

## ‘One God One Nation One Leader One Path’

*Top Iranian military and political officials deliver a firm response to Trump’s fantasies of internal division in Iran*

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## Pope Leo vents about failure to end Iran war: ‘Many innocent people have died’

TEHRAN – Pope Leo expressed frustration Thursday that U.S. and Iranian leaders have not been able to get the diplomatic efforts to end the war back on track.

“One day Iran says ‘yes,’ the United States says ‘no,’ and vice versa,” Leo told reporters on the flight back to the Vatican after an 11-day pastoral visit to Africa. “We don’t know where this is going to lead, which has created again this chaotic situation, critical for the world economy.” ▶ Page 2

## Strategic imperative of Strait of Hormuz

TEHRAN- Maximizing the use of the Strait of Hormuz’s capacities is a strategic necessity for Iran. On the other hand, the legal regimes governing waterways enable countries to effectively leverage their geopolitical capacities. Rather than viewing this critical chokepoint solely through the narrow lens of toll collection, Tehran must redefine the strait as a multifaceted strategic asset.

The core issue of the Strait of Hormuz must be defined as a strategic lever, with the matter of toll collection considered in subsequent layers as a secondary issue, not as the main focus of utilization.

Therefore, the key point is to make the best possible use of the existing capacities of this waterway, as the nature of the Strait of Hormuz and its geographical position allow for maximum exploitation. ▶ Page 4

## FM spox rejects AL’s claims against Iran

TEHRAN- Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei has dismissed a recent statement by Arab League foreign ministers on Iran, urging the bloc to refrain from adopting positions shaped by the unilateral and unconstructive perspectives of certain member states.

In a statement issued late Thursday, Baqaei underscored Iran’s commitment to the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter, including the prohibition of the use of force and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states.

He reiterated that Iran’s defensive actions against US military bases and facilities in certain countries along the southern coast of the Persian Gulf were carried out in line with its inherent right to self-defense under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, and in response to ‘military aggression’ by the United States and the Israeli regime against Iran.

Baqaei also referred to established principles of international law regarding non-interference and the obligation of states not to allow their territory to be used against others.

## Politicization of finance is undermining global development, Iran warns

TEHRAN- Iran’s ambassador to the United Nations has warned that the politicization of financial systems, unilateral coercive measures, and the consequences of armed aggression are seriously hampering global development efforts and eroding trust in the multilateral system.

Speaking at the ECOSOC Finance for Development forum in New York on April 23, Amir Saeid Irvani said that financing for development is directly tied to the credibility of multilateral institutions. He noted that declining cooperation, unilateral measures, and the freezing of sovereign assets are constraining fiscal space and disrupting investment in many countries, particularly developing nations.

Irvani stated that Iran has been subjected to unilateral coercive measures, financial restrictions, and asset freezes for more than four decades—“burdens borne directly by ordinary civilians. He also pointed to the ongoing aggression against Iran, including two imposed wars over the past nine months, which have claimed thousands of lives, especially among children and women.

## Araghchi starts tour of Pakistan, Oman, and Russia

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi embarked on a multi-leg tour to Islamabad, Muscat, and Moscow starting on Friday evening.

According to reports from IRNA, the tour will focus on bilateral consultations, regional developments, and the latest situation regarding the imposed war by the United States and the Israeli regime against Iran.

Writing on his X account, Araghchi said, “Purpose of my visit is to closely coordinate with our partners on bilateral matters and consult on regional developments.” He added, “Our neighbors are our priority.”

The diplomatic push comes as Washington and Tel Aviv continue their unprovoked military aggression against Iran, which began on February 28. The war has led to the assassination of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, as well as high-ranking military commanders and numerous civilians.

In the lead-up to the tour, Araghchi held separate phone calls on Friday with Pakistan’s Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar, as well as Army Chief Field Marshal Asim Munir.

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## Journalist Amal Khalil, a ‘woman of resistance’ who embodied southern Lebanon, killed by Israel

TEHRAN - Amal Khalil, the seasoned journalist, was born during a years-long Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon. She was killed there four decades later by invading Israeli forces.

“Amal was present in every home. Every home in Lebanon has lost her,” Ali Khalil, her brother, said tearfully a day after she was targeted and killed by Israel.

“Amal resembles the south in all its details – its sweet breeze, its valleys, its mountains, and its old houses. She resembles all of that.”

Khalil is remembered fondly by her colleagues as generous, fearless and pioneering. ▶ Page 5

## The limits of power: why American materialism falters against the Iranian spirit

By Nikita Mikhalkov

MOSCOW – In my view, this situation is less diplomatic, military, or political in nature than it is deeply rooted in the realm of mentality. The entire episode brings to mind a bodybuilder, artificially enhanced by steroids, his physique swollen with muscle, who—fully confident of victory—approaches a frail and unassuming Shaolin monk, one who has attained mastery in the martial arts. From the outside, the outcome of such a confrontation appears entirely predictable; in reality, however, everything unfolds quite differently.

This is not a war of countries; it is a clash of civilizations, a contest of cultures. Whether one accepts it or not, the United States, ▶ Page 8



© ISNA/ Seyyed Mohammad Alrasooli

## Mashhad hosts commemoration ceremony for Minab martyrs

A ceremony was held at Imam Reza holy shrine in the city of Mashhad on Wednesday, April 22, to commemorate people who were martyred during a US missile attack on Shajarah Tayyebeh School in the city of Minab.

On February 28, dozens of girls and boys aged between 7 and 12 were beginning their lessons, as the school was targeted by a missile strike that caused the building to collapse.

Iranian authorities confirmed a final death toll of 168 people, with at least 95 others wounded.

## Heritage experts urge action after war damages 149 sites

TEHRAN – Iran’s association of cultural heritage conservators has warned of extensive damage to historical sites, museums and cultural centers during the recent war with the US and Israeli regime, calling for immediate mobilization of national expertise to manage the crisis and safeguard affected assets.

In a statement reported by ISNA, the Association of Iranian Conservators expressed “deep concern” over reports of destruction and neglect impacting historical monuments, archaeological sites and museum collections during the conflict. It said the damage ranged from structural harm to historical buildings to the irreversible loss of architectural decorations and museum artifacts. ▶ Page 6

## TEHRAN PAPERS

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

### How Trump shifted his approach after battlefield setbacks

The Iran newspaper analyzed what it described as a shift in Trump's strategy. The paper writes: It appears that nearly two months after the start of the war, and with battlefield limitations becoming clear, Trump's effort to redefine the war's objectives and shift its weight from the battlefield to the realm of narrative and perception has become the central axis of US policy. Within this framework, the various claims about progress in negotiations or Iran's willingness to reach an agreement reflect less the realities on the ground and more an information operation aimed at preserving a controlled image of the war's trajectory. This trend also became evident in the ceasefire episode and Trump's unilateral announcement of its extension. Based on this, the war at its current stage is defined less by military action alone and more by a competition to shape reality and control narratives — with the difference that for Washington, narrative-building has increasingly taken on a compensatory role to manage battlefield setbacks.

Hamshahri: How does the Strait of Hormuz remain 'passable' but not 'normal'?

Hamshahri wrote in a note on the closure of the Strait of Hormuz: Although in peacetime there is no absolute right to close and collect tolls from transit passage, the law of the seas provides countries adjacent to such waterways with tools, from maritime safety and traffic management to declaring temporary security restrictions. If the situation changes to hostilities, the tools of naval warfare are added to these conditions. For this reason, a more accurate description of the situation in Hormuz is not that it is closed, but that it is not normally passable and is under tight control. This small difference in terminology makes a big difference in international analysis: Tehran does not need to declare that it 'closed the strait'; it is enough to show that it is implementing its rules and security considerations in its territorial waters. The practical result for global shipping is not much different from a blockade, but from a legal perspective, Iran's narrative remains more defensible.

#### Resalat: Diplomacy in a suspended state

Resalat analyzed the ambiguous conditions in the negotiations between Iran and the United States. The newspaper wrote: The decision to continue or suspend the negotiations has now become a variable dependent on the battlefield behavior of the other side. At present, the diplomatic process has neither completely declared defeat nor devel-

oped the necessary dynamics to progress. This suspended state is a direct result of Washington's attempt to buy time and measure Iran's resilience to combined pressures. Therefore, the possibility of a new round of negotiations will only increase if a geopolitical shock or double domestic/international pressure forces the United States to change its calculations and accept Iran's initial conditions. Otherwise, the repetition of fruitless meetings will only lead to the erosion of diplomacy.

#### Ettelaat: Trump lacks the authority to declare a ceasefire

Ettelaat examined the reasoning behind Trump's ceasefire announcement. The article stated: This ceasefire has neither military value nor value under international law. A ceasefire must also be subject to continuous monitoring. Moreover, the United States has already nullified the ceasefire by imposing a naval blockade and attacking Iranian vessels. Therefore, in practice, Trump does not possess the necessary authority to declare a ceasefire. At this point, Iran's hands are completely open to take any military action within the framework of wartime conditions and to deliver the necessary blows against the United States. By imposing a superficial ceasefire, the US is seeking to buy time to prepare itself for the next phase, to become more equipped, and to use the ceasefire to strengthen the element of surprise for any potential future military operation.

#### Donya-e-Eqtasad: Three scenarios for the post-ceasefire future

With the ceasefire between Iran and the United States extended indefinitely, three scenarios may unfold in the coming days. First, the ceasefire could lead both sides back to the negotiating table and result in an initial framework agreement in Islamabad. The second scenario is that the ceasefire — which Trump has declared open-ended — continues for a period of one month. Given the intensifying naval blockade and clashes in the Strait of Hormuz, one side may eventually retreat from its position, leading back to the first scenario. The third scenario is that the ceasefire does not last long and that within a few days, hostilities resume. Considering the escalating tensions in the Strait of Hormuz and the continuation of the US naval blockade, this scenario is not only plausible but could become highly likely, especially given Israel's approach and the pressure it exerts on Washington.

### National Interest: Persian Gulf Arab states will be clear losers in the war

TEHRAN — In a comprehensive analysis published by The National Interest, Dr. Marwa Maziad — an assistant professor of Israel Studies at the University of Maryland — argues that the ongoing war between Iran and the US-Israeli axis is fundamentally reordering West Asia. Most strikingly, she concludes that regardless of the war's outcome, the Arab Persian Gulf states will be the clear losers.

According to Dr. Maziad, what is unfolding is not a conventional regional escalation. Rather, it is a structural transformation that has already begun reshaping the security geography of the Persian Gulf. The conflict has expanded into maritime spaces — including the Strait of Hormuz — and integrated Persian Gulf infrastructure directly into the operational theater. High-value urban centers such as Dubai and Abu Dhabi are no longer peripheral to the conflict; they have become part of it.

The analysis reveals that the Israeli regime's strategic objective extends far beyond containing Iran's nuclear or missile capabilities. According to Dr. Maziad, the deeper goal is to consolidate regional military primacy across the Levant, Iraq, parts of the Arabian Peninsula, and adjacent maritime corridors. This, the author states plainly, is classical territorial and ideological expansionism.

Furthermore, the article explains that this

represents an outsourcing of US dominance. Washington's ability to define escalation thresholds, set red lines, and enforce deterrence asymmetry is increasingly delegated to the Israeli regime — enabling a policy of US withdrawal from West Asia and a strategic shift toward Cuba, Greenland, and the Pacific. In this new structure, Israel functions less as a traditional state and more as the central security node around which the region is organized.

Dr. Maziad critically examines Washington's initial war strategy, describing it as a failed attempt to apply the "Venezuela model" to Iran. The Trump administration assumed that rapid, coercive strikes would destabilize Iran's leadership and force rapid concessions without sustained US entanglement. This assumption, the author writes, has proven structurally incompatible with the Iran theater.

Instead of rapid decapitation, the war has produced distributed escalation onto the Persian Gulf states, sustained missile and drone attacks, and increasing exposure of infrastructure in third-party states. As a result, Washington is now gravitating toward a strategic exit through burden transfer — re-framed as "America First" — while operational responsibility shifts to Israel.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](http://tehrantimes.com))

# Araghchi starts tour of Pakistan, Oman, and Russia

*Iranian delegation heading to Islamabad will not meet US representatives*

From page 1 ▶ The talks focused on the latest regional developments and issues related to the ceasefire between Iran and the United States.

A two-week ceasefire, brokered by Pakistan, went into effect on April 8. While US President Donald Trump has unilaterally extended the truce, stating that Washington is awaiting an Iranian proposal for a second round of talks in Islamabad, Tehran has refrained from committing to further negotiations. Iranian officials cite Washington's "excessive demands" and ongoing "naval blockade" as the

main obstacles to ending the war.

Meanwhile, CNN quoted a US source as saying that the Iranian delegation will not meet with American representatives in Islamabad.

In a separate diplomatic engagement, Araghchi held a telephone conversation with Nechirvan Barzani, President of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The two sides discussed regional developments, as well as ways to strengthen cooperation between Iran and the Iraqi Kurdish region.

According to reports, Barzani and Araghchi also exchanged



views on safeguarding border security and preventing any third parties from exploiting the situation to destabilize the region.

The upcoming visits to Islam-

abad, Muscat, and Moscow are expected to build on these consultations, as Iran continues to pursue an active diplomatic track while confronting US and Israeli aggression.

## Politicization of finance is undermining global development, Iran warns

TEHRAN— Iran's ambassador to the United Nations has warned that the politicization of financial systems, unilateral coercive measures, and the consequences of armed aggression are seriously hampering global development efforts and eroding trust in the multilateral system.

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Irvani stated that Iran has been subjected to unilateral coercive measures, financial restrictions, and asset freezes for more than four decades—burdens borne directly by ordinary civil-

ians. He also pointed to the ongoing aggression against Iran, including two imposed wars over the past nine months, which have claimed thousands of lives, especially among children and women.

The ambassador expressed regret that proposed language reflecting the realities faced by countries under aggression was removed by facilitators and replaced with formulations that are neither consensus-based nor neutral, warning that such an approach undermines the credibility of collective work.

He called for development finance to remain predictable, free from politicization, and fully respectful of countries' sovereign right to pursue their own development pathways.

### Pope Leo vents about failure to end Iran war: 'Many innocent people have died'



TEHRAN— Pope Leo expressed frustration Thursday that U.S. and Iranian leaders have not been able to get the diplomatic efforts to end the war back on track.

"One day Iran says 'yes,' the United States says 'no,' and vice versa," Leo told reporters on the flight back to the Vatican after an 11-day pastoral visit to Africa. "We don't know where this is going to lead, which has created again this chaotic situation, critical for the world economy."

In the meantime, Leo told reporters, "there is also the entire population of Iran, of innocent people who are suffering because of this war."

Leo has drawn Trump's ire by forcefully advocating for an end to the war with Iran. That public spat has overshadowed his pontifical tour of four African countries, which ended Thursday with a Mass for thousands of people in Malabo, the former capital of Equatorial Guinea.

### Iran eases Strait of Hormuz transit rules for friendly countries



TEHRAN— Iran has granted exemptions to certain friendly countries, including Russia, from transit tolls imposed on vessels passing through the Strait of Hormuz, the Iranian ambassador to Moscow said.

Iran's Ambassador to Russia, Kazem Jalali, told RIA Novosti that Tehran is currently applying special provisions for friendly nations, allowing them to benefit from exemptions to newly introduced transit fees in the Strait of Hormuz. He

noted, however, that it remains unclear whether the policy will continue in the future.

According to the envoy, Iran's Foreign Ministry is working to implement the exemptions as part of broader efforts to maintain cooperation with allied countries.

Iran recently announced plans to impose tolls on ships transiting the Strait of Hormuz, citing the need to cover rising security costs.

## Trump and the trap of the 'necessary evil': How a 40-year trajectory was reversed

Dr. Sajjad Farokhipour

TEHRAN— For nearly half a century, from Jimmy Carter to Barack Obama, American presidents shared a common conviction: that their job was to manage Israel. They pressured, pleaded, and clashed with Jerusalem (al-Quds), but never surrendered the premise that America was the senior partner. George H.W. Bush was so infuriated by settlements that he banned a young Benjamin Netanyahu from the State Department. Bill Clinton looked at Bibi and famously asked, "Who's the fucking superpower around here?" Obama's relationship curdled into open hostility; a senior official famously called Netanyahu a "chickenshit", a slur that became the White House's in-house code name for the Israeli leader. For 40 years, US presidents saw Netanyahu as an obstacle to peace, but a necessary evil. They fought over borders and Iran, but never surrendered American primacy.

Then came Trump. He did not view Israel as a client state. He viewed it as a kindred spirit. He moved the US Embassy to Jerusalem, recognized the Golan Heights, and gave Netanyahu a free hand against the Palestinians. But the most consequential shift, now bringing the region to the brink, was on Iran. Obama had

constructed the JCPOA precisely to block Israel's path to war. Netanyahu hated it because it removed the Iranian threat as a rationale for military action. Under Trump, the firewall was demolished. When Trump withdrew from the nuclear deal in 2018, he walked into Netanyahu's trap. Israeli intelligence had spied on the Iran negotiations to leak material to Republicans and kill the deal. Trump never pushed back. Netanyahu, a master manipulator, understood that Trump did not ask, "Is this good for America?" He asked, "Is Netanyahu happy with me?" The man Obama's aides derided as "chickenshit" outmaneuvered the American system by capturing the one president who refused to say no, either due to secret causes such as possible Epstein files or Trump's volatile character.

But Trump and Netanyahu made a far more dangerous miscalculation. They fundamentally underestimated the Islamic Republic. First, they misread Iran's ideational power, the revolutionary spirit since 1979. Trump's "maximum pressure" campaign was designed to trigger a popular uprising. Instead, it triggered the opposite. The revolutionary Iran reverted to its founding DNA: defiance, martyrdom, and the conviction that endurance against foreign hostility is a religious duty. Trump assumed

economic pain would produce surrender. He forgot that a government born from a revolution against the CIA does not negotiate from fear. Second, they misjudged Iran's structural military power—its missile and drone arsenal. Unlike every other regional power, Iran's deterrent is innate, indigenous, and independent. It relies on no second country. The Shahed drones, the Fateh missiles, the Kheibar Shekan—all designed, engineered, and mass-produced inside Iran.

Trump's entire theory of victory rested on Iran being weak, isolated, and dependent. Once, the April 2024 attack proved the opposite. Iran is a civilization-state of nearly 90 million people with a sophisticated military-industrial complex hardened in underground cities. Finally, Trump was trapped by his own information bubble. Channeled media—from conservative outlets to briefings from Persian Gulf allies—presented a caricature of Iran on the verge of collapse. This was never true. But it was what Trump wanted to hear. Netanyahu ensured the flow of intelligence reinforced Trump's prejudices rather than challenging them.

Donald Trump shattered four decades of consistent American foreign policy by rejecting the "senior

partner" role that previous presidents maintained, instead personalizing the relationship to the point where "Israel First" replaced "America First". This fundamental shift led him to destroy the JCPOA, withdraw from the nuclear deal without a replacement, and provide offensive weapons, and now, entering into a full-scale war.

Trump's willful ignorance of intelligence, consuming only information that flattered his prejudices while Netanyahu fed him a distorted picture of Iran's weakness, completed his entrapment. Trump's "maximum pressure" campaign, now backed by open warfare, has failed to achieve its stated objectives: Iran has not collapsed, and its revolutionary leadership, despite the martyrdom of its Leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, has proven far more resilient than Trump's intelligence bubble predicted. Unlike previous presidents who understood that Iran could be negotiated with but not broken, Trump, blinded by Netanyahu's manipulation and his own hubris, tried to break it, and in 2026, the world is watching that failure unfold in real time.

(The article reflects the author's opinions and not necessarily the views of the Tehran Times.)

# 'One God, one nation, one leader, one path'

Top Iranian military and political officials deliver a firm response to Trump's fantasies of internal division in Iran

TEHRAN - President Donald Trump has resorted to psychological warfare, seeking to mask the growing strategic and political costs of the US-Israel war against Iran that began on February 28.

He has repeatedly portrayed Iran as internally divided in an effort to project instability inside the country rather than confront stalled negotiations, rising regional escalation, and growing domestic backlash inside the United States.

On Thursday, Trump claimed that Iranians are "having a very hard time figuring out who their leader is," alleging "crazy" infighting between "moderates" and "hardliners." This comes amid a fragile ceasefire extension following the collapse of Islamabad talks and the imposition of a US naval blockade on Iranian ports. Those negotiations, held two days after the announcement of the two-week ceasefire on April 8, broke down over what Iran described as "excessive and unrealistic" US demands, with Tehran insisting that lifting the siege is a precondition for any renewed diplomacy.

Following Trump's Thursday allegations, President Masoud Pezeshkian, Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, and Judiciary Chief Gholam-Hossein Mohseni Ejei issued identical statements emphasizing national unity. The message stated: "In Iran, there are no 'hardliners' or 'moderates.' We are all Iranians and revolutionaries. With iron-clad unity of nation and state and obedience to the Supreme Leader, we will make the aggressor regret. One God, one nation, one leader, one path; victory for Iran,



dearer than life."

Other senior Iranian officials and lawmakers posted similar messages. Iranian military officials, including senior commanders of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), also followed suit with identical messaging. In a post on X, Brigadier General Mohammad Karami, commander of the IRGC Ground Forces, said the Iranian people, government, and armed forces have stood against adversaries with cohesion and unity.

Trump's narrative of internal division can be understood as part of a PR stunt rather than a literal assessment of political reality. These six points further show how Trump's framing reflects broader war pressures and miscalculations rather than reality in Iran.

**1. War justification gap:** Trump's claim of Iranian internal division functions as a justification for the war that began on February 28, which has not delivered decisive political or military outcomes for his administration. Despite airstrikes, sanctions, assassinations, and a naval blockade, Iran has not fractured or conceded. The division framing helps present continued escalation.

**2. Diplomatic cover-up:** Following the collapse of the Islamabad negotiations, Trump's narrative shifts attention away from diplomatic failure. The talks broke down over maximalist US demands. Fresh talks have also been in a limbo due to the US maritime pressure linked to the blockade, not Iranian internal dysfunction. The division narrative attempts to reframe a negotiation breakdown as Iranian incoherence rather than strategic disagreement.

**3. Wartime resilience:** The assumption of internal Iranian division contrasts with historical and recent patterns of cohesion under pressure. During the Iran-Iraq War in the 1980s, Iran maintained institutional unity despite extreme wartime conditions. More recently, in the 12-day war in June last year, Iranian political and military institutions remained stable under external strikes. In the current war, coordinated messaging across the political leadership and IRGC structures reinforces continuity rather than fragmentation.

**4. Domestic pressure:** The war is increasingly unpopular in the United States, with multiple polls showing a majority

disapproval of its handling and growing concern over rising energy costs and economic consequences. Reports also indicate declining approval of war management. With an authorization window for military action without explicit congressional approval expiring soon, the division's narrative helps sustain political justification for continued escalation.

**5. Deadline credibility:** Repeated extensions of ceasefire windows and shifting deadlines for Iranian compliance have weakened coercive credibility. The claim of internal Iranian division helps explain why repeated final deadlines are delayed or revised, shifting attention away from strategic limits in US policy implementation.

**6. Cohesion misread:** The belief that sustained pressure produces fragmentation overlooks wartime behavior patterns in centralized states. Iran's security and political structures tend to consolidate under external threat rather than fragment. Meanwhile, Iran continues to exercise leverage through the Strait of Hormuz and maritime disruption, indicating adaptation and resilience rather than internal breakdown.

Nearly two months after the war began, continued public presence in Iranian cities and sustained expressions of support for the Islamic Republic reflect an ongoing societal cohesion despite external pressure. This visible stability on the ground contrasts with narratives of internal division, underscoring a persistent gap between political framing and lived realities

## FM spox rejects AL's claims against Iran

From Page 1 ▶ He added that regional governments, which, in any form—including granting access, providing bases, or offering logistical or intelligence support—have enabled US and Israeli military actions against Iran bear international responsibility for the consequences and must be held accountable.

The official further rejected accusations against Iran, stating that chronic instability and insecurity in West Asia stem from the presence and military interventions of extra-regional actors, as well as ongoing occupation and colonial policies aimed at eliminating the Palestinian people. He warned that ignoring this reality would only

prolong and intensify regional insecurity.

Baqaei also highlighted Iran's commitment to strengthening trust and cooperation among regional countries, calling on them to recognize their legal and political responsibilities, avoid escalatory rhetoric, and pursue constructive engagement based on mutual respect.

## LATES NEWS

bridge in Karaj at an SCO meeting, she urged the international community to condemn the attacks. Sadeq also highlighted Iran's strategic infrastructure and readiness for deeper cooperation with SCO members.

**■ IRGC seizes container ship in Strait of Hormuz**

Iran's IRGC Navy has seized the "Epaminondas" container ship in the Strait of Hormuz. The vessel, along with the "MSC-Francesca" linked to Israel, was operating without authorization and manipulating navigation systems. Both ships were intercepted and transferred to Iranian territorial waters.

**■ EU Council chief pledges support for Lebanon, urges reopening of Hormuz**

The President of the European Council announced plans to support Lebanon in efforts to disarm Hezbollah, while calling for the immediate reopening of the Strait of Hormuz without conditions. António Costa also stressed that the European Union had, from the outset, advocated containing the crisis and welcomed the ceasefire with Iran.

**■ Syrian president warns of risks from Hormuz closure, cites Israeli violations**

The Syrian president described the closure of the Strait of Hormuz as a major threat, calling on the international community to assume its responsibilities regarding 'Israeli violations of Syria's sovereignty'.

**■ Iran continues oil shipments despite blockade, reports say**

Bloomberg, citing satellite imagery and maritime data, reported that Iran is continuing to load oil onto tankers despite the US blockade of the Strait of Hormuz.

**■ Limited traffic through Hormuz amid tensions, shipping data shows**

**■ Swiss embassy in Tehran to resume operations**

Switzerland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has announced that following the temporary closure of its embassy in Tehran on March 11 due to security concerns, a Swiss team has returned to the Iranian capital as of April 20.

Four Swiss staff members entered Iran via land route through Azerbaijan and are now preparing to resume operations.

**■ Leader: Iranian unity has fractured enemy ranks**

Iran's Leader Ayatollah Seyed Mojtaba Khamenei stated that the unprecedented unity among Iranians has caused a fracture within enemy ranks, severely disrupting their calculations. He warned of enemy psychological warfare aimed at undermining national cohesion. His message came as Iran's three branches of government issued a collective response rejecting US President Trump's remarks about alleged divisions within the country.

**■ Iran Air to resume international flights April 25**

Iran's national airline, Iran Air, will resume international flights on five routes from Imam Khomeini International Airport tomorrow, April 25. Destinations include Istanbul, Baku, Doha, Najaf, and Baghdad. Flights had been suspended following US-Israeli attacks on Iran in late February.

**■ Iranian minister: US-Israeli aggression threatens global peace**

Iran's Minister of Roads and Urban Development, Farzaneh Sadegh, condemned US-Israeli aggression against Iran as a serious threat to regional and global peace. Speaking from the site of the bombed B1

## SPORTS

### 2026 Asian Beach Games: Iran beat Sri Lanka

TEHRAN - Iran's national beach handball team defeated Sri Lanka 2-0 at the 6th Asian Beach Games on Friday.

The Iranian squad secured the win with set scores of 18-12 and 22-10 in Group A. Team Melli had defeated the Philippines 2-0 in their first match.

Their next challenge will be against Hong Kong and Bahrain on Sunday, followed by a match against China slated for Monday.

The sixth edition of the Asian Beach Games, a prestigious event historically held biennially from 2008 to 2016, has returned and is now hosted by the vibrant city of Sanya.

The Games officially commenced on Tuesday, bringing together athletes across 14 sports, 15 disciplines, and a total of 61 events, running from April 22nd to April 30th.

### Iran's Taremi among top 48 World Cup stars

TEHRAN - With only 48 days remaining until the 2026 World Cup kicks off across the United States, Mexico, and Canada, Fox Sports has unveiled its list of the tournament's top 48 stars. Included in this elite selection is Iran's national team captain and Olympiacos striker, Mehdi Taremi.

Taremi remains one of the most prominent figures in Iranian football. The talented forward, who has represented several top-tier European sides, is currently a key player for Greek giants Olympiacos. His pedigree is bolstered by his performance last season, where he served as a regular starter for Inter Milan during their run to becoming runners-up in the UEFA Champions League.

The veteran striker brings a formidable record to the world stage. Throughout his combined 225 appearances for FC Porto and Inter Milan, Taremi has registered a remarkable 94 goals and 65 assists, solidifying his reputation as a dual-threat attacker capable of leading Iran's frontline in North America.

### No plan for Azzurri to replace Iran at 2026 World Cup: minister

TEHRAN - The Italian sports minister, Andrea Abodi, has described a proposal for his country to replace Iran at the World Cup as "not appropriate", rejecting any idea that the Azzurri will be granted a last-minute berth at this summer's tournament.

On Wednesday it emerged that Paolo Zampolli, a special envoy to Donald Trump, had suggested Italy should be fast-tracked to the World Cup despite their shock defeat by Bosnia and Herzegovina in last month's playoffs. Zampolli proposed the four-time winners Italy replace Iran and said they would "have the pedigree to justify their inclusion". But Abodi said football's showpiece tournament should remain meritocratic.

"Italy's possible requalification for the 2026 World Cup, which U.S. president Donald Trump's envoy, Paolo Zampolli, has reportedly proposed to FIFA, is firstly not possible, and secondly not appropriate," Abodi told Sky News. "I don't know what comes first. Qualification is on the pitch."

Iran's participation has been the subject of speculation owing to the war with the U.S. and Israel. They are due to play two group games in Los Angeles and one in Seattle. Although they had floated moving their matches to the co-hosts Mexico, that idea appears a non-starter. They have not requested to withdraw from the tournament and last month the FIFA

president, Gianni Infantino, said they "will be at the World Cup".

Should Iran's status change there is no obvious logic for Italy to replace them. The United Arab Emirates, the next-highest-ranked Asian country not to have qualified, are considered their likeliest potential replacements.

Italy's third successive absence from a World Cup finals has sparked soul-searching throughout the country's football scene. This month its football federation president, Gabriele Gravina, resigned and Gennaro Gattuso stood down as national-team manager. The country faces a race against time to build and renovate stadiums suitable for co-hosting Euro 2032, which it is due to hold with Turkey.

### Iran to compete at 2026 World Cup in U.S., says Infantino

TEHRAN - The Iranian men's national soccer team were one of the first teams to qualify for the 2026 FIFA World Cup in North America, an event shaping up to be FIFA's largest yet, not only in terms of footprint and participating teams but also commercially, projected to generate upwards of \$11 billion in revenue.

But amid the U.S.-Iran war, Iran's participation in the tournament has remained a question mark.

Last month, Iran's sports minister made his position clear: "Considering that this corrupt regime has assassinated our leader, under no circumstances can we participate in the World Cup," he stated.

In a post on Truth Social in March, U.S. President Donald Trump said that while Iran's team would be "welcome" at the World Cup, "I really don't believe it is appropriate that they be there, for their own life and safety."

But FIFA President Gianni Infantino says Iran will be "coming for sure."

"We hope that by then, of course, the situation will be a peaceful situation, that would definitely help," Infantino said at CNBC's Invest in America Forum in Washington, D.C. "But Iran have to come, of course. They represent their people. They have qualified. The players want to play."

Infantino said that he recently visited with the Iranian team at their training camp in Antalya, Turkey, where he said the team indicated they wanted to play.

"They should play - sports should be outside of politics," Infantino said. "Now, okay - we don't live on the moon, we live on planet Earth, but if there is nobody else that believes in building bridges and in keeping them intact and together, well we are doing that."

Iran are scheduled to play all three of its group stage matches in the U.S.: against New Zealand in Los Angeles on June 15, against Belgium in Los Angeles on June 21, and against Egypt in Seattle on June 26. If Iran were to advance in the tournament, their future games would likely be held in the U.S.

The Iranian football federation had previously stated it made a request to FIFA to move its team's games to Mexico, which is co-hosting the World Cup alongside the U.S. and Canada. However, that request was denied.

The last time a national team withdrew from a FIFA World Cup was 1950, when multiple teams did not participate in the first tournament held post-World War II.

The 2026 World Cup has been facing two other major fan concerns: the cost of tickets, and the safety and security of the millions of international fans expected to attend.

Infantino said that there has been "an unprecedented demand for tickets," saying that there were more than 500 million ticket requests.

"Security is obviously key, it's crucial, it's important," he said. "You can, of course, always hear and read there are bans or this and that, but the fact is, we received ticket requests from all 211 countries. Everybody's coming and everybody wants to come."

## Industry, mining, trade ministry taking special measures to supply raw materials for industries

TEHRAN- The Advisor to the Minister and Director General of the Ministerial Office of the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade announced the full readiness of the ministry to meet the needs of industries and said: "By adopting necessary measures to supply raw materials for the steel and petrochemical industries and offering them on the Commodity Exchange (capital market), the continuity of production and market stabilization will be guaranteed."

According to IRNA from the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade, Seyyed Abbas Hosseini, at a ceremony honoring the outgoing CEO and introducing the new head of the Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO), and given the fundamental role of this ministry in supplying, producing, and regulating the market in the third economic and imposed war, said: "The ministry's support headquarters has been formed since the beginning of the war to support production, distribution, and market regulation, and has played a strategic role in stabilizing the situation during difficult days."

Hosseini stated that production has never stopped during the days of crisis, adding: "With the forecasts made in various sectors, necessary raw materials, including steel sheets, have been secured for a sufficient period, both through the Commodity Exchange (capital market) and through other means."

The Director General of the Ministerial Office of the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade also continued: "In the petrochemical sector as well, necessary forecasts for the coming months have been made, and products have been offered on the exchange (capital market) at appropriate prices."

### Maintaining production & activating potential capacities: important priorities of ISIPO

The Advisor to the Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade considered maintaining production and developing and utilizing idle and potential capacities as two important priorities of ISIPO in the new year and said: "Factory-less production is a path to improving productivity that should be promoted so that nominal capacities are activated."

He stated that the prerequisite for economic development is increasing the depth of domestic manufacturing, adding: "Technology companies, innovative companies, and knowledge-based companies must be developed, and the Organization for Development and Modernization of Small and Medium Industries (ISIPO) must advance these two actions to improve productivity, increase production capacity, and reduce currency dependency."

Later in the ceremony, Reza Ansari, the former CEO of ISIPO and the new head of the General Industries Deputy of the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade, considered the organization's successes to be the result of teamwork and emphasized the necessity of comprehensive cooperation for the development of the country.

Tahmoures Lahouti Ashkouri, the new head of the Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO), also expressed gratitude for the support of the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade, and said: "With all our strength and by utilizing the capacity of ISIPO and its provincial subsidiary companies, we will provide worthy services to economic activists, industrialists, and stakeholders."

It is worth noting that Seyyed Mohammad Atabak, the Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade, in separate decrees, appointed Reza Ansari as the head of the General Industries Deputy and Tahmoures Lahouti Ashkouri as the head of the Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization.

Meanwhile, on April 19, the Deputy Secretary of the Tehran Provincial Council for Dialogue between Government and the Private Sector announced an examination of the challenges and crises caused by the war in the trade sector, aiming to expedite the processes of order registration and import of essential goods.

According to IRNA from the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Hooman Hajipour, referring to a joint meeting attended by the head of the Trade Promotion Organization, as well as Mohammad-Reza Ghafrollahi (head of the Trade Facilitation and Development Committee) and Ahmad-Reza Farshchian (member of the Tehran



Chamber's Board of Representatives and head of the Import Committee of the Iran Chamber), stated that 10 proposals and solutions have been put forward to accelerate the supply of goods and provide access to raw materials for production units.

Hajipour explained that "facilitating trade processes through interaction with state institutions and via the Government-Private Sector Dialogue Council is being pursued," adding that during the meeting with the head of the Trade Promotion Organization, trade barriers and import-export challenges—especially under current conditions, as the country has endured a 40-day war—were reviewed.

According to Hajipour, it was agreed in the meeting to reduce unnecessary administrative processes and review certain systems. Responsibility for some of these trade systems lies with the Trade Promotion Organization, while others fall under the currency working group of the Central Bank.

Hajipour noted that in the current situation, it is necessary to change the origin, destination, and entry customs points in some cases, and these changes require system updates.

He added that based on negotiations with the managers of the Trade Promotion Organization, it was decided that for the import of essential industrial goods, the origin, destination, and entry customs point can be edited without requiring approval, system waiting periods, or currency optimization reviews.

According to the Deputy Secretary of the Tehran Provincial Council for Dialogue between Government and the Private Sector, outstanding order registrations from the past Iranian year 1404 (ended on March 20) for importers—especially those who achieved a certain percentage of customs clearance last year—will be exempt from systemic quota restrictions and currency optimization limits.

Hajipour also announced the extension of order registrations until May 30, 2026, and stated that for order registrations from the year 1404 that achieved 90% customs clearance, efforts have been made to allow the remaining 10% to be cleared against a letter of guarantee, considering the wartime situation and related issues.

He stated that under the current circumstances, the priority right for registering orders for 2,800 essential industrial goods will be removed, and the waiting time in the currency allocation queue will be added to the validity period of the order registration.

He emphasized that given the necessity of securing goods and boosting exports, if importers of the 2,800 essential industrial goods use foreign currency obtained from their own or others' exports, they will be taken out of the currency allocation queue. This also applies to order registrations that have already expired.

Hajipour further said that it was also agreed that the 2,800 essential industrial goods, if available in customs warehouses, would be removed from the order registration queue. Furthermore, if these goods are covered by the annual quota, they will be placed in the customs clearance queue; otherwise, they will be cleared through import without currency transfer.

Highlighting the importance of securing raw materials for production units, he said that reviewing the quotas of production units was another topic discussed in the meeting with the head of the Trade Promotion Organization. Due to the damage inflicted on certain industries—including steel and petrochemicals—during the recent war, it is essential to secure raw materials for production units that were previously produced domestically through imports. Therefore, it is necessary to seriously review the quotas of production units and take this consideration into account when determining the currency needs of production units.

# Strategic imperative of Strait of Hormuz

TEHRAN- Maximizing the use of the Strait of Hormuz's capacities is a strategic necessity for Iran. On the other hand, the legal regimes governing waterways enable countries to effectively leverage their geopolitical capacities. Rather than viewing this critical chokepoint solely through the narrow lens of toll collection, Tehran must redefine the strait as a multifaceted strategic asset.

The core issue of the Strait of Hormuz must be defined as a strategic lever, with the matter of toll collection considered in subsequent layers as a secondary issue, not as the main focus of utilization.

Therefore, the key point is to make the best possible use of the existing capacities of this waterway, as the nature of the Strait of Hormuz and its geographical position allow for maximum exploitation.



Achieving this goal is possible only when transit through this route is carried out securely and safely. Under such conditions, maritime transport security will be guaranteed, Iran will be able to effectively benefit from the economic advantages of exports and imports, and it can make the best and maximum use of the Strait of

Hormuz as an effective tool and lever internationally, particularly in negotiation processes.

Beyond mere geography, the strait represents a convergence of law, economics, and power.

By ensuring stable and safe passage for all vessels, Iran builds international trust while simultaneously preserving its

right to regulate maritime activity.

This dual approach transforms potential confrontation into calculated cooperation. Furthermore, the strait's value extends beyond oil tankers; it includes commercial shipping, fishing zones, and undersea communication cables. A holistic strategy would integrate these layers, turning safe passage into diplomatic capital.

In future negotiations—whether over sanctions, regional security, or energy exports—Iran can invoke its stewardship of the strait not as a threat, but as a proven guarantee of stability.

Ultimately, the Strait of Hormuz is not merely a waterway to be managed. It is a permanent instrument of Iranian statecraft, deserving of the most sophisticated strategic thinking.

## Iran's naval blockade worsens global inflation

TEHRAN- The Secretary General of the Shipping and Related Services Association of Iran said that a naval blockade of Iran will only lead to worsening global inflation, exacerbating the global fuel shortage, and causing immense international losses for all countries.

He added that the damage European countries would suffer from such a situation would be far greater than that of China.

Masoud Polmeh, in an interview with IRNA regarding the naval blockade of Iran by the United States and its threats to the country's trade, stated that despite American claims of a naval blockade, vessel traffic continues thanks to the support of Iran's armed forces.

The Secretary General of the Shipping and Related Services Association, referring to the recent American aggression against the Iranian ship *Tuska*, added that we hope this misconduct and maritime piracy, which violated ceasefire agreements, will be responded to by Iran as soon as possible.

He explained that a naval blockade covers a ridge line exceeding 300 nautical miles (approximately 540 kilometers), which is referred to as a "danger zone." This expanse, at the same time, lies within range of Iran's armed forces. Therefore, it is not the case that American forces can cover this entire ridge line.

This expert in maritime industries and affairs stated that even if this so-called blockade were to be fully implemented by the Americans, it could affect the entire global economy, and it will not be the case that all countries except Iran can use this route, or that only we would be the ones in difficulty.

He clarified that if this blockade were to continue and become serious, no oil, gas, or goods would pass through this ridge line. Therefore, one cannot expect America to unilaterally decide as an international sheriff and block the Persian Gulf route.

### Iran's land borders advantage for breaking naval blockade

Polmeh noted that assuming the impossi-

ble happens and the blockade becomes serious, we have thousands of kilometers of land, road, and rail routes in our country that cannot be blocked. These borders are traditionally and professionally places for the exchange of transit goods, imports, and exports, and services in these areas continue to be provided.

He said that in addition, there are numerous rail routes in the country connecting Iran to Central Asian countries, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Caucasus, Turkey, and East Asia.

The Secretary General of the Shipping and Related Services Association also pointed to the Caspian Sea, which has created very extensive connections for Iran, stating that if we consider only essential goods, dozens of ships are waiting to be unloaded in Iran's northern ports.

He added that currently, the country's northern ports are operating at full capacity and with the necessary capability to provide services, and there are no restrictions in this regard.

Polmeh stated that in terms of the density of activities in the northern region of the country, we are facing an unreasonable increase, to the extent that a significant number of ships are waiting to unload their cargo. Therefore, it is not the case that we are dependent only on the southern waterways of the country.

### Iran's naval blockade is not 100% enforceable

The Secretary General of the Shipping and Related Services Association noted that in the main southern ports, specifically Bandar Imam, Bushehr, Bandar Abbas, and Chabahar, which are ports receiving bulk cargo and essential goods, as well as containers carrying other goods, a significant number of vessels are currently unloading, loading, or waiting to berth.

He emphasized that he doubts a naval blockade would be 100% enforceable as the Americans claim. However, even if America

## 'US aggression has cast a shadow over global, regional food security'

TEHRAN- Iran's Minister Agriculture, stating that American aggressions pose a serious threat to achieving the "Zero Hunger" goal, said: "The illegal war by the United States and the Zionist regime in the region has cast a shadow over global and regional food security and has disrupted the supply chain, especially in the energy fuel and fertilizer markets."

According to IRNA from the Ministry of Agriculture, Gholamreza Nouri Ghezleji said in an online speech on Thursday at the second meeting of the 38th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific (APRC 38), held in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei: "I express my heartfelt sorrow over the martyrdom of the esteemed Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ayatollah Khamenei (May God's mercy be upon him), and my other compatriots, especially those active in agriculture and food, during the illegal and brutal military attacks of the United States and the genocidal Zionist regime."

Stating that the Asia and Pacific

region today faces numerous problems and complex challenges, he said: "The Asian region is facing geopolitical tensions, market disruptions, instability in supply and trade chains, widespread food insecurity and malnutrition, climate change, land degradation, and water resource depletion. These problems and challenges have affected the agricultural and food system, made achieving the 'Zero Hunger' goal—the second main goal of the international community—impossible, and weakened the resilience of the agricultural and food system."

Nouri Ghezleji said: "In order to overcome the problems of the Asia and Pacific region, such as hunger, food insecurity, and lack of access to a healthy diet, it is necessary to adopt common approaches to transform the agricultural and food system and strengthen the sustainability of systems."

The Minister of Agriculture stated: "Water transformation and attention to forestry and wood farming are examples of

the aforementioned approaches. Of course, foresight, challenge management, attention to drivers, as well as the development of strategic plans to achieve goals such as improving food security with an emphasis on safe and nutritious food, are important."

Nouri Ghezleji, noting that a widespread tree planting program began in Iran three years ago, said: "Iran, backed by a network of research institutes and prominent researchers in various sciences, including fisheries sciences, possesses the knowledge capacity and readiness for comprehensive participation in water transformation programs."

The Minister of Agriculture added: "The aggressions of the United States are a serious threat to achieving Zero Hunger. Supply chain disruptions, especially in the energy fuel and fertilizer markets, are the result of the illegal military aggression of the United States and the Zionist regime, the effects of which will cast a shadow over global and regional food security."

could block the southern maritime outlet of our country, we could use the capacity of the country's rail and road connections and the northern waterway, and certainly, the Americans will not achieve a favorable outcome.

### America's lack of need for Strait of Hormuz is an outright lie

Polmeh went on to say that America claims it does not need the Strait of Hormuz, yet this is an outright lie. He asked how they can claim they do not need the Strait of Hormuz given all the investments made in the countries of the southern Persian Gulf, especially the \$1.8 trillion Persian Gulf international trade cycle (which accounts for over 20% of global trade value), invested by major American investors.

He stated that one of the reasons America claims a naval blockade is to console this category of investors who see their capital being lost.

Polmeh recalled that after Trump assumed the presidency of the United States, during one of his foreign trips to the countries on the southern shores of the Persian Gulf, he attracted over \$3 trillion in investment—capital attracted by major American companies.

### America is main loser of a game it started without necessary calculations

He continued that in addition to oil, gas, and upstream investments, extensive investments have also been made by Americans in this region in trade, advanced technologies, communications technologies, and artificial intelligence. Therefore, America is the main loser of a game it started without proper calculations, and now it is trapped, struggling to find a way out.

The Secretary General of the Shipping and Related Services Association clarified that we too will certainly suffer damage in this cycle, but our loss ratio will be far smaller than that of the Americans.

He expressed hope that Iran can soon reclaim its legitimate rights and achieve lasting peace with a view to preserving national interests.

Nouri Ghezleji stated: "It is expected that all regional and independent countries, while strongly condemning the military aggression and illegal blockade of Iran, will strive for a permanent and sustainable cessation of illegal attacks and the continuation of agricultural production."

Commemorating the memory of the martyrs of Iran's agricultural and food security sector, he referred to the martyrdom of 168 students at a school in Minab, southern Iran, and said: "From Makan Nasiri, a seven-year-old student of that school, only a crumpled blue sweater and cream-colored sports shoes remain for the free people of the world."

The Minister of Agriculture, on behalf of the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, thanked the brotherly government of Brunei Darussalam for its worthy hosting and organization of the 38th Session of the Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific.

# The hollowed arsenal of a fading empire

The campaign of aggression against Iran has left the American military-industrial complex in a state of kinetic bankruptcy

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN — The leak is worse than the official denial because it reveals something the White House cannot spin away: the United States has been fighting Iran with a magazine that is visibly thinning.

After weeks of air and missile combat, the Trump administration is now confronting the oldest rule of warfare it spent years pretending technology had abolished: if you shoot faster than you can build, you eventually run dry.

The revelation's sting is not simply that the U.S. used a lot of missiles. It is that it used the wrong missiles in the wrong quantities.

The U.S. squandered high-end missiles in a desperate, mismatched show of force for a war that was militarily effortless to ignite but remains an embarrassing political failure they can never truly justify.

The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) says the United States fired more than 1,000 Tomahawks, about 1,100 JASSM-ERs, and large shares of its Patriot, THAAD, SM-3, SM-6, and PrSM inventories during the 2026 campaign of aggression against Iran, with rebuilding to prewar levels likely taking one to four years or more.

CNN reported a "near-term risk" that the U.S. could run low in another war, and internal Pentagon assessments reportedly showed especially severe strain in air-defense stocks.

The depletion of these particular stocks is significant due to their unique roles in the U.S. arsenal. Tomahawks and JASSMs are the tools Washington reserves for standoff strike against hardened targets; Patriot, THAAD, SM-3, and SM-6 are the expensive shield that keeps bases, ships, and allies alive under missile fire.

When those stocks drop sharply in a short war, the challenge extends beyond immediate logistics into the realm of long-term strategy. A so-called superpower that cannot keep its magazine full must think twice before opening the next fight.

## US ability to defend allies, including Japan, falters: analysis

TEHRAN — There is growing concern about the United States' ability to provide security for its allies in the face of a military standoff.

For example, Japan will release the next phase of its national security strategy later this year, covering 2026 to 2030, Al Jazeera reported on April 24.

The document is expected to incorporate lessons from Ukraine and Iran about drones and supply chain chokepoints, says Kazuo Suzuki, director of the Institute of Geoeconomics, an independent think tank in Tokyo.

Japan has historically fallen under the protection of Washington's nuclear umbrella, but China's rapid military expansion has "reduced the credibility of the U.S. extended deterrence," according to Kei Koga, an expert in East Asian security and the U.S.-Japan alli-

ance, at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore.

While some of these changes are a response to the rise of neighboring China, they also reflect growing concern in Tokyo about its longtime ally, the U.S., and its ability or willingness to defend its allies, say analysts.

Under U.S. President Donald Trump, many of the longstanding assumptions about the U.S. commitment to defend allies like Japan are changing.

Trump's shift towards an "America First" policy and combative relationship with long-time allies in Europe has worried Japan. A 2025 survey by Japan's Asahi Shimbun indicated that 77 percent of respondents doubt the U.S. would protect Japan in a military crisis.

## Dozens of IOF casualties as Lebanon ceasefire extended

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN — The Zionist regime admits major casualties in southern Lebanon after Hezbollah launches more retaliatory attacks over the regime's ceasefire violations.

Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) admit 45 of its soldiers were injured in southern Lebanon in the past 48 hours alone. The IOF further acknowledged that since its illegal ground invasion began on March 2, the total number of wounded soldiers has risen to 735, including 44 in critical condition and 100 moderately wounded. Strict IOF censorship prevents independent verification, and the number of serious injuries is likely higher.

The regime's media outlets reported that while the IOF is aware of multiple Hezbollah operations carried out over the past several days, it has chosen not to public-



The cost trap

Iran understood the math better than Washington did. Tehran's drones and missiles are comparatively cheap, localized, and easier to replace, while the U.S. answer is a cascade of million-dollar interceptors and high-end cruise missiles built through slow, fragile supply chains.

The economic imbalance has become almost obscene. One side can launch a swarm for the price of a single air-defense round on the other side. That is one of the reasons the war does not resemble a display of American strength but a live demonstration of American vulnerability.

### The production ceiling

CSIS argues that replenishment is not a matter of simply approving more money.

The industrial base itself is the bottleneck, with lead times for critical components such as solid rocket motors and seeker electronics stretching into the 24-to-36-month range and total replacement cycles taking years.

The American military-industrial complex has operated similarly to a fragile boutique, even as its own relentless aggression creates a battlefield that demands the output of a factory.

In comparison, Iran's missile and drone ecosystem is more localized and improvisational, while the U.S. depends on large contractors, nested suppliers, and just-in-time as-

sumptions that break down under pressure.

### Strategic cannibalization

The leaks are also about damage control abroad. Reports say the Pentagon has delayed or deferred deliveries to Ukraine, Japan, and parts of NATO's eastern flank to prioritize war on Iran.

Japan's Tomahawk order has reportedly been pushed back, even though those missiles are central to Tokyo's new counterstrike doctrine against China. European allies have likewise seen delays.

If Taiwan needs anti-ship missiles, if Poland needs air defense, if Ukraine needs Patriots, every diverted round becomes a political message.

The issue is not merely that the U.S. is walking away from its so-called allies. It's far worse: Washington is still clinging to the illusion of full-spectrum dominance even as its security guarantees have degenerated into worthless promises; bad checks written on an industrial base so eroded it cannot even pretend to cover them.

### The logic of the leaks

The source of the leaks is probably mixed. Some insiders may be trying to force realism on a White House that prefers maximalist slogans to hard logistics. Others may be worried about the China file, where a Pacific contingency would require far more long-range strike and missile defense than the campaign of aggression against Iran has

already burned away.

There is also bureaucratic self-protection: if the stockpiles are depleted, leaking the numbers is one way to make sure blame lands on political leaders, not the bureaucrats and planners.

There is a more cynical interpretation: the possibility of strategic deception. In the tradition of maskirovka or the "empty fort" strategy, Washington might be intentionally projecting an image of kinetic exhaustion to bait its adversaries. If the reported shortages are exaggerated, the leak serves as a sophisticated trap, inviting a strike that would be met with a far more robust response than the current narrative suggests. In this light, these are not confessions of weakness, but carefully curated lures designed to smoke out the intentions of rival powers.

It is also worth noting the pedigree of the institutions sounding these alarms. The CSIS is a central node in the American national security architecture, heavily funded by the very entities that benefit from a bloated military budget.

With financial ties to the Department of War, major defense contractors like Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, and Boeing, as well as allied partner governments, its reports serve a dual purpose.

While providing data on stockpile depletion, these assessments also function as a sophisticated lobbying effort for the next generation of multi-billion-dollar contracts. Their closeness to the Pentagon suggests that when CSIS speaks of an empty magazine, it is often a precursor to a demand for a much larger and more expensive one.

But the larger reason may be simpler. Leaks like these appear when an institution knows it's being pushed past its limits and wants the world to see it before the next crisis hits.

They read as a warning shot from a system being ordered to fight tomorrow's battles with yesterday's ammunition; a desperate cry from a structure that knows it's running on fumes and borrowed time.

"Everything is focused on the American interest and American defence, so defending other countries is not the priority," Suzuki told Al Jazeera.

Growing U.S. skepticism in Japan has pushed Tokyo to shore up alliances with other U.S. allies like the Philippines and Australia, while also dimming some of the public criticism about Japan's military build-up.

"For many years, the opposition assumed that the United States would come and rescue Japan, and therefore we don't need to have more than self-defence," Suzuki said. "Increasingly, people are realizing this assumption is too optimistic, and we need to have at least the minimum capability to have deterrence and counterstrike capability."



air missile, in response to the violations of Lebanese airspace. Separately, Hezbollah fighters targeted a gathering of IOF soldiers in Qantara with a raid, achieving a confirmed hit. That operation came in response to the regime's attacks on civilians in the town of Tallin.

Hezbollah Secretary-General Sheikh Naim Qassem stressed that a ceasefire means a complete halt to all hostile actions.

He added that the resistance does not trust the Zionist regime and remains ready to respond to any violations.

Earlier, Hezbollah issued six statements.

First: "In response to the attack on civilians in At-Tiri town," fighters targeted an IOF gathering in Taybeh town with appropriate weapons.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](https://tehrantimes.com))

## Over 50 Indian physicists denounce raids on universities in Iran, Lebanon and Palestine

A group of prominent Indian physicists specializing in string theory has expressed solidarity with academics in Iran, Palestine and Lebanon, condemning attacks on universities and civilian institutions during conflicts involving Israel and the United States.

In a statement, more than 50 string theorists — physicists working at the cutting edge of humankind's understanding of nature — said they wished to "express our heartfelt solidarity" with scholars and civilians in the three countries amid "the recent war initiated by the United States and Israel".

The Indian scientists added that the attacks formed "part of a broader assault on civilian sites that has led to the loss of thousands of lives and displaced millions of people".

The group also referred to Israel's genocidal war on Gaza, saying "almost all universities and schools there have been destroyed."

"We unequivocally condemn these crimes

against humanity, which will cause long-term harm to the future of education and research in these regions apart from the tragic loss of lives," they said.

Ashoke Sen and Spenta Wadia, both award-winning, globally renowned theoretical physicists, were among the statement's signatories, which spanned India's top science and technology universities and research labs.

"Universities and educational institutes in Iran, as well as Lebanon and Palestine, have been attacked during the war," the group said, listing sites including the Sharif University of Technology, Shahid Beheshti University, Iran University of Science and Technology, Isfahan University of Technology and the Lebanese University.

India is a global leader in string theory, a mathematical framework in which the fundamental constituents of reality are one-dimensional extended objects called strings, rather than zero-dimensional point particles.

## Journalist Amal Khalil, a 'woman of resistance' who embodied southern Lebanon, killed by Israel

Israel killed the Lebanese journalist who had repeatedly received death threats from Mossad



TEHRAN — Amal Khalil, the seasoned journalist, was born during a years-long Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon. She was killed there four decades later by invading Israeli forces.

"Amal was present in every home. Every home in Lebanon has lost her," Ali Khalil, her brother, said tearfully a day after she was targeted and killed by Israel.

"Amal resembles the south in all its details — its sweet breeze, its valleys, its mountains, and its old houses. She resembles all of that."

Khalil is remembered fondly by her colleagues

as generous, fearless and pioneering.

"I want to express gratitude for everything she did for us young journalists," Hussein Chaabane, a Lebanese investigative and legal journalist, told Middle East Eye.

"She was so generous even if we were competitors. She never hesitated in sharing a contact, a key — and she had all the keys in the south."

"She knew it like the palm of her hand and she shared this love and dedication with everyone who needed it."

Khalil, 42, was killed on Wednesday as she went to cover an earlier Israeli attack in the town of al-Tayri.

An initial strike hit a vehicle in front of Khalil and freelance photographer Zeinab Faraj, prompting the pair to take shelter in a nearby house.

A second strike then hit the house, according to the health ministry. Rescuers retrieved Faraj, who sustained a head wound, but were fired on before they could reach Khalil.

Hours later, they found Khalil dead under the rubble.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](https://tehrantimes.com))

## Why has Israel entered direct talks with Lebanon?

By Batool Subeiti

LONDON — The Islamic resistance of Lebanon emerged to fill a vacuum during a time of absolute Israeli dominance of the country following the 1982 invasion. Its resistance finally led to the liberation of Lebanon.

Successive governments were completely submissive to the Western agenda. Therefore, the Lebanese resistance front became the force in Lebanon that enabled this small country to be the only Arab state capable of establishing an effective deterrence equation against the Israeli occupation entity. This preserved Lebanon's independence to some extent and kept it from being dominated between 2006 and 2023.

However, during this time, it never confronted internal opposing factions aligned with submissive Arab or Western agendas. Instead, it coexisted with them. It did not impose its agenda. Its presence and strength prevented Israeli intervention in the country.

After Operation Al Aqsa Flood and the open "Ul' al-Ba's" battle (Arabic for "Battle of the Mighty"), the U.S. and Israeli occupation entity assumed that the resistance movement had been defeated, especially in the period following the supposed ceasefire on November 27, 2024. This assumption came after major losses, including the pager massacre and the killing of the resistance movement's Secretary General, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, and first and second-tier military leadership. The party adhered to a unilateral ceasefire, while the occupation regime did not, and continued its attacks.

At that point, it was assumed that the Lebanese resistance movement had been defeated and that the political consequences of this supposed

defeat must follow. The U.S. administration, in cooperation with the Saudi alliance, brought in a President and Prime Minister suited to this phase to comply with American demands, especially since the resistance party had been in a state of dormancy for 15 months, without firing a single shot. The resistance movement went along with the system in approving the President and Prime Minister in their positions.

Then came the opportunity during the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran, after the blood of Sayed Ali Khamenei unified all, reshuffling the cards. The Lebanese resistance front returned to its core purpose, while the authorities reverted to illusory political effects that do not match reality, pushing toward recognition of the Israeli occupation regime and direct negotiations.

The entity had previously refused direct negotiations with Lebanon. It considered the Lebanese government incapable, as it had failed to dismantle the resistance movement or disarm it, despite U.S. dissatisfaction with Lebanon's official role and its unsuccessful attempts.

Lebanon issued many decisions, from those of August 5th and September 5th, to criminalize the resistance movement in the south and plans to withdraw weapons, but failed to implement them. This failure was a source of dissatisfaction for both the U.S. and the Israeli occupation entity. Now, suddenly, they have agreed to begin direct negotiations after previously rejecting the idea. Clearly, the main goal is to remove Lebanon from the Iranian-American negotiation table. The aim is not to give Lebanon anything, even symbolically, but to impose what it must do instead of the Israeli occupation entity, namely directly confronting the resistance movement.

## Heritage experts urge action after war damages 149 sites



TEHRAN – Iran's association of cultural heritage conservators has warned of extensive damage to historical sites, museums and cultural centers during the recent war with the US and Israeli regime, calling for immediate mobilization of national expertise to manage the crisis and safeguard affected assets.

In a statement reported by ISNA, the Association of Iranian Conservators expressed "deep concern" over reports of destruction and neglect impacting historical monuments, archaeological sites and museum collections during the conflict. It said the damage ranged from structural harm to historical buildings to the irreversible loss of architectural decorations and museum artifacts.

"Damage to cultural heritage, regardless of geography or political affiliation, constitutes harm to humanity's collective memory and the destruction of part of our shared history," the statement said.

The association emphasized its scientific neutrality and rejected any actions or conditions that threaten cultural heritage in times of crisis. It urged all parties to adhere to relevant international laws governing the protection of cultural property during armed conflicts.

The group announced its readiness to participate immediately in all stages of response, including emergency protection, technical restoration and long-term recovery. It said its capabilities are based on up-to-date knowledge, extensive field experience and a nationwide network of specialists.

However, the association noted that this or-

ganized capacity has not yet been effectively utilized in managing heritage-related crises. It described the lack of engagement as inconsistent with the principle of maximizing national professional expertise outside routine administrative structures.

The statement also highlighted the economic impact of the conflict on conservators, noting that many specialists in the restoration of historical objects and monuments have been left unemployed during the war and subsequent ceasefire period. It warned that continued unemployment risks weakening the professional body responsible for safeguarding cultural heritage.

The association called on Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts to take concrete steps, including the best use of conservators' expertise in crisis management, establishing legal and operational frameworks for structured collaboration, and integrating the group as a scientific and technical arm in both short- and long-term preservation strategies.

It outlined specific areas of cooperation, including participation in emergency expert task forces, provision of technical consultation and supervision, training programs to enhance workforce skills, and field operations for protection and restoration under official oversight.

According to the ministry, at least 149 historical sites across Iran have been damaged during the war that started on Feb. 28, underscoring the scale of the challenge facing authorities and heritage professionals.

## Glimpses of World Heritage sites: Fasil Ghebbi

In the 16th and 17th centuries, the fortress city of Fasil Ghebbi was the residence of the Ethiopian emperor Fasilides and his successors.

Surrounded by a 900-m-long wall, the city contains palaces, churches, monasteries and unique public and private buildings marked by Hindu and Arab influences, subsequently transformed by the Baroque style brought to Gondar by the Jesuit missionaries. The main castle has huge towers and looming battlemented walls, resembling a piece of medieval Europe transposed to Ethiopia. Beyond the confines of the city to the northwest by the Qaha River, there is a two-storey pavilion of a bathing palace associated with Emperor Fasilidas. The building is a two-storey battlemented structure situated within and on one side of a rectangular pool of water which was supplied by a canal from the nearby river. The bathing pavilion itself stands on pier arches and contains several rooms reached by a stone bridge, part of which could be raised for defence. Subsequent rulers, such as Iyasu the Great, continued building, improving the techniques and architectural style and expanded to the hills northwest of the city centre, in the area known as Qusquam.

Fasil Ghebbi is located in the Amhara National Regional State, in the North Gondar Administrative Zone of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

According to UNESCO, the serial property consists of eight components. Within the Fasil Ghebbi palace compound are: the Castle of Emperor Fasilidas, the Castle of Emperor Iyasu, the Library of Tzadich Yohannes; the Chancellery of Tzadich Yohannes; the Castle of Emperor David, the Palace of Mentuab and Banqueting Hall of the Emperor Bekaffa. The remaining seven components are located in and around the city of Gondar: the Debre Berhan Selassie (Monastery and church); the Bath of Fasilidas; Kiddush Yohannes; Qusquam (Monastery and Church); Thermal Area; the Sosinios (also known as Maryam Ghemb); the Gorgora (Monastery and Church) and the Palace of Guzara.

Between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries, Ethiopian rulers moved their royal camps frequently. King Fasil (Fasilidas) settled in Gondar and established it as a permanent capital in 1636. Before its decline in the late eighteenth century, the royal court had developed from a camp into a fortified compound called Fasil Ghebbi, consisting of six major building complexes and other ancillary buildings, surrounded

by a wall 900 metres long, with twelve entrances and three bridges.

The fortress city functioned as the centre of the Ethiopian government until 1864. It has some twenty palaces, royal buildings, highly decorated churches, monasteries and unique public and private buildings, transformed by the Baroque style brought to Gondar by the Jesuit missionaries. The main castle has huge towers and looming battlemented walls, resembling a piece of medieval Europe transposed to Ethiopia. Beyond the confines of the city to the northwest by the Qaha River, there is a two-storey pavilion of a bathing palace associated with Emperor Fasilidas. The building is a two-storey battlemented structure situated within and on one side of a rectangular pool of water which was supplied by a canal from the nearby river. The bathing pavilion itself stands on pier arches and contains several rooms reached by a stone bridge, part of which could be raised for defence. Subsequent rulers, such as Iyasu the Great, continued building, improving the techniques and architectural style and expanded to the hills northwest of the city centre, in the area known as Qusquam.

Fasil Ghebbi and the other remains in Gondar city demonstrate a remarkable interface between internal and external cultures, with cultural elements related to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Ethiopian Jews and Muslims. This relationship is expressed not only through the architecture of the sites but also through the handicrafts, painting, literature and music that flourished in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

(Source: UNESCO)

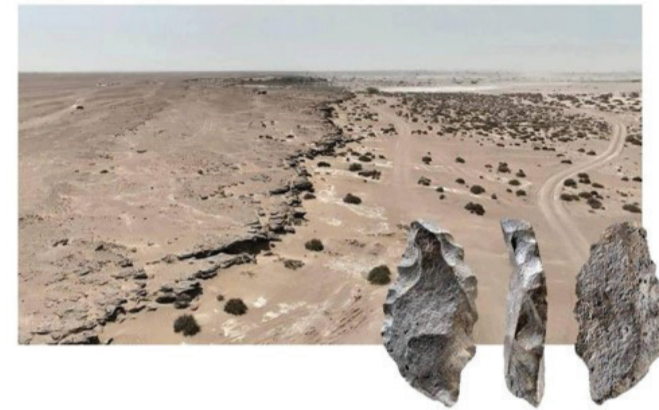
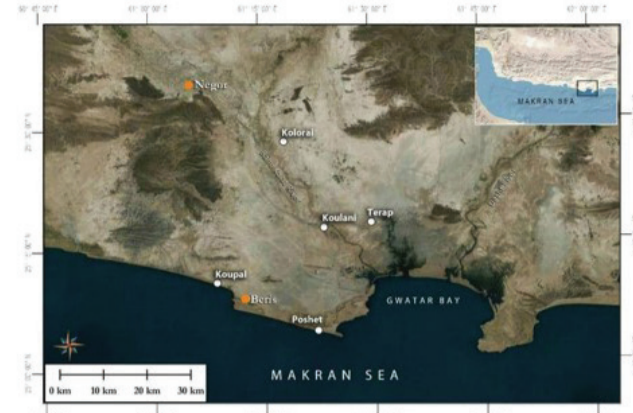
# Makran Coast: new archaeological evidence confirms repeated early human occupations in southeastern Iran

TEHRAN – Archaeologists have uncovered compelling evidence that some of the earliest human ancestors, originally migrating from Africa, not only passed through but also settled and flourished along the southern coast of present-day Iran, specifically within the natural corridor known as the Makran Coast. The findings have been published in the *Journal of Sistan and Baluchistan Studies*.

Stone tools recovered from multiple sites indicate that distinct groups of ancient hominins inhabited the region during three major phases of the Stone Age: the Lower, Middle, and Upper Paleolithic. The discovery challenges the notion of a mere transient passage, instead pointing to a familiar landscape where small bands of hunter-gatherers returned repeatedly over thousands of years.

At the two oldest sites, Koulani and Kolorai, archaeologists unearthed basic, heavy stone tools typical of early human ancestors, closely resembling artifacts found in East Africa. In contrast, sites such as Terap and Poshet yielded more advanced, specialized tools, including scrapers for cleaning animal hides and jagged flakes for cutting meat or wood, attributed to later human species, possibly Neanderthals or early *Homo sapiens*.

The site of Poshet has proven particularly significant. There, researchers found a mixture of older and newer tool styles side by side, offering a rare snapshot



of a transitional period when human technology was evolving toward sharper, more efficient implements while older methods persisted.

These were not permanent settlements but rather small, mobile hunter-gatherer groups. However, the accumulation of tools across multiple locations over an extended timeframe suggests intimate knowledge of the landscape, including sources of quality stone for toolmaking, water catchments, and animal

migration routes.

Some sites appear to have served as workshops where individuals shaped raw stone into new tools, while others were likely campsites or butchering stations. Such planning and environmental familiarity reflect a distinctly human trait: not desperate wandering, but learned adaptation to a sustainable way of life.

The discovery carries an urgent and sobering dimension. These archaeological sites are

located in southeast Iran along the Makran coast near the Strait of Hormuz, an area recently struck by American airstrikes during their war with Iran that started on Feb. 28. The strikes underscore the fragility of some of the oldest evidence of human existence. Scientists are now calling for an urgent, carefully planned excavation campaign to document and preserve these ancient remains before further damage or loss occurs.

Researchers from the Iranian Centre for Archaeological Research (ICAR), the Hormozgan provincial Department of Cultural Heritage, Deutsches Bergbau-Museum Bochum, and the Paleolithic Department of the National Museum of Iran contributed to the study.

Makoran, aka Makran or Mokran, is a semi-desert coastal strip, in Sistan-Baluchestan province, along the coast of the Sea of Oman.

The collective province -- Sistan in the north and Baluchestan in the south -- accounts for one of the driest regions of Iran with a slight increase in rainfall from east to west, and an obvious rise in humidity in the coastal regions. It is home to several distinctive archaeological sites and natural attractions, including two UNESCO World Heritage sites, namely Shahr-e-Soukhteh (Burnt City) and Lut desert.

In ancient times, Sistan-Baluchestan connected the Indus Valley to the Babylonian civilizations.

## Isfahan launches university partnership to restore Chehel Sotoun Palace after airstrike damage



TEHRAN – Iranian cultural heritage authorities have begun a joint initiative with Art University of Isfahan to advance research and restoration work at Chehel Sotoun Palace, officials said, as damage to the historic monument continues to worsen following nearby airstrikes.

Mostafa Hadipour, director of the Chehel Sotoun World Heritage site, said a memorandum of understanding had been signed to draw on the university's academic and research capacity to support the preservation and revival of traditional architectural structures, particularly the Safavid-era pavilion.

Speaking to ISNA, Hadipour said the second technical working group meeting for the site was held with participation from university professors and students, focusing on structural vulnerabilities, potential instabilities and damage attributed to what he described as recent U.S.-Israeli attacks.

He said academic teams had conducted monitoring and analysis of the palace structure and presented findings aimed at improving conservation strategies.

"One of the key proposals is the use of advanced seismic sensors for continuous monitoring of the structure," Hadipour said, adding

that the devices would enable precise recording and analysis of structural vibrations and movements.

The sensors could also measure environmental parameters such as humidity and light exposure, capabilities associated with modern "smart" engineering systems that can play a significant role in protecting historic buildings, the official added.

Hadipour said the implementation of the sensor system would depend on approval by the provincial technical council and allocation of funding.

He added that the initiative also seeks to direct postgraduate research at Isfahan Art University toward the study of Chehel Sotoun's traditional structure, allowing academic work to contribute directly to conservation efforts.

The agreement further includes cooperation on developing a new museum content plan for the palace, with the aim of improving the presentation of artifacts and enhancing the site's appeal to visitors.

Separately, provincial heritage

officials said the condition of the palace has deteriorated in recent weeks due to the lingering effects of shockwaves from nearby bombardments.

Amir Karamzadeh, director-general of cultural heritage, tourism and handicrafts for Isfahan province, told IRNA that the scale of damage had increased compared with earlier assessments conducted about a month ago.

"The ongoing evaluations indicate that some of the damage is progressive," he said, noting that decorative elements of the monument continue to fall.

Karamzadeh said the severity of the impact had proven more serious than initially estimated and stressed that comprehensive scientific studies must be completed before restoration begins.

Chehel Sotoun, meaning "Forty Columns," was built in the 17th century during the reign of Shah Abbas II and historically served as a venue for royal receptions. The palace, now a museum, stands within a Persian garden listed by UNESCO as part of the "Persian Garden" cultural landscape.

## Historic Owltn Castle seen as tourism hub in northwest Iran, official says

TEHRAN – A senior provincial official said the historic Owltn Castle in Parsabad county has the potential to become a center for cultural and tourism development in the region, according to remarks reported on Friday.

Jalil Jabbari, head of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department of Ardabil province, said the site in Owltn could play a key role in promoting tourism and cultural activities in the county.

"The historic Owltn Castle has the capacity to become a focal point for cultural and tourism development in Parsabad," Jabbari said on Friday.

He said plans to establish a national cultural heritage base at the site have been pursued both through coordination with the county's

parliamentary representative and during visits by the minister of cultural heritage to the province.

Jabbari added that the creation of such a base could contribute to improved protection and promotion of the historical structure.

"All sectors of the provincial cultural heritage department, particularly the heritage deputy, protection unit and legal office, are engaged in efforts to safeguard Owltn Castle," he said.

Owltn is a small city in northwestern Iran near the border with Azerbaijan. It was granted city status in 2021 and lies in a fertile plain known for agricultural activity.

The area has drawn attention for its historical significance. In 2022, road construction

work between Parsabad and Sarband led to the discovery of ancient tomb chambers. Archaeologists identified nine pit graves dating back to the Parthian period and early Islamic centuries through the Seljuk era, according to findings supervised by Iran's Research Institute for Cultural Heritage and Tourism.

Owltn Castle, located near the city, dates to the Parthian period and is registered as a national heritage site. Archaeological evidence suggests continuous human activity in the area from ancient times, with the site likely serving defensive and administrative functions.

Officials say further preservation and development efforts could enhance the site's visibility and contribute to regional tourism.

# Over 8,000 healthcare workers ready to provide services voluntarily: MP

TEHRAN - More than 8,000 healthcare workers have announced their readiness to provide relief and medical services voluntarily, an MP has said.

This issue indicates the spirit of sacrifice and high responsibility of the country's medical staff, IRNA quoted Fatemeh Mohammadbeigi as saying.

Referring to the widespread presence of health professionals during the recent war, she said: "During this period, in addition to the field presence of health personnel, all costs of treating the wounded were also covered free of charge, which is an important feature of the health system's performance in war conditions."

Emphasizing the need to compensate for the damage to health infrastructure, she added: "Damaged ambulances and medical centers, and other facilities must be reconstructed as soon as possible. In addition, improving the resilience of the health system and preparing to face possible future crises are serious priorities."

On March 16, the Welfare Organization announced that it had organized a network of some 20,000 volunteers to help provide a wide range of services, particularly medical and welfare services, to people affected by the U.S.-Israeli aggression.

The network includes ordinary people, medical specialists, psychologists, and social workers, IRNA reported.

Over the past few months, particularly during the recent war, public participation and volunteering have noticeably developed.

The Welfare Organization has held several meetings with the volunteers in different provinces of the country to plan and coordinate their activities, and derive maximum benefits from their high capacity.

The result has been great, and the volunteers provide services to different strata of society.

The network of volunteers helps to deliver generous donations faster and more targeted to the needy.



Apart from medical and essential supplies, volunteers have helped repair damaged houses.

President Masoud Pezeshkian has called on international health organizations and doctors worldwide to respond to what he described as a "crime against humanity" following attacks on medical facilities in Iran.

"What message does attacking hospitals, pharmaceutical companies, and the Pasteur Institute (of Iran) as a medical research center in Iran convey?" Pezeshkian wrote on X.

The Welfare Organization has organized some 20,000 volunteers to help provide services to people.

"As a specialist physician, I urge WHO, the Red Cross, Doctors Without Borders, and physicians worldwide to respond to this crime against humanity," he added.

In a separate statement, Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei condemned the strike as "heartbreaking, cruel, despicable, and utterly outrageous."

"The American-Israeli aggressors have attacked the Pasteur

Institute of Iran — the oldest and most prestigious research and public health center in Iran and the entire Middle East, founded in 1920 through an agreement between the Pasteur Institute of Paris and the Iranian government," Baghaei said on X.

In addition to the Pasteur Institute of Iran, other health infrastructures were destroyed during illegal strikes. The Delaram Sina Psychiatric Hospital sustained significant damage due to a strike on 29 March, and the Tofigh Daru pharmaceutical facility, which produced medicines for treating cancer and multiple sclerosis, was damaged in another attack on 31 March. No casualties were reported from these incidents.

Since March 1, WHO has verified over 20 attacks on health care in Iran, resulting in at least nine deaths, including that of an infectious disease health worker and a member of the Iranian Red Crescent Society.

Attacks on health have also been recorded outside Tehran, including on March 21, when an explosion nearby Imam Ali Hospital in Andimeshk, Khuzestan province, led to the facility's evacuation and cessation of services.

The conflict in Iran and the region is impacting the delivery of health services and the safety of health workers, patients, and civilians present at health facilities.

Peace is the best medicine."

The scale of civilian casualties and the humanitarian impact of the U.S.-Israeli war of aggression against Iran is deeply shocking, Vincent Cassard, the head of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) delegation in Iran, has said, describing images from the strikes as heartbreaking.

The toll on civilians and the destruction of essential services they depend on is deeply distressing, Cassard said in an exclusive interview with IRNA in March.

He noted that images of the ruined girls' school in Minab and the coffins of numerous children had left a profound emotional impact on him.

The ICRC official said that although he has so far witnessed the situation directly only in Tehran, the reports he receives from both his team and the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) on casualties, damage and devastation are extremely alarming.

Cassard stressed that civilians must be protected from attacks, and that vital services such as hospitals must remain off-limits to strikes, adding that international humanitarian law is unequivocal on this point.

He praised the IRCS for its nationwide emergency response since the start of the escalation on February 28, describing their round-the-clock efforts as remarkable.

## "Driven to End Malaria: Now We Can. Now We Must."



TEHRAN - Science is advancing faster than ever. For the first time, ending malaria in our lifetime is a real possibility. New vaccines, treatments, malaria control tools and pioneering technologies - including genetic modification of mosquitos and long-acting injectables - are in development.

Already, 25 countries are rolling out malaria vaccines to protect 10 million children a year. Next-generation mosquito nets now make up 84% of all new nets distributed. Nationally-led programmes are driving change. The possibility has never been greater.

Malaria is a mosquito-borne infectious disease that affects humans and other animals; the disease is most commonly spread by an infected female Anopheles mosquito. The mosquito bite introduces the parasites from the mosquito's saliva into a person's blood.

It causes symptoms that typically include fever, tiredness, vomiting, and headaches. In severe cases, it can cause yellow skin, seizures, coma, or death. Symptoms usually begin ten to fifteen days after being bitten by an infected mosquito.

On World Malaria Day 2026, April 25, the World Health Organization joins partners to launch the campaign: "Driven to End Malaria: Now We Can. Now We Must." This is a rallying cry to grasp the moment—to protect lives now and fund a malaria-free future.

### Progress is real and measurable

Since 2000, 2.3 billion cases and 14 million deaths have been averted. To date, 47 countries have been certified malaria-free (of which two in 2024 and three in 2025), while 37 countries reported fewer than 1000 cases in 2024. Success is possible, even in tough areas: The Greater Mekong Subregion proves elimination is achievable, with cases falling by nearly 90% despite long-standing drug resistance.

Between 2000 and 2024, the number of malaria-endemic countries fell sharply, dropping from 108 to 80. Over the same period:

- \* Countries with fewer than 10 000 cases rose from 27 in 2000 to 46 in 2024.
- \* Countries with fewer than 100 indigenous cases increased from 6 to 26.
- \* Countries with fewer than 10 indigenous cases increased from 4 to 24.

But the global situation is stalling: In 2024, there were an estimated 282 million cases and 610,000 deaths—a slight increase from 2023.

### Biological challenges:

\* Drug resistance: Artemisinin partial resistance is confirmed in four African countries (Eritrea, Rwanda, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania,) and spreading. This is a critical danger to the main treatments for malaria.

\* Insecticide resistance: Resistance to pyrethroids (the main chemical on bed nets) is widespread, confirmed in 48 out of 53 reporting countries.

\* Diagnostic failure: pfhrp2 gene deletions, which can make rapid diagnostic tests fail, are spreading and now reported in 46 endemic countries.

\* Invasive mosquitoes: Anopheles stephensi, an urban-dwelling, insecticide-resistant mosquito, is expanding its range in Africa, posing a new threat to cities.

### Systemic challenges:

\* A massive funding gap: 2024 funding (US\$ 3.9 billion) was less than half of the US\$ 9.3 billion 2025 target. A projected shortfall of US\$ 5.4 billion leaves the response dangerously under-resourced.

\* Fragility of aid: Recent cuts in global health aid have disrupted health systems, surveillance, and campaigns, demonstrating how quickly progress can be undone.

\* Humanitarian & environmental challenges: Climate change, conflict, and humanitarian crises continue to drive malaria resurgence and disrupt essential services.

Despite the challenges, several interventions are being successfully scaled up and showing impact:

\* New-Generation nets: In 2024, 84% of nets shipped to Africa were the more effective PBO or dual active ingredient nets, up from just 10% in 2019.

\* Vaccines: A major breakthrough. To date, vaccines are rolling out in 25 countries, protecting millions of children.

\* Chemoprevention: Seasonal malaria chemoprevention (SMC) now reaches 54 million children. Perennial malaria chemoprevention (PMC) is also expanding.

\* Improved treatment of children: More febrile children are being diagnosed and treated with effective medicines (ACTs) than in the past.

To make a malaria-free future a reality, we must:

\* Sustain & scale funding, with efficiency: Commit to sustained, diversified financing—both international and domestic. In an era of real financial constraints, every dollar must work harder. We must prioritize high-impact, data-driven interventions and deliver optimized responses that maximize value and minimize waste. Funding is what gets new vaccines, treatments, and tools out of labs and into the communities that need them most.

\* Champion country leadership: Support nationally-led programmes that are driving change and tailor interventions to local needs for maximum impact. Strong national ownership is the foundation of an efficient and sustainable response.

Since 2000, 2.3 billion cases and 14 million deaths have been averted. To date, 47 countries have been certified malaria-free.

\* Ensure consistent partner support: Progress depends on predictable, aligned, and consistent support from all partners. Sustainable gains are built not on sporadic commitments, but on reliable collaboration that allows countries to plan and implement for the long term.

\* Accelerate innovation: Continue to invest in research and development for new generations of tools, including those to beat insecticide, diagnostic and drug resistance.

\* Empower communities: Engage and resource communities as protagonists in their own health, everyone has a role to play.

### WHO, Japan help Iran combat malaria

The project, entitled Reinforcing Malaria Elimination as Humanitarian Assistance in the Islamic Republic of Iran, was implemented throughout 2024. WHO implemented the project with the Iranian Ministry of Health and Medical Education, WHO website reported.

Sistan-Baluchestan was hit by heavy rainfall and flooding in February 2024. Cross-border population movement is constant in the south-eastern border provinces of the Islamic Republic of Iran. These and other conditions may further drive local transmission of malaria. As such, it is critical to put prevention and control measures in place.

Jaffar Hussain, the former WHO Representative and Head of Mission to the Islamic Republic of Iran, stressed the vital importance of collaborative action with the Government of Japan: "The financial support provided by the people of Japan arrives at a critical juncture, following recent heavy rains and floods in Sistan-Baluchestan province in late February 2024.

Through concerted efforts and sustained investment, WHO and its international and local partners remain steadfast in their commitment to combat malaria and safeguard public health in the Islamic Republic of Iran and beyond."

## 'US maritime piracy threatens lives of patients in need of vital medical services'

TEHRAN - The Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) and the National Committee for Humanitarian Law (NCHL) have condemned the attack by US forces on an Iranian commercial vessel sailing in the Sea of Oman that was carrying essential supplies for dialysis patients, describing it as a blatant violation of international law and a threat to the treatment of patients in need of vital medical services.

The US forces targeted the vessel on Sunday in a blatant act of piracy, boarding the ship and disabling its navigation systems.

The supplies belong to Saha Medical Equipment Company, a subsidiary of the Iranian Red Crescent, the organization said in a statement on Thursday.

Part of the ship's cargo, it said, consisted of raw materials required to produce consumable medical supplies for dialysis patients.

"Any disruption in the supply of these critical items could directly threaten the health and lives of patients in need of dialysis services," the Red Crescent warned.

The Red Crescent added that the US action, which it said created threats and intimidation and endangered the lives of civilian crew members, contradicted fundamental principles of humanitarian law, including the principles of distinction and precaution in military operations.

It said the act could violate international obligations regarding the maintenance of peace and stability and could be examined as an instance of unlawful use of force under UN General Assembly Resolution 3314 (1974).

Iranian forces struck back immediately following the US piracy, targeting several

American military vessels in the area with drone attacks, according to Iran's military.

The armed forces of the Islamic Republic were ready to deal decisively with the American aggressor forces, but the presence of sailors' families aboard the targeted Iranian cargo ship prevented immediate action, as ensuring the safety of civilians took precedence over retaliation, Tehran stated.

The military added that as soon as the safety of the families and crew was assured, Iran's armed forces would take necessary action against what it called the terrorist US Army.

In this line, Foreign Ministry issued a statement on Tuesday, denouncing the operation as an act of "maritime piracy" and "terrorism," saying it involved intimidation of the ship's crew and their families.

The attack, according to the ministry, "not only contravenes the fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter and international law but also represents a clear violation of the ceasefire agreement enforced on April 8, and an act of aggression against the Islamic Republic."

The ministry called on the UN secretary-general, the UN Security Council, and the International Maritime Organization, as well as responsible governments, to take "firm and decisive" response to "the criminal act" against international commercial shipping.

It also warned of "extremely dangerous consequences" resulting from "the US's criminal and unlawful act," stressing the need for the immediate release of the vessel, its crew, and their families.

Concluding the statement, the ministry emphasized that Iran would use "all avail-



able capacities" to defend its national security and interests, and safeguard the rights and dignity of its citizens, while holding the United States fully responsible for any further escalation in the region.

On April 11, the IRCS and the NCHL condemned the US-Israeli attacks on the country's civilian infrastructure.

In a joint statement issued on Wednesday, the IRCS and the NCHL warned about the Israeli attacks on civilian critical infrastructure carried out with the support of the United States, calling for the unconditional observance of the principles of international humanitarian law.

"At least eight railways and 59 airports, as well as public facilities, connecting roads, bridges, and transportation networks, have been targeted in the recent attacks," noted the statement.

"Furthermore, power substations, nuclear power plants, and petrochemical facilities have also been targeted, causing serious disruption to the supply of energy, vital services, and the basic needs of the population, and resulting in widespread and long-term consequences for the lives, health, and security of civilians.



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APRIL 25, 2026

## GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

*The elderly are the sources of mercy and divine blessing.*

*Prophet Muhammad (S)*

Prayer Times > Noon:12:02 Evening: 19:05 Dawn: 3:47 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:18 (tomorrow)

## The limits of power: why American materialism falters against the Iranian spirit

By **Nikita Mikhalkov**

MOSCOW – In my view, this situation is less diplomatic, military, or political in nature than it is deeply rooted in the realm of mentality. The entire episode brings to mind a body-builder, artificially enhanced by steroids, his physique swollen with muscle, who—fully confident of victory—approaches a frail and unassuming Shaolin monk, one who has attained mastery in the martial arts. From the outside, the outcome of such a confrontation appears entirely predictable; in reality, however, everything unfolds quite differently.

This is not a war of countries; it is a clash of civilizations, a contest of cultures. Whether one accepts it or not, the United States, beyond its roughly 250 years of history, has little to offer humanity in comparison to a civilization such as Iran's, with its millennia-old legacy enriched by some of the greatest minds across all domains of life. The achievements of Avicenna, the works of Khwarizmi, and the wisdom of Nezami have all emerged from this vast Iranian cultural sphere and have been bestowed upon the world.

For many observers, it is perplexing how a vast and heavily armed power—the hegemon of the present era—finds itself unable to prevail over what it often perceives as something semi-primitive, akin to a half-rural entity. Yet, one need only recall that during the

Vietnam War, even minor disruptions to the daily comfort of American soldiers—such as being served powdered eggs instead of fresh ones—could lead them to refuse participation in military operations.

From this, it becomes evident that one may bomb homes and occupy territories, yet those for whom comfort and a polished self-image outweigh the invisible but unyielding force of the human spirit will never comprehend why they fail to achieve their objectives.

Even when comparing the level of religious conviction and faith in the United States—a country that permits the existence of institutions such as the Temple of Satan—with the steadfast faith and devotion to the Prophet Muhammad that unites millions of Iranians, it becomes clear that, under such circumstances, no bright horizon lies ahead for the United States.

It is worth noting that, for the first time in its history, the United States—a country that has historically benefited from wars and revolutions—now finds itself incapable of confronting that slender yet resonant thread of the human spirit.

*\* Nikita Mikhalkov is a prominent Russian filmmaker, Academy Award-winning director, and chairman of the Russian Cinematographers' Union.*

## Cartoon of Day



Trump the Pirate

Cartoonist: Masoud Shojai Tabatabai from Iran

# Tehran International Book Fair to be held online

TEHRAN – The 37th edition of the Tehran International Book Fair (TIBF), the country's largest annual cultural event, is scheduled to go online in mid-May, the organizers have announced.

Organized by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, the fair is widely regarded as Iran's most significant publishing event, annually drawing hundreds of domestic and international publishers as well as large crowds of book lovers, academics and cultural figures.

The decision was finalized during the first meeting of the policy-making council in the new Iranian year, following a comprehensive review of the country's current situation and the status of the publishing industry, Mehr reported on Thursday.

In the meeting, council members discussed several proposals after considering the exceptional circumstances facing the nation. The impact of the recent war has led to the closure of some publishing units and has hindered many publishers' ability to organize a physical presence at a large-scale venue, the report added.

Ultimately, the virtual format was chosen and the book fair will be held online for its upcoming edition, following a model successfully established and tested during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Deputy Culture Minister for



Cultural Affairs and the head of the book fair Mohsen Javadi said.

"The primary mission of the Deputy Office for Cultural Affairs is to support every link in the publishing chain," the official stated. To ensure that local bookstores also benefit from government support, Javadi confirmed that the seasonal Bookstore Subsidy Scheme will be implemented in June.

Moreover, further details regarding publisher registration and the distribution of purchase subsidies, including book vouchers, will be released in the coming days.

The online edition of Tehran Book Fair was first launched in January 2021 by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance as a response to the cancellation of the 33rd TIBF due to the pandemic. From 2022 to 2025, the virtual event ran concurrently with the physical international exhibition. This year's transition to a purely virtual format marks a significant effort to maintain the country's premier cultural event amidst regional instability.

Over the years, the Tehran International Book Fair has evolved into a major cultural marketplace and a vibrant meeting point for publishers, writers, translators and readers. Beyond book sales, it hosts a wide range of cultural programs, including unveiling ceremonies, panel discussions, and professional meetings.

With preparations gaining momentum, the 37th edition is expected to once again underscore the central role of books and publishing in Iran's cultural landscape while strengthening the country's literary ties with the international community.

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## Roudaki Hall to host Fereydoun Nassehi's piano recital

TEHRAN – A piano recital is scheduled for May 14 at the Roudaki Hall in Tehran, where the Iranian veteran pianist Fereydoun Nassehi will perform pieces from famous composers

Titled "Chopin Night – Liszt Night," the recital will present pieces by Ludwig van Beethoven, Franz Liszt, and Frédéric Chopin, Honaronline reported.

Nassehi will perform "Piano Sonata No. 23" by Beethoven and "Études Nos. 4, 23, and 24" by Chopin.

He will also play "The Angel of Death" by Liszt and two selections from "Six Paganini Études," which Liszt composed based on works by Niccolò Paganini.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 – 1827) was a German composer and pianist. One of the most revered figures in the history of Western music, his works rank among the most

performed of the classical music repertoire and span the transition from the Classical to the Romantic era.

Franz Liszt (1811 – 1886) was a Hungarian composer, virtuoso pianist, conductor and teacher of the Romantic period. With a diverse body of work spanning more than six decades, he is considered to be one of the most prolific and influential composers of his era, and his piano works continue to be widely performed and recorded.

Frédéric François Chopin (1810 – 1849) was a Polish composer and virtuoso pianist of the Romantic period who wrote primarily for solo piano. He has maintained worldwide renown as a leading composer of his era whose poetic genius was based on a professional technique that was without equal in his generation.

Niccolò Paganini (1782 – 1840) was an Italian violinist and composer. He was the most celebrated violin virtuoso of his time, and left



his mark as one of the pillars of modern violin technique.

Fereydoun Nassehi, 68, is the son of acclaimed composer and trombone player Hossein Nassehi (1925 – 1977).

He is a graduate from Berlin University of Arts in Germany and has performed at several concerts, collaborating with Iranian and international orchestras.

## Persian translation of Bernstein's "Einstein" republished after 26 years

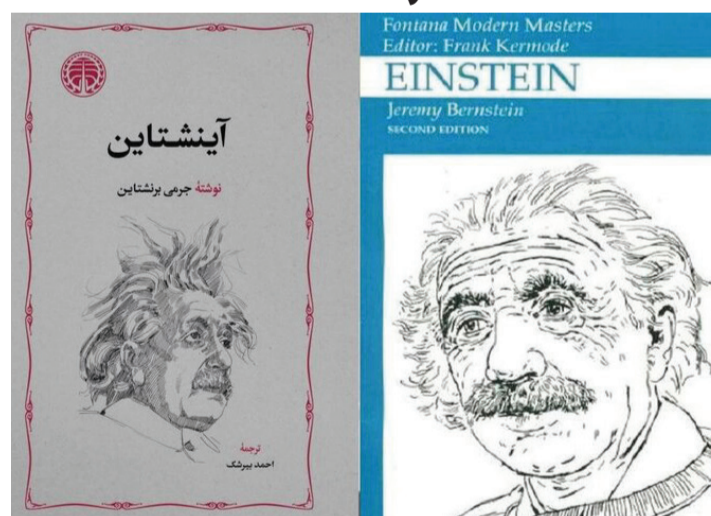
TEHRAN – The third edition of the Persian translation of "Einstein" by Jeremy Bernstein has been released after 26 years.

Ahmad Birashk has translated the book and by Kharazmi Publication has brought it out in 236 pages, Mehr reported.

"Einstein" is a concise intellectual biography of Albert Einstein, written by a physicist who understands both the scientific content and the human story behind it. Rather than offering a massive, encyclopedic life story, Bernstein gives a focused portrait of how Einstein thought, what he accomplished, and why his ideas changed the foundations of physics.

The book aims at readers who are curious about Einstein and modern physics but do not want to be buried in heavy mathematics. It works especially well for interested general readers, high-school or early university students, and anyone who wants more than anecdotes yet less than a technical textbook.

Bernstein begins with Einstein's early life in Germany and Switzerland, emphasizing the contrast between his rebellious, independent mind and the rigid educational system of his time. Instead of being a model pupil, Einstein was often bored with rote learning and resisted au-



thority, but he was fascinated by geometry, by Maxwell's theory of electromagnetism, and by imaginative thought experiments.

The author uses these early experiences to show that Einstein's originality grew out of a deep habit of thinking for himself, rather than simply mastering what teachers presented. This part of the book also sets the stage for understanding why Einstein often worked outside conventional academic paths, including his period in the Swiss patent office.

A central section of the book is devoted to Einstein's "miracle year" of 1905, when he was still a patent clerk and yet published a series of papers that reshaped

modern physics. Bernstein explains four key contributions in clear language: the paper on the photoelectric effect, which treated light as consisting of discrete "quanta" and later earned Einstein the Nobel Prize; his analysis of Brownian motion, which gave powerful evidence for the reality of atoms; his formulation of special relativity, based on the idea that the laws of physics are the same in all inertial frames and that the speed of light is constant; and his famous relation  $E = mc^2$ , which reveals that mass and energy are interchangeable.

From there, the book moves to general relativity, Einstein's theory of gravitation. Bernstein describes how Einstein, guided by

the equivalence principle, came to regard gravity not as a traditional force but as a manifestation of curved spacetime.

An important thread in the book is Einstein's complex relationship with quantum mechanics. Bernstein reminds readers that Einstein helped launch quantum theory, particularly with his work on light quanta and early quantum ideas. However, as quantum mechanics evolved into a probabilistic theory of nature, Einstein became increasingly uneasy.

Bernstein discusses the Einstein-Podolsky-Rosen (EPR) paper, which used what we now call entanglement to argue that quantum mechanics might be incomplete. Here, Bernstein shows both Einstein's philosophical depth and his stubbornness; he was crucial to quantum theory's birth yet dissatisfied with its final form.

In the later chapters, Bernstein portrays Einstein's life in Princeton, his efforts to construct a unified field theory combining gravity and electromagnetism, and his growing status as a public icon. The narrative touches on his pacifism, his opposition to Nazism, his concerns about nuclear weapons, and his role as a moral voice in the mid-20th century.