

Lebanon Ceasefire: Iran Puts the US and Israel in Check

Hezbollah keeps 'finger on the trigger' as it warns Israel against ceasefire breaches



People celebrate the ceasefire as those forcibly displaced by Israel's attacks return to their homes in Lebanon on Friday, April 17, 2026.

Foreign Ministry spokesman: Vessels can transit the Strait of Hormuz through coordination with Iran

TEHRAN – Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has announced that the Strait of Hormuz will remain fully open to all commercial vessels for the remainder of the Lebanon ceasefire.

In a post on X, Araghchi wrote: "In line with the ceasefire in Lebanon, the passage of all commercial vessels through the Strait of Hormuz is declared fully open for the remaining duration of the ceasefire, via the coordinated route previously announced by the Ports and Maritime Organization of the Islamic Republic of Iran." ▶ Page 2

In Tehran synagogue, Iran's Jewish community mourns martyred Leader in historic display of unity

TEHRAN – In a powerful testament to inter-faith solidarity, Tehran's Yusef Abad Synagogue held a solemn memorial ceremony on April 16 for the martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

The gathering at the Jewish place of worship was not merely a ritual. It was a profound declaration of shared grief and national unity. Photos from the event showed attendees from across Iran's religious communities standing shoulder to shoulder, their faces etched with sorrow and resolve. ▶ Page 2

'JANFADA' girls demonstrate readiness to defend country

TEHRAN – Thousands of girls from different age groups and from all walks of life participated in a rally in Tehran on Friday to show their preparedness to defend homeland against any aggression by enemies.

The event, organized under a campaign titled "JANFADA", literally meaning "ready to sacrifice life", aimed to renew allegiance to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution and declare support for the armed forces.

The "JANFADA" campaign began on March 29 to demonstrate public readiness to defend the country under current sensitive conditions. Yet what unfolded exceeded expectations. Within just a few days, millions signed



up, adding their names to a list that continues to grow rapidly, and it has reached a staggering figure of over 27 million participants so far.

In a message marking the 40th day since the martyrdom

of Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the new Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei, referred to the campaign, stating: "Undoubtedly, your resounding cries in the public squares have a profound impact on the outcome of the negotiations. Likewise, the

astonishing and ever-increasing number of millions participating in the "Ready to Sacrifice for Iran" campaign is an influential factor in this arena."

Iranian women and girls who are ready to sacrifice their lives with love for their homeland,

took to the streets, as they did over the past 48 nights, holding the tricolor Iranian flag to say that they will defend the country to the last drop of blood shoulder to shoulder with men and the armed forces.

Support for one's homeland and the willingness to defend it is nothing new for Iranians. The country's history is filled with moments when people, despite their differences, have stood united at critical turning points. From resisting foreign invasions in ancient times to enduring the pressures of modern conflicts, one constant remains: a profound sense of belonging to the land and a shared national identity.

Pete Hegseth faces a reckoning for war crimes in Iran

By staff writer

TEHRAN — The corridors of power in Washington are finally echoing with the screams of the innocent, as the political cost of the U.S.-Israeli aggression against Iran reaches a boiling point.

Representative Yassamin Ansari, an Iranian-American lawmaker, has shattered the silence of the American establishment.

On April 15, she introduced six articles of impeachment against Pete Hegseth, the Secretary of War whose tenure has been defined by a sociopathic disregard for international law and human life.

This legislative move is a long-overdue indictment of the U.S. military's war crimes in Iran, including the Minab school massacre.

When American Tomahawk missiles struck the Shajareh Tayyebah elementary school in Hormozgan, killing 168 children and teachers, Hegseth did more than just authorize the slaughter. ▶ Page 5

IRCS lauds China's humanitarian assistance during war

TEHRAN – The head of the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS), Pirhossein Kolivand, has praised the aid consignments provided by China's government to help Iran during the US-Israeli war against the country.

"We did not ask for help from any country, and many countries volunteered to do this work," he said. "The countries that volunteered for help consider its spiritual value more than its material value, and they say that the spiritual message of this aid is that we are together and we want to have a share in this defense," IRNA quoted Kolivand as saying.

The official made the remarks in a Thursday meeting with Chinese ambassador to Tehran, Cong Peiwu.

Peiwu said that China has delivered 58 tons of emergency medical aid to Iran in cooperation with the Iranian Red Crescent Society. ▶ Page 7



Iran's battlefield strength shapes the course of Pakistan-led talks

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN – The official visit of Pakistan's Chief of Defense Forces (CDF), Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, to Iran underscores Pakistan's growing role in regional and global diplomacy at a time of heightened tensions in West Asia involving the United States and Israel.

Pakistan's peacemaking efforts have placed General Munir, alongside Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, in the international spotlight as they try to mediate between Washington and Tehran in hopes of ending a conflict that has disrupted global energy supplies and rattled markets. ▶ Page 2

Singer Mohsen Chavoshi emerges as Islamic Revolution Artist of the Year



TEHRAN PAPERS

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

A naval blockade would be extremely costly for the United States

Shargh, in an editorial, examined the prospect of the US naval blockade against Iran. Announcing a 'naval blockade' is, in fact, a clear sign of retreat. Suppose the United States decides to target every ship in the Indian Ocean and the Sea of Oman that is heading to or departing from Iran, and Iran offers no response, allowing the mission to succeed. Is the sea route really Iran's only breathing channel? The country's domestic capacities are so extensive that, if used properly, many needs can be met internally. Moreover, Iran shares thousands of kilometers of land borders with multiple countries. Therefore, a naval blockade would not only be the least effective measure against Iran, but it would also impose a very high cost on the United States.

Arman-e-Melli: Diplomatic visits

Arman-e-Melli, in its commentary, discussed the visit of Pakistan's Chief of Defense Forces (CDF) Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, aimed at consultations with Iranian officials. Pakistani officials have recently pursued an active diplomatic agenda by traveling to Iran and Saudi Arabia to help create conditions for the resumption of negotiations. Asim Munir traveled to Iran to advance Islamabad's negotiations and encourage Tehran to continue the talks. Pakistani analysts say that these significant visits by the country's political and military leaders to the region signal a glimmer of hope for extending the current temporary ceasefire between Iran and the United States. Of course, the ceasefire in Lebanon is also a positive indicator for Iran's decision regarding the next round of negotiations. However, the United States must adhere to a logical framework for the talks and avoid excessive demands or repeating the breaches it committed before the ceasefire, which would obstruct progress.

Iran: A golden opportunity for Iran and China

In the recent West Asia crisis, China demonstrated that its approach to regional dynamics—contrary to common assumptions—is neither ideological nor based on military presence. Instead, it is shaped around geo-economics, pragmatic diplomacy, and strategic patience, and this creates a valuable opportunity for Iran in shaping the future of Tehran-Beijing relations. Hamed Vafaei, a scholar of Chinese studies, explained China's three-stage strategy for playing a role in the recent conflict in an interview with the Iran newspaper. Without incurring any military cost and relying solely on economic leverage and quiet diplomacy, China managed to secure its energy supply, accelerate the process of de-dollariza-

tion and the rise of the petro-yuan, and reinforce its credibility as an effective regional mediator. Iran, by using the Strait of Hormuz card, can elevate China from a mere economic partner to a diplomatic anchor and a balancing force against pressure from Trump. Iran can also use China's newly strengthened diplomatic standing to raise the issue of stability in the Strait of Hormuz at the upcoming Xi Jinping - Trump summit.

Etemad: The efforts of Iranian diplomats are a continuation of the military achievements

Etemad discussed Iran-US negotiations after the ceasefire in an interview with political figure Fatemeh Rakei. According to this analyst, although the other side demanded a two-week ceasefire, a new arena of confrontation has now opened. This time, the commanders of Iran's diplomatic corps have become ready to face the other side. Just as all national capacities were mobilized to support soldiers and military commanders on the defensive front, all of the country's capabilities and resources must now be deployed to ensure the success of the diplomats. Any weakening of diplomacy runs counter to national interests and undermines the country's potential. Every diplomatic decision is made with the approval of responsible institutions at the highest levels of state and government. Therefore, personal remarks or views that contradict national interests must not send the signal abroad that Iran lacks a unified voice regarding either the battlefield or diplomacy.

Khorasan: China will not back down in confrontation with Trump

It is evident that the United States is changing the way it engages with the world, and in doing so, it shows no hesitation about reshaping the international order itself. This is precisely the danger point that has pushed China, for some time now, into a phase of confrontation with the United States. In reality, China does not seek a confrontation with the US, and even before recent developments, despite continuing to operate within a unipolar system, it had already found itself in direct opposition to Washington on numerous issues — such as the Russia-Ukraine war, helping Iran circumvent sanctions, and vetoing recent UN Security Council resolutions against Iran. China will certainly not allow its oil lifelines to be cut so easily. Even now, a list of mechanisms to sustain Iran-China cooperation in energy supply and trade — centered on bypassing Trump's new sanctions model — is being put into action.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baqaei also clarified Araghchi's comments. He said the Lebanon ceasefire was part of the two-week Iran-US truce agreement. He noted that after the implementation of the ceasefire in Lebanon, vessels can transit the Strait of Hormuz under the framework of the two-week Tehran-Washington ceasefire and in coordination with Iranian authorities.

While noting that the strait partly lies within 'Iran's territorial waters,' he emphasized that it has long been accessible to global maritime traffic.

He accused the United States and Israel of fueling instability in the region, warning that their actions have disrupted global trade and adversely affected the international economy.

Khatibzadeh reaffirmed Iran's commitment to keeping the Strait of Hormuz open, while noting that new arrangements could be introduced in light of current conditions, particularly with regard to security, safe passage, and environmental considerations.

He added that a lasting resolution to the conflicts, coupled with a shift away from the "maximalist positions" of the United States, would help ensure that the Strait of Hormuz remains a stable and reliable artery for global commerce.

Iran's battlefield strength shapes the course of Pakistan-led talks

From page 1 ▶ Iran and the United States reached a two-week ceasefire on April 8 through Pakistani mediation, following a joint US-Israel war that began on February 28. The truce temporarily halted hostilities, including exchanges of strikes across multiple regional fronts.

This ceasefire was followed by Pakistani-mediated negotiations in Islamabad on April 11 and 12. However, the talks collapsed without an agreement, with Tehran citing excessive US demands. The discussions were based on a 10-point Iranian proposal that President Donald Trump had initially shown willingness to consider. The plan included sanctions relief, regional security assurances, and guarantees against future attacks by the United States and Israel.

After the failure of the first round of talks, Pakistan intensified its mediation efforts to prepare for a new round of negotiations in Islamabad. In this context, Pakistan's top military leadership travelled to Tehran on Wednesday.

General Munir held talks with senior Iranian officials, including President Masoud Pezeshkian. During a meeting on Thursday night, Pezeshkian praised Pakistan's constructive role in brokering the ceasefire, calling its efforts "effective and responsible."

"Iran seeks lasting peace and stability in the region and emphasizes the realization of the rights of the Iranian nation within the framework of international law," the Iranian president said.

General Munir, for his part, highlighted the deep religious, historical, and cultural ties between the two countries. He also met Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, who headed the Iranian delegation in the Islamabad negotiations. The US delegation was led by Vice President JD Vance.

General Munir was also warmly welcomed by Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, who expressed appreciation for Pakistan's role in facilitating dialogue and said he was "delighted" to receive the field marshal.

No date has yet been set for the second round of Iran-US talks, but



Pakistan's diplomatic activity has fueled speculation that further negotiations could lead to a breakthrough.

This speculation has grown following Sharif's four-day regional tour, which began in Jeddah on Wednesday. During the visit, he met Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who praised the "constructive role" played by both Sharif and Munir, according to Pakistan's Foreign Ministry.

Sharif's regional visit is widely seen as an effort to reassure Persian Gulf allies and build broader regional support, while General Munir continues diplomatic engagement aimed at narrowing the gaps between Tehran and Washington.

Lebanon ceasefire

A 10-day ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon has further raised hopes for progress in upcoming Tehran-Washington talks. Halting Israeli strikes in Lebanon is part of Iran's broader 10-point plan presented to the White House before the two-week ceasefire between Iran and the US.

Reports suggest that the Lebanon ceasefire has caused anger within Israel. The Jerusalem Post reported that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu accepted the truce under pressure from Donald Trump.

"Israel will not be bombing Lebanon any longer," Trump wrote on Truth Social on Friday. "They are PROHIBITED from doing so by the U.S.A. Enough is enough."

In Tehran synagogue, Iran's Jewish community mourns martyred leader in historic display of unity



From page 1 ▶ On the synagogue's wall, a famous saying by Imam Khomeini was prominently displayed: "The Jewish faith is separate from Zionism." Above the entrance, a banner read: "O martyred Leader, your path will continue."

Another large placard, featuring the image of Ayatollah Khamenei, declared: "Unity of Iran's faiths against aggression — condemnation of the attack on the Tehran synagogue by the child-killing Zionist regime and criminal America."

Iran's Jewish community, numbering approximately 25,000, has once again chosen the side of right. Following the U.S.-Israeli aggression on Iran on February 28, the community issued a resolute statement of support for the Islamic Republic.

Religious and political leaders of the Jewish community, including their representatives in the Iranian Parliament, expressed their deep hatred for the military aggression by Israel and the United States, reaffirming their unwavering loyalty to Tehran.

The very act of holding this memorial — especially after Israel and America bombed a synagogue in Tehran — is living proof that Iran's Jewish community sees its roots not in Tel Aviv, but in the ancient soil of Persia.

In a region torn by sectarianism, Iran stands as a stark contrast. Jews have their own parliamentary representative, freely practice their faith, and live as equal citizens. This ceremony was not an exception. It was a reflection of a deeply ingrained culture of respect, one that separates Judaism from the violent extremism of Zionism.

As one attendee put it: "We are Iranian first. Our homeland is under attack. And we stand with Iran until the end."

Israel and its lobby have means to make Trump dance to their tune, professor says

TEHRAN- Israel and its enormously powerful lobby have the means to make President Trump "dance to their tune," political scientist John Mearsheimer told Judge Andrew Napolitano on the "Judging Freedom" podcast on April 14, 2026.

Mearsheimer argued that Trump is in no position to negotiate a meaningful deal to end the ongoing war with Iran because Israel has no interest in a ceasefire — much less an agreement that satisfies Tehran's demands, including maintaining uranium enrichment capability.

"Israel would prefer to wreck Iran, much the way Syria was wrecked," Mearsheimer said.

He noted that the Israeli lobby has demonstrated its ability to control Trump's policy repeatedly since the president returned to the

White House in January 2025.

The only exception, according to Mearsheimer, would be if the global economy were on the verge of disaster — a scenario so dire that Trump would feel he has no choice but to stand up to Israel.

Mearsheimer's assessment reflects a long-standing debate about the role of pro-Israel advocacy groups in US foreign policy. Together with Stephen Walt, he co-authored "The Israel Lobby and US Foreign Policy," which argues that a loose coalition of individuals and organizations has consistently pushed American policy in a pro-Israel direction — not through conspiracy, but through political activity.

The most powerful among them is the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). Founded in 1954, AIPAC maintains over 50

full-time lobbyists on Capitol Hill, and spends nearly \$1 million per quarter on lobbying alone. In the 2024 election cycle, AIPAC-backed candidates won at least 318 seats in Congress. The organization spent over \$100 million, including \$8.5 million to unseat a single "Squad" member critical of Israel.

Beyond AIPAC, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations coordinates dozens of groups across the political spectrum. The Republican Jewish Coalition (RJC), founded in 1985, has grown from six chapters to 41, with over 21,000 members, and counts billionaire donors like the late Sheldon Adelson among its backers. The Democratic side includes J Street, a liberal Zionist advocacy group, though its spending is dwarfed by AIPAC's.

Private donors also play a mas-

sive role. Miriam Adelson, the Israeli-American mega-donor, distributed \$100 million through her super PAC to support Trump's 2024 presidential campaign.

Critics argue that this network has pushed US policy into costly wars.

Some analysts note that AIPAC's influence has limits — presidents from Reagan to Obama have defeated it on key votes. Others point to shifting public opinion, especially among younger Americans, who are increasingly critical of unconditional support for Israel.

But for Mearsheimer, the structural reality remains clear: as long as Israel opposes a deal, especially one permitting any uranium enrichment, no American president can deliver a meaningful agreement with Iran.

Lebanon ceasefire: Iran puts the US and Israel in check

Hezbollah keeps 'finger on the trigger' as it warns Israel against ceasefire breaches

TEHRAN – A 10-day ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon after weeks of intense fighting has drawn widespread reactions across the West Asia region and globally. Tens of thousands of displaced Lebanese began returning home to Beirut's southern suburbs, as well as towns and villages in southern Lebanon, at dawn on Friday after the truce took effect at midnight on Thursday (2100 GMT). According to UN figures, more than 1.2 million people across Lebanon had been displaced, the majority from the south.

According to Al Jazeera, the coastal highway linking Beirut and Mount Lebanon with the southern cities of Sidon and Tyre witnessed long lines of vehicles carrying returning families. Some displayed victory signs as they headed home, reflecting both relief and a sense of resilience after weeks of bombardment.

However, the ceasefire's fragility became evident within hours. The Lebanese army accused Israel of violating the agreement, while Lebanon's National News Agency reported that an ambulance was struck in the border town of Kounine, resulting in casualties among medical workers.

Trump's diplomatic claims

US President Donald Trump attempted to take credit for the ceasefire, announcing the truce after what he described as "excellent conversations" with Lebanese President Joseph Aoun and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. He stated that both leaders had agreed to begin a 10-day ceasefire as a step toward achieving peace between Israel and Lebanon.

Following the announcement, Trump invited Netanyahu and Aoun to the White House for what he called "the first meaningful talks between Israel and Lebanon since 1983".

Hezbollah warning

The Lebanese government welcomed the ceasefire agreement. Prime Minister Nawaf Salam expressed hope that the deal would allow displaced citizens to return safely to their homes. Hezbollah emphasized that the truce must include a comprehensive halt to attacks across Lebanon and reject any continued operational freedom for Israeli forces. The movement warned that it remains fully prepared to respond to any violations, stating it has its "finger on the trigger."

Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also welcomed the ceasefire, expressing hope that it would pave the way for sustainable peace and reaffirming support for Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity.



Victory signs as people return home to southern Lebanon [Louisa Gouliamaki/Reuters]

Iran's strategic role and diplomatic positioning

Iran also welcomed the truce, presenting it as a product of both resistance on the ground and sustained diplomatic engagement. In a statement issued Thursday night, Foreign Ministry spokesman Ismail Baghaei praised the "legendary perseverance" of the Lebanese people and resistance fighters for standing firm against Israeli aggression. He called for the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon.

Baghaei further described the ceasefire as a direct outcome of Tehran's diplomatic efforts. He pointed to recent talks between Iran and the United States in Islamabad, mediated by Pakistan, where Iran consistently stressed the necessity of a simultaneous ceasefire across the region, including Lebanon. The talks held on April 11 and 12 did not lead to a final agreement due to what Iran described as excessive US demands. Tehran maintained that any deal must include Lebanon and a halt to Israeli strikes there. Iran's position linked developments in Lebanon to broader regional negotiations, reinforcing its view of interconnected fronts.

Iran's Parliament speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf also weighed in. He said, "The ceasefire (in Lebanon) was only achieved thanks to Hezbollah's steadfastness and the unity of the axis of resistance."

The commander of the IRGC Quds Force, General Esmaeil Qa'ani, also attributed the ceasefire to the steadfast resistance of Lebanon and the strategic support of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Global reactions

Beyond the region, global reactions followed swiftly. UN Secretary-General António Guterres commended the ceasefire in Lebanon and urged all parties to fully respect it and comply with international law at all times.

European leaders echoed similar sentiments. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen described the agreement as a "relief,"

emphasizing continued support for Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity. EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas stressed that the ceasefire must be used to step back from violence and create space for a more lasting peace.

French President Emmanuel Macron also called on Israel to respect Lebanese sovereignty and end the war.

The military context behind the truce

Renewed fighting erupted between Israel and Hezbollah last month. Israel launched strikes on Lebanon on March 2 in response to attacks by Hezbollah amid the broader repercussions of the US-Israel war on Iran that began on February 28.

Since March 2, more than 2,100 people have been killed and around 7,000 wounded in Israeli attacks on Lebanon, according to the country's health ministry. This includes more than 300 fatalities from a series of nationwide airstrikes on April 8, which heavily targeted Beirut in what has been described as the largest assault on the capital in decades.

Following the intense bombardment of April 8, the Israeli military halted attacks on Beirut amid mounting pressure ahead of the Islamabad talks between Tehran and Washington. On the same day, Iran and the United States had reached a temporary two-week ceasefire mediated by Pakistan. However, Israeli operations continued in southern Lebanon, where Hezbollah forces engaged in fierce confrontations with an advancing ground invasion, leading up to the current truce.

Despite the ceasefire, Netanyahu has stated that Israeli troops will remain stationed up to 10 kilometers in southern Lebanon. Defense Minister Israel Katz had previously suggested that the occupied zone could extend to the Litani River, approximately 30 kilometers from the border, and indicated that homes in border villages could be demolished.

Now, reports suggest the ceasefire has sparked anger within Is-

rael. According to the Jerusalem Post, Netanyahu had to agree to the ceasefire under Trump's pressure.

Limits of US military power

While Trump has tried to claim credit for the ceasefire, the broader sequence of events points to a more complex and layered reality. The agreement appears to have emerged not from a single diplomatic initiative but from a convergence of sustained military resistance and strategic pressure at multiple levels.

Hezbollah's continued battlefield resilience played a central role in shaping the conditions that made prolonged conflict increasingly costly for Israel. At the same time, Iran's approach—combining diplomatic engagement with firm conditions tied to regional de-escalation—helped redefine the framework and introduced clear limits to further escalation.

Iran's insistence that any diplomatic progress must include a halt to Israeli operations in Lebanon, along with its broader regional posture, contributed to shifting the balance of power. Its ability to link multiple fronts and leverage geopolitical pressure points, including tensions in the Persian Gulf, added further weight to its position. More importantly, Iran's full control of the Strait of Hormuz has remained a thorn in Trump's side. Iran asserted control of the strategic waterway at the beginning of the US-Israel war on February 28.

In this context, the United States, facing mounting regional challenges and limited strategic gains amid the war it jointly launched against Iran with Israel, appears to have moved toward de-escalation, applying pressure on Israel to accept the truce in Lebanon. This suggests that the ceasefire was not merely a goodwill gesture but part of a broader recalibration driven by changing realities on the ground.

Ultimately, the ceasefire highlights the limits of military dominance when confronted with sustained and organized resistance supported by regional alliances. It underscores how Hezbollah's role, within a wider axis of resistance aligned with Iran, has evolved into a decisive factor in shaping outcomes in Lebanon.

Whether this ceasefire will hold remains uncertain, particularly in light of early violations and unresolved strategic objectives. However, it has already demonstrated that determined resistance, combined with coordinated diplomatic strategy, can compel even powerful actors to reconsider their course—marking a significant moment in the evolving dynamics of the region.

FIBA World Cup qualifier: Iran to face Syria on June 29

TEHRAN – Iran's postponed FIBA World Cup qualifying clash against Syria has been scheduled for June 29, though the host venue has yet to be finalized.

According to federation spokesman Mohsen Moezzi, preparations for the national men's basketball team are already underway as Iran gear up for the upcoming qualification window.

"We are waiting for the Ministry of Sports to officially authorize the resumption of activities, as all federations were suspended at the start of the conflict," Moezzi said. "Once approval is granted, we will fully restart our programs."

Moezzi noted that Iran's 3x3 squad were cleared to compete at the Sanya Beach Games, but decisions on the national league and senior team camps remain pending.

When asked about coordination with Sotiris Manolopoulos, the Greek head coach of Team Melli, he confirmed ongoing communication. "Yes, we are in touch. He is awaiting our finalized schedule so he can join the camp and implement his plans."

With the third window of World Cup qualifiers set to open on July 1, Iran believes there is still sufficient time for training camps and tuneup games. "Once the Ministry authorizes the start of our camps, we will proceed accordingly," Moezzi added.

As for the postponed fixture from the second window, Moezzi said: "We have one remaining match against Syria. The likely date is June 29, ahead of the third window, but the official venue is still undecided."

Ghanbari: Australia experience will fuel Iran's future in Women's Asian Cup

TEHRAN – Zahra Ghanbari, captain of Iran's women's national football team, believes that despite a difficult campaign, the 2026 AFC Women's Asian Cup provided invaluable experience for the squad as they look ahead to future tournaments.

Iran exited Group A after three defeats to Australia, South Korea, and the Philippines, but Ghanbari insists that the team gained important lessons during the tournament held in Gold Coast.

"It was my first appearance in the biggest Asian event, and it was truly an honor to play there," Ghanbari said. "From the start, we knew we were placed in an extremely tough group. South Korea, hosts Australia, and the Philippines were all strong, well prepared teams — and technically on a higher level than us."

She highlighted the rapid rise of the Philippines, a team Iran had faced in the Olympic qualifiers two years earlier. "The Philippines showed remarkable improvement compared to our previous match. With the experience we collected in Australia, I'm hopeful we can enter the next editions with better planning, more focus, and stronger ambition," she noted.

Ghanbari also spoke about the off field pressure the players faced during their stay in Australia.

"Given the circumstances back home, some players received tempting and unusual offers to stay and live in Australia," she revealed. "But for me, returning home to my mother and my family was the clear choice. Being with family is more valuable than anything else."

Iran ready for 2026 FIVB U17 World Championship, coach says

TEHRAN – Head coach Arash Sadeghiani

has expressed confidence in Iran's readiness for the 2026 FIVB Volleyball Boys' U17 World Championship, where the young Persians will compete in Pool E with Brazil, Bulgaria and Japan.

Doha, Qatar will host the second edition of the tournament from Aug. 19 to 29.

"Our team have previously finished as the runnersup of Asia, won the World School Championship, and also claimed the CAVA title. Now, we're preparing for the U17 World Championship. Since last year, we divided the players into two A and B groups, and because we know that growth and development in youth categories happens at an extremely fast pace, we invited two roughly 20player groups again for new evaluations," Sadeghiani said.

"The first stage has just finished, and the second group has now started training. Fortunately, the players' condition has significantly improved, and we've seen remarkable progress. From the top talents of these two groups — alongside our main roster — we will select the final squad. Naturally, there will be some changes, because players develop rapidly at this age. This approach ensures that no talent is overlooked, and we enter the World Championship with a fully prepared team," he added.

"As part of our preparation path, we took part in the World School Championship and managed to win the title. That tournament was extremely valuable, giving our players crucial international experience. After that, with the support of the Volleyball Federation, we approved a program for our team to participate in the Iran Volleyball Professional League. Despite this category being one level above our players' age group, we performed very well and the team were put under excellent competitive pressure.

"Additionally, we also entered the second division league, where we played around 12 intense, highquality matches in homeandaway format. Competing in official matches at these ages is vital, and these games were exactly what we needed. Overall, the competitions we took part in during the second half of the season were perfectly planned to maximize our preparation for the World Championship," Sadeghiani stated.

"We've been drawn into a very tough group, featuring Brazil, Japan, and Bulgaria. That means we have opponents from Asia, Europe, and South America. The 24 qualified teams have been distributed across six pools of four, with defending champions Italy, winners of the inaugural edition in 2024, among the leading teams in the field. The 2026 edition will introduce a revised competition format, with the top two teams in each pool and the four best third-placed teams progressing to the Round of 16 before the competition moves into a knockout phase to determine the medalists. Despite these changes, our full focus is on preparing and sending the strongest possible version of our team," he concluded.

Faraji secures spot in 2026 Youth Olympic Games

TEHRAN – The International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) has officially announced that Iran's rising star, Benyamin Faraji, has earned qualification for the 2026 Youth Olympic Games.

The ITTF confirmed Faraji's place in the event following his impressive run over the past season.

Faraji clinched a bronze medal at the 2025 Asian Youth Games in Bahrain and finished among the world's top 10 players in the under 19 ITTF rankings—achievements that sealed his Olympic ticket.

The fourth edition of the Youth Olympic Games will take place from October 30 to November 16, 2026, hosted by Senegal across its three cities: Dakar, Diamniadio, and Saly.

LATES NEWS

for the United States and Iran to reach a permanent agreement to end the conflict.

■ Army to defend Iran to last drop of blood

Brigadier General Ali Abdollahi, commander of Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters, said the Iranian Army will defend the country's sovereignty and national interests "to the last drop of blood."

In a message marking the Islamic Republic of Iran Army Day (April 18), he said the Armed Forces stand ready to confront any aggression and will firmly respond to hostile threats.

■ Ceasefire shows failure of US, Israel: Ansarullah leader

The leader of Yemen's Ansarullah Movement, Abdul-Malik al-Houthi, said the current ceasefire reflects the failure of the United States and Israel to achieve their objectives against Iran.

He said that toppling Iran's political system was among the main goals of the aggressors, but the effort ultimately failed.

■ Army chief: forces ready to confront any threat

Iran's Army Chief Commander Amir Hatami said the military is fully prepared to confront any threat with "firm resolve, vigilant eyes, an iron will, and fingers on the trigger."

In a message marking National Army Day (April

18), he said the Army has never allowed enemies to undermine Iran's dignity or security and remains committed to defending the nation under the leadership of Mojtaba Khamenei.

■ Lebanese resistance forced Israel to accept ceasefire: Iranian official

Ali-Akbar Ahmadian, a member of Iran's Supreme Defense Council, said the "courageous resistance" of the Lebanese people and Hezbollah fighters forced Israel to accept a ceasefire.

He added that supporting the Resistance remains a key strategic principle for Iran.

■ Iran says vessels must use safe corridors in Strait of Hormuz

A senior Iranian official told Reuters that ships transiting the Strait of Hormuz must pass through designated corridors considered safe by Tehran.

■ Trump claims Iran agreed to unlimited nuclear suspension

Donald Trump has claimed that Iran agreed to an unlimited suspension of its nuclear program.

In remarks to Bloomberg, he said an agreement to end the war is "almost complete," adding that most key issues have been finalized.

"We are done with most of the key points with Iran, and it will happen very quickly," he said.

■ Hezbollah resistance, unity key to Lebanon ceasefire: Qalibaf

Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf has attributed the recent ceasefire in Lebanon to the steadfast resistance of Hezbollah and the unity of the "Axis of Resistance," underscoring that Tehran considers a lasting truce in Lebanon as vital as one in Iran.

In a post in Arabic on X, Qalibaf said the ceasefire would be approached with caution, adding, "We will remain together until the full realization of victory."

In a separate phone call with his Lebanese counterpart Nabih Berri, Qalibaf said, "We will never forget our Lebanese brothers," noting that he is closely monitoring developments to ensure the ceasefire holds.

Berri, for his part, briefed him on the impact of Israeli strikes, accusing Israel of carrying out systematic attacks and attempting to displace entire communities. He said more than 1.2 million Lebanese have been forced from their homes.

■ US allies see Iran deal taking months

European and Arab countries in the Persian Gulf believe the conflict in West Asia is unlikely to be resolved in the short term.

Officials from Arab and European states told Bloomberg that it could take at least six months

Maintaining economic stability in wartime requires full coordination of monetary policies: president

TEHRAN- During a staff inspection and visit to the Central Bank, the President, referring to the exceptional circumstances caused by the 40-day war and simultaneous external pressures, emphasized the necessity of maintaining financial stability and controlling inflationary expectations.

He stated: "Managing key markets, especially the foreign currency exchange and money markets, under such conditions requires full coordination among the monetary policymaker, the government, and other economic institutions."

According to an IRNA report on Thursday, Masoud Pezeshkian, visiting the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran, held a meeting with the Governor and senior managers of the institution. While receiving a report on the latest status of monetary and foreign currency exchange indicators, he issued the necessary orders to maintain financial stability and manage markets under the country's exceptional circumstances.

During this expert meeting, comprehensive reports were presented on the state of the foreign exchange market, liquidity, balance of payments, foreign exchange reserves, monetary regulatory policies, as well as measures taken to manage the country's economy during and after the war.

The President examined and evaluated the decision-making process and implementation of economic policies on the ground.

Pezeshkian, referring to the exceptional circumstances caused by the 40-day war and simultaneous external pressures, emphasized the necessity of maintaining financial stability and controlling inflationary expectations, and stated: "Managing key markets, especially the foreign currency exchange and money markets under such conditions, requires full coordination among the monetary policymaker, the government, and other economic institutions."

Appreciating the Central Bank's measures in managing potential market volatilities, he stated: "The performance of this institution in controlling war-induced shocks, preventing severe exchange rate fluctuations, and meeting the essential needs of the economy is remarkable. It demonstrates the high capacity for policymaking and targeted intervention in the country's macro economy."

The President, emphasizing the importance of liquidity management, directing credit toward productive sectors, controlling the mon-



etary base, and safeguarding foreign currency exchange reserves, called for the continuation of disciplined and intelligent approaches in monetary policies.

He added: "In wartime, any instability in financial markets can quickly spread to other economic sectors. Therefore, making the economy predictable and strengthening public trust are fundamental priorities."

During this meeting, the issues of financing the production chain, supporting economic enterprises under wartime conditions, debt management, and controlling bank imbalances were also discussed and reviewed.

The President emphasized the need for strict supervision over the banking network and preventing the diversion of resources.

Pezeshkian, noting the importance of economic resilience in times of crisis, stated: "Just as we witness steadfastness on the military front, we must also safeguard the country's stability in the economic sphere through cohesion, coordination, and timely decision-making."

He also emphasized the necessity of strengthening foreign currency exchange policies based on managed float, combating speculation and disruptive activities in the currency market, and facilitating the provision of foreign currency for the import of essential goods and medicine, issuing the necessary orders in this regard.

The President stressed the need to strengthen coordination among the Central Bank, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance, and other relevant institutions, and said: "Continuing precise and data-driven management in the monetary and foreign exchange spheres will play a decisive role in the country's successful passage through wartime conditions and stabilizing the path of economic growth."

Hossein Ferdowsi appointed as acting secretary of Free Zones High Council

TEHRAN- By order of the Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance, Hossein Ferdowsi has been appointed as the acting secretary of the Iranian Free Zones High Council.

According to IRNA, reporting from the Ministry of Economy, by decree of Seyyed Ali Madani Zadeh, Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance, Hossein Ferdowsi, who currently serves as the Deputy for Management Development and Human Resources of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance, has been appointed as acting secretary of the Free Zones High Council, while retaining his current position.

The text of the decree issued by the Minister of Economy emphasizes the need for full coordination between the ministry's departments and the secretariat of the free zones to advance the government's strategic objectives.

Prior to this, Reza Masrou held the position of secretary of the Iranian Free Zones High Council.

The establishment of free trade zones (FTZs) in Iran dates back to the Iranian calendar year 1368 (March 1989 - March 1990) following the fall in the country's oil income in the preceding year which prompted the government to promote non-oil exports.

The first two free trade zones of Iran were established in the south of the country. The first one was Kish Free Trade Zone established in 1368 on Kish Island in the Persian Gulf and the second one was Qeshm Free Trade Zone established the year after on Qeshm Island in the Strait of Hormuz.

Some five other free trade zones have been also established in the country since then, including Chabahar in southeastern Sistan-Bal-

uchestan Province, Arvand in southwestern Khuzestan Province, Anzali in northern Gilan Province, Aras in East-Azərbaycan Province and Maku in West-Azərbaycan Province, both in the northwest of the country.

The development of existing free trade zones and the establishment of new FTZs has become one of the major economic approaches of the Iranian government.

The Free Zones High Council's proactive formulation of support packages underscores a strategic commitment to shielding entrepreneurs from external shocks. By easing financial burdens, facilitating debt installments, and streamlining duties, these measures aim to transform free zones into resilient economic sanctuaries. As war-driven pressures mount, such targeted interventions are essential not only for sustaining business continuity but also for preserving Iran's broader economic stability and trade capacity.

Earlier this month, Reza Masrou emphasized the support for entrepreneurs amid war conditions, and stressed the design and formulation of support packages for them in free zones.

He made the remarks in a meeting of the Free Trade and Special Economic Zones High Council, which was held to review the implementation of national missions in these zones.

During the meeting, Masrou, highlighting the need to provide adequate services to the people and entrepreneurs in free zones, stated: "Following the recent attacks by the United States and Israel against our country, the issue of accelerating the provision of legal facilities, especially for entrepreneurs, has been communicated to the free zones organizations."

Strait of Hormuz under threat: Global energy security & economic vulnerabilities

TEHRAN - Trump's warning of a "maritime siege of Iran" has once again directed attention to the Strait of Hormuz as one of the world's most critical chokepoints for energy transportation; a corridor where any disruption could impact the structure of the global energy market and even seaborne trade.

In recent days, the matter of a naval blockade of Iran has generated widespread discussions among economic analysts, energy security experts, and international organizations, raising serious questions about the repercussions of such a move on crude prices, energy-dependent economies, and global commerce.

For Iran, the countries of the Persian Gulf region, and the major energy consumers in Asia and Europe, the Strait of Hormuz is not merely a transportation route but a key link in the energy security chain.

For this reason, any change in the status of tanker traffic through this passage has multi-layered effects on global supply, prices, and even the stability of financial markets.

Energy market experts believe that raising the issue of a naval blockade, regardless of its feasibility, creates an "expectation shock" in the market.

Experience from recent years shows that whenever tensions have risen in the Persian Gulf, the market has immediately reacted with an increase in oil prices.

Furthermore, analysts emphasize that the global oil market currently has limited capacity to absorb new tensions.

This issue becomes even more critical at a time when oil supply from some countries has already faced disruptions, and consequently, global spare production capacity is very limited. International institutions have also noted in their recent reports that the global oil market is in a "fragile



balance," and increased uncertainty could drive prices to higher levels.

New reports indicate that due to declining inventories and seasonal consumption growth in some importing countries, the market will face lower stockpile levels in the coming months. Therefore, even verbal threats can trigger new waves of price increases.

In this regard, the American bank J.P. Morgan recently announced that the release of US strategic energy reserves can only play an effective role in controlling prices until approximately April 20. According to the bank, after that date, the capacity to continue releasing reserves becomes limited, and this could usher the market into a sensitive phase.

According to this analysis, if tensions in the Strait of Hormuz increase simultaneously with declining inventories, the global oil market will face the risk of "exponential price increases," as there is no adequate alternative supply and export routes are limited.

Analysts at J.P. Morgan warn that any disruption to tanker traffic through the Strait of Hormuz could reduce commercial stockpile levels in Asia and Europe faster than expected and cause a price spike in the short term—a situation that could lead to rising

energy costs in production, transportation, and services.

Regional repercussions and Persian Gulf vulnerabilities

Alongside the global impacts, regional experts have also pointed to the potential effects of such a threat on the economies of the Persian Gulf countries.

Many of these nations are highly dependent on oil exports through the Strait of Hormuz, and any restrictions on their tanker traffic could affect their oil revenues and government budgets.

Given that Iran has announced that, within the framework of its sovereignty, it may give "lower priority for passage" to certain countries it considers to be involved in recent tensions, analysts believe some members of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council will be more vulnerable.

Reduced oil exports, increased insurance costs for tankers, and the potential rise in transportation costs could put pressure on the net income of these countries. Furthermore, there is concern that declining oil exports could reduce the financial capacity of governments to implement development projects and long-term investments.

Historical experience from past years has shown that even limited tensions in the Strait of Hormuz have led to higher marine insurance rates and increased mari-

time transport costs for regional countries.

Some international experts, also referring to the recent crises in the Red Sea, have warned that any simultaneous disruption in both the Strait of Hormuz and the Red Sea could severely strain global trade. This issue is particularly significant for Asian countries, which are the largest importers of energy.

If tanker traffic through the Strait of Hormuz faces restrictions, alternative routes are very limited, and global trade—especially in East Asia—may encounter higher energy costs and slower production.

Some experts also believe that disruptions to sea routes could affect natural gas prices, as a portion of liquefied natural gas exports also passes through this region.

Political feasibility and risk of self-harm

Alongside economic analyses, some international relations scholars have raised different perspectives on the feasibility of a naval blockade and its consequences.

They believe such an action would not only have a limited effect on Iran's economy but would also bring unforeseen consequences for the global economy.

Furthermore, the Financial Times believes that Trump's plan to blockade the Strait of Hormuz is high-risk and could harm the United States more than Iran. Trump's plan could dangerously escalate tensions and increase the risk of a wider conflict.

The report also states that such an action would not only target Iran's oil exports but could also disrupt the global flow of energy and create widespread economic shocks. This plan could damage the global economy and the United States more than it pressures Iran.

Solutions to strengthen supply chain of essential goods reviewed

TEHRAN- In a joint meeting between the Ministry of Agriculture and regulatory bodies as well as private sector associations, issues related to the supply chain of essential goods were reviewed.

According to Mehr News Agency, a meeting to examine and determine mechanisms for supplying essential goods from the northern ports was held at the Ministry's headquarters, attended by the deputy ministers of agriculture, representatives from relevant regulatory bodies, and production and trade associations from the agricultural sector.

During this session, topics such as increasing silo storage capacity, improving the performance of systems, the necessity of strengthening the private sector and enhancing its financial capacity and trust, increasing port facilities and reducing warehousing costs, avoiding parallel work in the goods clearance process, import in exchange for export, as well as managing fuel supply for machinery and managing transportation costs, were discussed and reviewed.

Iran's Customs Administration announced in a statement that during the 39 days of the imposed American-Zionist war against the country, customs clearance procedures for 2,874,000 tons of essential goods were completed at the country's customs offices and dispatched.

According to an IRNA report from Iran's Customs Administration on April 13, the statement reads: "Accordingly, customs clearance and the exit of more than 112,000 trucks carrying essential goods were carried out at the country's customs offices during the 39 days of the war, from February 28, 2026 to April 7, 2026."

In total, during the aforementioned period, 2,874,000 tons of essential goods were loaded and brought into the country through the national transport fleet.

The statement emphasized: "The country's customs offices are ready to carry out customs procedures and 24-hour clearance of essential goods needed by the people, as well as raw materials for production units, and this process continues with the cooperation and solidarity of traders, adjacent organizations, and the national transport network."

Additionally, the support package offering

customs facilities to economic actors in emergency situations remains in place at the country's customs offices.

Meanwhile, on April 11, the head of Iran's Customs Administration, referring to the directives and instructions issued during the war, emphasized the continued provision of special customs facilities to economic actors in emergency situations.

According to IRNA from Iran's Customs Administration, Foroud Asgari, while appreciating the relentless efforts of customs personnel as the country's economic border guards during the third imposed war, added: "During the third imposed war, the dedicated and hardworking customs staff, just as in the 12-day war, stood alongside the people in the field of service. With round-the-clock efforts throughout this period, they were present in the arena of service and defense of the homeland. These relentless efforts and hardships deserve appreciation and gratitude."

He stated: "Despite repeated threats at zero border points and ports across the country, bringing satisfaction and contentment to the people, especially economic actors, was the best reward during these difficult days. Customs personnel, as the economic border guards of the country, once again distinguished themselves with honor and pride by maintaining their presence at customs offices and carrying out customs procedures for essential goods and basic necessities around the clock, in defense of the homeland."

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

The Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), in order to facilitate transit under the current circumstances, has delegated the authority to change the exit border or destination customs office for goods in transit to the directors of executive customs offices.

According to a report by Mehr News Agency on March 6, Iran's Customs Administration, considering the current situation and with the aim of expediting the exit of transit goods, has increased the authority of executive customs directors in the area of domestic and foreign transit.

Based on the instruction communicated by the Transit Office to supervisors and directors of executive customs offices, the authority to change the exit customs office or destination for goods in transit has been delegated to customs directors.

This instruction states that due to the congestion of truck traffic at some exit borders and with the goal of facilitating the exit of transit goods and maximizing the use of domestic customs capacity, if international transport companies request a change of exit border, the matter covered in Note 2 of Article 95 of the Executive Regulations of the Customs Affairs Law can be carried out in coordination with the Director General or deputies of the Transit Office or the Director General of the exit customs office.

Accordingly, if the new border is open and confirmed by the supervisors or directors of the relevant customs offices, customs can accept the request to change the exit border and follow up on the receipt of the goods.

Furthermore, if there is a request to change the domestic destination customs office, the possibility of carrying out this process similar to foreign transit has been provided. In cases where the goods have arrived at the exit customs office but the transport company requests exit from another border due to border conditions, the container and seals will first be inspected, and customs formalities completed at the [initial] exit customs office. Then, by filing a new declaration and lodging a guarantee, the goods will be sent to the new exit customs office.

The Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration, in a notice on March 5, has announced 11 urgent measures to executive customs offices, which are aimed at facilitating and expediting foreign trade and enable the country's business community to benefit from approved facilities until the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20).

Why the alchemists of America's secret programs are vanishing

Inside the wave of disappearances hitting the architects of next-generation weapons and propulsion

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN — When President Donald Trump emerged from a closed-door briefing on April 16, he characterized the recent wave of missing and deceased American scientists as “pretty serious stuff,” a phrasing that suggests the administration is no longer viewing the “coincidence” of these events as a statistical anomaly.

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt confirmed that a formal investigation is underway, targeting a pattern that has been seen at least ten high-clearance experts, the architects of America's most sensitive aerospace and nuclear programs, simply drop off the map since 2023.

This looks like a systemic evacuation of the human capital required to maintain American technological hegemony.

The individuals involved represent the brain trust of institutions such as Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), and the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL).

Their specialties, plasma physics, exotic metallurgy, and inertial navigation, are the precise disciplines required to bridge the gap between theoretical physics and the “impossible” flight characteristics observed in Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena (UAP).

The Albuquerque nexus

The epicenter of this crisis is New Mexico, a state that serves as the nervous system for the U.S. nuclear and aerospace ecosystem.



The most high-profile disappearance occurred on February 27, 2026, when retired Major General William “Neil” McCasland walked out of his Albuquerque home with a .38-caliber revolver and nothing else, leaving behind his phone, glasses, and wearable devices.

McCasland was no ordinary officer. As the former commander of the AFRL at the infamous Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, he oversaw a \$2.2 billion portfolio in space acquisition and special programs.

His name gained notoriety in the 2016 WikiLeaks release of the Podesta emails, where he was described by Tom DeLonge as a “pivotal insider” who was “very, very aware” of secret programs related to recovered materials from the 1947 Roswell crash.

His exit, characterized by his wife as a period of “mental fog,” looks to many analysts like a clean-up operation or a forced extraction of a man who held the keys to the kingdom.

The pattern in Albuquerque

extends to Steven Garcia, a property custodian at the Kansas City National Security Campus (KCNSC) who oversaw over \$100 million in classified nuclear components.

He disappeared in August 2025, leaving his home in camouflage and armed with a handgun.

Within weeks, two employees of Los Alamos, Anthony Chavez and Melissa Casias, also vanished. In the case of Casias, her mobile devices were found wiped clean of all data, a technical signature that points toward professional counterintelligence protocols rather than a simple missing person case.

The alchemists of ‘forbidden’ physics

Beyond the administrative “gatekeepers” such as McCasland, the crisis has struck those doing the literal heavy lifting in materials science and propulsion.

Monica Jacinto Reza, the Director of the Materials Processing Group at JPL, vanished in June

2025 while hiking in California.

Reza was the co-inventor of “Mondaloy,” a high-performance nickel-based superalloy essential for next-generation rocket engines reportedly designed to replace Russian hardware.

In the world of alleged UAP reverse-engineering, the hull's atomic structure is often considered more critical than the engine itself; without metallurgists such as Reza, the recovered craft sitting in hangars remain inert paperweights.

The field of plasma physics has been equally gutted. In December 2025, Nuno Loureiro, the Director of MIT's Plasma Science and Fusion Center, was shot dead in his home in what authorities described as a “targeted attack.”

Loureiro was a global authority on magnetic reconnection and plasma turbulence, technologies that theoretically allow “trans-medium” craft to manipulate electromagnetic fields and achieve frictionless travel.

This echoes the chilling pre-death warnings of Amy Eskridge, a Huntsville physicist who specialized in anti-gravity research.

Before her suspicious reported suicide in 2022, she documented a years-long campaign of harassment that included microwave weapon sensations, break-ins, and anonymous messages encouraging her death.

Eskridge had publicly claimed that gravity-modification technology was being independently discovered and systematically suppressed by private aerospace firms.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Trump must find an exit route from his war of choice with Iran

TEHRAN - Donald Trump first imagined that the war will last hours or days but weeks have passed and the U.S. is sinking deeper into the Iran quagmire.

At first, he said the attack on Iran is an operation and not a war. But everything changed immediately.

Failing to force Iran into a capitulation, he has been making foolish and astonishing remarks such as a “whole civilization will die” that “never to be brought back again,” they will be sent back “to the Stone Age,” etc.

Now he has resorted to the desperate and risky attempt of naval blockade on Iran while the two-week ceasefire between the two countries, that went into force on April

8, is still, according to himself, “holding well”.

Iran's resilience in the face of the illegal war has made the U.S., which is considered the greatest military power in the world, look weak in the eyes of its rivals and friends. His war has laid bare the U.S. vulnerabilities and instead made Iran look very resilient and strong. It is for these reasons that Professor Robert Pape from the University of Chicago has said “the war is turning Iran into a major world power”.

Although Trump does not lose any opportunity to say the U.S. has the “best” military, aircraft carriers, warships, armaments, fighter jets, etc., this is not the whole story. Now it is mostly the war of wills rather than advanced weaponry.

Trump's United States has lost the war militarily, politically, diplomatically, economically, and most importantly morally and legally.

Fareed Zakaria, an American political commentator and author, has said “the U.S. is acting like past hegemony”.

In a post on Facebook, Turkish newspaper Yeni Safak says, “President Trump will go down in history as the leader who ended American hegemony and accelerated U.S. decline. It also said, “The Iran war exposed the limits of U.S. power, led to isolation by allies, and marked a turning point where Trump's imperial strategy was turned back from Tehran.”

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

The disappearance of 10 American scientists and a potential weapons program

By Kourosh Aliyani

TEHRAN — To provide a rational analysis of the disappearance of 10 American scientists within a short timeframe, grounded in technological and security realities, one must examine the loss of specialists beyond mere criminal or conspiracy-driven narratives. Instead, this phenomenon should be viewed within the framework of strategic asset management and the lifecycle of ultra-classified projects.

This text represents a preliminary effort to deduce the operational and technical logic governing these events.

The transition of advanced defense projects from development to deployment (2024–2026)

An examination of the professional backgrounds of the individuals who have exited public activity over the past two years reveals a meaningful convergence in the fields of plasma physics, inertial navigation, and metallurgy. This trend can be analyzed through the logic of

output security within classified projects.

I. Security logic: The shift from developer to operator

In advanced military-industrial complexes, every strategic project follows a specific lifecycle. When a technology, such as hypersonic propulsion or quantum guidance systems, moves beyond the laboratory stage and enters production and deployment, protective protocols undergo a fundamental shift:

- Knowledge sequestration: Specialists who possess deep technical details and understand a system's vulnerabilities become the most sensitive information nodes during the deployment phase.

The sequestration of these individuals, whether through administrative restrictions, physical isolation, or even biological elimination, is a non-standard but entirely plausible measure to prevent information leaks on the threshold of a weapon's operational use.



Kourosh Aliyani

- Technical freeze protocol: To prevent an adversary from reverse-engineering a potential weapon, all individuals involved in designing its underlying layers must be rendered inaccessible. This ensures the reconstruction of the manufacturing process is impossible for outsiders.

II. The nature of potential new weapons infrastructure

The hardware at the center of this period involves a new generation of ultra-high-velocity penetrator projectiles. The missing

specialties represent the final pieces of the puzzle for these potential weapons:

- Thermal protection: Advanced alloys designed to withstand extreme temperatures caused by friction in the upper layers of the atmosphere.

- Autonomous navigation: The use of quantum sensors that eliminate the need for satellite communication, rendering the weapon immune to radar jamming and signal disruption.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Pete Hegseth faces a reckoning for war crimes in Iran

The Minab massacre fuels a historic impeachment drive in Washington

From page 1 ▶ He actively suppressed the truth, attempting to frame Iran for his own atrocities while dismantling the very Pentagon offices tasked with investigating civilian casualties.

Ansari's articles, co-sponsored by thirteen other members of Congress, outline a terrifying pattern of conduct.

Beyond the illegal strikes, Hegseth is accused of endangering his own service-members by leaking sensitive operational data through private Signal chats.

This recklessness is matched by his flagrant violation of Article I of the U.S. Constitution, which reserves the power to declare war for Congress alone.

Hegseth has essentially operated as a rogue agent, politicizing the armed forces and treating the Middle East as a sandbox for his ideological delusions.

Endorsed by groups such as MoveOn, Win Without War, and the Center for International Policy, the measure describes Hegseth as the chief enabler of an illegal campaign of aggression that has killed thousands of Iranian civilians and risked wider regional chaos.



Hegseth's pattern of disregard, from firing experienced generals who questioned the strategy to misappropriating billions for this adventure, reveals a deeper rot: a willingness to sacrifice innocent lives and U.S. servicemembers alike for political theater.

Additionally, this impeachment effort reminds the world that not every American voice supports aggression.

Though passage remains unlikely in a Republican-led Congress, the filing forces a necessary reckoning.

Hezbollah: Fingers on trigger if ceasefire breaks

“Lion's Roar looks like a Kitten's Meow”

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – Hezbollah warns the Zionist regime that its “fighters will keep their fingers on the trigger” and are “ready to defend against the enemy's treachery and betrayal.”

A senior Hezbollah source told Al Jazeera Arabic: “A ceasefire cannot include any freedom of movement for the (Zionist regime). That would take us back to before March 2.”

The official added, “As long as the occupation (regime) remains on our land, Lebanon and its people have the right to resist by all means to force it to withdraw.”

The warnings come after U.S. President Donald Trump earlier boasted about securing a ten-day ceasefire in Lebanon, a claim that critics argue masks the real actors who made that achievement possible.

Hassan Fadlallah, a member of the Lebanese parliament from the Loyalty to the Resistance bloc, stated that Hezbollah “was informed by the Iranian ambassador in Beirut that Iranian efforts have succeeded in imposing a comprehensive ceasefire in Lebanon.”

Fadlallah added that the Americans “have pledged to inform the [Israeli regime's] Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, of this decision, as well as to notify Lebanese President Joseph Aoun.”

He pointed out that officials in Iran “will monitor the extent to which the Americans side complies with its commitments,” noting that “Iran's resumption of negotiations with the United States is contingent upon the fulfillment of this commitment.”

Fadlallah further stated that the matter “depends on the [Israeli regime's] adherence to all the provisions of the ceasefire,” adding: “We have returned to the original agreement reached in Islamabad, where the Lebanese file was set on the right track.”

Lebanon's Parliament Speaker, Nabih Berri, also received a phone call from his Iranian counterpart, Mohammad-Bagher Ghalibaf, during which they affirmed that “a ceasefire must be applied to Lebanon before anything else.”

Iran's foreign ministry spokesman, Esmaeil Baghaei, welcomed the ceasefire and emphasized that it was already part of the original Iran-U.S. agreement brokered by Pakistan. Baghaei also credited Pakistan's efforts over the past 24 hours in securing the 10-day pause.

Trump's announcement followed direct talks in Washington between officials representing the governments of Lebanon and the Zionist regime.



The war in Lebanon is between the aggressor, the Zionist regime, and the defender, Hezbollah. The Lebanese government is fundamentally not a defender in this war. The Lebanese army has not fired a single bullet against Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF). For this reason, the claim of a ceasefire between the Israeli regime and the Lebanese government, as asserted by Trump, is meaningless, critics argue.

What was discussed in Washington was essentially unrelated to a ceasefire, because none of the three parties, the Americans, Israeli regime, or the Lebanese present, represented Hezbollah as a party to this war.

Observers say this is where the Iranian argument of applying pressure and achieving a temporary ceasefire in Lebanon holds validity. On one hand, the Islamic Republic has insisted that peace in Lebanon should be part of any broader deal with America; and on the other hand, it has been exerting pressure on the Americans through Pakistani mediators to force the Zionist regime into a ceasefire. Iran said its decision to fully reopen the Strait of Hormuz came in line with the Lebanon ceasefire.

Pakistan's army chief traveled to Tehran and met senior Iranian military and security officials on the same day Trump announced the Lebanon ceasefire. Asim Munir held talks with Iranian Parliament Speaker Ghalibaf and Commander of Khatam al-Anbiya Headquarters Major General Abdollahi.

Middle East Eye has reported that Saudi Arabia pushed the U.S. to prioritize securing a ceasefire in Lebanon to sustain talks with Iran, citing multiple American, Western, and Arab officials.

There won't be any U.S.-Iran deal without a ceasefire in Lebanon, a foreign policy analyst, Trita Parsi, told Sky News. The ceasefire “may be either a step towards that or it may be trying to pacify that theatre during the Iran-U.S. talks.”

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Protecting 'living human treasures' vital for cultural continuity in Iran



TEHRAN - The head of the Research Institute of Anthropology at Iran's Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism has underscored the critical role of protecting cultural heritage bearers, particularly the elderly, in ensuring the continuity of historical memory and intergenerational knowledge transfer.

Farideh Majidi Khameneh highlighted the fundamental importance of intangible cultural heritage in shaping the identity of societies. She noted that in recent years, the global community has increasingly adopted a forward-looking approach by paying special attention to what are often referred to as "living human treasures."

She pointed to the adoption of the UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage as a clear indication of the vital role intangible heritage plays in preserving cultural identity and ensuring its transmission across generations.

Majidi Khameneh stressed that cultural heritage bearers, many of whom are elderly, serve as "living human treasures" whose knowledge and experience sustain the vitality of intangible heritage. In times of crisis and social transformation, she said, these individuals require increased protection and support, as the survival of intangible cultural practices depends on their continued presence and ability to pass on their knowledge.

Emphasizing the equal importance of tangible and intangible heritage, she noted that while the preservation of historical buildings, cultural sites, and museums is widely prioritized, similar attention must be directed toward safeguarding individuals who carry cultural knowledge. "These individuals are custodians of collective memory, experience, and identity," she said.

The anthropology researcher also outlined several practical measures to strengthen the protection of intangible heritage. These include identifying and officially registering heritage bearers in both urban and rural areas during their lifetimes, facilitating the transfer of their knowledge to younger generations, encouraging public participation in supporting them, and ensuring timely and accurate documentation of their expertise.

She concluded by stressing that accelerating efforts to record and transmit such valuable knowledge would help preserve national cultural assets and contribute to the dynamic continuity of a society's historical and cultural identity for future generations.

World Heritage sites: Ouadi Qadisha

Ouadi Qadisha is one of the most important settlement sites of the first Christian monasteries in the world, and its monasteries, many of which of great age, are set in an extraordinarily rugged landscape. Nearby are the vestiges of the great cedar forest of Lebanon, highly prized in ancient times for the construction of great religious buildings.

The Qadisha Valley site and the Forest of the Cedars of God (Horsh Arz el-Rab) are located in northern Lebanon. The Qadisha Valley is located North of Mount-Lebanon chain, at the foot of Mount al-Makmel and West of the Forest of the Cedars of God. The Holy River Qadisha, celebrated in the Scriptures, runs through the Valley. The Forest of the Cedars of God is located on Mount Makmel, between 1900 and 2050 m altitude and to the East of the village of Bcharré.

The rocky cliffs of the Qadisha Valley have served over centuries as a place for meditation and refuge. The Valley comprises the largest number of monasteries and hermitages dating back to the very first spread of Christianity. The main monasteries are those of St Anthony of Quzhayya, Our Lady of Hauqqa, Qannubin and Mar Lichaa. This Valley bears unique witness to the very centre of Maronite eremitism. Its natural caves, carved into the hillsides - almost inaccessible - and decorated with frescoes testifying to an architecture specifically conceived for the spiritual and vital needs of an austere life. There exist numerous terraces for growing grain by the monks, hermits and peasants who lived in the region; several of these terraces are still under cultivation today.

Linked to the Qadisha Valley through historic reference and contiguity, the Forest of the Cedars of God is the last vestige of antique forests and one of the rare sites where the Cedrus libani still

grows, one of the most valued construction materials in the antique world and cited 103 times in the Bible.

The Qadisha Valley comprises all the caves, monasteries and cultivated terraces that are associated with the activities from a very early phase of Christianity. The cultural elements of the site are for the most part existent, but their state of conservation varies: some religious buildings are dilapidated, their stability is precarious and with a few exceptions, the frescoes have almost all disappeared. The visual integrity of the Valley is disturbed by the increase in human settlements in the vicinity, especially on the ridges surrounding the Valley as well as by the uncontrolled visitor flow. The Reserve of the Forest of the Cedars of God is located within the boundaries of the property and is well preserved. However, its visual integrity is affected by souvenir shops on one side and by an illegal construction on the eastern side. The entrance to the Forest should be monitored and the illegal building should be demolished, in particular as it is located in an area subject to reforestation.

The original character of the ancient monastic troglodyte habitats is still visible. The monastic architecture and the agricultural habitats of the Valley have not yet been modified or altered by substitution interventions. In addition, they have not been hampered by activities incompatible with the spirit of the place. Over time, some sites have lost certain of their characteristic elements such as frescoes or structures. The global authenticity of the Christian vestiges is consequently vulnerable. The Forest of the Cedars of God has maintained its authenticity as related to the survival of its trees.

(Source: UNESCO)

Iran to mark intl. monuments day, honor restorers amid heritage concerns

TEHRAN - Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts is set to commemorate the International Day for Monuments and Sites on Saturday, April 18, with a ceremony honoring restorers and master artisans, as officials underscore the urgency of safeguarding the nation's cultural legacy in times of crisis.

Mohsen Tusi, head of the office for preservation, revitalization, and restoration of historical buildings, textures and sites, announced that the

event will coincide with the globally recognized observance established by the International Council on Monuments and Sites and endorsed by UNESCO in 1983.

Tusi described the occasion as "a valuable opportunity" to highlight the significance of preserving both cultural and natural heritage, which he said represents the historical identity and collective memory of the Iranian people.

He noted that this year's theme, designated by ICOMOS as "Living Heritage and Emergency Response" emphasizes the need for rapid, intelligent action in the face of mounting threats, particularly during crises and armed conflicts.

"The focus must be on strengthening the resilience and safety of historical buildings and sites so they can withstand various threats," Tusi said, calling for coordinated planning, collective efforts, and improved safety

standards across heritage environments.

According to the official, new initiatives are planned nationwide to enhance resilience, improve health, safety, and environmental (HSE) standards for both sites and visitors, and ensure better protection and restoration of cultural properties. These efforts, he added, are aimed at preserving Iran's heritage for future generations.

Iran's cultural heritage exhibition draws crowds in China amid wartime destruction at home

TEHRAN - As airstrikes by the United States and Israel battered parts of Iran and damaged dozens of cultural landmarks, a strikingly different scene unfolded thousands of kilometers away in China, where an exhibition of Persian antiquities drew growing numbers of visitors and deepened public curiosity about Iranian civilization.

Hosted in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia province, the exhibition showcased more than 150 historical artifacts from Iran, including finely crafted glassware and intricately woven carpets. The collection, part of a traveling cultural program across China, gained unexpected momentum after the outbreak of hostilities started on February 28.

Originally scheduled to conclude in March, the exhibition was extended into April due to rising demand, reflecting what observers describe as a surge of cultural interest among Chinese museum-goers at a time of geopolitical tension.

Curators said the war has lent the exhibition a heightened sense of urgency and emotional weight. Dong Bibing, who oversaw the display, described feeling "heartbroken" upon learning that Iranian heritage sites, including the UNESCO-listed Golestan Palace, had suffered damage during the bombardments, CNN reported on Wednesday.

At the same time, he emphasized the significance of safeguarding the artifacts on display. "There is a protective instinct now," he said, noting that the collection represents not only artistic excellence but also a tangible link to a civilization currently under strain.

Iran's cultural legacy spans millennia, with landmarks such as Persepolis symbolizing the architectural and artistic achievements of the Achaemenid Empire (550-330 BC). According to Iranian authorities, more than 130 heritage sites have been damaged or destroyed during the six-week bombing campaign, prompting concern from international bodies including UNESCO.

While Washington and Tel Aviv have denied deliberately targeting cultural sites, the scale of destruction has raised alarm among heritage experts and fueled global attention toward Iran's historical assets. President Donald Trump has previously threatened to destroy



Chinese museum-goers view Iranian antiquities at the Inner Mongolia Museum. (Photo: Inner Mongolia Museum/WeChat)

Iran's "whole civilization" if it does not cave to his demands.

In China, that attention has translated into a broader cultural awakening. Visitors to the Hohhot exhibition have shared their experiences widely, encouraging others to attend and learn more about Iran's past. For many, the artifacts offer a rare and immediate connection to a country often perceived as distant or unfamiliar.

The growing interest extends beyond museum halls. Bookstores in Beijing have reported increased demand for titles on Iran, including Persepolis by Marjane Satrapi, a coming-of-age story set during the Iranian Revolution. The book, along with documentaries and academic texts, has seen renewed popularity as Chinese readers seek to better understand the country behind the headlines.

University libraries have also recorded a spike in readership, with students exploring Iran's history, politics, and culture. Some cite a desire to grasp the roots of the conflict, while others are drawn by the artistic and architectural richness of Iranian heritage.

According to the CNN report, analysts note that the surge in interest is partly shaped by perceived cultural parallels between China and Iran—both civilizations with ancient ori-

gins and strong national narratives rooted in historical continuity. At the same time, shared geopolitical tensions with the United States have contributed to a sense of affinity among segments of the Chinese public.

Curators involved in the exhibition say the response has been overwhelmingly positive. Yin Quanbin, a Chinese curator based in Iran, expressed hope that the display would humanize Iranians in the eyes of Chinese audiences.

"They have their own joys and sorrows, their own perspectives," he said, adding that cultural exchange can play a vital role in fostering mutual understanding during times of conflict.

As the Hohhot exhibition concludes its latest run, organizers plan to move the collection to another Chinese city, continuing its nationwide tour. For many visitors, the exhibition has become more than a display of artifacts, it is a reminder of the fragility and resilience of cultural heritage in times of war.

The contrast is stark: while parts of Iran's historical landscape face destruction, its cultural legacy continues to captivate audiences abroad, underscoring both the global value of heritage and the urgent need for its protection.

Shaneh Tarash village emerges as a model for community-based rural tourism in northern Iran



By Afshin Majlesi

TEHRAN - The village of Shaneh Tarash, located in Tonekabon county in Mazandaran province, is steadily gaining recognition as a leading example of community-based rural tourism, where local identity, traditional livelihoods, and sustainable development strategies are being effectively integrated.

Nestled amid the lush landscapes of northern Iran, Shaneh Tarash combines pristine natural surroundings with a rich heritage of handicrafts. The village is particularly known for its long-standing traditions of Chadorshab weaving and the crafting of traditional wooden combs, skills that have historically played a central role in the local economy and cultural identity.

The village's name itself reflects this heritage. In Persian,

"Shaneh" means comb, while "Tarash" refers to carving, pointing to the centuries-old craft of hand-carving combs, once a key occupation among residents. Today, this traditional profession has been revived and reimagined as part of the village's tourism narrative, with live workshops and hands-on experiences allowing visitors to engage directly with local artisans.

Since around 2018, Shaneh Tarash has been undergoing a structured transformation under a framework of national cooperation and international development approaches. The initiative has drawn on the expertise and support of organizations such as the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, alongside Iran's Ministry of Cooperatives, Labour and Social Welfare.

At the core of this transformation is an "innovative tourism destination management" approach, designed to promote tourism-driven employment, empower local communities, and enhance stakeholder participation. The strategy aims to create a sustainable link between indigenous heritage, traditional livelihoods, and the broader tourism value chain through a process of socio-economic revitalization.

The development model seems to align with UNDP's focus on sustainable livelihoods and UNIDO's emphasis on strengthening value chains, standardization, and the growth of small-scale economic activities. Together, these frameworks have helped shape a gradual but resilient path toward locally driven development.

A key component of the initiative has been the establishment and expansion of a local cooperative, which now includes approximately 95 percent of the village's residents. Serving as the central body for destination management, the cooperative operates on principles of local and non-governmental governance. It has played a crucial role in organizing tourism services and ensuring a more equitable distribution of economic benefits across the community.

Local officials and development planners say that Shaneh Tarash represents more than a short-term project; it reflects the emergence of a sustained movement in rural tourism.

Such an experience is increasingly being viewed as a potential national model for rural tourism development in the country, one that demonstrates how community engagement, combined with modern development frameworks, can transform a village into a dynamic, meaningful, and sustainable tourism destination.

As such, Shaneh Tarash offers a compelling example of how rural communities can leverage their cultural assets and social cohesion to redefine their economic future while preserving their heritage.

Mazandaran, a major tourism hub on the southern coast of the Caspian Sea, is known for its natural beauty and hospitality infrastructure. The picture-perfect province has long been a highly popular destination for domestic holidaymakers. Its varied nature features plains, prairies, forests, and rainforests stretching from the sandy beaches of the sea to the rugged and snowcapped Alborz sierra, including Mount Damavand, one of the highest peaks and volcanos in Asia.

being prepared for submission to international bodies, including UNESCO.

The International Day for Monuments and Sites, first proposed by ICOMOS and later adopted by UNESCO's General Conference, serves as a global platform to advocate for heritage conservation and to reinforce the value of monuments and sites as irreplaceable testimonies of human history.

IRCS lauds China's humanitarian assistance during war

TEHRAN – The head of the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS), Pirhossein Kolivand, has praised the aid consignments provided by China's government to help Iran during the US-Israeli war against the country.

"We did not ask for help from any country, and many countries volunteered to do this work," he said. "The countries that volunteered for help consider its spiritual value more than its material value, and they say that the spiritual message of this aid is that we are together and we want to have a share in this defense," IRNA quoted Kolivand as saying.

The official made the remarks in a Thursday meeting with Chinese ambassador to Tehran, Cong Peiwu.

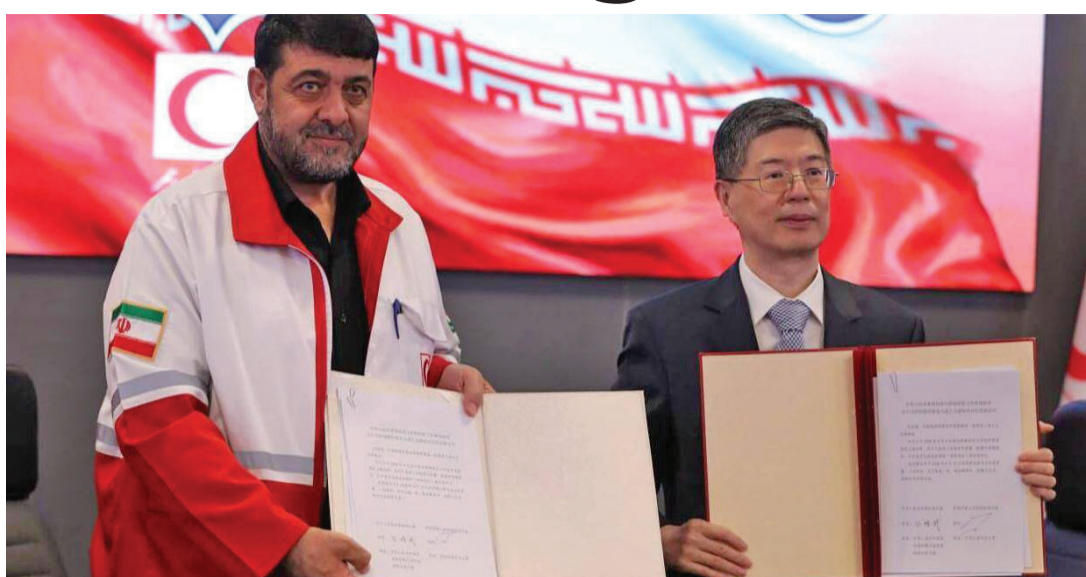
Peiwu said that China has delivered 58 tons of emergency medical aid to Iran in cooperation with the Iranian Red Crescent Society.

"The aid aims to support people in need and save lives during a critical time. The shipment includes essential medical supplies for emergency healthcare response to strengthen relief efforts across affected regions amid urgent needs and improve medical support capacity promptly delivered."

Officials said the assistance reflects humanitarian cooperation between the two countries, and the supplies will be distributed to hospitals and relief teams.

On April 15, Peiwu and Kolivand jointly signed the intergovernmental handover certificate for China's emergency humanitarian assistance to Iran.

The Chinese ambassador stated that the Chinese people always hold



the Iranian people in their thoughts. This provision of emergency humanitarian aid is a vivid practice of China's commitment to the vision of a Community with a Shared Future for Humanity and its fulfilment of international humanitarian obligations.

Kolivand, for his part, expressed Iran's sincere gratitude to China for consistently extending a helping hand during difficult times and for providing valuable support on various occasions. He remarked that the profound friendship between the two nations continues to grow stronger over time.

In March, the IRCS thanked China for providing \$200,000 in emergency humanitarian assistance to support the families of scores of children and teachers who were killed in a US missile strike on an elementary school in southern Iran.

The US missile attack targeted Shajareh Tayyebeh School in the city of Minab, Hormozgan Province,

on the first day of the US-Israeli assault against Iran on February 28. At least 168 people, most of them students aged between 7 and 12, were killed and dozens more injured.

In a meeting with the Chinese ambassador at the Chinese Embassy in Tehran on March 15, Razieh Alishvandi, the head of the Iranian Red Crescent Society for international affairs, hailed Beijing's humanitarian move.

"Protecting civilians, especially children, teachers, and educational centers, based on the principles of international humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions, is a fundamental obligation for all parties involved in armed conflicts," Alishvandi told the Chinese ambassador.

She added: "Targeting civilians and educational facilities, in addition to violating international laws, has irreparable humanitarian and social consequences and challenges fundamental human values."

Referring to the importance of solidarity among nations in times of crisis, Alishvandi stated: "In such circumstances, the humanitarian action of the Chinese Red Cross Society in supporting the families of the teachers and students who lost their lives in Minab is valuable and commendable."

She said the Chinese Red Cross Society's move to allocate \$200,000 in financial assistance to support the families of the deceased teachers and students "sends a clear message of sympathy and solidarity from the Chinese nation with the people of Iran and shows that human values can bring nations closer together beyond borders."

Alishvandi expressed hope that relief and humanitarian cooperation between the Iranian Red Crescent Society and the Chinese Red Cross Society will further expand.

'US-Israeli strikes on Pasteur Institute target global public health'

TEHRAN – The United States and the Zionist regime have jointly attacked global public health by launching strikes on Pasteur Institute of Iran, Hossein Kermanpour, the deputy health minister, has said.

"Several facilities severely damaged or decimated by the US and Israeli bombardments are not merely national assets, but global heritage," he wrote on his X account.

"These countries have attacked global public health by targeting institutions such as the Pasteur Institute of Iran – a key member of the Pasteur Network and a WHO Collaborating Centre.

The international community has a collective responsibility to rebuild it; we will rebuild it better than before, provided that the aggressors stop violating international law."

Founded in 1920, the Pasteur Institute of Iran is a longstanding member of the Pasteur Network. The Institute contributes to national, regional and global public health through its national reference laboratories, WHO Collaborating Centers, disease surveillance and diagnostics, biobanks, and essential medical countermeasures production. The Institute was targeted by the aggressor on April 2.

Following the attack, Mario Moreira, President of the Pasteur Network, expressed concern over the destruction of Pasteur Institute of Iran, and

warned of the potential regional impacts as it disrupts the major role of this century-old pillar of global health in prevention and control of existing and rising health threats in the region.

"The reported damage to the Pasteur Institute of Iran is deeply concerning. This institution plays an important role in supporting the health of populations in Iran and the region. When such capacities are disrupted, diagnostics, surveillance, and response to ongoing and emerging threats may be affected, with potential implications for health security beyond national borders," Moreira highlighted.

International scientific reporting, including coverage in Science Magazine, has highlighted the effects of escalating hostilities on universities and research institutions in Iran, including impacts on academic and public health infrastructure.

Damage to or disruption of such infrastructure may have consequences beyond national borders. When public health institutes and surveillance systems are affected, outbreak detection capacity can be reduced, essential public health functions may be disrupted, and preparedness for emerging infectious threats may be weakened. These challenges are directly linked to broader considerations of regional and global health security.

The protection of health and scientific institutions is widely recognized as important for safe-



guarding essential public health functions, particularly in times of crisis. Maintaining the continuity of such institutions supports not only national health systems but also collective efforts to prevent and respond to cross-border health threats.

The Pasteur Network notes the increasing international attention to the protection of health and scientific institutions and commends the efforts of the Pasteur Institute of Iran's staff to maintain essential diagnostic and public health functions under challenging circumstances.

The Pasteur Network expresses its support for its colleagues at the Pasteur Institute of Iran and reaffirms its commitment to the continuity of critical public health functions, scientific cooperation and the protection of health and research institutions worldwide.

Tabiat bridge turns red to mark World Hemophilia Day

TEHRAN – Tabiat bridge in Tehran is lit up in red from April 17 to 19 to mark the World Hemophilia Day, which is observed annually on April 17 to raise awareness of the disease.

Hemophilia is usually an inherited bleeding disorder in which the blood does not clot properly, and it mostly affects males. It is estimated to occur in about 1 of every 5,000 male births.

People with hemophilia have low levels of proteins called clotting factors that help to stop bleeding.

The disease can result in spontaneous bleeding within joints, leading to chronic joint disease and pain, bleeding in the skin, head, and brain, which can cause seizures and paralysis.

It can also lead to excessive bleeding following injuries or sur-

gery. Death can occur if the bleeding cannot be stopped or if it occurs in a vital organ such as the brain.

The light it up campaign is conducted across the globe as a part hemophilia awareness efforts. On the occasion of World Hemophilia Day, a lot of bridges and landmarks shine red around the world to raise public awareness for the bleeding disorders.

Apart from this universal goal, this year, the campaign in Iran also honors those martyred during the imposed US-Israeli war which started on February 28.

It also highlights the need to protect ancient and historical structures, as well as prominent urban constructions and cultural heritage, Mehr news agency reported.

On this occasion, the global inherited bleeding disorders com-

munity come together to advocate for all inherited bleeding disorders. This year's theme of "Diagnosis: First step to care" highlights the critical importance of diagnosis—the essential first step in treatment and care.

The World Federation of Hemophilia (WFH) estimates that over three-quarters of the population of people with hemophilia worldwide are undiagnosed, and an even more significant gap also exists for other bleeding disorders.

To appreciate the scale of this gap, the expected number of patients with haemophilia globally is 1,125,000, of whom approximately 418,000 should have severe haemophilia.

Hundreds of thousands of people with bleeding disorders around the world still lack access to basic care. We have the power—and the shared

commitment—to change this.

We can improve diagnostic outcomes by strengthening the skills of healthcare professionals and enhancing the effectiveness of laboratories. By increasing global diagnosis rates, we can move one step closer to our shared vision of Treatment for All.

In 2025, the chairman of the board of the Iranian Hemophilia Society, Amin Afshar, said that some 14,000 hemophilia patients are registered in the country.

Some patients with hemophilia lost their lives from a lack of medicines caused by sanctions, according to the chairman of the board of the Iranian Hemophilia Society. Lack of medicine for factor 8 and factor 9 hemophilia is quite evident in the country, which risks the lives of the patients.

International Day for Biological Diversity should highlight impacts of war on Iran's environment

By Mehdi Garshasbi

TEHRAN – We are approaching the International Day for Biological Diversity in a situation where the unjust US-Israeli war, by causing widespread destruction and the spread of various pollutants, has exposed Iran's environment and its valuable biodiversity to many dangers and threats, putting many plant and animal species at risk, and disrupting ecosystem functions and services.

The International Day for Biological Diversity is observed each year on May 22. Proclaimed by the United Nations to raise awareness of the value of life on Earth, this day serves as a global reminder of the need to safeguard biodiversity and protect the ecosystems that support human well-being.

The observance is coordinated by the Convention on Biological Diversity, the international legal instrument for the conservation and sustainable use of biological resources.

"Acting locally for global impact" is the theme of the 2026 edition of the International Day for Biological Diversity. This slogan emphasizes, more than ever, the role of local communities in protecting nature and the future of the Earth.

Wars and armed conflicts don't only have human casualties; the environment is one of their biggest victims. Historical experiences, from the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, the Kosovo conflicts, the war in Lebanon, the genocide against Gaza, to the U.S.-Israeli aggression against Iran, have shown that destruction of infrastructure, explosions, fires, and pollutants from military operations have severe and long-term effects on soil, water, air, and wildlife. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has repeatedly highlighted the issue.

Recent attacks on Iran, particularly targeting oil depots and industrial facilities, are a stark and alarming example. These attacks have caused "black rain" in Tehran, a mix of pollutants, smoke, and petroleum compounds in the air, posing serious threats to both human health and the environment. These events illustrate that even countries committed to environmental protection under international protocols are vulnerable to unpredictable military attacks.

Iran is in a special position in terms of biodiversity, forming part of two global biodiversity hotspots, from the Hyrcanian and Zagros forests to the wetlands, mountains, deserts, and beautiful and eye-catching coastal-marine areas, the country hosts numerous and diverse species of plants and animals, some of which are found nowhere else in the world.

"This issue doubles the importance of protecting this precious heritage, although unfortunately this hostile war has not only

damaged biodiversity and protected areas, but has also caused extensive damage to infrastructure, including offices, environmental protection posts, and related transportation equipment," Hamid Zohrabi, the deputy head of the Department of Environment for biodiversity, has said.

In a letter to the executive secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Zohrabi has elaborated on the detrimental impacts of the war on the country's biodiversity, and irreparable damage to ecosystems.

The letter has confirmed clear violations of the articles of the convention, considerations of human rights, and the goals of Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, calling on the executive secretary to take a more active role in protecting biodiversity, and release a formal statement to censure this war and its environmental impacts during the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which will be held in October in Yerevan, Armenia.

The Framework, building on the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, sets out an ambitious plan to implement broad-based action to bring about a transformation in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals, and ensure that, by 2050, the shared vision of living in harmony with nature is fulfilled.

The International Day for Biological Diversity will help connect local initiatives with the 23 global targets of the Kunming-Montreal framework, focusing the world's attention on the importance of applying the whole-of-society approach which includes ways to enlist, enable, empower and leverage contributions of actors other than national governments at the local level, including indigenous peoples and local communities, sub-national governments, cities and other local authorities, women and youth groups, businesses and financial institutions, and other civil society organizations, among others.

This year's slogan is a reminder of the fact that any action, no matter how small, at the local level can have an impact on a global scale. This action, whether negative or positive, can have short-term, medium-term, and long-term impacts at the local, regional, and global levels, just like the effects of the imposed war on Iran and consequently on the region and the world, an action that pursues a mission that is completely opposed to the mission of the Global Biodiversity Framework and its 23 goals, and follows the opposite path and direction.

15-year-old girl recounts 'dark' days of war

TEHRAN – I am a 15-year-old girl named Shakiba. Ironically, my name in Persian means "patient," but I'm not patient at all—though maybe I am, I'm not really sure.

I live in Tehran, and I've never had anything to do with politics. In fact, I've always disliked it. But recently, I've found myself deeply and unwillingly caught up in it.

It all started in late February, when Israel and the United States attacked Iran. By sheer luck, I hadn't gone to school that day. With that attack, our dark days began. "Dark" in two ways: first, the internet was cut off; second, every day we were jolted awake by the roar of missiles. Frightened and disoriented, we would rush up to the rooftop.

It was the second day that I woke up to the sound of an explosion, a close one.

I jumped up. I didn't even have time to register anything or check my dying phone properly before my dad and I went up to the roof. It was 12:00 p.m.

I used to wake up at 5:00 a.m. to go to school, but after the first attack, my whole routine went sideways. When we got up there, it was just me, my dad, my tiny parrot, and some neighbours.

We went to the rooftop, and that's when we saw it, a giant cloud of smoke going up from what I assumed— and was later clari-

fied, was the police base near my home, and my school.

We asked our neighbours what had happened, and we found out they had gotten up there not that long before us, but before we could ask anything else we heard the sound of a missile approaching, and our neighbour quickly taking out his camera just in time for all of us to see the missile hitting the base.

It was so loud, so much louder than anything I thought. All of us hid behind one of the walls, one of my neighbours filming while all of us screaming at him to get cover.

When everyone had calmed down, I remembered my friend. She lived near the base, and I didn't have my phone on me. We quickly went down the stairs to our house, where I got out my phone to call my friend. She was okay— well, physically, at least. Her house had been destroyed.

The phone call was such a blur that could either be my memory, or the fact that her voice wasn't reaching me well. Even now, when I try to think about it, I don't remember anything past that, it was either uneventful, or a little too eventful.



APRIL 18, 2026

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Justice puts everything in its place, and liberality brings out things from a special direction. Justice is a statesman who gives everyone his right, and liberality is a habit belonging to one person only. Therefore, justice is worthier.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:04 Evening: 18:59 Dawn: 3:58 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:27 (tomorrow)

Iranian calligrapher restores Holy Qurans burned in recent unrests



TEHRAN – Iranian calligrapher Mojtaba Sadeqi has dedicated himself to restoring copies of the Holy Quran that were burned during the early January riots.

Working within the Art Tent in Tehran's Haft-e Tir Square, Sadeqi is breathing new life into sacred pages that were damaged when rioters set fire to a mosque during the recent unrests. The project, which involves meticulous reconstruction of charred text, represents a unique and emotionally charged challenge for the artist.

"Following the news of a mosque being set ablaze by rioters in January, images of burned Qurans were released. It was then that the idea of restoring and reviving these Holy Books came to my mind," Sadeqi said, Mehr reported on Friday.

Traditionally, when a Quran is severely damaged, its pages are committed to flowing water or buried out of respect. However, Sadeqi sought a different path: "I realized I could keep these burned pages alive by rewriting the lost verses."

Sadeqi first mounts the damaged pages onto a durable backing. He then identifies the specific script used—most notably the Uthman Taha and Naskh styles—and painstakingly rewrites the missing words and letters to match the original

calligraphy.

The artist revealed that he received seven Qurans from a single desecrated mosque, with approximately 30 to 40 percent of their content destroyed by fire. He emphasized that those who target houses of worship are not mere political protesters but are, in truth, "enemies of God."

"Reviving and preserving these Qurans is a debt I owe to my faith," the master calligrapher stated. "I am determined to bring this task to a worthy conclusion."

So far, Sadeqi has restored more than 20 charred fragments. He noted that the Art Tent provides a peaceful environment where he works for long hours daily, drawing significant interest from citizens who view his restoration work as a powerful piece of spiritual art.

Upon completion of the project, the artist hopes to hold an exhibition to display these restored miracles of calligraphy.

The Art Tent, which remains open to the public daily, focuses on producing artworks that embody the spirit of heroism, sacrifice, and the culture of resistance. Participants are engaged in various creative mediums to showcase the nation's enduring resilience.

Cartoon of Day



Strait of Hormuz

Cartoonist: Derkaoui Abdellah from Morocco

TEHRAN – Renowned Iranian pop singer and composer Mohsen Chavoshi was named the Islamic Revolution Artist of the Year for 1404 (2025-2026) during the closing ceremony of the 12th edition of the Islamic Revolution Art Week held on Thursday evening.

The ceremony, which took place at Tehran's Valiasr Square, was attended by cultural officials including Hojjatoleslam Mohammad Qomi, head of Iran's Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization, and Mohammad-Mehdi Dadman, Head of the Art Bureau. The event served as a major cultural gathering for artists, officials, and citizens alike.

Chavoshi received the prestigious title primarily for his acclaimed tracks "Alaj" and "Hasbi Allah," which have resonated deeply with the public during the period of the US-Israeli war imposed on the country. He was selected from a shortlist that included notable figures such as painter and journalist Seyyed Ali Mirfatah, filmmaker Sirous Moqaddam, and theater director Maryam Shabani.

During the announcement, host Najmeddin Shariati emphasized the grassroots nature of the selection, noting that the crowd had been chanting Chavoshi's name throughout the evening. "This choice is entirely popular," Shariati told the audience. "With great honor and respect for your voices, we name Mohsen Chavoshi as the Islamic Artist of the Year."

The program featured some street performances. The event also paid tribute to the Martyr Leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, through music and media packages centered on the themes of martyrdom and resistance.

A particularly moving moment

Singer Mohsen Chavoshi emerges as Islamic Revolution Artist of the Year



occurred when children and teenagers in the audience raised placards inscribed with lyrics from Chavoshi's "Hasbi Allah" and "Alaj." The ceremony concluded with a mass sing-along of "Alaj," as thousands of citizens joined their voices in a display of national unity.

Earlier in March, Chavoshi released "Hasbi Allah" (God is sufficient for me), to mark the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Ali (AS), the first Imam of the Shia.

In a note accompanying his latest release, Chavoshi reflects on recent social unrest and external pressures, defining his stance as being "in the middle"—a space dedicated to the common people and national logic over foreign-led narratives. Expressing disillusionment with voices from beyond the borders, he criticized the psychological onslaught of foreign media, arguing that such relentless influence could incite subversion in even the most

prosperous nations.

While expressing heartbreak for all victims of recent events and foreign aggression, Chavoshi emphasized his refusal to align with those seeking foreign intervention or insulting religious sanctities. He reaffirmed his commitment to the Islamic Republic over the uncertainty of foreign-backed agendas, concluding that he chooses to stand with the ordinary citizens, the schools, and the struggling households of his own country.

"Hasbi Allah" is the latest addition to Chavoshi's repertoire of religious and devotional works, which includes notable tracks such as "Ya Mowla," "Adl-e Movassaq," and "Asadullah," all dedicated to the virtues of Imam Ali (AS).

The art week is organized by the Art Bureau of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization every year to commemo-

rate the martyrdom anniversary of documentarian Morteza Avini. Art exhibitions and workshops, and theatrical musical performances are organized during this week.

Avini was martyred by a landmine in 1993 during his last trip to the former Iran-Iraq war zone in southwestern Iran while making the documentary "A City in the Sky" about the fall of Khorramshahr and the liberation of the southwestern Iranian city during the Iran-Iraq war.

He became famous for "The Narration of Triumph" and was called "the master of martyred writers" by his colleagues and war veterans due to the fervent narrations he wrote for his documentaries.

Avini has been commemorated by various Iranian personalities and organizations on different occasions.

Head of NLAI calls on global library community to react against threats facing cultural centers

TEHRAN – The head of the National Library and Archives of Iran (NLAI) Gholamreza Amirkhani in an official letter to Sam Helmick, President of the American Library Association (ALA), expressed his concern about the damage inflicted on cultural, educational, and library centers during the US-Israeli war against Iran, emphasizing the need to safeguard cultural heritage and protect human lives.

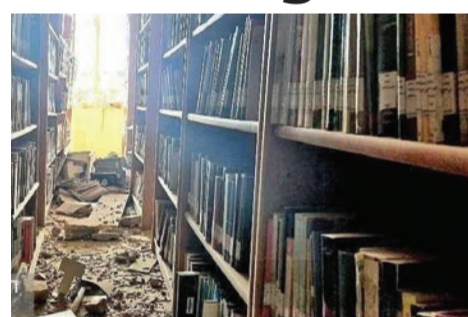
In the letter, Amirkhani described librarians as messengers of peace and dialogue, and called on the global library community to play a role in defending human values and protecting cultural institutions—especially during the recent war, which has caused harm to cultural and educational collections in Iran, Honaronline reported.

He also pointed to Iran's history of professional international engagement, citing the National Library and Archives of Iran's participation in rebuilding and equipping libraries in Afghanistan as an example of such cooperation.

"As a librarian, I have always wished to see the United States as a land of the world's largest libraries and most active librarians—a country of great figures such as Melvil Dewey, Charles Cutter, and Herbert Putnam; a nation that has been a pioneer in library associations, whose librarians have always been messengers of peace and friendship," Amirkhani stated in part of the message.

"Now I ask you, librarians who advocate for peace and humanity: Does the behavior of today's US government align with this image of mine? Is the killing of dozens of innocent children in the school of the city of Minab compatible with the human values respected by all people?"

At the end, Amirkhani expressed hope that the global library community would respond to threats facing cultural centers with ethical and



humanitarian reactions.

In response to the letter, Sam Helmick, while expressing appreciation for the correspondence, emphasized the role of libraries, archives, and cultural heritage centers as reflections of human memory and dignity, and considered their protection a shared responsibility of the global community.

"When libraries, schools, archives, and cultural heritage centers are endangered or become involved in conflicts, the impact of these events on us is profound. These institutions carry treasures far beyond mere information; they safeguard the continuity of communities and record human experiences. Therefore, their protection is a shared responsibility of the global library and information community," Helmick said part of the response.

The president of the ALA also referred to Iran's long-standing tradition of librarianship and archiving, praising the role of Iranian professionals in international cooperation and emphasizing the continuation of professional ties among librarians worldwide.

Helmick reiterated that the American Library Association, while acknowledging the concerns expressed, underscores the importance of protecting cultural and educational spaces and en-

suring the safety of human beings.

This correspondence represents an example of cultural diplomacy and the professional engagement of the National Library and Archives of Iran on the international stage, highlighting the institution's role in promoting scientific dialogue and safeguarding the documented memory of humanity.

The US and Israel attacked Iran on February 28 and for 40 days martyred over 3,000 people including the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, several high-ranking 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.

Sylvie Servoise's "Committed Literature" published in Persian

TEHRAN – The Persian translation of the book "La littérature engage" ("Committed Literature" in English), written by Sylvie Servoise has been released in the bookstores across Iran.

Translated by Parivash Safa and Hamed Fouladvand, the book has been brought out by the Morvarid Publications in 141 pages, ISNA reported.

The back cover reads: "Committed literature has seldom enjoyed a good reputation. In fact, literature has often been reproached for sacrificing form to content, art to usefulness, truth to ideology, and depth and precision to dualism and dogmatism. Only a small number of such works have escaped this rule."

Servoise, in this concise, highly informative, and engaging work, discusses the grammar and structural principles of literary commitment, earlier systems of committed literature, and the transformations of committed literature in the modern era with the necessary precision and thoroughness. At the end of the book, she turns to outlining new directions for committed literature in the contemporary period.

Sylvie Servoise is a French scholar of literature known for her research on modern French literature and comparative literary studies. She is a professor of French literature and comparative literature in France.

