US blockade

Despite the announcement of the blockade by the United States, early shipping data indicate that maritime traffic through the Strait of Hormuz has not been fully halted.

Reports cited by international monitoring services showed that several Iran-linked vessels continued transiting the waterway. Iranian media highlighted the continued movement of Iran-affiliated shipping as evidence that the US measures have not yet achieved their stated objective of fully disrupting Iranian maritime trade.

The latest confrontation comes in the aftermath of a wider military escalation that began on February 28, when the US and Israel launched war on Iran. Since the outset of the conflict, Iran has asserted control over the Strait of Hormuz, preventing vessels affiliated with the US and Israel from passing through the waterway.

A two-week ceasefire reached between Iran and the US on April 8 temporarily halted hostilities, including exchanges of strikes across multiple regional fronts. That truce was followed by Pakistani-mediated negotiations in Islamabad over the weekend, which ultimately collapsed without an agreement.

The breakdown of talks has been interpreted as evidence of Washington's inability to convert military pressure into diplomatic concessions.

Strategic escalation and shifting pressure

Trump's decision to intensify maritime pressure appears to follow what analysts describe as mounting strategic setbacks during and after the 40-day conflict period, which failed to achieve Washington's stated objective of forcing major changes in Iran's regional posture.

Having fallen short on both the battlefield and at the negotiating table, the United States has increasingly shifted toward maritime and economic coercion aimed at restricting Iran's oil ex-

ports and trade flows.

However, Iran has consistently signaled that it retains the capacity to respond asymmetrical across regional chokepoints, particularly in the Strait of Hormuz, through which a significant portion of global energy supplies passes.

Rising risks for global shipping

Even without full disruption of traffic in the Strait of Hormuz, the escalation has heightened concerns over maritime security in one of the world's most critical energy corridors. Any sustained confrontation in the Strait of Hormuz risks increasing insurance costs, disrupting shipping schedules, and triggering volatility in global energy markets. Analysts warn that further escalation could extend beyond the Persian Gulf, affecting broader trade routes across the Indian Ocean and Red Sea.

For now, General Abdollahi's warning reflects a broader Iranian strategy of deterrence through regional reach, signaling that any attempt to pressure Tehran through maritime containment could be met with reciprocal measures across multiple waterways.

As tensions rise, the confrontation risks evolving from a localized naval standoff into a wider economic and geopolitical contest with consequences for global energy security and international trade stability. These repercussions will also worsen the current energy crisis in the US, where fuel prices have risen since the start of the US-Israeli war on Iran.

Why the US naval blockade against Iran will fail

By Xavier Villar

MADRID - When Washington announced the start of operations to intercept vessels carrying Iranian oil, markets barely moved. That lack of alarm was not a sign of indifference, nor simply the result of traders grown accustomed to crisis; it was, rather, an indication of how thin the gap has become between Washington's language of blockade and the material reality of the Persian Gulf. The announcement was framed as an assertion of strength, as though a declaration of interdiction could itself bend shipping routes to American will. What followed was something less theatrical and more revealing: a demonstration, not easy to absorb in Washington, of the structural limits of American

power in a region where geography does not obey sanctions and where the political economy of oil has long since learned how to move around pressure.

That failure begins before the first patrol is launched. In the weeks before the operation, a substantial share of Iranian crude had already been moved from vulnerable terminals and dispersed into routes beyond the immediate reach of interception. Some cargoes were transferred to tankers waiting in less exposed waters; others were folded into a maritime architecture of flags, registries and intermediaries that makes ownership difficult to pin down and enforcement costly to sustain. This was not panic. It was anticipation. Tehran had read the situation correctly:

the real contest was not over a single port or a single shipment, but over the infrastructure of circulation that links one terminal to another, one legal regime to another, one market to another. By the time Washington acted, the places it meant to pressure had already been partially emptied, and the blockade found itself confronting a geography that had moved on.

The issue is not just Iranian strategy, as though Tehran had simply devised a clever way to evade pressure, but Washington's persistent refusal to recognize that coercion in the Persian Gulf has already altered the strategic field in Iran's favor.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

LATEST NEWS

Iran, Japan FMs discuss bilateral ties, regional talks in phone call

Iranian and Japanese foreign ministers, Abbas Araghchi and Toshimitsu Motegi, spoke by phone on Wednesday to discuss bilateral relations and regional developments, including progress in Iran-US negotiations hosted in Islamabad.

Iran, China foreign ministers review regional developments over phone

Iran's foreign minister, Abbas Araghchi, and his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi, held a phone call on Wednesday to review the latest regional and global developments.

Iranian general warns US over maritime restrictions

A senior Iranian military commander warned on Wednesday that continued US maritime restrictions could violate the ceasefire. Major General Ali Abdollahi said Iran could halt shipping in the Persian Gulf, the Sea of Oman, and the Red Sea if US aggression persists.

Pezeshkian: No one can force Iran to surrender

President Masoud Pezeshkian said Wednesday that no external power can force Iran to surrender, criticizing double standards in international conduct. He added that national unity during the recent 40-day conflict showed that adversaries cannot impose their will on Iran.

Iranian supertanker defies US pressure, returns via Strait of Hormuz

An Iranian very large crude carrier (VLCC)

tanker, sanctioned by the United States, returned to Iranian waters via the Strait of Hormuz with its tracking system active.

China warns of retaliation over potential US tariffs

China warned it would retaliate if the United States imposes tariffs on Chinese goods over unfounded allegations of military support for Iran.

Iran announces formation of world's largest volunteer force

Iranian organizers say more than 25 million people have registered for the JANFADA campaign, launched following the recent conflict, describing it as the formation of the world's largest volunteer force.

UN deputy chief warns Middle East conflict threatens Africa's food security

The United Nations deputy secretary-general said the conflict in the Middle East is worsening economic crises in Africa and posing a serious threat to food security across the continent.

UN experts urge US to pressure Israel to halt attacks

Experts affiliated with the United Nations Human Rights Council urged the United States to use its influence to halt Israeli military actions and called on countries to suspend arms transfers to Israel.

Finance ministers warn Middle East crisis will continue to affect markets

Finance ministers from 11 countries across Europe, Asia, and Australia warned that the Middle East crisis will continue to weigh on

global markets, even if a long-term resolution is reached.

WSJ: Mediators seek to extend Iran-US ceasefire

Mediators are working to extend the Iran-US ceasefire and arrange a second round of negotiations, according to officials quoted by The Wall Street Journal.

Geo TV: Second round of Iran-US talks likely in Islamabad

A second round of Iran-US negotiations is likely to take place in Islamabad next week, according to sources cited by Pakistan's Geo TV.

Axios: US and Iran near framework agreement to end conflict

The United States and Iran are nearing a framework agreement to end the conflict, Axios claimed, citing US officials, though significant differences remain.

Bloomberg: US withheld Iran war plans from European allies

European officials told Bloomberg that Washington did not share its war plans regarding Iran with its European allies, effectively sidelining them.

White House: Trump disappointed with European allies over base access

A White House spokesperson said President Donald Trump is disappointed with European allies who declined to allow the United States to use their military bases during the conflict.

Team Iran arrive in Sanya for Asian Beach Games

TEHRAN - After a lengthy journey, Iran's athletic delegation has officially landed in Sanya, China, the host city for the upcoming Asian Beach Games.

The Iranian contingent, a robust team of 99 individuals comprising 57 athletes across 10 sports disciplines and 42 technical staff, medical personnel, and media representatives, has arrived with high hopes for a strong showing at the Games.

The delegation embarked on their journey from Tehran early Thursday, April 10th. Their initial leg involved a bus trip to the Bajgiran border crossing in Razavi Khorasan Province, followed by overland travel to Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, where they commenced their flight segment.

The planned route saw the Iranian team fly from Ashgabat to Beijing, and then split into two groups for the final leg to Sanya. This multi-modal approach was necessitated by specific air traffic limitations. Dubbed the "Martyrs of the Dena Ship" delegation, they completed their approximately 50-hour journey this morning, ready to begin their preparations.

Athletes from the following sports are represented: Beach Wrestling, Beach Volleyball, Beach Handball, Beach Football, Jiu-Jitsu, Beach Kabbadi, Athletics, 3x3 Basketball, Sport Climbing, and

Water Polo. Recognizing the need for peak readiness, the team arrived 10 days ahead of the competition to conduct training camps, acclimatize to the local weather conditions, and ensure optimal preparation for success.

The 6th Asian Beach Games are scheduled to run from April 21st to April 30th, hosted by China in Sanya.

FIFA confirms Iran's 2026 World Cup matches will go ahead in U.S.

TEHRAN - FIFA has put an end to speculation surrounding Iran's participation in the 2026 FIFA World Cup, confirming that Team Melli's matches will take place in the United States as originally scheduled. The proposal to relocate Iran's fixtures to Mexico has been rejected.

The announcement was made by Mexico's President, Claudia Sheinbaum, during a press conference at the National Palace. She emphasized that any changes to host venues would require extensive logistical coordination—adjustments that are not feasible with only two months remaining before the tournament begins.

The debate intensified after Iran's ambassador to Mexico, Abolfazl Pasandideh, criticized the U.S. government for what he described as a lack of cooperation in issuing visas and providing logistical support for Iran's delegation. Following those remarks, the idea of moving Iran's matches to Mexico gained traction, especially amid existing tensions between the two countries.

Iran's Football Federation has reportedly been in discussions with FIFA since mid-March to explore alternatives, citing potential security and organizational concerns.

In the United States, contrasting statements were issued. U.S. President Donald Trump initially said that Iran's national team would be welcomed as one of the nations competing in a World Cup jointly hosted by the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. He later raised concerns about player safety, noting that their presence might not be ideal under current circumstances.

According to the reports, FIFA ultimately chose to preserve the tournament's stability and avoid last minute changes, ensuring that the competition proceeds as planned.

Iran have been drawn into Group G alongside Belgium, Egypt, and New Zealand. Team Melli will face New Zealand and Belgium in Los Angeles and take on Egypt in Seattle.

Throughout the tournament, the Iranian squad are scheduled to be based in the state of Arizona.

Rabiei: Tractor were not prepared against Shabab Al Ahli

TEHRAN — Tractor head coach Mohammad Ali Rabiei admitted his side's lack of preparation made it harder to manage the game against UAE club Shabab Al Ahli.

The Iranian team were beaten 3-0 by Shabab Al Ahli in the 2025/26 AFC Champions League Elite Round of 16.

"The players were really passionate and motivated, and we were able to keep our shape and discipline, especially in the first half," Rabiei said.

"Our team suffered because, for 40 days, we have been far from training. We managed our energy in the first half with our strategy, and we created opportunities in the first half."

Tractor goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand was sent off in the 52nd minute after coming out to challenge Sardar Azmoun.

"That incident changed the game," Rabiei said. "After we went behind, we did our best to come back. We played high-risk football to try to score an equalizer, but our opponents were able to exploit the space behind our defense and score more goals."

Mehrgan Noor to represent Iran at 2026 AVC Women's Club Championship

TEHRAN - Mehrgan Noor will represent Iran at the 2026 AVC Women's Clubs Championship.

After withdrawal of Sepahan, Mehrgan Noor announced their readiness to participate in the event.

Mehrgan Noor are headed by South Korean coach Lee Do-hee.

The team's roster will be enhanced by the inclusion of several national team players.

The 2026 AVC Women's Club Championship will be held in Thailand from April 26 to 30.

ACL tear sidelines Iran star Vahedi for 9 months

TEHRAN - Disaster has struck Iran's national basketball team as rising star Sina Vahedi faces a lengthy spell on the sidelines after suffering a devastating ACL tear while playing for his new club, the New Taipei Kings, in the East Asia Super League (EASL).

The promising point guard, who had just joined the Taiwanese powerhouse, sustained the severe knee injury during a recent league fixture. Medical evaluations confirmed the worst: a torn anterior cruciate ligament in his right knee.

Vahedi will now return to Iran for surgery and an arduous rehabilitation, a decision supported by the New Taipei Kings. The club lauded his brief but impactful presence, stating: "Sina showed professionalism and a high level of commitment to the team just after one week since joining us. We respect his decision to return home for surgery, and we will coordinate everything needed for his treatment. We look forward to his strong comeback."

The timing couldn't be worse for Vahedi, widely regarded as one of Iran's most exciting young talents. This brutal injury not only jeopardizes his club season but also delivers a significant blow to the national team's coaching staff, who had earmarked him as a crucial player for the upcoming third window of the World Cup qualifiers. Vahedi is now expected to be out of action for at least six to nine months.

Iran's oil production reaches 3.06m bpd in March: OPEC

TEHRAN- The OPEC Secretariat announced that Saudi Arabia, with a daily production of 7,799,000 barrels, and Iran, with 3,060,000 barrels, were the top producers among major OPEC members in March.

According to a report by Mehr News Agency citing the OPEC Secretariat, the oil production of the organization's 12 member countries, based on the latest report (April 2026), totaled 20,788,000 barrels per day in March 2026, which represents a decrease of 7,878,000 barrels per day compared to February.

Iran's oil production in March decreased by 182,000 barrels per day, reaching 3,060,000 barrels per day. Iran's average daily oil production in 2025 was 3,263,000 barrels, and in 2024 it was 3,257,000 barrels.

Saudi Arabia, with a daily production of 7,799,000 barrels, and Iran, with 3,060,000 barrels, were the largest OPEC producers in March.

OPEC+ members produced 14,267,000 barrels per day in March, an increase of 176,000 barrels compared to February's production of 14,092,000 barrels. Among them, Kazakhstan experienced the largest production increase in March, with 251,000 barrels per day.

Overall, the total daily crude oil production of OPEC and its allies reached 35,055,000 barrels in March, a decrease of 7,702,000 barrels compared to February (42,757,000



barrels).

According to OPEC's latest monthly report, the price of Iran's heavy crude oil in March increased by \$57.51 compared to February.

The price of Iran's heavy crude oil was recorded at \$124.10 per barrel in March, whereas in February it was \$66.59 per barrel. The average price of Iran's heavy crude oil in 2025 was \$77.31.

The OPEC basket price also reached \$116.36 per barrel in March, which is \$48.46 higher than in February.

According to the OPEC Secretariat's latest monthly report (April), global crude oil demand for 2027 is expected to increase by 1,340,000 barrels per day. Total world oil demand for 2027 is forecast at 107,870,000 barrels per day.

Over 200 fishery research projects to be implemented this year

TEHRAN- The head of the Iran Fisheries Science Research Institute announced plans to implement over 200 research projects in the fisheries sector in the current Iranian year 1405 (starting March 21, 2026).

According to a report by Mehr News Agency, quoting the Ministry of Agriculture, Mohammad Seddiq Mortazavi, referring to the institute's executive policies for the current year, stated: Given the country's circumstances, the institute will carefully pursue and implement the executive policies planned for the year 1405.

He added: In line with the approved priorities of the Strategic Council, the institute's research planning has been carried out with the aim of increasing resilience, sustainability, and enhancing fishery products in the areas of fishing, aquaculture, processing and value-adding, as well as the production of biological fishery products.

Mortazavi, referring to the macro-objectives of fisheries research, said: Increasing per capita consumption of aquatic products, preserving genetic diversity, rebuilding endangered aquatic stocks, and protecting aquatic ecosystems are among the most important objectives of this research, which are being pursued in cooperation with the Iran Fisheries Organization, the Iranian Veterinary Organization, the Environmental Protection Organization, the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology, and the Sea-Based Development Headquarters.

The head of the National Institute of Fisheries Science Research, emphasizing the role of education and knowledge transfer alongside research activities, stated: Achieving new global knowledge and localizing it through two-way technology transfer, as well as promoting research findings for transfer to the country's production sector, are among the most important missions of this institute.

He announced the goal of utilizing artificial intelligence in fisheries research activities and said: For the first time, the use of artificial intelligence in various research projects—including aquatic reproduction and rearing, aquatic health and diseases, nutrition and live food production, sustainable fishing with a species conservation approach, as well as the production of processed and biological fishery products—has been placed on the agenda.

Mortazavi continued: This program will be implemented with the support and funding

of the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology and the Agricultural Research, Education and Extension Organization (AREEO). If the necessary funds are secured, the research station for marine fish production in Bandar Lengeh will also be equipped with AI-based facilities.

He also referred to the use of modern technology capacities and added: The utilization of nanotechnology and biotechnology capabilities has also been considered in research activities related to fisheries.

Mortazavi then referred to research programs in the field of natural resources and stated: Studies for assessing and managing aquatic stocks in the Caspian Sea will be pursued, and—if funding is secured—projects to assess aquatic species stocks in the country's southern waters will also be followed up.

Iran's fishery industry is a vital part of the country's economy and food security, providing direct employment for approximately 285,000 to 300,000 people and indirect jobs for one million more.

Strategically leveraging access to the Caspian Sea in the north and the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman in the south, the sector is divided into two categories: capture fisheries and aquaculture, with the latter being the dominant force driving growth.

Production focuses on high-value species, including rainbow trout, common carp, and especially Pacific whiteleg shrimp.

As a major pillar of the non-oil economy, fishery exports reached over \$700 million in 2025, with key markets including China, Iraq, and the UAE. Looking ahead, Iran aims to increase total fishery production to 1.8 million tons by 2030, with the goal of raising exports to \$1.0 billion annually.

Iran's seas host a rich diversity of fishery species.

Iran's fish farming sector, a vital part of its non-oil economy, primarily produces rainbow trout, common carp, and whiteleg shrimp. Production is geographically distinct: cold-water trout farms are concentrated in provinces along the Alborz and Zagros Mountains, while shrimp farming is focused in the southern coastal provinces of Bushehr, Hormozgan, and Sistan-Baluchestan. In 2025, the sector saw significant growth, with shrimp production alone reaching 50,000 tons. This robust aquaculture sector is a key driver for exports, job creation, and regional economic development.

Far-reaching economic fallout of striking Iran's energy infrastructure

TEHRAN- Any military action targeting Iran's economic infrastructure, especially its energy heartlands, would not be a localized event; the disruption would extend far beyond Iran's borders, shaking the economic security of major powers, destabilizing financial markets, and harming ordinary citizens worldwide.

The repercussions of the Zionist-American coalition's move to destroy Iran's economic infrastructure will not be confined to Iran's borders, because by disrupting the global energy supply chain, it will also expose the economic security of great powers to intense shocks.

Targeting the nation's energy infrastructure, particularly in Asaluyeh and Mahshahr, would cause a profound and unparalleled disruption in the global energy supply process, one that reaches beyond Iran's frontiers and impacts all energy markets and worldwide production.

A massive portion of Iran's economy relies on the steel and petrochemical sectors. Some industries are directly dependent on these foundational industries; therefore, an assault on these facilities and the shutdown of their operations could force the entire production cycle in petrochemicals and steel to face a drastic reduction or a complete standstill.



Disruption in these two critical industries does not only have a single direct effect, but creates "an extensive chain of stagnation in middle and downstream industries", industries that make up a substantial part of domestic output, non-oil exports, and national employment.

Lower exports, a decline in GDP, growing joblessness, falling employment, accelerating inflation, and a spike in the prices of staple goods are the inevitable results of such a scenario—and other nations will also see the smoke from it.

Such attacks harm citizens' livelihoods. Reduced output, higher costs for raw materials, and diminished access to certain goods are among the consequences that directly affect people's daily lives.

'Naval blockade neither feasible nor sustainable, Iran has sufficient alternative routes'

TEHRAN- An economic analyst, emphasizing the technical and deterrent limitations of enforcing a naval blockade against Iran, warned that such threats would immediately cause price shocks in energy markets and put European and East Asian economies under stagflation pressure.

Hossein Razavipour, speaking to IRNA about the recent action of the US president to impose a naval blockade on Iran aimed at exerting political and economic pressure on Tehran, stated: First, we must examine whether such a blockade is technically possible. When Iran blocks the passage of ships through the Strait of Hormuz, it should be noted that the Strait of Hormuz is a waterway with a narrow passage that can be monitored even with the naked eye, and ship traffic there can be controlled.

He added: Regarding waterways, it must be noted that these routes can be threatened with the simplest tools, including inexpensive but high-quality drones, to target unauthorized ships if they attempt passage. However, at distances farther from the Strait of Hormuz, where they would want to seize ships, the enforcing military force must be present within close range of the vessels.

Razavipour continued: During the recent military aggression by the US and the Zionist regime against Iran, we saw that many American warships and destroyers were stationed in the Indian Ocean to stay out of range of Iran's naval cruise missiles. This itself is a technical deterrent factor that prevents them from effectively controlling and exerting authority over ship traffic at close range. Therefore, from a technical and military standpoint, seizing ships that dock at Iranian ports will not be very easy.

Razavipour continued: On the other hand, Iran's current most important trading partner is China, and it is unlikely that the US, under current circumstances, would want to directly engage with Chinese ships or maritime trade, because there is a possibility of China retaliating in kind. This is another technical

and deterrent factor that casts doubt on the success of such actions.

Regarding the impact of these threats on energy markets, the economic analyst said: Interestingly, immediately after Trump announced this decision, global energy prices began to rise. For example, European gas futures grew by 18% within a single day. This indicates that the future outlook of the energy market is more crisis-ridden than the current situation. The reason is clear: when the energy supply outlook declines due to restrictions in the Strait of Hormuz and reduced oil and gas production or exports in the Persian Gulf, any shock that further reduces supply will fuel price increases.

A naval blockade will fuel an energy shock

He recalled: For this reason, at the beginning of the war, we saw that even the Americans suspended some oil and gas sanctions on Iran and Russia to allow more supply into the global market and to overcome the initial shock. Now, the same America is threatening oil tankers or cargo ships associated with Iran or originating from Iranian ports—an action that will likely add to the energy shock and put more pressure on those parts of the global economy that are vulnerable to energy shocks.

This economic expert stated: Europe and Southeast Asian countries such as Japan, Hong Kong, China, and South Korea, and even the US itself, will be affected by the stagflation caused by rising energy prices. It seems this policy will be a mistake with counterproductive results for the US; it will not be very successful in practice, but in terms of psychological shock, it will have negative effects on the oil market.

Razavipour added: In the US itself, many have mocked Trump's adoption of this unwise and ill-timed policy, considering it a sign of his lack of understanding of the situation and his inability to resolve the Strait of Hormuz issue. It seems that the US currently does not have many cards on the table and is using options that have little chance of creating a

stock exchanges in Europe and the US are among the likely consequences of such a situation.

Major energy consumers in the East and West have not remained unaffected by such energy shocks so far. Under these circumstances, rising global inflation, reduced output, and financial instability are not unexpected.

We must accept this reality: the world is profoundly dependent on the energy flow from the West Asia region, especially the Persian Gulf.

In an era of globalized trade and just-in-time supply chains, no major economy is an island. A deliberate strike on Iran's energy infrastructure would trigger a chain reaction of volatility—from skyrocketing oil prices and maritime insurance to stock market crashes and rising unemployment across continents. Policymakers in Washington, Brussels, and beyond must recognize that such a move would not weaken only Iran; it would inflict severe collateral damage on their own economies and on global stability. The rational path forward is de-escalation and diplomatic engagement, not military adventurism with unpredictable and far-reaching consequences.

Given that 20 percent of the world's oil passes through the Strait of Hormuz, any geopolitical developments in this region influence the global economy. The third imposed war demonstrated that any interruption along this route could quickly raise global oil prices by 30 to 100 percent, figures that several international analysts have also confirmed.

If the wartime conditions persist, insurance premiums for oil tankers and sea transport will also skyrocket, and this will directly affect the economies of European and American countries, which are deeply dependent on energy.

If worldwide energy production is disrupted, financial markets will rapidly become unstable. A fall in the value of gold, the dollar, bonds, and a collapse of

superior position for it.

Iran's geographical expanse covers a large part of the risks

The economic analyst then addressed the management of domestic markets and said: Undoubtedly, Iran's economy is also affected by this war and the policies imposed by the United States, and the recent fluctuations observed in the foreign exchange market are due to these threats, which, it must be said, are mostly psychological in nature.

Razavipour noted: With the targeting of some energy infrastructure and then industrial infrastructure—which is natural for any country during wartime—there will be some problems in the production chain of certain products.

At the same time, he emphasized: The country's geographical expanse and the possibility of using non-maritime borders for key trade with neighbors cover a large part of Iran's risks.

He added: Just as we saw with grains and some other inputs—where northern ports replaced southern regions and commodity needs were largely met—trade affairs can be managed through various methods.

The former head of Iran's Plan and Budget Organization referred to Iran's land borders and the advantage of having numerous neighbors, stating: Iran's borders with Iraq, Pakistan, Central Asia, Turkey, and the Caspian Sea provide the possibility that the country will not face famine due to disruptions in imports.

Razavipour added: Some goods may arrive with delays or at higher cost, but during transitional periods and war, such shocks are manageable for a vast country like Iran.

He concluded: This situation may impose costs on the country, but compared to the costs incurred for the Americans themselves and the financial gains from rising energy prices for Iran, it seems these costs can be compensated.

IMF downgrades global growth outlook as Iran war hits prices

TEHRAN- The IMF cut its growth outlook due to West Asia war-driven energy price spikes, but said the world was already drifting toward a more adverse scenario, Reuters reported on Tuesday.

With massive uncertainty over the conflict, the IMF presented three growth scenarios: weaker, worse and severe, depending on how the war unfolds.

The IMF chose the most benign scenario for its World Economic Outlook "reference forecast," which assumes a short-lived conflict and oil prices normalizing in the second half of 2026, with an \$82 per-barrel average for the year. That's well below Tuesday's benchmark Brent crude futures price of around \$96.

Just minutes after releasing

the outlook, IMF chief economist Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas said it may already be outdated.

He told reporters that with continued energy disruptions and no clear path to ending the conflict, the IMF's "adverse scenario" looks increasingly likely.

The IMF also cut the growth estimate for emerging market and developing economies,

where GDP tends to be more dependent on oil inputs.

Nigeria's finance minister Wale Edun, who chairs the G24 group of developing countries, asked the IMF and World Bank to provide more liquidity support, given what he called the negative flow of concessional financing to developing economies.

Spain reopens its embassy in Tehran in bold challenge to US-Israeli war strategy

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN - Spain's decision to reopen its embassy in Tehran has become the clearest demonstration yet of Madrid's steadfast opposition to the US-Israeli military campaign against Iran, launched on February 28.

Spain formally reopened its embassy in Tehran on Monday, becoming the first Western country to restore a diplomatic presence in Iran since a two-week ceasefire between Iran and the United States took effect on April 8. Spain's move signals both its rejection of the conflict and its desire to help facilitate de-escalation and renewed dialogue in the region.

"We return to Tehran. The Spanish Embassy in Iran reopens after the ceasefire. Ambassador Antonio Sánchez-Benedito Gaspar, together with the diplomatic team and local staff, resumes his work with the commitment to support peace," the embassy said in a post on social media.

The Spanish ambassador returned to Iran via the Astara border crossing on the Caspian Sea coast in northern Iran, accompanied by his diplomatic staff, formally announcing the resumption of the embassy's activities.

Sánchez-Benedito Gaspar wrote on X that he has returned to Tehran together with his "com-



mitted team" in order to "join in efforts for peace from every possible quarter," following instructions from Spanish Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares.

Spain has emerged as Europe's most outspoken critic of the US-Israeli war on Iran.

On the first day of the conflict, Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez strongly condemned the aggression. "We reject the unilateral military action by the United States and Israel, which represents an escalation and contributes to a more uncertain and hostile international order," he said in a message posted on X on February 28.

In separate remarks later the same day, the Spanish premier said the war waged by US Pres-

ident Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was making the world less stable. A day later, he described the war as "unjustified and dangerous" and said it was "outside international law."

These rebukes were reinforced by Spain's refusal to allow the United States to use its military bases in Rota and Morón for strikes against Iran. On March 2, Albares said Spain would under no circumstances permit its bases to be used in the war on Iran.

Defense Minister Margarita Robles also confirmed that neither of the Spanish bases had been used in the US military operation against Iran. In late March, Spain further escalated its opposition to the US-Israeli war by closing its airspace to

American aircraft involved in attacks on Iran.

Spain's stance against the US-Israeli war in the Middle East was also highlighted during Sánchez's visit to China. On Tuesday, during a meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing, Sánchez said lasting peace could be achieved by adhering to multilateralism and fostering a multipolar world. Later, at a press conference, Sánchez said China is the only global player he could envision helping to end wars in Iran and in other conflict zones, including Ukraine.

Sánchez also said Spain seeks to avoid impunity for those who commit crimes in places such as Gaza, where he stated that a "genocide" has been committed. "International law is being violated today, fundamentally by one country: the government of Israel," he said.

Observers in Tehran describe Spain's actions over the past weeks as a thoughtful and principled stance, particularly its clear objections to the military campaign against Iran. Many in Iran say Madrid's willingness to speak plainly during a tense period may well go down in history as an example of steady, independent leadership at a moment when calm judgment is in short supply.

The trillion-dollar folly of America's war on Iran

Harvard estimates and Pentagon tallies expose a war engineered to bleed American taxpayers for generations while the world pays in higher prices and shattered livelihoods



By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN — As the fog of war partially thins, the economic numbers have hardened into a reality that Washington can no longer mask with the kind of military bravado it relied on during the height of its campaign of aggression against Iran.

Harvard Kennedy School professor Linda Bilmes, who famously warned that the Iraq War would eventually cost three trillion dollars, now states with quiet certainty that this war is headed for a similar trillion-dollar mark once veterans' care, debt interest, and munitions replacement are fully counted.

The Pentagon's early figure of 11.3 billion dollars for the first six days already feels like ancient history.

Independent trackers show American spending has topped 51 billion dollars, with daily outlays averaging 2.1 billion dollars as two carrier strike groups and more than 56,000 troops maintain a relentless munitions drain.

The fiscal abyss facing American taxpayers

The fiscal asymmetry of this war is staggering and fundamentally favors the defender.

One U.S. interceptor missile runs roughly four million dollars, yet the Iranian drones it attempts to stop cost about 30,000 dollars apiece.

This lopsided fiscal ratio is a slow-bleed strategy that drains the American treasury.

Unlike during the Iraq War years, when the national debt was only a fraction of its current size, today's nearly \$39 trillion burden means that 2026's high interest rates now magnify the cost of every dollar the government borrows.

The money that could have modernized America's aging power grid or funded a decade of universal childcare is instead being converted into fire and debt.

The International Monetary Fund delivered a grim verdict on April 14, slashing global growth forecasts for 2026 to 3.1 percent.

Chief economist Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas described the outlook as abruptly darkened, noting the world was poised for an upgrade before this aggression halted all momentum.

In the IMF's severe scenario, global growth could plummet to 2.0 percent, a level associated with full-scale recession.

The U.S. technical siege on global commodities

The claimed naval blockade initiated by the U.S. Navy on April 13 supposedly against Iranian southern ports has attempted to sharpen the pain into a precision tool of collective punishment.

While Trump brags about American energy dominance and record production of 23.6 million barrels per day, the rest of the world is being strangled.

The Henry Hub natural gas benchmark has climbed 36 percent in a month, allowing fossil fuel conglomerates to profit from war-inflated prices while American drivers pay nearly four dollars a gallon at the pump.

A more dangerous siege is unfolding in the

specialized sectors that rarely make it into a Western politician's talking points.

Thirty percent of global urea, the critical nitrogen fertilizer, normally moves through the Strait of Hormuz.

Tanker traffic has dropped more than 90 percent, and urea prices have jumped 37 percent to 665 dollars per metric ton.

In India, which draws 63 percent of its nitrogen imports from the Persian Gulf, farmers are already cutting applications, leading to warnings of an 18 percent spike in global food prices by year's end.

Aluminum tells a similar story. Persian Gulf smelters produce 10 percent of the world's primary output, and strikes near energy sites have forced a 19 percent cut. Prices have hit 3,500 dollars per ton, forcing Toyota to slash production by 40,000 vehicles.

Even helium from Qatar, essential for MRI scanners and semiconductor manufacturing, has seen its availability collapse by nearly 30 percent, forcing hospitals to delay MRI maintenance and threatening to stall global chip production.

The price of calculated indifference

The human cost of this aggression is being met with total indifference from those who started it.

When asked about the rising costs for families worldwide, Trump's response was a blunt "if they rise, they rise."

This attitude reveals an outlook where other people's inflation and hunger are treated as tolerable side effects of U.S. leverage.

While families from the industrial hubs of East Asia to the struggling agricultural belts of Africa and Latin America are directly impacted by this campaign of aggression, the architects of this war in Washington and Tel Aviv remain insulated.

The streets of the world are finally talking back to this cruelty. Dublin's farmers and truckers paralyzed the city for six days during the Tractor Siege to protest fuel duties.

"No Farms, No Food" has become the rallying cry in Paris, Berlin, and London.

Rallies in India, Pakistan, Brazil, and Nigeria link fertilizer shortages directly to decisions made in distant war rooms.

In the United States, anti-war voices now share the stage with inflation-weary workers in cities red and blue.

In late March, an estimated 8 million people participated in over 3,300 protest events worldwide, explicitly linking the trillion-dollar war expenditure to their own empty shelves.

The economic suffering visible in American Midwest grocery bills, stalled German factories, and hungry fields in India was entirely foreseeable.

It flows directly from belligerent policy choices made in Washington and Tel Aviv. Yet the rhetoric of indifference reveals a doctrine that treats other nations' pain as acceptable collateral.

And the bill, whether measured in dollars, lost harvests, or shattered livelihoods, will keep coming due long after the last bomb has fallen.

Iran turning into key architect of regional security

TEHRAN - The U.S.-Israeli war on Iran has backfired.

Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu and their inner circle had a misconception about Iran. They were not aware of Iran's resilience and smartness that has turned threats into opportunities.

The U.S. and Israel suffered from the illusion that Iran, as a country that has been under "maximum" economic pressure, collapse in a matter of a few weeks. Iran has suffered great damages and lost top political, military, and intelligence officials but it has immediately adapted to new situations through its decentralized power structure.

Iran is now winning the war militarily, strategically, politically and diplomatically. It has also emerged as a global power and is becoming key architect of security in the Middle East region.

As Al Jazeera writer Andrew Mitrovica says, Iran is using the vital strategic Strait of Hormuz, that about 20 million barrels of oil and oil products passed through it, as an "asymmetric leverage" against the aggressors.

In his article headlined "Iran has been bloodied, but it is winning against the US-Israel axis", Mitrovica writes:

Today, to borrow a phrase, we are all Iranians.

We are Iranians, witnessing the failure of a tughish logic practiced by the United States and Israel, which operates on a single, crude premise: that enough pain can bend any nation to their imperial designs.

The US-Israel axis has long believed that force and coercion would eventually compel Iranians to abandon their sovereignty and accept the leash. It has failed. By refusing to surrender, Iranians have turned a lonely struggle

for survival into a universal symbol of resistance — a testament to the endurance of the human spirit.

For weeks, we have watched the predictable mechanics of an empire trying to drain a people's will. We have seen the familiar script of demonization followed by the machinery of industrial slaughter. Then, we saw America's "commander-in-chief" issue a threat that defied decency and defiled statecraft.

Donald Trump did not just threaten a government or a military. He threatened to end "civilization" in Iran.

It was a monstrous decree. It was also a transparent one. This was the desperate act of a desperate man. It was the foul howl of a leader who knew he had lost a war.

So, Trump resorted to the "madman theory" of diplomacy, hoping that by appearing unhinged and capable of infinite destruction, he could scare a proud country into capitulation.

He failed. The prospect of annihilation was meant to trigger a collapse. It was meant to prompt the surviving leadership in Tehran to flee and panicked Iranians to yield.

The American-Israeli axis has made a fatal miscalculation. It remains wedded to the discredited conceit that resolve is a commodity to be bought or broken.

Instead, Iran and Iranians stood fast. The "madman" in the White House was obliged to negotiate with an adversary he claimed had already been defeated.

The moving measure of Iran's success is found in that defiance. The Iranian people could have wilted, succumbed under the burden of such military, economic and psychological terror.

Bint Jbeil's symbolic value for Hezbollah

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN - Hezbollah's heroic resistance in Bint Jbeil, a historic nightmare town for the Zionist regime, has been turned into a fresh hell for invaders with a dozen confirmed casualties.

These latest losses among the regime's troops underscore the deep symbolic value this town holds for Hezbollah, a value forged through decades of resistance. Since Hezbollah was established in 1982, this town has been the Vietnam of the Israeli invasions, a place where its military has repeatedly suffered unexpected and costly defeats.

The battle for Bint Jbeil during the Zionist regime's July 2006 war in Lebanon became a pivotal moment between Hezbollah and the occupation forces. The IOF committed more than 5,000

troops to overtake a town defended by only 100 to 150 Hezbollah fighters.

Yet after three major pushes, the regime failed to secure or maintain control over Bint Jbeil. An IOF brigadier general announced "complete control" on July 25, but ongoing heavy fighting quickly showed that declaration to be false.

The deadliest exchange took place on July 26, when the regime's elite Golani Brigade stumbled into a carefully planned Hezbollah trap. Eight IOF troops were killed within minutes, and dozens more sustained critical injuries in what became the Zionist regime's single worst loss of life during the 2006 war.

In 2000, after the regime withdrew from southern Lebanon, Hezbollah martyred Sec-



retary-General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah delivered a victory speech in the town, calling the Zionist regime "weaker than a spider's web."

IOF commanders aimed to seize the same town to stage their own triumphant address, an objective they never reached

before 2000. Instead, the battles there became an enduring symbol of Hezbollah's resilience against a technologically superior military, while exposing serious intelligence failures and tactical weaknesses within the regime's forces.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Damage to Chehel Sotoun Palace worsens as shockwave impact persists



TEHRAN – Damage to the historic Chehel Sotoun Palace has continued to worsen in the weeks following nearby airstrikes, with falling decorative elements and expanding structural concerns raising alarm among heritage officials and conservation experts.

Amir Karamzadeh, director-general of cultural heritage, tourism and handicrafts for Isfahan province, said on Wednesday that the scale of damage to the Safavid-era palace museum has increased compared to assessments conducted a month ago, when it sustained damage due to US-Israeli airstrikes.

According to him, decorative features of the monument are still collapsing as a result of shockwaves from recent bombardments.

“The ongoing evaluations indicate that some of the damage is progressive,” Karamzadeh told IRNA, noting that the severity of the impact has proven more serious than initially estimated. He stressed that comprehensive scientific studies must precede any restoration work.

Experts warn that focusing solely on repairing visible decorative damage, such as mirrorwork, wooden elements, and ornamental surfaces, without addressing potential structural weaknesses could lead to repeated deterioration after restoration efforts are completed.

“For now, it is not sufficient to restore decorations alone while ignoring possible structural problems,” Karamzadeh said. “This could result in renewed damage and further collapse of restored elements.”

Teams of specialists in wooden ornamentation, metal structures, and traditional mirrorwork have been deployed in recent days to assess the full extent of the damage. Their immediate priority is to stabilize the structure and prevent further degradation, while also determining appropriate conservation methods.

Authorities say advanced equipment will be required to analyze the deeper layers of damage and reinforce the building. Emergency funding has already been allocated at both provincial and national levels. In addition, the provincial crisis management headquarters

is contributing funds to support urgent stabilization measures. Officials say that once emergency interventions are completed, a broader research-based restoration plan will be launched for Chehel Sotoun and other affected monuments.

According to provincial authorities, at least 28 historical monuments in Isfahan province have been damaged in the recent attacks. These include a wide range of structures, from Safavid palaces and historic houses to religious sites, schools, and bazaars. Among them are Hasht Behesht Palace, Amin al-Tojjar House, the Jarchi Bashi Bathhouse, Baba Rokn al-Din Shrine, and several historic tekkyehs in the Takht-e Fulad cemetery complex.

Damage has also been reported beyond the city of Isfahan. In other counties of the province, affected sites include historical homes in Khansar, its congregational mosque and schools, as well as a historic caravanserai and bazaar in Kuhpayeh. In Shahreza, both a historic house and an early modern textile factory sustained damage.

The broader context of destruction is nationwide. Between February 28 and April 8, a total of 132 cultural sites, museums, and historical monuments across Iran were damaged or destroyed, largely due to powerful shockwaves from airstrikes. Among them are major UNESCO World Heritage sites, including the Golestan Palace in Tehran, as well as Naqsh-e Jahan Square and Chehel Sotoun in Isfahan.

Chehel Sotoun, meaning “Forty Columns,” is a 17th-century pavilion constructed during the reign of Shah Abbas II. Historically used to host foreign dignitaries and ambassadors, the palace now serves as a museum displaying artworks from different periods of Iranian history.

The palace is set within a historic Persian garden, itself part of the UNESCO-listed “Persian Garden” ensemble, inscribed in 2011. This cultural landscape reflects design principles dating back to ancient Persia and exemplifies a longstanding tradition of garden architecture associated with royal and ceremonial spaces.

tural and political viewpoints. Leading Swedish architects worked together with the best craftspeople in Europe to create a unique ensemble of buildings with rich and lavish interiors.

The Palace Theatre is the only surviving 18th century theatre where the original machinery is still regularly used and the original stage sets are preserved. The sophisticated stage machinery, built by Georg Fröman according to drawings prepared by Christian Gottorp Reuss, is still fully intact, permitting quick changes of scene with the curtain up. A unique collection of stage sets, the dressing rooms, the storerooms, the scenery, and the large auditorium, seating 400 spectators, are preserved. Historical opera productions performed at the theatre are often staged and accompanied by music performed on authentic period instruments by the Drottningholm Theatre Orchestra.

(Source: UNESCO)

Discover 40,000 years of human history at Tamtaman Cave

TEHRAN – Nestled in the rugged landscapes of northwestern Iran, near the historic city of Urmia, the Tamtaman Cave stands as one of the most evocative windows into humanity’s distant past.

Located about 20 kilometers from Urmia along the road to the village of Tamtaman, this remarkable cave is far more than a natural formation carved into rock; it is a living archive of human endurance, adaptation, and ingenuity stretching back some 40,000 years.

From the moment one approaches the cave, the journey feels like a passage through time. The surrounding landscape, rolling green plains, vineyards, fruit orchards, and a flowing river, creates a setting that is as picturesque today as it must have been tens of millennia ago. Standing at the mouth of the cave, visitors often describe the sensation of being suspended between eras: behind them lies the modern world, while ahead stretches a silent, shadowy space that once sheltered early humans.

Inside Tamtaman Cave, the atmosphere is deeply immersive. The walls, ceiling, and floor seem to whisper fragments of forgotten stories. As one ventures deeper, the imagination begins to reconstruct scenes of prehistoric life: early humans gathering around fires, shaping tools from stone, and preparing for hunts in the surrounding plains. The cave’s physical features, its chambers, recesses, and carved-out spaces, offer subtle but powerful clues about how it was used. In certain sections, evidence suggests that inhabitants modified the rock itself, perhaps to create storage spaces for food or to improve their living conditions.

Archaeologically, Tamtaman Cave is of profound importance, as it represents one of the earliest known human habitation sites in northwestern Iran, offering invaluable insights into life during the Middle Paleolithic period. Scientific investigations indicate that the cave was occupied roughly 40,000 years ago, a time when early human communities were still developing tools, hunting strategies, and social structures that would define their survival.

The first systematic study of the cave was carried out in 1949 by the American anthropologist Carleton Stanley Coon. His exploratory excavations uncovered a range of artifacts, including stone tools, blades, and flakes, alongside animal bones belonging to species such as cattle, sheep, goats, gazelles, wild horses, birds, turtles, and foxes. These findings painted a vivid picture of a hunter-gatherer community that relied on the rich biodiversity of the surrounding environment.

Coon’s research suggested that the cave was likely used seasonally, particularly during the summer months. This seasonal habitation aligns with the ecological conditions of the region, where warmer weather would have made hunting and foraging more productive. The abundance of water sources and fertile land nearby would have further enhanced the cave’s appeal as a temporary shelter.

Beyond its prehistoric significance, Tamtaman Cave has continued to play a role in human life across centuries. For thousands of years, shepherds have used it as a refuge for themselves and their flocks. During harsh winters, sudden spring rains, or the intense heat of summer, the cave provided a stable and protective environment. Over time, however, this prolonged use led to the accumulation of thick layers of animal waste, which now cover many of the deeper archaeological deposits beneath.

The name “Tamtaman” itself adds another layer of cultural richness. Derived from Kurdish, it is

Iran, Afghanistan advance joint UNESCO dossier for Asbads

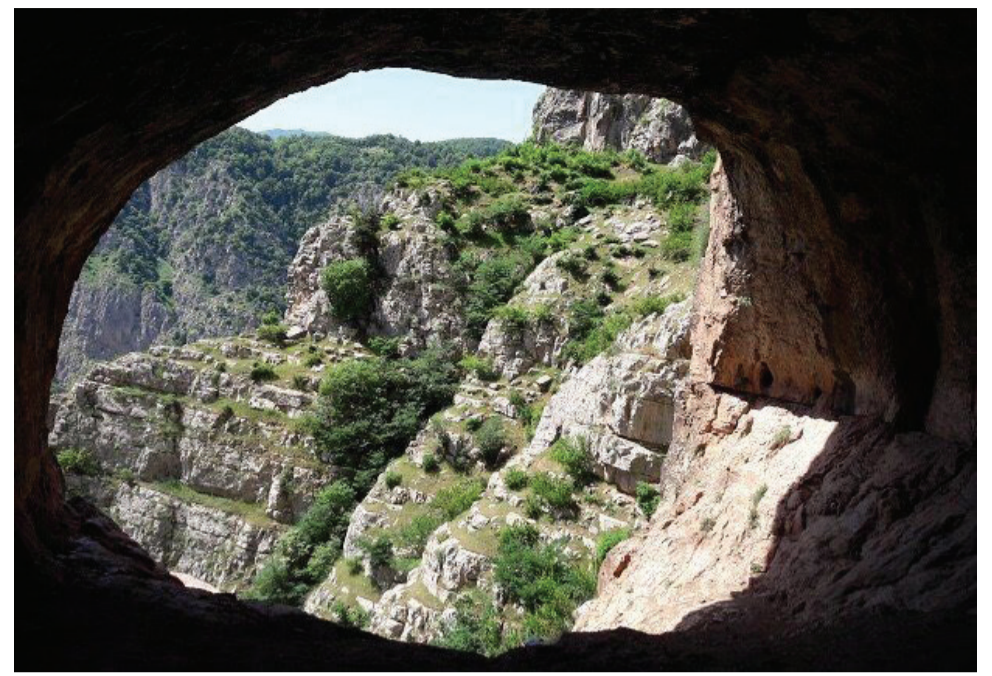
TEHRAN – Iran is moving closer to finalizing a “complex” UNESCO World Heritage nomination for its ancient wind-powered structures, known as Asbads, with officials confirming that the dossier will be submitted jointly with Afghanistan.

Alireza Izadi, director-general of the office for registration of historical works at Iran’s ministry of cultural heritage, said the long-running effort to secure global recognition for the Asbads, considered among Iran’s most significant indigenous technological heritage, has now reached an advanced stage after years of expert work.

“The Asbads dossier is now close to finalization,” Izadi told ISNA on Wednesday. “This project began six or seven years ago and involved extensive efforts by multiple teams. Although the dossier was largely prepared earlier, we decided to accelerate its completion and submission once it was placed on the tentative list.”

The nomination highlights a network of traditional vertical-axis windmills spread primarily across eastern Iran, particularly in the provinces of Khorasan-Razavi, South Khorasan, and Sistan-Baluchestan. Notable clusters include those in the historic region of Nehbandan and the well-known site of Nashtifan Windmills, where some of the most iconic and best-preserved examples stand.

According to Izadi, the transnational nature of the heritage has been a defining aspect of the nomination. “From the outset, our approach was



to mean “foggy” or “misty,” a reference to the atmospheric conditions that often envelop the village and its surroundings. This persistent mist lends the area an almost mystical quality, enhancing the cave’s aura as a place where nature and history intertwine.

Stepping outside the cave, visitors are greeted with a sweeping panorama that reinforces why this location was so attractive to early humans. The elevated position of the cave offers a commanding view of the landscape below, ideal for spotting game or monitoring environmental changes. The lush plains, interspersed with orchards and water sources, would have provided both sustenance and strategic advantage. It is easy to imagine prehistoric hunters observing herds from this vantage point before descending into the valley.

From a tourism perspective, Tamtaman Cave holds exceptional potential as a destination that combines natural beauty with deep historical resonance, attracting both nature enthusiasts and those fascinated by human origins. Each year, travelers, hikers, and history lovers make their way to the site, drawn by its unique ability to connect them with a distant and largely unseen past. The experience of walking through a space once inhabited by early humans is both humbling and transformative, encouraging reflection on the long journey of human development.

The cave itself measures approximately 35.3 meters in length and 16.9 meters in width. Inside, two distinct cavities add to its complexity: one smaller chamber to the right and a longer, deeper passage to the left, extending up to 28 meters. These features not only enhance the cave’s physical intrigue but also suggest varied uses by its ancient occupants, from habitation to storage or shelter.

Recognizing its importance, Tamtaman Cave was officially registered on Iran’s National Heritage List in 2005. Protective measures have since been introduced to safeguard the site and its surrounding area, which also includes remnants from later historical periods, such as Urartian fortresses and Safavid-era tomb towers. These additional elements transform the region into a layered cultural landscape, where multiple eras coexist within a relatively small geographical area.

In the nearby cemetery of Tamtaman village, four historical tower tombs, dating back to the Safavid period, stand as silent witnesses to more recent chapters of the region’s history. Although

one of these structures has largely collapsed, the others have been restored and preserved, offering further points of interest for visitors. Together with the cave, they form a compelling itinerary for those interested in Iran’s cultural and architectural heritage.

Despite its many strengths, Tamtaman Cave faces challenges that threaten its preservation. One of the most pressing issues is environmental degradation caused by littering. Both domestic and international visitors have, at times, left waste in and around the site, undermining its natural beauty and historical integrity. Local authorities and environmental organizations have responded by organizing periodic clean-up campaigns and installing informational signage to raise awareness.

There is a growing recognition that the protection of such sites cannot rely solely on official measures; it requires active participation from visitors and local communities alike. Public awareness campaigns emphasize that historical sites like Tamtaman are not merely attractions but shared cultural assets that must be respected and preserved.

Historically and culturally, Tamtaman Cave stands as a powerful symbol of human continuity, bridging the gap between prehistoric life and modern civilization, and underscoring the enduring relationship between humans and their environment. It reminds us that the story of humanity is not confined to written records or monumental architecture but is also etched into the landscapes we inhabit.

For journalists, researchers, and cultural heritage enthusiasts, Tamtaman Cave offers a rare opportunity to explore a site that is both scientifically significant and emotionally evocative. It invites deeper questions: How did early humans adapt to their surroundings? What challenges did they face? And how did their innovations lay the groundwork for future generations?

In an age defined by rapid technological advancement and urban expansion, places like Tamtaman Cave serve as vital reminders of our origins. They encourage us to look back, not with nostalgia, but with curiosity and respect for the resilience and creativity of those who came before us.

Ultimately, Tamtaman Cave is more than a destination; it is a journey into the depths of human history. Its preservation is not just a matter of protecting a physical site but of safeguarding a narrative that belongs to all of humanity.

World Heritage sites: Royal Domain of Drottningholm

The Royal Domain of Drottningholm, situated on the island of Lovön close to Stockholm, is an exceptionally well-preserved ensemble of gardens and buildings with original interior furnishings. It includes Drottningholm Palace, the Palace Theatre, the Chinese Pavilion, Canton Village, the gardens and part of Malmen, and has been used for pleasure and summer recreation from the Baroque era until today. As the current home of the Swedish Royal Family, Drottningholm upholds a cultural continuity with the original purpose of the site.

Drottningholm Palace is representative of 17th and 18th century western and northern European architecture, and the palace grounds were also created during that period. The palace was created with strong references to 17th century Italian and French architecture. The interiors reflect Sweden’s ambitions as one of the most powerful nations of 17th century Europe, from both cul-

thousand years, are regarded as among the earliest known industrial machines in human history. Designed to harness the powerful seasonal winds of eastern Iran, these vertical-axis windmills were used for grinding grain, pumping water, and other essential tasks.

South Khorasan province, considered the main hub of Asbads, is home to more than 310 surviving structures, approximately 79 percent of Iran’s total. Their distinctive design sets them apart from the horizontal-axis windmills later developed in Europe.

Historical and scholarly accounts suggest that this technology originated with Iranian engineers during the early Islamic period. According to documentation referenced by UNESCO, vertical-axis windmills spread from Iran to other parts of the Islamic world, including Egypt, before reaching China during the Mongol era. By the 11th century, the technology had extended to regions such as Spain, Portugal, and the Aegean islands.

Technology historian Robert Forbes has described the windmill as an Iranian innovation that became a crucial energy source across Islamic territories by the 12th century.

If successfully inscribed, the Asbads would join a growing list of Iranian cultural properties recognized by UNESCO, further underscoring the country’s long-standing contributions to engineering, environmental adaptation, and sustainable technologies rooted in its historical landscapes.

He expressed hope that UNESCO evaluators will visit the sites as soon as possible, paving the way for final assessment and potential inscription.

Asbads, some of which date back more than a

ICRC dispatches first aid shipment to Iran

TEHRAN - Iran has received the first consignment of humanitarian relief items from the International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (ICRC) since the beginning of the imposed US-Israeli war against Iran, February 28.

The shipment includes 171 tons of essential items such as blankets, water containers, kitchen sets, tarpaulin cloths, hygiene parcels, solar lamps, buckets, and mattresses that are delivered by five trucks, IRNA reported.

The second supplies involving 9 trucks of essential goods are expected to be delivered to the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) by the end of the week.

Moreover, 200 generators and 100 water pumps, purchased from the country's market, were donated to the IRCS.

The two shipments will provide for the basic needs of 25,000 families.

The ICRC representative to Iran, Vincent Cassard, hoped the consignment would help alleviate part of the sufferings and pains of Iranian people caused by destructive measures of the US and Israel during the war.

The ICRC hopes to send more medical and essential assistance in coming weeks. The organization has also voiced readiness to boost cooperation with the IRCS in providing relief services and assistance to the people in need.

"We aim to extend support for the humanitarian efforts of the Iranian Red Crescent Society. Their committed response, particularly during difficult situations, is amazing. We are still committed to support their critical activities," Cassard noted.

The IRCS has already 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 re-

ported. 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.

Pezeshkian praises services of rescue and relief organizations during war



President Masoud Pezeshkian (L) and Pirhossein Kolivand, the head of the Iranian Red Crescent Society.

TEHRAN - President Masoud Pezeshkian paid a visit to the Iranian Red Crescent Society and Tehran's Emergency Medical Services Organization on Wednesday, honoring their dedicated staff for offering ceaseless services during the US-Israeli aggression.

Your round-the-clock and selfless efforts are a clear manifestation of the high human spirit and social responsibility that has been able to restore hope and peace to society at critical times, Pezeshkian said at the IRCS headquarters in Tehran.

People did not experience any shortage in receiving emergency medical services, Pezeshkian said.

In his visit to the Emergency Medical Services Organization, Pezeshkian highlighted that any military action against other countries is contrary to universally accepted principles.

"With what authorization and for what

crime was the attack on our country carried out? What justification does targeting civilians, elites, children, and destroying civilian infrastructure, including schools and hospitals, have within the framework of international law and humanitarian principles?"

Iran does not seek war and instability and always emphasizes dialogue and constructive interaction with different countries, he added.

"Any attempt to force the country to surrender is doomed to failure, and the Iranian nation will never accept such an approach."

The unique and exemplary unity and cohesion of the people in the 40-day resistance disappointed the enemies of their sinister goals, the president stressed.

Such a spirit among the people and officials will strengthen national authority, and in such circumstances, no power will be able to bring this nation to its knees, he concluded.

Iranian inventor dedicates intl. award to Minab martyred schoolgirls

TEHRAN - Leila Keshavarzi, an Iranian inventor and national taekwondo athlete, just won a gold medal at the Asian Youth Innovation Awards, which was held from April 9-11 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

When she received her award, she held a pink backpack in dedication to the 168 schoolgirls who were killed in a US missile attack on February 28 to Shajareh Tayyebeh school in the city of Minab, southern Hormozgan province.

Competing against 35 teams from across the globe, Keshavarzi secured the gold medal in the Asian youth category.

In an interview with IRIB News Agency, Keshavarzi said one of her three presented projects had been named after the "Martyrs of Minab School."

"Although these martyrs are no longer among us, their message of peace can remain eternal and everlasting," Keshavarzi said, referring to 168 school children martyred in the American-Israeli missile strikes in Minab, Press TV reported.

Keshavarzi's tribute - symbolized by the pink backpack she carried on stage - has since resonated widely, turning a moment of personal achievement into a powerful reminder of lives cut short by the brutal and unprovoked war of aggression.

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.

The Minab tragedy has caught the imagination of people worldwide in the past 45 days and brought to light the horrendous war crimes of the US-Israeli war machine.

Head of Iran's Emergency Organization Majid Moadfar said in a statement on Sunday that at least 258 women and 221 under the age of 18 have been martyred in US-Israeli assaults during their war of aggression against the Islamic Republic.

He added that a total of 18 children under the age of five have also been killed in the bloody onslaught.

Students, professors expelled from US 'warmly welcomed': science minister

TEHRAN - Minister of Science, Research and Technology Hossein Simaei-Sarraf has announced that Iranian students and professors who have been sacked from American universities will be warmly welcomed.

"Some of our students who were legally majoring, and some professors who were teaching in American universities have been expelled, recently. They should not worry about anything; they will be accepted by Iranian universities of the same level, Mehr news agency quoted Simaei-Sarraf as saying.

The official made the remarks on Wednesday while paying a visit to the aerospace research centre that was damaged during the US-Israeli war.

It was a non-military center where researchers were operating in biology, agriculture, and mapping, the official noted.

The science minister went on to say that the universities across the country have made necessary arrangements and plans for the post-war period.

Technological, research, scientific, and educational programs will be adapted to the current situation of the country.

According to Simaei-Sarraf, said over 30 Iranian universities had been directly attacked by the United States and Israel since the war began in late February.

Five university professors and more than 60 students had been killed in the strikes, added Simaei-Sarraf, describing attacks on Iranian infrastructure as "crimes against humanity."

"The main reason the enemy targeted this sensitive infrastructure was that they did not want us to gain access to this technology," he said, adding that many Iranians abroad have contacted the university, offering to help fund its restoration.

On April 7, Iran's ambassador to the United Nations accused the United States and

Israel of committing "unprecedented barbarism" by deliberately targeting Iranian universities and scientific institutions, calling the strikes war crimes that no amount of threats or military pressure can extinguish.

In a series of letters to the UN Secretary-General and the Security Council this week, Ambassador Amir-Saeid Irvani detailed a systematic campaign of state terrorism.

He cited an airstrike early on April 6 that severely damaged Sharif University of Technology in Tehran, including its faculties of civil engineering and electrical engineering, as well as research institutes for nanotechnology and environmental studies. That attack followed a similar strike on April 3 that hit Shahid Beheshti University, damaging its Laser and Plasma Research Institute.

"The intentional targeting of scientific institutions and universities constitutes a clear violation of international humanitarian law and amounts to a war crime," Irvani wrote.

The Iranian government's spokesperson, Fatemeh Mohajerani speaking at a news conference at Shahid Beheshti University, echoed that defiance.

"The enemies cannot extinguish the lamp of Iranian science," the spokeswoman said, adding that recent attacks were meant to undermine the achievements of the 47-year-old revolution and sever the bond between the nation and its homeland.

"These miscalculations are wrong. Iran is the common denominator of all Iranians. Those who have a homeland will stand behind their country, and Iranians living abroad will never give in."

Targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure on such a scale can, according to credible legal sources, constitute clear violations of international humanitarian law. Under the Geneva Conventions and customary in-



ternational humanitarian law, civilian locations, including schools and universities, are generally protected from attacks.

The strike on the Pasteur Institute of Tehran, a research and public health center with over a century of history and a member of the international Pasteur network is a prime example of targeting scientific institutions as part of modern warfare. Established in the 1920s, the institute has been a regional pioneer in vaccine production and has played a key role in controlling deadly diseases, particularly plague originating from wildlife in the Middle East.

Universities and research institutions are engines of knowledge and technological production. Training engineers, scientists, and specialists across disciplines lays the foundation for industrial and economic development. Destroying such centers is not just a physical attack on buildings; it is an assault on the transmission of knowledge, the training of skilled professionals, and technology production.

This type of warfare against scientific institutions shows that Iran's adversaries understand that the country's future strength lies not only in its military but also in its knowledge and scientific development.

Therefore, targeting universities and research institutes is a deliberate and strategic action to limit Iran's scientific and engineering capabilities.

International Wellness Day promotes healthy living for all

TEHRAN - International Wellness Day, observed annually on April 15, aims to emphasize the necessity of leading a balanced and healthy life.

This day serves as a reminder that wellness transcends mere absence of illness, advocating for a comprehensive approach to health that includes physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

The observance encourages both individuals and communities to prioritize their overall health by focusing on preventive measures and sustainable lifestyle habits.

It underlines the need for individuals to engage in mindful living, thereby enhancing

their quality of life in an increasingly demanding world.

By promoting awareness, International Wellness Day seeks to highlight the importance of adopting a holistic perspective on health, prompting people to consider various aspects of their well-being beyond conventional medical care.

Maintaining wellness through preventive, lifestyle-based, and people-centered approaches plays a vital role in saving lives, reducing healthcare costs, and delivering cost-effective solutions to preventable diseases.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)



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APRIL 16, 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:12:04 Evening: 18:57 Dawn: 4:01 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:29 (tomorrow)

Nationwide street performances honor Dena martyrs during Islamic Revolution Art Week

TEHRAN – The sixth day of Iran's Islamic Revolution Art Week was marked by a series of street theater performances across the country, with 57 productions staged in Tehran and other cities in tribute to the martyrs of the IRIS Dena.

On Tuesday evening, eight plays produced by the Sooreh Dramatic Arts Center, affiliated with the Art Bureau, were performed simultaneously at eight locations across Tehran. The performances coincided with public gatherings related to the recent imposed war on Iran, while parallel productions were staged in several provinces.

The performances were dedicated to the sailors of the IRIS Dena, who lost their lives after the vessel was targeted by a US submarine while returning from the MILAN 2026. The incident has been widely condemned in Iran as an act of aggression.

The 12th edition of the Islamic Revolution Art Week commenced nationwide last Thursday, marking the martyrdom anniversary of Seyyed Morteza Avini.

Organized by the Art Bureau of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization, the week-long event features a diverse array of street theater, poetry nights, and art exhibitions across Tehran and several other provinces.

This year's festivities are defined by a shift toward public spaces, aiming to foster a direct dialogue between artists and the citizenry through identity-driven and national themes.

The sinking of the Iranian Navy frigate IRIS Dena during the US-Israeli war imposed on Iran marks a significant and tragic episode in modern naval warfare. On March 4, 2026, while returning home from the MILAN 2026 naval exercise in India, the Dena was torpedoed by the USS Charlotte, a Los Angeles-class submarine of the United States Navy, approximately 19 nautical miles off the coast of Galle, Sri Lanka. The attack occurred in international waters, raising seri-



ous questions about the legality and morality of targeting a vessel that was reportedly unarmed and carrying naval cadets. Iranian sources have described this incident as a brutal assault on a returning naval unit, leading to the martyrdom of several crew members and igniting widespread condemnation across Iran and world.

The implications of the Dena tragedy extend beyond the immediate loss of life; it has been framed within the context of escalating tensions between Iran and the United States. Iranian officials and commentators have characterized the attack as part of a broader pattern of aggressive actions by Washington during the conflict, portraying it as a violation of international norms. US President Donald Trump's admission that the decision to sink the vessel was made for reasons of amusement has further inflamed sentiments in Iran, reinforcing perceptions of American hostility and disregard for human life.

The Dena destroyer was unarmed and carrying naval cadets when it came under attack by American forces. US President Donald Trump stated that his administration could have chosen not to sink the vessel, but decided to do so because it was "more fun."

Cartoon of Day



Iran War
Cartoonist: Kamal Sharaf from Yemen

Iran condemns YouTube's removal of AI-driven Lego-style channel over anti-US narratives

TEHRAN- A YouTube channel producing artificial intelligence-generated animations in a Lego-inspired format focusing on recent US-Israeli aggression on Iran has been taken down, drawing criticism over what some describe as selective enforcement of content policies.

The channel, operated by Explosive Media, had gained attention since 2025 for publishing politically themed videos created by a young Iranian artist. The group announced that its account on YouTube was suspended on the grounds of "violent content," a characterization it has openly challenged.

In a post shared on X, the group questioned the decision, arguing that its stylized Lego-like animations could not reasonably be classified as violent. Despite the suspension, its presence remains intact across other platforms, including Instagram, TikTok, and Telegram.

The development comes as AI-generated media continues to expand globally, reshaping how political messages are produced and disseminated. Notably, even official institutions such as the White House have increasingly incorporated AI-generated visuals into their communications.

Esmaeil Baghaei, spokesperson for the Foreign Ministry, criticized the move, describing it as an attempt to silence alternative perspectives on the recent US-Israeli war imposed on Iran. He argued that such actions reflect a broader effort to control narratives in the digital sphere.



"In a land that proudly hosts Pixar, DreamWorks Animation, and The Walt Disney Company, an independent animated YouTube channel — which had organically grown by depicting US aggression & war-mongering, and garnered millions of viewers — was abruptly shut down! Why?! Simply to suppress the truth about their 'illegal war' on Iran and shield the American administration's false narrative from any competing voice." Baghaei wrote on X.

The channel's content frequently employed satire and elements of American popular culture to critique Washington's policies. In several widely circulated clips, figures such as Donald Trump were portrayed in exaggerated, cartoonish forms,

often conveying themes of political failure and retreat.

Observers note that while a wide range of AI-generated content continues to flourish online, material that challenges dominant Western narratives appears to face greater scrutiny. The removal of the channel has therefore reignited debate over freedom of expression and the boundaries of acceptable content on major technology platforms owned by corporations such as Alphabet.

As AI tools become more accessible and influential, the contest over digital storytelling—and which voices are allowed to be heard—appears set to intensify.

The Lego-style animated videos

produced by Explosive Media seek to present a narrative aligned with the experiences of Iranians, using accessible and visually engaging storytelling to reach a global audience. Through satire and simplified imagery, these productions aim to shed light on the realities of the recent war imposed on Iran, while criticizing what they portray as US aggression and unilateralism. By drawing on familiar elements of popular culture and reinterpreting them through a political lens, the creators attempt to raise awareness among international viewers and challenge dominant narratives surrounding American policies.

Tabriz hosting cartoon exhibition on US-Israeli attacks on Iran

TEHRAN – An exhibition of cartoons on the theme of the recent American-Zionist aggression against Iran has been set up at Clock Square in Tabriz.

This cartoon exhibition showcases selected works by cartoonists and artists from Tabriz, aiming to depict the lesser-seen aspects of the imposed war. These are angles that sometimes remain hidden amidst media clamor and official narratives, ILNA reported.

The presence of art within society facilitates direct dialogue with the public and enhances the impact of cultural messages. Cartoons, in particular, are an art form that can convey profound messages in the shortest amount of time, prompting the audience to reflect and question.

The US and Israel attacked Iran on February 28 and for 40 days martyred about 3,000 people including the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Aya-



tollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, several officials, and military commanders as well as numerous civilians, including women and children.

The aggressors claimed at the beginning that the attacks were aimed at preventing Iran's nuclear program but they later revealed their real objectives. For Israel, the maximalist goal was the regime change in Iran and the US sought to seize

the oil and gas resources of the country.

Therefore, besides some military targets, the US and Israel launched organized attacks against civilian infrastructure, including residential homes, hospitals, refineries, power plants, schools, universities, art and cultural spaces, bookstores, museums, and ancient sites in several cities, causing total or partial damages and injuring innocent people, in an attempt to force the country to surrender to their illegitimate demands.

The attacks prompted a swift response from the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), with missile and drone launches targeting Israel and several US bases in the region, which were gradually intensified.

After 40 days, Iran, the US, and Israel agreed to a two-week ceasefire on April 8, during which they intend to hold negotiations to end the war.

Iranian short animation to compete in 4th Voronezh International Animation Film Festival

TEHRAN – The Iranian short animation "The Last Deer" by Mehdi Barghadegan will compete in the fourth Voronezh International Animation Film Festival "AniMakers," which will be held in Voronezh, Russia, from May 22 to 24.

A production of the Documentary, Experimental, and Animated Film Center, it has been selected for the short animation competition section of the festival, ILNA reported.

The animation has several main themes. Family, the environment, and nature are its key themes. It shows how the relationship between humans and nature should be.

"The Last Deer" tells the story of a deer, wandering through the forest, that is attacked by hunters and

forced to flee. During the escape, it realizes that the forest — its home — has become an unsafe place for it. Along the way, it gets injured, but eventually finds a chance to escape from the hunters. However, because of its family, the deer returns to the forest, only to discover that it has lost its entire family. At that point, it no longer thinks about running away, and a series of events unfolds.

The Voronezh International Animation Festival "AniMakers" is a review of modern professional domestic and world animation films for children, teenagers, and families. A feature of the festival is its workshop format, which includes not only screenings and discussions of animated films but also master classes, round tables, and creative



meetings for a wide audience from leading specialists of the Voronezh Animation Studio and recognized professionals of the international animation industry. The workshop program will present animation as

one of the fastest-growing arts and creative industries.

The festival is supported by the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation and the Government of Voronezh region.

Artists and cultural actors mobilize to support displaced families in Lebanon

Several spontaneous cultural initiatives, including in theaters, aim to help people driven from their homes by Israeli bombardments.

On the stage of Lebanese National Theater, a private institution in the Hamra district in western Beirut, words are steeped in war: uprooted from home, brutal mourning under bombs, the vulnerability of the displaced.

The moving performance was no work of fiction. The troupe was made up of children, teenagers and adults forced to flee their homes in Lebanon's latest war, pitting Israel against Hezbollah. Most had come from the south, a region pummeled by the Israeli army and now a battleground. Titled Rajeiin ("We Will Return"), the performance was

created amid conflict as the theater opened its doors to displaced people and offered cultural workshops. "It is an artistic, therapeutic and political approach, and a message of hope," said actor and theater director Kassem Istanbouli.

It is a space for the displaced to find their voices: The actors wrote their own stories. "Today, a large part of society in Lebanon is uprooted. These are ordinary people whose lives have been turned upside down by the bombs," added Istanbouli, who has led the rehabilitation of three cultural spaces in Beirut, Tyre and Tripoli. With his team, he had already hosted displaced people during the 2024 conflict as part of an emergency response. This time, they were more prepared. "Fifteen days be-

fore the resumption of all-out war, we gathered to get ready in case of a new escalation," the director explained. "Theaters must be homes for those who have lost theirs and art must stand with those who suffer."

At the Hamra theater, which occupies the space of the former Le Colisée cinema, films are screened every afternoon, a breath of fresh air for displaced families crowding the neighborhood, their days marked by anxiety and boredom far from home.

Rajeiin was scheduled to be performed again from April 10 to 12, despite the shock caused by violent Israeli attacks on several residential neighborhoods in western Beirut on Wednesday, April 8, which caused carnage.